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The importance of prioritizing yourself on Valentine's Day

by Ashley Turner
Managing Editor

Valentine's Day has returned. A day filled with love, but also its counterpart: loneliness. Every year, the day usually plays out in two different ways: valuable time spent with a special somebody or avoiding any indication of what day it is, while endlessly scrolling through obligatory social media posts. Being a part of the latter category does not mean you should feel excluded from the holiday. There is someone most deserving of attention and care just a moment away: you!

The stigma around this romantic holiday shuts out anyone without a romantic partner. However, dating or not, loving yourself as an individual is healthy and will better prepare you for beneficial relationships, even just the platonic ones. Without love for yourself, the ability to maintain a loving relationship will be impossible and

taxing due to the lack of priority and self-respect. Many forget that self-love and love for others are reliant on one another.

By human nature, we are prone to be blind to what makes us beautiful and relentlessly pick at our flaws. This is the result of inherent doubt in ourselves and the notion that we are undeserving of love. Recognizing this mindset is the first step to changing it. The task is most certainly demanding. However, taking the time to take back a hurtful remark you made against yourself will encourage a feeling of self-appreciation.

What we often lack appreciation for is our differences. Safety in numbers is resorted to when it comes to interests, looks, styles and much more. By instinct, it feels safer. But, how can you know before you even explore what is beyond?

Along with the ability to explore new possibilities, embracing your



PHOTO COURTESY OF CAT ADAMIS

Juniors Nina Wall, Luci Caron and Paige Lambert pose in celebration of Valentine's Day.

differences is the secret to loving yourself. Society is so quick to shame someone for dressing differently or not fitting the "cookie-cutter" standards, but what sets them apart is what makes them their own person. Without our so-called

"flaws," how could we find a romantic partner, let alone a best friend?

Today, peoples' looks, personalities and self-worth are measured by their relationship status. This indicator of someone's relevance fails to acknowl-

edge the individual. Digging deeper into individuality, it is the basis for setting boundaries and standards. Understanding what is a match for you can ensure a relationship worthy of your affection and attention.

Firstly, it builds a

foundation of truth. Shying away from your true self issues stress, and continuing to deny your full involvement in the relationship will prolong that unease. The basis of any healthy

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Legally bound: Mock Trial team heads to the courthouse for People v. Clark

by Bella Svanberg
Contributing Writer

After months of unwavering dedication and meticulous preparation, the NDB Mock Trial Team stepped into the Superior Court of California in Redwood City for the 43rd Annual California Mock Trial Competition. There, they presented their arguments for this year's case: People v. Clark.

In this case, the State has charged Tobie Clark with the first-degree murder of a multi-billion dollar company's CEO. What seemed like a two-hour movie of exceptional acting, compelling arguments and a roller coaster of legal drama in the courtroom was the result of the collaboration and resilience of the team over the past five and half months.

Since August, the team has been dissecting the intricacies of the case, constructing arguments and embracing the identities of legal personas.

Each team member had the opportunity to explore the roles of a pretri-

al and trial attorney, bailiff, courtroom artist or journalist, witness and timekeeper. Following a thorough investigation of the case, they were strategically assigned positions in the Showcase team as well as JV and Varsity Defense and Prosecution teams.

The teams met for practice every Monday and Wednesday after school, and meetings were held for attorneys working on their arguments and objections on Friday afternoons.

The team participated in scrimmages throughout the season against other Bay Area schools, including Burlingame HS, Crystal Springs and Saint Ignatius HS. They tested out their material, worked on their courtroom presence and received constructive feedback from other teams' coaches and attorney judges.

While the team worked immensely on this year's case, it was never that simple. Team members

juggled sports, Tri-School productions, college applications and other extracurricular commitments while navigating the demands of school. They supported each other through their demanding schedules and grown close throughout the process.

"As someone new to Mock Trial this year, I felt worried about how I would be received by the team members, but

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MIA MUZZI / THE CATALYST

During their trial on February 8, attorney Page Krensavage questions the defendant, Tobie Clark, played by junior Alexis Hom.

NDB admin warns against the use of AI

by Mia Muzzi
Editor in Chief

Over the past few weeks, Associate Head of School for Curriculum and Instruction Jolanda Breazeale joined class meetings to make an announcement regarding the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools in the classroom.

