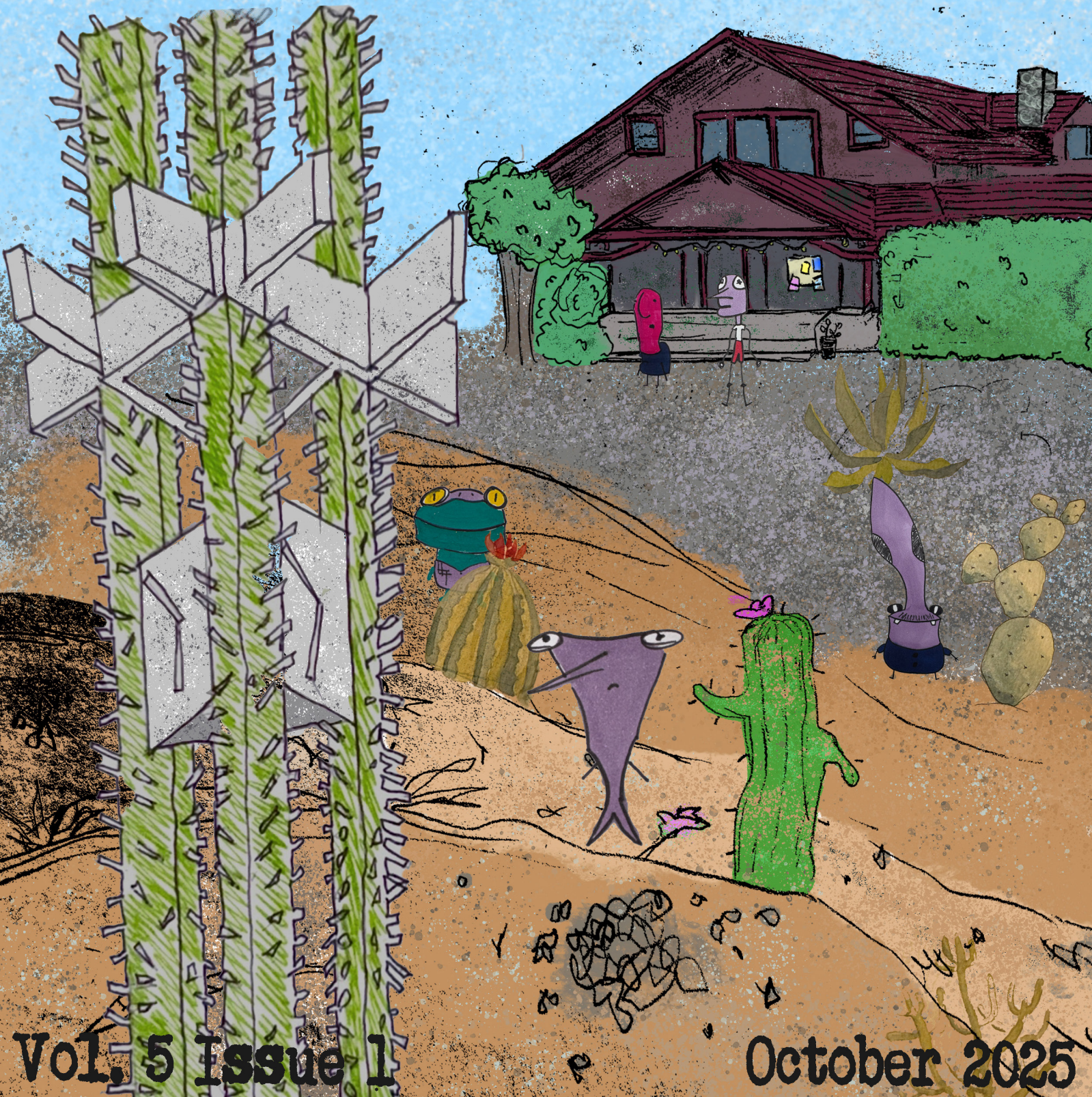




THE
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Newsprint Magazine



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Letter from the editor

Hello Claremont,

Welcome to this new era of The Outback! The club fair went swimmingly and now we have more people on our staff than ever before. It has been such a gift to see this space grow and grow and grow! As with any issue of The Outback, it's such a pleasure to watch our staff at work together — crafting each piece and graphic with the utmost care and precision. Especially exemplary of the impressive nature of our team this year is the beautiful front and back cover, which were the joint effort of a very large portion of our graphics team, as listed below.

Thank you so much to my lovely creative directors, Ben Connolly and Rhyus Goldman, those boys put so much energy into getting things started this year and getting our readers this issue. Also thank you to all of our lovely staff, both returning and new.

I have nothing intelligent enough to say to merit global commentary, but it feels awful not to mention everything that's going on in our country and the world. It feels wrong to say nothing in this letter about the deterioration of democracy and crimes against humanity that are livestreamed to our phones every single day — so perhaps I'll acknowledge the privilege of being able to share and read stories. I feel honored to be able to curate a forum like ours where we can hear personal anecdotes about what is usually just widely distributed harrowing national news, updates about the community, and personal poetry and prose. I never thought I'd be clinging to freedom of expression and speech as a privilege, but here we are.

Stay safe, stay loud, stay on the streets if you're willing and able.

Love,
Willa

**Front cover by Ben Connolly PZ '26, Carter Haroza PZ '29, Darby Lind SC '29,
Thea Riley PZ '28 and Cara Shin PZ '29**

**Back cover by Ben Connolly PZ '26, Carter Haroza PZ '29, Penny Messinger SC '29,
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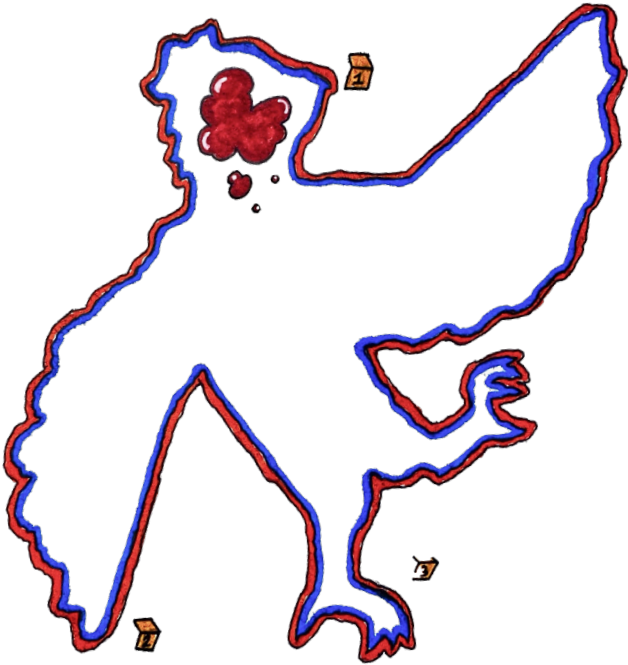
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Minimalism has ravaged the PP logo

Words by Jack Paradis PZ '26

Graphic by Alex Berlind PZ '29



On August 1, Cecil the Sagehen was brutally murdered. The lively, smoldering Cecil was once the primary logo of Pomona-Pitzer Athletics ... but no longer.

In his place, an orange “P” seemingly penetrating a blue “P” will now be representing our schools — shockingly confirming that Pomona is the bottom in our relationship. This sudden development has us all wondering: who would commit such a crime? And perhaps more importantly, why?

To uncover the truth behind this mystery, we have to go back to the beginning.

At the turn of the 20th century, Pomona’s athletic teams went by many nicknames, one of which was the “huns,” a reference to warrior nomads. Although the exact origin of the name “Sagehens” is unclear, one legend claims that in 1913, a writer for TSL mistakenly typed ‘hens’ instead of ‘huns.’ The name stuck, accidentally rebranding the school’s entire identity.

Other theories have claimed that it was an intentional change, considering that “huns” became a pejorative term for the Germans during World War I.

Whatever the case may be, the Sagehen has been the mascot of Pomona, then Pomona-Claremont, and now Pomona-Pitzer, since 1918.

Our nameless mascot was given life when Cecil the Sagehen was officially born in 1946, first referenced in *Metate*, Pomona’s yearbook. Cecil only manifested in drawings and newspapers early on, but this queen couldn’t be bound by simple 2D imagery for long. Cecil first appeared in the flesh as a paper-mache figure on a Homecoming Day float — yes, we apparently used to have those — and soon after became a lively mascot that fiercely waddled along the sidelines of major sporting events.

Cecil even showed up to Pomona-Pitzer President Peter Stanley’s inauguration in 1991 in drag, under the name Cecilia, chirping and wooing the new president — true icon behavior. To this day, we are still the only sports team in the world to have a Sagehen as our logo, or at least, we were.

