

CENTURION

SPOTLIGHT

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See what Centurions are doing on the romantic Valentine's holiday!



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VALENTINE'S DAY: SPENDING TIME WITH THE ONES WE LOVE

WRITTEN BY DEBORAH SON



Couples show their love during Valentine's Day!
Photo Credit: Calabasas Courier



Mrs. Kaiser enjoyed Valentine's Day with her granddaughter.
Photo Credit: Ms. Kaiser

Valentine's Day is a day of the month in February full of love, spent with the ones you love. This was founded by a priest named Saint Valentine on February 14th, AD 496 in Rome. During this time, people exchange gifts such as chocolates with each other and spend time together. A survey showed that 72.7% of the students who answered were celebrating Valentine's Day with their significant other, family members, or using the time to focus on themselves. During this special time, many Centurions are participating in activities including watching a movie, eating chocolates, exchanging gifts, shopping, and self-care. **Amberly Chaimongkolmanee**, a freshman at Cypress High School said, "My friends came over to my house and we had fried chicken together."

Mrs. Kaiser, a registrar at Cypress High School said, "I went to Disneyland with my two daughters and granddaughter. I loved being with my family and just seeing how happy the baby was."

Although some people do not have a significant other to spend this day with, they can show their appreciation and love to others who are special to them.

Cypress Needs to be Held Accountable

WRITTEN BY: YE JI JONG

All throughout America, over half the states are lifting mask mandates and putting millions of Americans' lives in danger. These short-sighted actions are harmful and more likely than not, going to exacerbate the public health crisis.

CNet News writes, "On Monday, five states -- California, Connecticut, Delaware, New Jersey and Oregon -- announced that they would be ending mask mandates for indoor public spaces, schools or both. Throughout the week, governors in five more states -- New York, Illinois, Massachusetts, Nevada and Rhode Island -- followed suit, declaring the end of required masks immediately or in the near future."

Despite the CDC's advice on continuing to implement mask mandates, states are still choosing the unsafe alternative and catering to anti-maskers. Most importantly, lifting mask mandates is a disaster waiting to happen and increasing the possibility of more mutations and spikes in Covid cases.

"It is not safe at this time for schools to rescind mask mandates [because] even though we do have decent levels of vaccination in the older age groups, as populations get younger, the proportion who are vaccinated gets lower," Dr. Mercedes Carnethon, vice chair of the department of preventive medicine and a professor of epidemiology and pulmonary and critical care at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, told ABC News.

We would expect that during these unprecedented times of a global pandemic, Cypress students, especially ASB, would set an example of how to stay Covid safe. In reality, Centurions often go mask-less and put other students at risk.

At school events, masks are encouraged by district policies, but hardly followed. A few students, including ASB members, have masks under their nose or just disregard the rules altogether. They continue to choose the unsafe alternative and put other students, staff, and administration at risk despite the influx of science and data pointing towards the benefits of wearing masks. This sets a dangerous precedent since those who are supposed to enforce mask safety, are covertly encouraging the worst choice by setting a mask-less example. Games, senior events, rallies, and even walking around school all pose a risk and potential of another outbreak. So, for ASB officers to go around mask-less is extremely disappointing and dangerous.

The most recent issue was at the basketball game against Tustin on January 27, 2022.

@Studentsectrep on Instagram posted photos and videos of the student section and the proof was right in front of our eyes. The majority of the crowd were not wearing masks.

Although administration claims on announcements and assemblies that there are consequences to not wearing a mask, students still get a lot of leeway and often go unpunished.

Cypress ASB must take more accountability with their carefree attitude towards Covid. Masks save lives. For them to disregard mask mandates and continue to take actions that have scientifically proven to worsen the pandemic is tone-deaf and ignorant.

But most importantly the bigger issue at hand is that more and more Americans are disregarding the severity of Covid and the importance of mask mandates. It's very disheartening to see Cypress students themselves becoming part of the anti-mask statistic. Accountability must be held.