According to Breazeale, there was an overwhelming number of students who were caught using AI on assignments last semester. Given that AI tools, like "ChatGPT," are relatively new, teachers were initially forgiving of student use. However, when AI was detected, most teachers reported it, but stated that they had discussed the situation with the student, so the administration did not see it necessary to move forward with punishment.

Unfortunately, this has happened too often, and it became an issue that had to be addressed with the entire student body.

Breazeale reminded students that according to page 21 of the 2023-2024

NDB Parent/Student Handbook, "[u]nless specifically allowed by the teacher, students are prohibited from using any and all Artificial Intelligence tools, large language model (LLM) tools or essay writing services to guide, brainstorm, draft or create student work related to any assessment or assignment, including written assessments, projects and performance tasks."

The handbook also emphasizes that the use of AI will be treated as plagiarism and, on page 29, states that "[t]urning in work that was written by other people or by generative AI resources as if it were the student's own without citation/notification is plagiarism, which represents a violation of NDB's honor code. It will be considered a serious academic infraction."

In accordance with NDB's plagiarism policy, students who submit AI as their own work will receive 50% of the total points earned on the assignment, may be asked to

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Administration addresses AI Students support Francisco

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participate in restorative action with the Academic Integrity Review Board (AIRB) and are subject to other academic punishments. More information about the consequences of breaching the Academic Integrity Policy can be found in NDB’s handbook starting on page 28.

Due to the prevalence of AI use last semester, NDB will not condone any uncited works that indicate a generative tool was used to supplement student work. Some programs, such as “Grammarly,” are permitted if used to check grammar or spelling without changing the content and voice of the student’s

work. Through AI detection programs like “Turnitin,” teachers will monitor assignments and are encouraged to report any suspicions to administrators.

AI is becoming increasingly easier to access without getting caught and get away with, but there are long-term effects that it can have on students’ education. As a college preparatory school, NDB is dedicated to developing college-ready students who can make their own opinions and back them up with evidence.

“AI is with us to stay, and it is a useful tool in a lot of ways. But, in the classroom, the challenge is that, oftentimes, the skill that we’re trying to teach

students has to do with their critical thinking skills,” said Breazeale. “Generative AI is not a student’s voice, and it’s not their thinking. It is a summary of internet content. The reason we don’t want students to use it is because it undermines their education and future thinking. If they can’t write in their own voice, and they can’t synthesize and analyze, that is a deficit that will appear in their lives.”

In an age of quickly advancing technology, the community continues to adapt. In the upcoming semester, students and teachers will receive support in properly using AI tools, and actions will be taken to regulate the misuse of AI.

by **Lily Henry & Andie Wong**
Junior Writers

Over winter break, Epicurean Team Member Francisco Calderon was involved in an accident that resulted in severe injuries to his leg. News of his situation caused concern within the student body.

“I would always go to his station, and he would serve me lunch. It’s really sad not to see him every day,” said junior Luci Caron. “He really brought everyone together, so we all miss him and wish him the best.”

Calderon was usually seen serving students during lunch and bringing positive energy and vi-

brance to the school community.

“I made a connection with him because ... I speak Spanish, Francisco’s first language, and that drew us closer together,” said junior Nina Wall. “He just always has such an uplifting spirit ... that could brighten everyone’s day.”

On Wednesday, January 10, Director of Student Life and Leadership Alisia Bergholm sent a schoolwide email, listing ways that the community could assist Calderon: purchase household items, donate money and attend a card-making event sponsored by the Key Club.

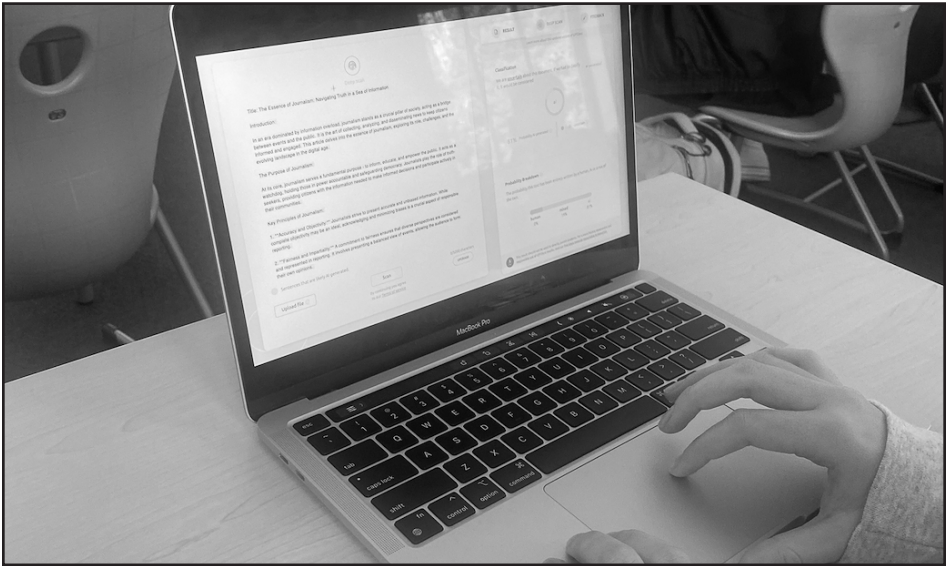
“I think [Francisco] has an incredible impact, and I have such a spe-