The storied history of Cecil the Sagehen shines light on how devastating this case is. Thousands of Cecil lovers fell to their knees when @sagehenathletics announced the death of Cecil, with

many voicing their despair online: “Fly high Cecil 🥺 you will be missed,” “FaZe clan ahh logo,” and that one gif of Britney Spears giving a disgusted side eye.

The pushback from students inspires many questions about this change: Why would Pomona-Pitzer spend so much money on something as silly as this? Is this our way of competing with CMC’s new athletic facility? Are we trying to convince people that Division III sports are real? Most pressingly, who did Pomona-Pitzer pay to commit this tragic assassination?

The simple design, straight lines, and basic color scheme led us down the trail of Joe Bosack & Co, a brand consultant known for turning the unique identities of college sports teams into logos you’d expect to see walking around Silicon Valley. We looked into their history and what we found left us stunned: a trail of mascots slain at the hands of corporate minimalism. Our perpetrator is a renowned serial murderer of the whimsy of DIII mascots — mascots which once had life in their eyes and a secret love for academics in their heart.

This trend of simplifying logos is not limited to just DIII mascots. It’s a worldwide phenomena that I’m sure most are familiar with. In short, our favorite retro logos are turning into ugly corporate slop. Brand consultants believe that consumers are more comfortable with visuals that don’t require much brain power to process — a concept called cognitive fluency.

Companies are sold the idea that when their logo is simple and easy to recognize, it has a better chance of sticking in the mind of consumers and standing out in the vast sea of logos. But if everyone is converting their logos into minimalist crap, none of them will stick out.

Brand consultants are monopolizing the logo industry, turning unique logos into the same old shtick. Logos are now designed to be recognized in even the smallest forms, like the corner of our phones. They're becoming flat, monochromatic, and avoidant of complex textures.

Companies are investing millions of dollars to make these changes to their logos.

Just look at Burger King, Pay Pal, or Twitter. Companies are selling their unique brand identities to make their logos as simple as possible so consumers will recognize it and feel inclined to purchase their product.

So I have to ask, why is a DIII sports team doing the same thing? Who are we trying to sell our product to?

Even if our logo is now somewhat more recognizable, was tarnishing our school's spirit worth it to appeal to corporate America? This mysterious case brings up many questions, but as we enter a new era of branding, let us never forget the goofy looking mascot we all came to love.

Immigration court watching

Words by Soren van Loben Sels PZ '28

Graphic by Eli Heart PZ '26

On Thursday, June 26, 2025, at the immigration court in Concord, CA, ICE attempted to detain two Brazilian immigrants without respect for the Judge's decision. I arrived there, as a court observer, at 1:02 p.m., as proceedings started for that day's hearing.

Those two minutes between 1:00 and 1:02 p.m. — minutes that I missed — had been crucial. During them, I later heard, the judge discovered that ICE had sent two officials who identified themselves as "ICE interns" to sit in on the hearing.

As I entered, the judge was asking the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) attorney if he was intending to dismiss any cases that day. The attorney answered in the affirmative and provided two case numbers: a husband and wife from Brazil seeking asylum. The judge immediately scheduled their case for the end of the hearing, ensuring that legal aid volunteers could advise the targeted asylum seekers on their right to oppose the case against them being dismissed.

This reaction would be odd in any other field of law, where the dismissal of a case means that the threat of legal implications / punitive measures to the accused would be over. This logic has been turned on its head by a new DHS policy that pursues dismissals. This is because people who are still in removal proceedings through the court system cannot be taken by ICE for removal without due process, a process called Expedited Removal. To get around this, the DHS has begun dropping the removal charges against someone so

that they can be detained and put into Expedited Removal. There is a pending class action lawsuit on the legality of these dismissals.

Volunteer courtroom navigators, including one immigration attorney, explained these details after moving with the couple into the hallway. For most immigrants, volunteers are the only available source of legal advice; the vast majority of people in immigration courts go unrepresented, especially among Hispanic immigrant groups. Immigration court evades the 6th-amendment endowed right to an attorney to adults as it isn't a court under the Judicial court system, but a court system attached to the executive branch.

The rest of the cases proceeded without the couple. This was an administrative hearing, which quickly moves throu-

gh the procedural details necessary to work out before final asylum hearings, so the cases passed quickly. Outside of the room, the legal aid volunteers struggled. At the Concord court, legal aid groups can only have so many volunteers there in a day. The groups cater to the two languages most used by immigrants who come through the Concord immigration court, Spanish and Punjabi, but not the Portuguese that the Brazilian couple required.

The court itself also had problems with translation. Speakers of any but the most common languages had to either settle for a second best language (as I saw for a Quechua speaker who had to settle for Spanish) or hard to understand translation-by-phone. In one case, in which respondents only spoke Turkish or Kurdish, none of the three translation services the court used were able to



provide any translator.

When all the other cases had passed, the Brazilian respondents crossed the bar with a volunteer attorney waiting just behind it. The mundane details of their case — name, housing, and the fact that they had a legally submitted asylum claim — were confirmed. Right before the DHS formally moved to dismiss their cases, the couple attempted to link their cases, so that whatever judgement was rendered would not separate them. The judge ruled that that motion would be answered after the dismissal.

With the legal advice on what dismissal was, the husband was able to respond effectively to the motion to dismiss. His wife was already starting to break down at this point, terrified of detention. His arguments, that they were correctly following the procedures for asylum and absolutely could not go back, may not have been entirely well-formed in the legal sense. That was why the judge, instead of ruling one way or another, gave him ten days to get the help of legal representation to make those arguments properly. The judge set a court date and that was supposed to be the end of their case for the day. They left the courtroom, but I did not.

At the end of every administrative hearing, the court issues deportation orders for people who did not show up to their hearing. The non-appearances, scared from the courtroom by fear of ICE detention, confused by a change of court date, or driven off by other fears, are ordered to be removed with little recourse. I stayed to take notes on how many “in absentia” cases were removed.

From what the legal aids later told me, ICE was waiting and had attempted to detain the couple outside of the hearing. The husband was seized as his wife was in the bathroom. She was in there when two male armed ICE agents entered to grab her. She fell and began having a panic attack. Someone called paramedics. I exited the courtroom to find

almost a dozen ICE agents hovering in the halls, many masked and all in irregular uniforms. The husband had already been brought down to whatever vehicle ICE had, but everyone still on the ninth floor of the building with me was waiting for those paramedics to arrive.

When the woman exited the bathroom,



ICE agents hovering around her, she was distraught. She retched into a trashcan as tears ran down her face. The paramedics arrived and took her into a side room. I lost track of what was really going on from there. The lawyer from the legal aid organization — Contra Costa Immigrant Rights Alliance — went in and out and spoke to the ICE agents and paramedics, but there was little that I or the non-lawyer aid volunteers could do. Eventually, the ICE agents on the floor took the elevator down, and left her in the hands of the CCIRA volunteers.

I went with them to the elevator but elected to catch the next one, not wanting to crowd the distressed woman any more than was necessary. When the next elevator came, four ICE agents were in it. They were trying to find her, and the security guards told them to go to the ground floor. Why they were sent to find her after the others had left, I do not know. I caught the elevator down with these agents. During the ride, one of them asked who I was. Upon finding out that I was an observer, he made some comment about us each having our own jobs that I do not remember the specifics of. I did not respond.

Arriving on the ground floor, I assumed the targeted woman and her accompanying volunteers had left the building

and quickly made my way outside. A crowd of rapid response protestors had gathered around the glass doors on either end. Once I was outside, with no way to go back in, I realized that somehow I had ended up ahead of the elevator that had first left. The woman and the immigration aid volunteers were all still inside with a number of remaining ICE agents. I don't know how the group talked their way out but they did, whisking her off to her car and to a temporary safety. Her court date was only days away and her husband was sent to detention God knows where.

I don't know what happened to her next.

By arresting her husband mere days before the hearing that would determine if his asylum claim would continue, they intentionally sought to ruin his chance at defeating the dismissal. Whisked across the state into inhumane conditions, away from familial or legal support, and in front of a likely less sympathetic judge, they stacked all the oddseverything against him. It is a special and specific cruelty.

The heartwrenching piece of the couple's story that I witnessed is unfortunately not unique. We hear about detentions like this every single day. Every video you see of ICE agents in courthouses, is a result of either an illegal action or a manipulation of case dismissal rules. Additionally, the Trump administration has ended protections given to refugees of many foreign nations with serious crises. Not all of these revocations have gone into effect, but I still saw multiple AfghanAfghanistani people on those lists of non-appearances, deported in absentia. The system, especially volunteer, and aid organizations, are already overflowing.

That was something I noticed again and again in observing the immigration court system. The Trump administration has placed more and more burdens on this system and worked their hardest to cut away the few protections that existed within it, but they are not chopping at a healthy tree. Removal in absentia has existed in the system for decades, and has been cruel the whole time, but every seizure in a courthouse makes it worse by scaring more people into not appearing. It is a weak system that was never fixed as it became more and more overloaded. A bridge made of rotten logs is easy to break.