Centurions are being unsafe.
Photo Credit: @studentsect on IG

Theater Presents School Play: Almost, Maine

WRITTEN BY: TALANIA WILSON

Cypress High School's theater presented *Almost, Maine* on February tenth and eleven 2022. This is a romance comedy, with 8 scenes each featuring a different couple. Scene 2 is about two people that broke up around two years ago and see each other for the first time. **Evan Nguyen**, and **Annie Ho** are the actors in this scene. They say that it is difficult to make this scene not awkward, because of all the physical parts. But Ho says, "Reading and saying the lines are easy, but making it feel real is hard."

The third scene of the play is about someone who can't feel pain meeting a girl that hits him in the head which results in love. The actors playing are **Julian Aispuro**, and **Savannah Shaddow**. Aispuro joked, "It's not hard to play this part because I'm already kinda dumb." When they were asked if it's difficult to play a role where two people fall in love Shaddow said, "Not really because they're already good friends."

The fourth scene is about a confused couple acted by **Chris Moore** and **Emil Murray**. Murray said, "it isn't hard to play this role because I'm naturally an overthinking person." But Moore said it was the opposite, "I've never been in a serious relationship, so it was difficult playing a boyfriend."

Scene five is different from the other scenes because actors **Emily Vo**, and **Shelley Tan**, are playing the role of two best friends who have terrible experiences dating men, then realizing they love each other. When asked if these roles were difficult to portray, Tan said, "The difficulty about the falling scene is that it's hard to coordinate because we have to look each other in the eye then fall." Vo said, "It's difficult because I've also never been in love before."

Emil Anesi, and **La Muir Metoyer** are the actors in scene six which is about a dysfunctional married couple. This relationship consists of a lot of arguing. Metoyer said, "that it was difficult at first but after I got to memorize my lines it was easier." But Anesi said, "I'm good at arguing so I didn't have any problems."



Emily Vo and Shelley Tan portrayed friends who evolve into a couple in scene 5. Photo credit Talania Wilson

Scene seven is about a girl going back to her hometown and seeing the guy she used to be with moving on when she still loves him. The actors in this scene, **Jenny Vu** and **Chantal Mitco**, would both describe this play as emotional and heartbreaking. Mitco said her role was difficult because, "It has hard emotions to portray and I have a lot of long monologues...we're all in school right now so it's hard to portray how someone would feel after high school." eight is with actors **Eric Sandoval**, and **Hailey Lopez**. Their scene consists of a guy who really likes the other character, who doesn't understand love until he kisses her. Lopez said, "we have a rule that when they're in class they are always together so they won't be awkward around each other."

Ali Tompkins and **Sarah Abubaker** are the Artistic Directors in charge of makeup, props, costuming, set, and lighting. Tompkins said, "We started with nothing, so they had to get all the props."

Teacher **Marianne Stewart** said, "I am really proud of my students because so many of them missed a week of school because of Covid." She was also very hopeful that the play would go well, and it did.

Centurion Games Are Finally Here

WRITTEN BY: RUBY MILBURN

In March 2022, the very first Centurion Games will be held here at Cypress, elevating school spirit and supporting children in need of health care.

So what are the Centurion Games? The games are set to take place the week of March 14-18, during which there will be five main events, one for each day, during lunch. The school is split into two teams: freshmen and seniors are the orange team, and sophomores and juniors are blue. There are multiple ways to earn points and the team with the most points at the end of the games wins the grand prize.

The first way to earn points for your team is by donating money to Children's Health of Orange County. The games are technically going on right now, as students and staff can already begin donating to CHOC. Each donation earns points for your team, so the more money donated, the more points the team receives. There are three packages for sale for donation: bronze for \$5, silver for \$15, and gold for \$20. The more expensive the package, the more points your team can win. Buying these packages also contributes to individuals' eligibility to participate in the actual games.

By engaging in a variety of physical games, you have the chance to earn points for your team. Each competition will happen on a different day of the week during lunch. Team captains have already been chosen, and along with the captains are two participants for each game, so for those interested in signing up to participate, ASB will be sending out another sign up sheet closer to when the games begin.

Videos shown on CTV's daily announcements will continue to provide more information on what to look forward to in the near future. ASB Commissioner of Technology, **Trevor Wilson**, explained that there



Cypress eagerly counts down the days until the Centurion Games.