cial bond with him,” shared junior Hailey Degnan. “I am trying to do anything to help ... I wrote him a card and donated some of his favorite fruit.”

Epicurean General Manager Kimi Green shared Calderon’s progress after recently visiting him.

“He’s able to bend his knee a little bit more, but ... probably can’t stand on it for another month. He is able to move around a little bit better, and he knows everyone’s thinking of him,” said Green.

Though Calderon will not be returning to campus in the upcoming months, the community continues to help and support him with his recovery.



ASHLEY TURNER / THE CATALYST



PHOTO COURTESY OF PATSY IANNONE

Students showed their gratitude for Calderon on his birthday last year.

Artificial intelligence detection tools are used to find generated content.

Mock Trial team competes

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everyone was incredibly kind and welcoming to me because they genuinely wanted me to learn and succeed,” said senior Katie Homrig. “I think this team is so rare because these girls care for and uplift each other in a very inspiring way. I love walking into a courtroom knowing that the two attorneys next to me will help me in whatever way I need and that I will do the same for them.”

Round One of the trials began on January 25, followed by round two on February 1 and then round three on February 8. The JV and Varsity teams competed against several San

Mateo Country schools, including Hillsdale HS, Menlo, and the combined Serra/Mercy HS team.

The Tiger support for each other was instrumental when it came to entering the courtroom and presenting their arguments to an actual judge.

“There’s something to be said about just knowing that the people beside you are there not only to do their best, but to push you and help you in any moment or way possible,” said junior Maggie Templeton. “As someone who tends to take every little mistake and slip-up a little too seriously, the support we have for each other comes through after trial,

especially when we debrief, congratulate and discuss every triumphant moment and great argument we saw the others put forth.”

The team has cultivated a mindset that goes beyond diligence. They have adopted the philosophy of not only working hard, but also deriving genuine enjoyment from the task at hand. This attitude comes from Mock Trial Coach Jonathan Tomczak’s mantra, echoed at every practice: “Enjoy every moment. Win every moment.”

Although the Mock Trial Team’s season is coming to a close, some students will perform in the team’s Showcase Trial in March.



EDITORIAL STAFF / THE CATALYST

Pretrial Attorney Lucy Wood practices delivering her statement.

Elective Fair showcases classes

by **Maddie Mosso**
Staff Writer

On Tuesday, January 30 during Collaboration, students attended the Elective Fair to review their class options for the upcoming school year. They were encouraged to consider a variety of classes that allow them a break from their hectic schedules and to focus on something catered toward their interests or even their intended college major.

Electives offered include AP Art History, Psychology and Sports Management, which allow for a diverse education beyond core classes. Other electives, such as Journalism

and Sculpture have several levels, permitting students to take the course for multiple years. Additionally, classes vary in curriculum and rigor, which is what made the Elective Fair so valuable to students as they were able to hear from others about their personal experiences in those classes.

It is important to consider what one can handle to ensure that they do not spread themselves too thin. An effective way to approach this is to talk to people who have already taken that class to get a proper explanation of the curriculum and workload.

“Definitely take this year, whatever grade you’re in, ... and understand

[if you] felt challenged enough. Do you think you could take on more for next year?” shared Counselor Christina Christenson. “Also, when you’re trying to balance classes, you also need to consider all of your extracurriculars too.”

“I definitely think interest is a good way to go. When it comes to the name and just the reputation of classes, it’s always nice to hear from other students, but always take that information and decide for yourself,” added Christenson.

NDB has a variety of educational opportunities, so picking the right classes is crucial to developing a well-balanced schedule next year.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CAT ADAMIS

Sophomores represent certain electives and encourage students to enroll.