My experience as a Pitzer student at the Charlie Kirk vigil

Words by August Eberle PZ '29

Graphic by Xanthe McGrath SC '29 and Carter Haroza PZ '29



On September 10, 2025, Charlie Kirk was shot while hosting a public engagement and debate booth at Utah Valley University (UVU), and later died at the hospital. On September 11, 2025 at 9:00 pm, my friend and I (another Pitzer student) were removed from a vigil for Kirk held at the Veterans Fountain Kravis Lower Court at Claremont McKenna College. The vigil was sponsored and led by members of the Claremont Colleges College Republicans (CCCR) and Turning Point USA (TPUSA).

I decided to dress considerably for the occasion, both to fit in and demonstrate respect. I encouraged my friend to do the same. We wore what we thought was appropriate: polos, a black jacket, straight-leg jeans, and a pair of boots. It seemed neutral enough, so we walked to CMC.

As we approached the Kravis Lower Court, the path to the vigil was adorned with small candles, some blown out

from the wind. The candles spiraled down a staircase directly to a small crowd of quiet people. At the end of the candlelit path was a picture of Charlie Kirk with his fist in the air, and an unlit crucifix candle in front of him.

I had one intention entering the vigil: to be an observer. Despite no provocation on our part, my friend and I were questioned immediately. We were approached by a TPUSA member, who asked for our names and asked what we were doing at the vigil. It was as if they knew everyone else there except for us or had decided that something about our appearance made us different enough to arouse suspicion.

The question was odd, given the fact that everyone was at the vigil for presumably the same reason. In the spirit of disclosure, we answered that we were there as "neutral goers." It was implied that everyone who was there was there to pay respect.

"Are you from Pitzer?" Our answer triggered a series of rushed responses from the TPUSA member in what felt like a panic; words like "worried" and "trolls" were thrown around. We were asked, "Are you here seriously or are you here to protest?"

This interaction caught us off guard; it made this situation personal. We, as Pitzer students, were asked if we were at a vigil to make fun of it, just because we look like Pitzer students.

As the TPUSA member was speaking to us, they were interrupted. A person who labeled themselves as a CCCR

representative interrupted and told us, "You are not legally allowed to speak to any TPUSA members if you work for any news or journalist organisation ... If you want to stay, you are going to have to respect our rules."

I have found no information regarding the legality of speaking to any TPUSA members or supporters of the organization. I responded to their terms with my name and my friend's name, and I formally asked for an interview with them instead of the TPUSA member, who when I asked them, responded, "Yes, only if you bring weed, it's a necessity." Both my friend and I were handed a homemade vigil candle, crafted with a condiment container and a taper candle, and were asked to light it ourselves because "you guys are Pitzer students, you know how to light things." As neutral attendees, we put the candles down and waited for the ceremony to begin. The CCCR member who originally talked to us about legality was now talking of their experience as an "acolyte" of Charlie Kirk, and how the experience of meeting him was the "awakening moment in [their] life."

Right after the speech and ceremony, we were asked to leave "immediately." Security stood by the staircase as we walked up and away from the vigil that was open to the public; they gave no reason for why we had to leave, and security prevented us from coming back. As we walked away, the people at the Charlie Kirk vigil, TPUSA members, and CCCR members alike sang the national anthem together: "Land of the free, home of the brave." Notably, CMC was ranked number one in the nation in the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression's (FIRE) Free Speech Rankings. I'll let the irony speak for itself.

My parting gift

Words by Luca Rudenstine PZ '26

Graphic by Izzy Young PZ '28

Fiona Apple's Parting Gift isn't a breakup song so much as a group memo to an alumni association of exes. She once said it was written "to all of the men I have known," which instantly shifts it from private heartbreak to mass correspondence: subject line, Your Services Are No Longer Required. Amidst my own teary breakup last winter, the resonant tune became deeply personal. As a concoction of rage and longing arose within me, Apple's lyricism captured the double-exposure of goodbyes. Take the refrain:

"It ended bad but I love what we started
It said stop
But we went on wholehearted
It ended bad but I love what we started."

This is a confession without revision, a goodbye that still admits its beauty. The line refuses to simplify romance into either/or. The love was genuine, the wreckage equally so. Instead of ironing that contradiction into something neat, Apple repeats it like a stutter, letting the paradox stand: regret and gratitude bound up in the same breath. It's a reminder that closure is rarely clean; it's more like a palimpsest – hurt written right over love.

That lyrical ambivalence is where the humor creeps in. Apple calls her exes a "silly, stupid pastime" and still insists she "loved what [they] started." It's a sly jab at the cultural script that demands women exit relationships graciously, with thanks for the memories. Apple does thank them, but the thanks is edged with mockery, like a parting gift you didn't ask for and don't quite want.

Most pop goodbyes try to canonize heartbreak as something noble. Apple's farewell is more complicated, more human. It's a eulogy with a wink. When my ex told me he learned a great deal from cheating on me, I remember slyly telling him, "it was a lesson I never had to learn." At the time, his voice had carried the impossible request: be open. Not because he wanted true freedom, but because he couldn't bear to lose me entirely. He was in transition then –



halfway between the life he had known and the one he was trying to build. I refused. It had to be all or nothing. He couldn't choose all.

But there's one lyric of hers I could never fully claim:

"I bet you could never tell
That I knew you didn't know me that well
It is my fault you see
You never learned that much from me."

For Apple, the pain is being unseen, unstudied, dismissed as simple. Unlike her universal message, my ex knew me – deeply, sometimes unbearably so. In our last conversation, nothing about me was invisible to him. When he told me I had given him the gift of grace, it wasn't a hollow parting line; it was a truth spoken by someone who had watched me grow into myself under his gaze. And I could tell him, without irony, that I had learned how to love in his company. If Apple's lyric is a lament for the intimacy that never was, mine is a recognition that intimacy did happen – messy, flawed, unrepeatable, but real.

That conversation has stayed lodged in me like a sculpture I can't stop circling. We choreograph beginnings but rarely endings. Take weddings, housewarmings – all ribbon-cutting ceremonies,

all sealed with kisses in front of witnesses. But when the structure of love collapses, we are left without a form, no agreed-upon ritual for goodbye. No equivalent of Rodin's marble embrace – only rough drafts of parting, improvised gestures that never quite hold the weight. Why isn't the dismantling of a relationship given equal staging? Why isn't there an agreed-upon ritual for goodbye?

Instead, we improvise. In my case, the first version of closure was the sound of my own breath in my bedroom after the call. A familiar room, suddenly unrecognizable. The moon still hung in the same spot in the sky, his letters still taped to my wall, but something in the air had shifted. No vigil. No final kiss to consecrate the ending. Just the efficient violence of a voice I loved saying something I could not accept.

And now, here he was. The same eyes. The same scent – natural deodorant and Versace cologne – closed in on me as we hugged. For a moment, my body wanted to fold into him, to be carved back into the marble intimacy of The Kiss: two figures fused, timeless, unbreakable. But our bodies withheld. A sliver of air remained, our torsos almost but not quite touching, like a crack running through stone. He is not a villain in my story, there is no operative betrayal to fix him to. Just a man who miscalculated tenderness, reminding me that most endings don't arrive cleanly. Guilt is not always sharp. Sometimes it's soft, pliable, like fabric you absentmindedly twist in your hands before realizing you've been holding it for hours. That's the kind I feel with him. There have been new people, new memories, and a new sense of self-assurance that has settled after re-finding myself in new countries, that makes me feel almost unrecognizable. And yet – I still text him. Still leave space for his voice on the other end of the line. It's a strange, slow rationing of goodbye. When he says he still wants to be with me and only me, it is not the confession I once fantasized about. It is heavy now – with all the months and people

in between, his mistakes and my own, the quiet exchange of our skin for the illusion of closure. In that weight, I hear the myth of reconciliation: the idea that if two people still want each other, the math should work out. But the equation ignores erosion.

I love him, but I don't want to be with him. For so long I believed those two truths couldn't exist side by side – something cowardly, selfish, an act of keeping someone tethered without granting them the whole of you. And yet, across the table, I felt the familiar rush of love, as undeniable as ever, and I knew that feeling will never entirely go away. Was it muscle-memory or true permanence? The compromise we once called learning alongside each other but growing independently – together when we're together, apart when we're apart – now feels like a way of using him for intimacy. And God, we are so good at slipping back into it.

But my first love is not an heirloom I can keep on a shelf without it rotting. It must transform – into gratitude, into reflection, into space for whoever walks into your life next.

This is the trouble with the narrative of “moving on” we've inherited: it assumes love either renews itself or it dies cleanly. In reality, it often does neither. Sometimes it lingers, the way a coat you haven't worn in months still carries your perfume—now layered with the dusty sweetness of mothballs. One scent says, remember how it felt when he looked at you like that. The other says, for God's sake, get your knitwear dry-cleaned. That's love, I think. That's grief. Two scents woven together – desire and repellent.