Photo Credit: Ruby Milburn

are two main goals of the Centurion Games, one is "promoting school spirit, getting people involved in...something that's fun, and the other is raising money to donate to CHOC. Teachers have already received emails containing the five events which are listed below:

- March 14: Water balloon toss
- March 15: Inner tube water polo
- March 16: Home run derby
- March 17: Tug of war
- March 18: Obstacle course and jousting

According to ASB adviser, **Mr. Michael Cobleigh**, one team is raising money for childhood cancer, while the other is supporting child life, which contributes to recreational events CHOC holds for children in need of health care. Cobleigh states, "the goal is to have fun, to compete and to build a tradition on working with the CHOC foundation." While the battle between teams is currently going on via the CHOC sponsorship, there is still some time to prepare for the physical games for those who are interested in participating. The long awaited class competition is finally here, and you don't want to miss out.

Numerous Namesakes: Who Is Who?

WRITTEN BY: ANELINA ALEGRE AND ADAM HAWARI



Christopher Wright, English teacher (left) and Benjamin Wright, autism focus teacher (right).

Photo credit: Anelina Alegre



Math teacher Reihle Saldana (left) next to attendance clerk Renee Saldana (right)

Photo credit: Anelina Alegre

Cypress High School is home to diverse staff and students, some of them even sharing a name, creating confusion.

First, there are three Binfords working on campus: **Mary Binford** the counselor, **Sarah Binford** the Activities Director, and **Mrs. Kathy Binford** the nurse. Mary Binford and Sarah Binford are identical twins, and they both go by "Ms. Binford."

The twins get confused for each other daily, by both students and staff members they don't interact with often. Mary joked that it "makes the day more interesting." It's something that has happened her whole life, so she's not bothered by it. The twin Binfords encourage students not to be scared to come up to them and ask them a question, even if you aren't sure which one you are talking to. Mary also said not to be offended if she doesn't recognize you, because it might have been the other Binford you were previously talking to.

Cypress also has two teachers with the last name Wright: **Christopher Wright** the English teacher, and Benjamin Wright the autism focus teacher. Mr. Christopher Wright has been teaching 10th and 12th grade English

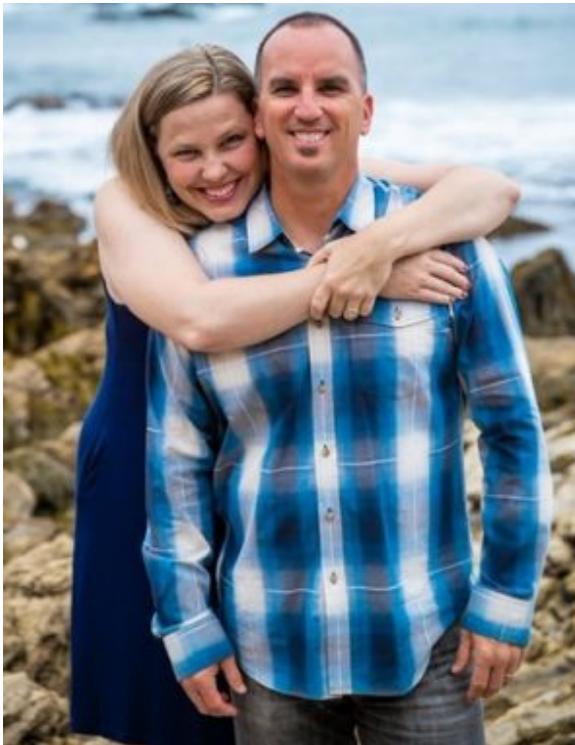
for about five years now, and **Mr. Benjamin Wright** is starting his first year here teaching an autism focus group. Both teachers mentioned that they often get misaddressed emails sent to the wrong inbox.

"I found a really nice letter in my box and read it, but it turns out this wasn't my student," Mr. Wright said. The English teacher Chris Wright also shared that the school had a mix-up regarding payroll because of their same last names.

Another pair of names are the two Saldanas: **Ms. Reihle Saldana** the math teacher, and the attendance clerk **Mrs. Renee Saldana**.