And this time, I got my closure. He told me I had given him grace; I told him I had found myself in his love. We saw each other wholly – no shadows left unlit – and in that space, we honored it. Apple's parting gift was mockery; mine was recognition.

Different songs, same ending. I learned

what it was to truly love and be seen through love, and that, I will carry like a pulse under my skin forever.

We saw each other wholly – no shadows left unlit – and in that space, we honored it. Apple's parting gift was mockery; mine was recognition. Different songs, same ending. I learned what it was to truly love and be seen through love, and that, I will carry like a pulse under my skin

When we hugged goodbye, I thought again of The Kiss. At first glance, it's nothing but devotion: two bodies fused in timeless embrace. But the sculpture was meant for The Gates of Hell, a monument to eternal torment. That embrace, then, is not salvation. It is desire frozen, caught inside a larger damnation. You can feel the inevitability pressing in: whatever this is, it cannot last.

He hugged me hard. I hugged him back. And in that moment I understood: it is possible to hold someone with everything you have and still already be walking away.



I'm Just a Teenage Dirtbag, Baby

Words by Oliver Schoening PZ '27

Graphic by Ben Connolly PZ '26

The word “dirtbag” typically conjures images of vulgarity and sloppiness – not a political identity. Yet for an American left wing increasingly under attack in the wake of Charlie Kirk's death, the label may be a much-needed lifeline.

In a recent opinion piece titled “America's New Segregation,” New York Times columnist David Brooks investigates the divided state of American society and potential solutions in the Trump era. Brooks writes, “In sector after sector, Democrats are in danger of becoming the party of the status quo ... Trump goes after some institution, like D.E.I., the federal bureaucracy or universities. The resistance folks rise up to defend those institutions without acknowledging that there's usually a kernel of truth behind Trump's critiques.

Brooks' words, though insightful, fail to recognize that this has already happened. Nearly a decade removed from

the 2016 election, the Democrats are rudderless and actively being undercut by the Republican Party on nearly every major issue – from immigration to housing to the economy.

The so-called “dirtbag left” has been kicking since 2016. During the Democratic presidential primaries, podcasts like “Red Scare,” “Chapo Trap House,” and “Cum Town” began to make a name for themselves with irreverent and often inflammatory political commentary. The dirtbag left encompassed a range of progressive millennials alienated from the Democratic establishment, eschewing civility in favor of harsh and often vulgar criticism of American politics.

The much-maligned “Bernie Bros” of 2016 are a good example of the ideology commonly associated with the dirtbag left. The aptly named “Bernie Bros” became infamous for their willingness to attack candidates like

Hillary Clinton on the campaign trail, rapidly growing a reputation for misogyny, racism, and even threats against Sanders' detractors. To be clear, this portion of Bernie's voter base represented a particularly ugly subset of leftists, but pinning the failure of 2016 on them misses the point entirely.

“Bernie Bro” quickly became shorthand for any Sanders supporters who criticized Clinton, regardless of their own identity. What was before a little-known subset of Americans largely confined to Twitter discourse was thrust into the spotlight and assigned blame for the failure of the party. There were undoubtedly many who turned to misogyny and racism as the tide turned against Sanders in 2016, but it is nevertheless important to recognize that this ugliness stemmed from real political angst over the inability of politicians to connect with voters on important issues like housing prices and the healthcare system.

The right wing has already attempted to turn Kirk into a martyr, and for many on the right, no amount of condemnation is enough to absolve the Democrats of their perceived role in the decay of the country. With rumors and accusations already coming from politicians and voters alike, it is clear that there is even more fallout yet to come. Ultimately, the left has to come up with an organic solution to this increasingly hostile media sphere — and sticking to a failing playbook isn't going to cut it.

In late August, journalist Taylor Lorenz released a WIRED article about Chorus, an incubator program for Democratic influencers funded by a dark money group called the Sixteen Thirty Fund. A dark money group is a political action committee whose sources of funding are hidden from the public, raising questions about who is exerting control over Democratic policy. According to a leaked pitch to investors obtained by Lorenz, Chorus' goal is to "build new infrastructure to fund independent progressive voices online at scale." Immediately following the release of Lorenz' article, Chorus founder Brian Tyler Cohen struck back, denying claims that Chorus dictates talking points to partnered influencers and forbids them from disclosing that they are being paid.

Following the September 11 attacks, pioneer of gonzo journalism Hunter S. Thompson wrote a piece about the future of the United States titled "When War Drums Roll". "The poor bastards of what will forever be known as Generation Z are doomed to be the first generation of Americans who will grow up with a lower standard of living than their parents enjoyed," Thompson wrote. "The party's over, folks." Nearly twenty-five years later, Thompson's words feel nothing short of crushing.

Kirk's assassination comes at a crucial juncture for the Democratic Party and the country as a whole. Already facing record-low approval ratings, nothing that the party has done in recent years inspires confidence that there is a grand plan that we simply are not yet privy to. The attempts at censorship from the right are vindictive, driven solely by residual bitterness over the left's perceived role in shaping years of "cancel culture." The irony of all this could not be more apparent, especially as figures

on the right continue to use Kirk's death to infringe on First Amendment rights. But even with the contradictions laid bare, the left has fallen in line with the wishes of the right.

The Sanders-obsessed dirtbag left of the 2016 era is long-gone. Red Scare has gone full reactionary and the millennials that comprised the movement have grown up, but some managed to stick around. Perhaps most notably, former "Cum Town" host Adam Friedland has gained traction through his eponymous talk show "The Adam Friedland Show," featuring an eclectic mix of guests from actress Sarah Jessica Parker to New York Congressman Ritchie Torres.

Friedland's success is an indication of something that organizations like Chorus and the Democratic establishment have failed to grasp. While Kirk was immensely successful, his politics were decidedly inflammatory to many. If a man who asserted that "we made a huge mistake when we passed the Civil Rights Act" can be at the forefront of conservative politics, we don't need more "clean" voices that, to quote Ezra Klein, "practice politics the right way". Many on the left often bemoan the lack of a "Joe Rogan of the left". Although figures like those are few and far in between, the issue is a structural one.

Friedland is interesting not because he is similar to Kirk, but because of his position as a political outsider. Establishment media figures like Jimmy Kimmel have found themselves under attack from the right over their words following Kirk's assassination, not to mention the scrutiny ABC is facing. Figures like Friedland have the unique ability to engage blithely in political discourse because they are not limited to what is "acceptable" for political commentators. If establishment media is already being watched by the government, independent media is all the more important. The importance of the dirtbag left lies not just in the vulgarity of their political commentary, but in its subversive critique of the Democratic Party's supposed focus on everyday Americans.

The dirtbag left associated with Bernie Sanders' ill-fated presidential bids in 2016 and 2020 gained steam for what can only be described as a nihilis-

tic view of American politics. But now is better than ever to bring those who have been alienated from the inaction of the Democrats back into the fold. While it may seem like this decidedly vicious take on politics is incongruous with the views of the mainstream, taking a step back from all the noise and simply calling things as we see them is the only way to steer the ship back on track.

With a right-wing assault on the First Amendment currently underway, it makes little sense to acquiesce to the wishes of conservatives and silence ourselves. The reality is that no matter how heartfelt the condolences, the die has already been cast. If nothing you say or do is going to convince the right wing otherwise, it is time to stop pulling punches. Reconciliation may have been achievable years ago, and it likely will be again in the future, but for the time being, there is no happy medium.

By policing the language of people we should be working with moving forward for fear of further polarization, we risk giving up what little agency we do have in the direction of the Democratic Party and American politics as a whole. Simply cursing out the political system at every turn is not the solution, but there are times when there's no better way to get your concerns heard. As Chapo Trap House host Amber A'Lee Frost put it, "The depravity of the atrocious acts committed by the powerful far exceed the depravity of any swear words one could use to describe those acts."



ghosting: inertia

Words by Rafa Goldman-Kunin PZ '28

There's something sibylline in the way
that all human motions are telegraphed —

a way that makes you think of other Grecians,
maybe Pythagorean, maybe Platonic,

in the subtle nods of cheek to jawline,
side tangents, how the upper back carries

the weight of a day's excuses, which angle
a forearm swings at. That's the thing with tendons:

either flexed or slack, piston-sharp action
fast as zeroes and ones. In a crowd this thick,

you need reflexes to be an oracle, ones that
I've tensed taut, poised against the current of Brooklyn.

On subways, the world works by dark-forest calculus,
bleary-eyed victims muttering if I can't see

them, they can't see me — tarmac hurled under
the gears of mass transit, mass migration, matter,

a Daoist flow where no lord sits stable
above nature's whims. Here, though, the line

shuffles bright and whimsical, fully realized
mortals twirling bobby pins and scraping

plantain crumbs from phone screens. Seven bows
and a Seto Kaiba decal adorn their handbags,

Kusama dots whirl on fingertips, all cheap creation
putting on a tidy face for the camera. So

who'd begrudge six misaligned buttons
in the sum of odd atoms? I feel us shifting,

reel in the messenger bag like an anchor.
Trays of organic spring mix, wild rice,

jugs of miso vinaigrette and ranch, a drone
peppier than numbing-spice between queues

past where a glimpse of a hairnet spins,
offers sizzling fried chicken, spins away —

and there goes service again, cropping up
like dandelions in asphalt. Back on 14th

and Avenue 6, on the God's Love prep floor,
you lost yourself in the ceaseless twirl of motion,

decisive slices, fingers on label sheets,
the dance of ladles, the springy snap of containers

from assembly to basket. Mind-numbing, sure,
but the kind where your voice is left to project

all the confidence your mind never could,
dating tips to aunties, Dante to freshmen —

and a merry time was had by all. Not to mention
the cause, but limbs swing on forward

and prescribe the Will for a fraction longer,
and aeration does the rest, sending you springing

heels-forward like a bontebok in the long grass,
living too in the moment to swivel

even one passing gaze to past definite.
Besides, that was the point last month, unmoored

in the harsh kitchen overheads, five MGs
of THC and fiery mi goreng

untangling soft wings from rigging, space-timeless,
lost in heady orange and deep brown pools

as the too-real world turned on leviathine axes
somewhere far away. Is it only the sharpest

concoctions that shear you clean, stark naked,
pistons primed to move for motion's sake? Sure,

chemicals stick in the mechanism next morning,
but maybe the transition's too harsh — that night

I was flitting through Oberon's court, come break-
fast
just one vertex set firm in place and time.

Fuck knows I'm still a dot in a shape too vast
for the mortal eye to comprehend, maybe

the armpit, androgynous groin — nitty-gritty,
a deep coiled tension of nerves and summer

yearning, the little joint that makes the machine go.
Footsteps on the quad chant in a metric

I don't know — O, my Lord of freefall
how sweet you feel, how sweet you feel —

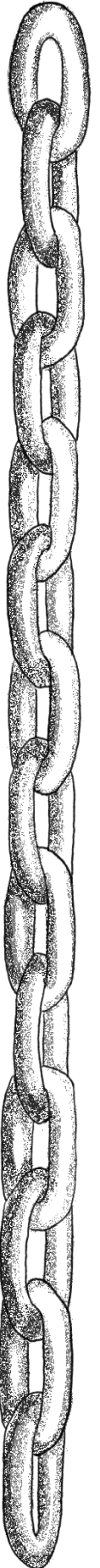
and the limbs rise again, moving to a backbeat
relentless as oceans, poppy as sunshine

on tarmac, lockstep with all God's children,
or at least the grinning ones I tuck behind

and surrender to. Terminal velocity is constant,
non-Will prevails, it will not hold, it will not

hold, you know it won't, but just for now,
let's Lincoln-in-the-Bardo this moment, momentum,

laughing now if only to laugh along, and above
feathers cycling, so soft, down to flat soil.



Through the daze and haze, the freshmen learn to graze

Words by Elias Schendler PZ '29

Graphic by Darby Lind SC '29



Bad Bunny once said, “Debí tirar más fotos” (I should’ve taken more photos). He sings of the profound regret one feels when failing to capture the true essence of a memory. This is very similar to the crippling sorrow I felt after failing to take pictures of my first meals at this (mostly) wildly delicious consortium. Would I ever recall my first Hoch Steak night, McConnell pasta bar, or Scrunch (Scripps Brunch)?

I needed “más fotos” because I had forgotten all the tastiest things I’ve devoured. Those who knew me before college are well aware of my not-so-secret @eliaseats Instagram account. The only meaningful questions family and friends ask me are about my diet. As I’m slammed with the typical, “Elias, what’s the best meal you’ve had so far?” I simply replied, “Debí tirar más fotos.”

The truth is, I seem to have no recollection of any of the food I ate during the first week frenzy. The second I stepped foot into any dining hall (except for Frank, perhaps, due to the lack of humans there), I seemed to black out

(NOT in terms of overconsumption of alcohol, though this may be true for certain beer leaguers who attend Drary (Drunk Frary) after slamming a dozen Natty Lights and attempting to hit a little white ball while your fellow non-athletic peers “cheer you on.”)

No, I mean I blacked out in the sense that I forgot ever even going to get food. I simply got too overwhelmed by the familiar faces, different types of pasta, and the devastatingly scrumptious dessert bar. Am I allowed to have a croissant every day? All the commotion caused me to forget what I put on all three of my plates. No doubt, the meal was sufficient and usually on par with my standards, but I just blacked the fuck out.

That said, I have had some tasty morsels since then. Leg of lamb at McConnell, yes, I like the sound of that. It’s fun to say, and I admit, I enjoy the alliteration. Something about it just works; tender and properly seasoned. The Friday night wings and Birria tacos at The Hoch are a must-have. Four wing flavors, lemon pepper being my favo-

rite, and the quesadilla-taco creation are all you need to celebrate making it through the day. I have yet to eat a bad meal at Hoch. Right now, it’s at the top of my list in terms of my dining hall ranking. The poke is fantastic, with tons of different toppings, and they don’t skimp on the fish. I’d also like to give a pork noodle bowl (also Hoch) shout-out! Despite the noodles being slightly too al dente, I thoroughly enjoyed my tenderly cooked pork. I’ve also been on quite the McConnell yogurt bowl streak. The granola gets me going.

What I’m less keen on: waiting in line for Scrunch chicken and waffles. It’s not worth it. They’re not bad, but I don’t see the cost-benefit ratio working in my favor. A minimum fifteen-minute wait in that tight Malott hallway takes years off my life. I find the other options: acai bowls, homefries, and scrambled eggs are equally tasty. Until proven otherwise, I’m done with that malarkey.

People seem to flock to one line at any given meal. I have seen this flocking phenomenon at the other dining halls too. Is the food in that one line really

that much better? Bao buns, I guess, are the exception for me. I'll wait ages for a good bao. It seems that some meals are not worth the wait. No need to be a sheep! Explore, adventure, take a risk.

Ceviche, at a cafeteria!? Wait, just hear me out. Do yourself a favor and order the Peruvian Ceviche at McConnell. It's a pleasant, citrusy, and savory delight. The shrimp ceviche is good, too. Who knew! There seems to be a stigma that getting seafood (let alone raw fish) at a dining hall is an awful decision. People also say you shouldn't buy sushi at gas stations. But look at me, I'm still standing. Take the risk. Get the ceviche, enjoy. I did notice a third ceviche: cauliflower ceviche. Isn't that just cauliflower with some lime? Was it good? (I wouldn't know, I steered clear).

Here, I must pause and remind the reader that these critiques are not meant to diminish the unbelievably loving and skilled workers (or students) at McConnell, or any other dining hall. I'm simply a self-professed food reviewer giving my honest two cents.

Speaking of the lovely staff, I would like to bring up a clever creation that I can only credit to one of the best McConnell omelet chefs out there (if only I remembered his name). Last Sunday, I woke up swole, dysfunctional, and in need of a hearty meal. What this man gave me is something I like to call a cromelette: croissant + omelette. Mind Blown. No words. Douse that thing in salsa and you'll be happily bedridden for the remainder of the day. Consider adding some pesto-cream cheese on

the side if you're feeling frisky. I even remembered to take a picture; I didn't blackout this time. I felt dialed.

I have begun, as I hope other freshmen have as well, to calm myself down and navigate this whole dining hall thing. I'm beginning to remember the good bites. As I wait in line for the pasta bar, I breathe! I even, on occasion, get myself something they call a salad! I'm still in search of some restraint... three plates per meal isn't something I'm proud of. It's just so hard to resist! If you have any tips or recs for 5C dining, find me. And please, follow my now-certainly-not-secret Instagram, @eliaseats.

SCOTUS ruling on immigration raids stirs fear, unease in Los Angeles area

Words by Madeleine Farr PZ '27

Graphic by Thea Riley PZ '28

In early September, the Supreme Court lifted a lower court judge's ruling on immigration raids in Los Angeles. While ICE agents, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and supporters argue that the SCOTUS decision was necessary to ensure agents could thoroughly carry out their duties, critics argue that it enables indiscriminate sweeps and racial profiling.

The Trump administration described ICE's descent on Los Angeles earlier this summer as "the largest mass deportation operation in history." Agents used what they call "reasonable suspicion" to target individuals based on a wide range of factors including work sites, speaking

Spanish or accented English, and whether or not a person flees in response to seeing an ICE agent.