It is Ms. Saldana's first year teaching math here at Cypress. She said she used to get mixed up with the other Mrs. Saldana when the year first started. "It happened frequently at the beginning of the year, but it happens less now that the school year has gone on," she shares. Mrs. Saldana has been working here in the attendance office for a year and a half. She said that she would get emails from people thinking was the other Saldana. She shared, "Her first name starts with an 'R' as well, so it really is confusing."

Numerous Namesakes: Who Is Who? (Continued)



Jeffrey Russell, athletic director and economics teacher (right), and Jennifer Russell, a Science teacher often receive each others' emails.
Photo Credit: Adam Hawari



Mr. (left) and Ms. (right) Falt, both math teachers, happily work near each other on campus.
Photo Credit: Adam Hawari

It's a common misconception for people to mix up names, and at Cypress, these cases happen usually with teachers who have the same last names. But, it's not just a coincidence.

Interestingly enough, some of these teachers are related or come from the same backgrounds.

For teachers like **Jeffrey Russell**, it bugs him that people mistakenly confuse his name. Mr. Russell currently teaches economics and is the Athletic Director. Mr. Russell said that he has "been teaching for at least 26 years." His time at Cypress wasn't only teaching economics, he was also a former student! The person on campus who shares a similar last name is his wife, **Jennifer Russell**.

Normally when people confuse Mr. Russell's name, it happens digitally. People accidentally email him instead of his wife.

When this happens, Russell responds with, "I don't teach chemistry" and forwards it.

Another incident of someone mistakenly emailing Jeffrey is when a completely different school emails him instead. Loara High School usually confuses him with another Russell in the school. English teacher **Andrea Crooks** is another person with a matching last name. She has been teaching for eight years; her husband **Jeffrey Crooks** is a new teacher on campus this year, as well as one of our football coaches. There are actually other people with similar last names as Mr. and Mrs. Crooks. There are two teachers with the last name "Cook," **Alison Cook**, the English teacher, and **Sharlene Cook**, the math teacher.

In room 224 and 225, teachers Mr. and Ms. Falt can be found teaching Math. **Mr. Dan Falt** has been teaching for 21 years, and **Mrs. Lisa Falt** for 30 years. Funnily enough, when newer students come into Mrs. Falt's classroom, she teases them by telling them that Mr. Falt is her twin.

Nicki Minaj's Comeback Single "Do We Have A Problem?"

WRITTEN BY: JAKE HARRIS



Nicki Minaj and Lil Baby pose for the cover art of their song "Do We Have A Problem?"

Photo Credit: Spotify

Rapper Nicki Minaj released her first single in two years titled "Do We Have A Problem?" on February 4, 2022 with rapper Lil Baby.

Minaj announced her comeback on social media, then did many interviews with radio stations to promote the release of the song giving details of her upcoming album. Minaj's last single titled "Yikes" was released on February 7, 2020, and she initially planned to begin the rollout for her fifth album in 2020, but due to Covid she delayed it. She then became pregnant with her first child and in an Instagram live she discussed how she decided to take a break from her music career to focus on being a mother.

The music video is a nine minute short film, and in an interview with the Hot 93.7 show "DJ Buck and Friends." Minaj stated that it is inspired by one of her favorite films "Salt" starring Angelina Jolie. The storyline begins with Minaj as a secret agent in an interrogation room. She has been given the task to kill someone. Despite being hesitant at first, she decides to take the mission. The video then changes the scene to a high end auction with Lil Baby while "Do We Have A Problem?" plays in the background. Minaj's partner Detective Flint is outside of the room while Minaj made her moves, but to the Detective's surprise, she sets off smoke bombs and hold up two guns to get people to leave the auction. Lil Baby and Minaj then drive to Cuba, and as they arrive, Detective Flint finds them. The video ends with Lil Baby and Minaj holding guns up to his head revealing that the plan was a ploy, and a snippet of her new song "Bussin" plays.

Upon release the song jumped to the number one spot on the iTunes all genre chart and the Apple Music chart. The song has already sold 100,000 units in less than a week, and debuted at number two on the US Billboard Hot 100. The critical reception to this song is mixed, but Minaj's fan base, the "barbz," love the song.