Responding to what she argued were "unlawful" immigration raids, Judge Maame Ewusi-Mensah Frimpong of the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California prohibited the government from detaining or interrogating individuals based on the aforementioned factors. The decision was upheld by an appeals court.

The Trump administration, in response, appealed to the Supreme Court. Justice Brett Kavanaugh wrote the majority opinion for the 6-3 decision that ultimately ruled in the federal government's favor on Sept. 8.

"What the district court tried to do is basically inhibit, paralyze our ability to do anything by saying we cannot consider work sites, we can't consider language, we can't consider a list of things," Acting U.S. Attorney for the Central District of California Bill Essayli said on FOX News when the SCOTUS decision was revealed. "What happens is agents are afraid to do their jobs, afraid they'll be held in contempt of court."

As a result of ICE conducting raids based on "reasonable suspicion," many Latino and Hispanic Americans are beginning to carry their passport around whenever they leave the house — if they are still leaving the house.

“I don't think I've ever, as an immigration reporter, spoken to so many people who are hiding behind closed doors, who are just not going out,” Jasmine Garsd, NPR immigration correspondent, said in response to the decision. “They've been here for about 25 years, and they're just not going out anymore. And they are going to self-deport, which is kind of, you know, one of the pillars of this administration's policy.”

Despite the decision's vast impact on the greater Los Angeles area, some Claremont students have said that open discussion about the ruling and its implications has been limited

“This decision made by SCOTUS has not been discussed or acknowledged in any classes, clubs, or organizations I'm a part of,” an anonymous Pitzer student said in a statement shared with the Outback. “It is really tragic to see the emotional well-being of our marginalized students being thrown to the side lines in times where it matters most,” they wrote.

The majority in the ruling did not provide an explanation, meaning that it's difficult to know whether its reasoning is limited to Los Angeles or can be applied nationwide. However, the Trump administration has explicitly targeted the area, claiming that illegal immigration levels here are especially high.

The city isn't the only target. The Inland Empire, widely considered part of the greater Los Angeles Area, has also felt the impact of the Trump administration's crackdown on immigration, according to Lennon Nuttall

PZ '27.

Nuttall has been working with the Pomona Economic Opportunity Center (PEOC), connected by a praxis class with Professor Melissa Chadburn last spring. She creates infographics and writes articles about citizenship for the organization, a non-profit which aims to connect day laborers with “safe work at a fair wage” and “improve overall conditions for all immigrant workers.”

Nuttall shared with the Outback that when the ruling was released, she was preparing to meet with an individual in association with her work with the PEOC.

“She told me a bunch of horrific stuff,” Nuttall said. “Like, over 100 people in the IE getting stolen. And there's a lot in one day. And I was so sick and tired and, like, ready to punch everyone in the face and dropkick everyone's baby.”

The news about the SCOTUS ruling was quickly overshadowed

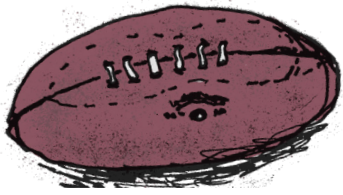
by Charlie Kirk's assassination, which was captured in graphic video. Kirk, a right-wing political activist, was shot fatally in the neck during an event at Utah Valley University.

“It was really heartbreaking to see this news drowned out by the news of Charlie Kirk, a white right-wing political figure around the same time,” the same anonymous source wrote. “Although the community of students and staff at Pitzer College pride themselves on being uplifting allies of our community, there still are blatant choices made in which movements to support and uplift.”

The source also highlighted how students of color comprise a majority of student staff and run affinity organizations: “Students of Color are truly the backbone of Pitzer College ...” they wrote. “However most of our stories go unheard.”

The case's outcome is not yet finalized; it is pending before a federal appeals court, and may end up at the Supreme Court once again.





The rise of rugby: Claremont Foxes experience record growth following 2024 Olympics

Words by Emmy Knapp PZ '26

When I first arrived in Claremont in the fall of 2022, I found myself missing the one thing I sadly thought I might leave behind forever: organized sports. I ran cross-country all four years of high school and came away feeling I wasn't fast enough to compete at a higher level. Even as a state-level wrestler who competed at national tournaments, I felt unfulfilled in a sport marked by individualism and shaped by an undercurrent of misogyny and toxic masculinity.

Overall, it seemed there was no clear path forward for me to live out my days as a student athlete. All of this changed one fateful day at the Pitzer College club fair, when I signed up to join the Claremont Foxes Women's Rugby mailing list. Never in my life had I considered the sport as a possibility, and frankly, I didn't even know what it was.

In recent years, rugby's increasing global appeal, especially among women, has made it so that nearly every student on campus has at least a rough idea of what the sport entails. As a rough overview, rugby is a contact sport similar to football, where players advance the ball by running with it in hand or kicking it. Unlike football, the time doesn't stop when a player is tackled, and the ball can only be passed backwards. Teams earn points by scoring tries—placing the ball on the ground in the try zone—and through conversion kicks, taken after a try is scored.

The sport is played in both a 15-person and a 7-person format.

After the USA Women took home Bronze at the 2024 Olympics, national interest and participation in the sport have grown exponentially. Players like Ilona Maher, Portia Woodman-Wickliffe, and Ellie Kildunne have catapulted women's rugby to the center of global attention by garnering a mass audience on social media. As a result, women's rugby in particular has emerged as a

global phenomenon. This year's Rugby World Cup Final between England's Red Roses and Canada's Maple Leafs was the most attended rugby union match in history, at 81,885 attendees, nearly doubling the 2021 final attendance of 42,579.

Claremont is a case study in the sport's significance at a campus-wide scale. At the club fair the fall after the 2024 Olympics, 86 students joined the Foxes' mailing list and the number of rookies showing up to practice was nearly double that of returning players.

"That kind of momentum hasn't stopped," said Ella Grouws (PO '28), one of the social media chairs for the team. "More people know what rugby is, and I think that's the biggest difference." Grouws's first exposure to rugby was on social media, after an old soccer teammate posted a clip of her scoring a try. "I had no idea what any of that meant, but I was like, 'That looks really cool.' I want to do that," she said.

In her posts, Grouws tries to emulate what she sees from rugby influencers. "I think for a long time rugby has been viewed as kind of intense and scary, like it can't be feminine ... It's important that all of those people on social media are represented and know that they have a space, because rugby is a space for everyone."

This sentiment that rugby is a space for everyone was echoed by every single player and coach I talked to. Lily Lisle (SC '18), a Fox alum and now coach, emphasized how every single body type and type of athlete is represented on the team. "Rugby is a sport that anyone can play and add value to the team." Hannum emphasizes, "regardless of the ways you want to get involved – whether it's coming to socials, supporting us on the sidelines, or playing at a competitive or casual level – there's a

place for you on the team."

The Foxes have also always been an important part of the queer community on campus. When I talked to Lisle, she emphasized that when she played, there weren't as many people 'out' as there are now, and emphasized the importance of having queer spaces on campus. "It's a queer space, definitely, but it's so much more than that. You don't have to be queer to benefit from the kind of values and lessons that are instilled in rugby." This commitment to queer inclusivity extends beyond sexuality. Lisle beamed when she described how players themselves insist on creating a welcoming and supportive environment for any and all gender expressions and identities.

This culture of inclusivity, and the social media team's efforts to represent such a culture, is exactly what draws new players to their first day of practice. Samantha Campbell (SC '26), one of the Foxes captains, reflected on her own experience freshman year. "I had no idea what rugby was ... Now, we're starting to have more rookies who can name-drop Ilona Maher or have watched a game of rugby before, which has been a really nice transition."

Like Grouws and Campbell, most of the players on the team started rugby in college. "As freshmen," Campbell said, "We had no experience with rugby, really no idea what it entailed, no idea what the team vibe was. We all just went to the club fair, showed up to practice, and were taught by the ones who came before us."

Even so, the Foxes compete at a very high level, moving from the Division II league to Division I for their 2023-24 season. Laila Hannum (SC '26) described this transition. "The DII League was kind of falling apart, we were annihilating our competition, and we

were like, honestly, our only choice is to move up to DI,” Hannum said.

The Foxes won back-to-back DII Championships in 2022 and 2023. Having played in the DI league for two seasons now, the Foxes made it to the top eight in 2024 and top four in 2025 amongst heavy hitters like UC San Diego, San Diego State, University of Arizona, Arizona State, Grand Canyon University, and many other schools, all of which have at least 20,000 more students than the Claremont Colleges.



But that’s not all.

Alongside their DI team, the Foxes’ program is large enough to roster an additional DII team for DII tournaments. According to Hannum, “We were the only team in the state to put in a DI and DII team, and actually compete in both.” While competing in DI tournaments, the DII team also delivered an impressive showing against programs like Occidental, UC Riverside, UC Irvine, and Long Beach State –schools whose only focus is on their DII teams. The Foxes DII team is an important part of the DII ecosystem in Southern California and ensures good competition in the league and a competitive training program for our DI team.

“It just always blows my mind what this program has been able to do compared to any other college program around,” Amanda Martinez (SC ‘20), another Fox Alum and now coach, adds. “I played club in Texas at the D1 level, and you guys are still more disciplined. You guys train better and have more skills than D1 adult clubs. The Foxes program is not like your average program. It is really a high-level program.”

Few things illustrate the Foxes’ success more than their alumni-dominant vo-

Photograph by Ashe West-Lewis PZ ’26

lunteer coaching staff. Both Lisle and Martinez drive over four hours throughout the week to come to Claremont and coach the team. Such dedication greatly contributes to the ever-expanding and thriving team.

“I’ve always had so much pride and stayed connected (to the team),” Martinez says. “I want to show that women can lead with empathy, women can lead with kindness and love. I think the leadership that we’re producing and the direction we’re going is very much in tune with how women’s sports are quickly evolving.”

Lisle told me how she came back as a coach because the Foxes were a safe and welcoming space for her when she really needed one. “I wanted to give back to a team that gave me so much. Rugby is a really special sport, and doing it ourselves and for each other is such a privilege that helps make it so special and different.”

Evan Wollen, head coach of the Foxes, noted that, “The alumni coaches’ dedication and commitment show just how much the players themselves invest in

the team. The level of competitiveness isn’t determined by me, but by the players who show up and put in the work every day.”

The increase in popularity of the game, along with its alumni support, has only strengthened the Foxes’ footing as an important community on campus. The Foxes Rugby program has helped me grow from someone who had no understanding of the game to a player who can contribute to a shared field and community vision. It is an extremely unique and empowering community where I have gotten to explore all aspects of my identity in a safe and encouraging space. The Foxes inspire me every day to be a better version of myself both on and off the pitch. I am honored to have the opportunity to build relationships with and learn from talented teammates and coaches.

On September 27th, the Claremont Foxes won the West Coast 7s tournament at Dignity Health Park in LA. I encourage everyone to celebrate and support such an impressive team by cheering us on at our home game on October 18th at Parents Field!

What's in our notes app?

Words by The Outback Staff

Italian soda w strawberry
syrup and cold foam

**The more you come into your own,
the less you rely on borrowed glory.**

Like trying to pronounce the wind

Vanicream
Pimple patches
Tampons and pads
Claw clips

Mexico journal entry

greatest has been this thing i've come to terms with de-
siring. i say that like this is some sort of revelation, quite
the opposite — i've been the same for a long time. i think
i'm just okay with it now. i was reading a manuscript the
other day and the character mentioned craving a destiny,
i know i feel that way. i told **[redacted]** on the phone last
night that i'm going to be a very successful author. he told
me that he believed me.

**they had people pray for petri dishes, and then tried to
monitor if those who were prayed for were doing better**

I liked you and so I kind of just wanted
you to fuck off to make my life easier
Its cuz im so pleasant
No pleasant is not quite enough
What's the word then?
Intriguing

soft shoulders in seventh hour sun

we had a really good friendship and now it seems like all
you want to do is find new ways to fuck up and need to
apologize. it's like you always want a reason to be sorry
and it makings me feel like you hate yourself.

Our age is retrospective

Augustine's notion that human language is a divinely-or-
dained reflection of the Logos
At the pawn shop is it supposed to be an innuendo when
the guy is trying to pawn something that they dont take?
Like gay male prositutiin

Oxford word of year is yearn

i made myself some tilapia last night. delicious. what i do
is i take a piece of fish, i cover it with lettuce, and i zap it.
zap! all you can taste is the fish. i make shrimp the same
way. i take shrimp i put it into a dish, add water, and plop
it. im a zapper.

Shopping List

Vegetable broth
Arborio rice
Onion
Butternut squash
Parmesan
AP flour
Pumpkin pie spice
Pumpkin puree
Cream cheese
Vanilla
Brown sugar
Sour cream

I don't think i am normal at all

Examples

My fathers ex situationship
just married Keanu reeves

My Judaism demands grief for Gaza

Words by Willa Umansky PZ '27

Graphic by Ben Connolly PZ '26

When I was little, my family would have Shabbat dinner every week — there is something inside of me that craves the Shabbos spirit. At camp, I would keep Shabbat weekly and that satisfied my innate desire for the sabbath, for the warmth of candle light and echoes of Shalom Aleichem. At college, I return to my natural state of Friday night observance, attending Chabad Shabbat dinner weekly.

One Friday night this summer, after screaming my way down Fifth Avenue in a march demanding the siege on Gaza be lifted, I went to the synagogue that raised me. I wanted to feel held spiritually, I wanted to grieve with my brethren. I prayed alone for Gaza during the silent Amidah.

I feared they would not have listened to me if I expressed my pain — that I would have been the radical college kid who couldn't read the room. But I wish I had tried. Instead, I grieved silently for the people of Gaza during the Mourner's Kaddish.

Days after my disappointing synagogue experience, at a rally for Jews demanding an end to the genocide, Simone Zimmerman, founder of If Not Now, implored supporters to take more risks, interrupt more silences, and demand more of our people. I thought about



how I said nothing when the rabbi asked if anyone wanted to share who they were praying for during Kaddish.

These days, I often go to synagogue seeking something that isn't there. Since the Jewish institutions of my youth insisted they were liberatory, I somehow still expect that catharsis of collective grief when I show up to shul during a genocide being committed by, and supposedly, for our people. I leave services upset and dissatisfied, bereft of the community mourning I'm in search of. I go home and I rant to my dad about how that institution is no longer the place for me, how I should stop trying.

But after listening to Simone's words, I changed my mind.

I cannot forgo attempts to salvage the morality of the shul that raised me. No, that effort doesn't take precedent over my taking to the streets, demanding an end to the genocide — but it is something that leftist Jews should keep in mind. It troubles me that my affiliation with organizations like Jewish Voices For Peace automatically push me to the fringes of American Jewry, discrediting any point that I could make about what many of my American

Jewish peers refer to as “the conflict.” But I cannot allow my congregation to bear silent witness to a genocide taking place in our name and I cannot let the world understand Judaism to be synonymous with that genocide.

It’s comforting to sing Lo Yisa Goy with 1,500 other Jews at a rally demanding the end to the genocide, knowing that the tremor in our voices is born from the pain that we feel for Palestine. It’s comforting to recite the Mourner’s Kaddish with 1,500 other Jews and know we are all mourning those killed in Palestine. But we don’t deserve to be comfortable.

We cannot allow ourselves to be pushed to the side and written off as radical. We should be in the mainstream spaces where many of us grew up, we should be repeating the numbers of the dead until those communities are forced to feel the magnitude of tragedy. My vision of Judaism revolves around song and warmth and

fighting for justice and fighting for peace and welcoming strangers with open arms. My vision for Judaism demands me to ask my family and peers for more.

I was raised to seek liberation for all people. At Hebrew school we were taught about Black and Jewish alliances during the civil rights era and we celebrated when gay marriage was legalized in the United States. As these justice-oriented lessons were instilled in me, I was also being raised to love Israel without question. My American Jewish education taught that supporting Israel was inextricable from my religious identity — but that’s not true.

So I will stand for Gaza during the Mourner’s Kaddish next time I’m at the synagogue where it feels radical to care as deeply as I do. I will stand to honor the tens of thousands killed, for Awdah Hathaleen and Anas Al-Sharif who were murdered in cold blood and for all those slaughtered whose names we will never get to know. I will send the donation link for the Gaza Soup Kitchen to fami-

ly members whom I doubt would donate without my encouragement. I will grieve openly for Palestine in places that feel risky, like Chabad or other ‘mainstream’ Jewish environments, because it is Judaism that fostered my staunch humanism. And I owe it to Judaism to not have its sanctity be desecrated.

I will force myself into spaces where it feels scary or uncomfortable to stand up for what I believe in, because how am I supposed to demand better of my community from the fringes?

**ZIONISM
IS TREASON**

The performative male: when feminism becomes an aesthetic

Words by Kayra Hidirlar PZ '28

Graphic by Genevieve O'Marah SC '28

conversations. He is instantly recognizable all over the world, both online and in real life. However, the real topic of discussion is not necessarily what he wears nor what songs he listens to, but rather what this performance reveals: the way feminism has been turned into a costume rather than a set of values.

To be clear, it is not inherently problematic for men to enjoy fashion, pop culture, and music that don't fall into traditional standards of masculinity. Some men simply like those aesthetics. In fact, it is important that more and more men feel comfortable to push the boundaries of masculinity and break traditional gender norms. The issue arises when all of these aesthetic choices are done not out of authenticity, but instead out of a goal to present as more "emotionally in-tune" or more "woke" to receive attention from women. That is where the performative aspect comes in.