Cypress Wrestles to League Championships

WRITTEN BY: ANISH ASHOKKUMAR



Freshman Enzo Olmedo goes against his opponent in individual league finals at Valencia High on February 4, 2022.

Boys and Girls wrestling won the Empire League on January 19 and has moved on to CIF individual. Girls wrestling placed 8th out of the 55 schools and boys placed 5th out of the 52 schools in league finals.

In the league there were many individuals who exceeded their performance during the league matches. The girls took 8th in the SS (Southern Section) and the boys took 5th in SS. **Vida Beckel** got 1st place for an Outstanding Wrestler and both **Emarie Bolosan** and Vida Beckel both qualified for their masters and got top eight to go to state. **Jimmy Romero, Dylan Stark, and Tyler Thienngern** were wrestling in the masters meet this weekend and placed top 9 in the state. **Head coach Mr. Lundberg** says that the most improved out of the boys was **Eli Krueger**.

According to Coach Lundberg, the hardest part about training for wrestling was that they had to work around COVID, because of the potential complications that can happen. Although they had a good season, there are some things needed to work on to improve their game and their skills in general.

Boys and Girls Wrestling both won 1st place in Empire League, and had many qualifiers for CIF. "We need to know each individual's potential and concentrate on that and also need to work on their weaknesses so they can improve on it and perform well in tournaments."

The Centurion wrestlers had a great season, and their tradition of hard work made them very successful.

Girls' Varsity Water Polo Are 3-Peat Empire League Champions

WRITTEN BY: ANNA NGUYEN



Our varsity girls' water polo team celebrates their Empire League championship. Photo credit: @cypressaquatics on Instagram

Girl's Water Polo won the Empire League title for the third year in a row Thursday, February 3rd at their senior night game against California High School. Scoring 12 to 9 places our outstanding team into CIF.

Captain **Leila Egusa** (12) led the victory, scoring six points for the team. The girls played hard and the crowd cheered them on every step of the way, it was a memorable game for our senior players. Egusa's teammates applaud her for the ambition and great leadership she provides. **Milika Burdett** (12) says, "I honestly love Leila so much, she's played such a big part in my polo career and I know the team owes a lot of our success to her and coach." Egusa is no stranger to the pool and has been playing water polo basically all her life. She is excited to play on the college team for the next four years as she has committed to Cal Lutheran. "Getting there [Cal Lutheran] has been a goal of mine forever and I feel like the hours I put in practicing and training have paid off. Polo is more than just a sport to me, it is my life," Egusa gushed about her passion for the game.

This past season has been nothing but success for our ladies. They've had a lot of great wins and recently placed 4th in the Diamond Bar Tournament, the highest Cypress has ever placed in the DB Tournament. **Andrea Pascasio** (12) reports, "I'm glad our team has been doing well and I'm so happy we got into CIF, I want to get to at least quarterfinals." Following their dominating Empire League win, the team went straight into preparing for their CIF games. **Ryann Manalo** (12) is excited about the upcoming games, "CIF is no joke, but I feel like we got a great team and will make it far."

February 10th marked the second round of CIF, where the team crushed Garden Grove 11-7 which progressed them to the quarter-finals. In the quarter-finals, Cypress beat Camarillo High School, so for the very first time in Cypress history, our girl's water polo team played in the *CIF Southern Section Girls Water Polo Semi-Finals* against Oxnard High School. The game was on Wednesday, February 16th at 3:30 PM at the Woollett Aquatics Center. Unfortunately, our team did not move onto the finals, losing 12-16, but they still made water polo history by making it this far into the CIF round.

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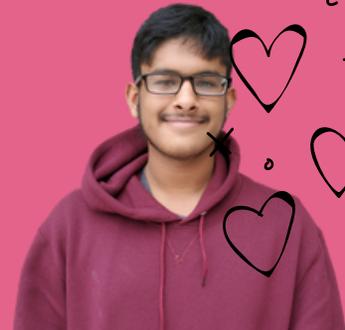
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