By dressing a certain way with this specific intention, this kind of "performative feminine softness" becomes weaponized to lower women's guards, so that they see him as a guy who is more "safe" than other men and understands the hardships that women go through. However, in reality, the only change that occurs is in the wardrobe, not in the way that they treat women in any kind of relationship. As a result, the performative male contributes to a rebranding of the patriarchy – one that is dressed in labubus and thrifted cardigans – making it harder to call out.

In addition, performative males are still upholding patriarchal values by aestheticizing feminism and treating it like an accessory instead of a practice. They make feminism more about their image and how they are perceived rather than about women themselves, which ultimately is still centering male voices and male validation.

Going on a broader note, these acts that performative males engage in contribute to a societal shift that rewards aesthetics over action. Men are increasingly trying to appear "sensitive" or "politically correct,"

rather than authentically advocating for the empowerment of women and other marginalized communities. When we continue to applaud such performances, we contribute to a cycle where male validation is perpetuated, feminism becomes reduced to a set of trendy looks, and sincerity becomes optional.

At the same time, social media has done a successful job in highlighting this cycle in satirical ways. With platforms like TikTok and Instagram turning him into a running joke, he has become a meme that people all over the world have engaged with. People have posted exaggerated impressions of him, such as videos titled "How To Dress Performatively" and "Performative Male Final Boss." While these posts are hilarious and entertaining to watch, they also call out the faux feminism and shallowness in the act itself through this form of mockery.

Beyond social media, the performative male trend has made its way to college campuses as well. Students at Pomona College recently hosted one of many performative male contests that involved people competing to see who can best embody the character, as convincingly and ridiculously as possible. This again proves the role in which social media helped make people aware of what the performative male looks like and what his intentions are. By making him the subject of a contest, the students were using humor to point out his aestheticization of feminism that centers the male experience.

All in all, the performative male is more than just something to laugh at – it is a reflection on the ease of reducing feminism to a costume. Social media has played its role in indicating this by keeping the performative male in the spotlight. Behind the host of quotes from feminist literature novels, the multiple pairs of baggy pants, and the daily matcha orders is a guy who has learned how to soften up patriarchy into a disguise. And it is not the clothes or the music that creates the problem, but rather the performance behind it because at the end of the day, feminism isn't a tote bag, it's a practice.

You may have seen him before. Maybe he was sipping an iced strawberry matcha with oat milk at a local coffee shop, maybe he was talking about how much he loves women and feminist theory on your Instagram feed, or maybe he was holding up a Sylvia Plath book in front of everyone to show what he is reading. He was also likely wearing a thrifted knitted sweater, the baggiest jorts ever, chunky silver rings, and a carabiner that holds his car keys.

The list isn't finished. It would be a crime to omit the black loafers with white socks, vintage sunglasses, and a tote bag full of the vinyls of artists, such as Clairo, Beabadoobee, and Faye Webster. This guy is indeed the performative male and he is very hard to miss. The question lingers in the air: is this a genuine and authentic form of self-expression or is it all simply an act?

As social media continues to circulate the guy throughout multiple platforms, the performative male trend has sparked numerous

Morality

Words by Willa Umansky PZ '27

Graphic by Ben Connolly PZ' 26

Excited to notice the Empire State
Building out the window. Been working
two weeks, I saw something
fly past my view. Can pigeons?

I'm tired, up late. A phone call.
"Matters of the heart?" Uncertain,
all I can do is nod.

Studying the map of American writers,
Babitz is there but no Didion. I don't know
if the anorexic recluse would be
thrilled or

rolling. I can't focus
on my reading for the life
of me. It's exhaustion and combing
through memories. I want
to bottle your words
and drink them when I want.

Right now I want to seal it,
but there you are.

Desire won't save
your morality, you're learning
I'm a sinner, I know
all I have is prayer. And want.



But I don't quite want or pray
to save you.



5 Questions

Words by Joseph Woo Chan PZ '27



Photograph by Luca Rudenstine PZ '26

It goes without saying that the Pitzer staff are integral to the institution. Naturally, we feel it is only appropriate to try to get to know our staff better. So, we're continuing our column of asking staff members five questions about their lives on and off campus.

For this issue, we had the pleasure of talking to Evie DeGraw, who you may have met swiping into McConnell or getting late-night munchies at the Shakedown.

How long have you been working at Pitzer?

What jobs have you done?

"I want to say I've been working here at Pitzer for about three or four years. As a [full time] Pitzer employee: a little over two years. I started off in the dish room, washing dishes, and then I started doing catering. And of course, a lot of you know that I worked at the Shakedown for quite a long time, and also working the line and now being a cashier [at McConnell] dining hall, I only worked like one day at the Pit-Stop, probably only a couple hours, but I've pretty much done everything here."

What do you do to unwind after work?

"Go home, probably take a nice hot or cold shower depending on the weather. And, try to find a good book to read."

What is your favorite book/movie genre?

"[My] favorite [book] genre [is] currently dark romance. [For] movies, I definitely like anything that has to do with horror."

What is your favorite book?

"'Rain of Gold' is my favorite book because it's just like a super easy read, and it's kind of funny, and it tells a point of view from three different people in Victor's family, his dad, his grandpa and his grandma, and it just kind of tells a bunch of funny stories that could or could not be true."

What's your favorite holiday?

"Spooky season is my favorite time of year; now until the end of November. I've been waiting to celebrate Halloween all year. As soon as Halloween's over, I got the countdown until the next day."

What's your favorite place on campus?

"My favorite spot on campus would be a spot between Pitzer Hall and the Shakedown, like coming up the steps when the sun goes down. It's just very beautiful scenery."

ACROSS

- 1 Government agency controlling guns, booze, and cigarettes, abbr.
- 4 You may use one to collect 28 down
- 8 Pinnacle
- 12 It has veins and cells
- 14 Trim down
- 15 Verb relevant in both "Law and Order" and "The Great British Bake Off"
- 17 L8r
- 18 "Thanks ___!"
- 19 Spelunker
- 20 You're reading it right now!
- 22 First name of "a single mom who works two jobs, who loves her kids and never stops."
- 23 Chemical sought after by those looking to unclog a drain or dissolve a body
- 24 Acronym for a southern school, or a trending word for old
- 27 Highly addictive painkiller, abbr.
- 28 Partisan org.
- 31 Classic soda brand
- 33 Last name of 59 down
- 34 Backstory
- 37 One who approves your course registration
- 40 X's AI bot
- 41 Milk variety favored by Gen Z
- 42 Combine with go- and my- to make supernatural, spooky adjectives
- 43 Apple's operating system
- 44 They're used to cure gel manicures

- 48 Lou Gehrig's disease, for short
- 50 Scams
- 52 Memed primate in the Apple store
- 60 They're found among the reeds
- 61 Piece of internet parlance engraved in the bullets used to assassinate conservative activist Charlie Kirk
- 62 Prefix with -mom, or -pus
- 63 Contradict
- 64 Goal at the Scripps pool
- 65 Part of a drag queen's pre-show procedure
- 66 Surname of the titular characters in JD Salinger's "Franny and Zooey"
- 67 Vaccine type
- 68 Vietnamese noodle soup

DOWN

- 1 Choir voice below soprano
- 2 Chinese online marketplace where you can "shop like a billionaire" (though all of your purchases may be falling apart)
- 3 Release flatus
- 4 Idiot Elon Musk's stupid company
- 5 Move past on foot
- 6 Odor
- 7 Testing phase, greek letter, or incel designation
- 8 HS class that may allow you to skirt a college math requirement
- 9 Online expression of a fun night, with 10 and 34 down
- 10 Online expression of a fun night, with 9 and 34 down
- 11 2, 4, 6, and 8

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- 13 Keeping it casual, briefly
- 16 Before, poetically
- 21 Not the lovey-dovey type, briefly?
- 24 Eel option on sushi
- 25 Prefix meaning death
- 26 Complete mayhem
- 28 It makes us
- 29 Silent approval
- 30 Nickname for oft-abused painkillers
- 32 Uncertainty, over text
- 33 Prefix with -gon or -ve
- 34 Online expression of a fun night, with 10 and 11 down
- 35 Organization responsible for workplace safety, abbr
- 36 Stir up
- 38 Video format
- 39 Common suffix

- 45 "Atonement" author Ian
- 46 The 5c that shares a sports team with Pitzer
- 47 ___ Cone
- 49 Pet peeves?
- 51 Tissue target
- 52 Instrument in a temple
- 53 Cain's brother, or first name of pop singer The Weeknd
- 54 Practice in which you may embody a tree, cobra, or child
- 55 Suffix to Zion-, Marx-, or femin-
- 56 Tolkien trilogy, for short
- 57 Plastic insert for Keurig's coffee system
- 58 Engrave
- 59 Activist, musician, and the late John Lennon's wife

