

2025 Scholarship Award Essays

- **American Canyon**
 - Mary Angeline Maningding: The Ruins near Shenandoah Park
- **Calistoga High School**
 - Daisy Avina: Sharpsteen Museum
 - Zeneb Cortez-Arroyo, Bale Grist Mill State Historic Park
- **Napa High School**
 - Nicolai Lopez-Magro: Trancas Crossing Park
- **New Technology High School**
 - Antonio Bazan: Duck Pond at Streblow Drive
- **St. Helena High School**
 - Sophia Honig: Rutherford Grange
 - Claire Kellogg: Pope Street Bridge
 - Olivia Reble: St. Helena Public Library
 - Melina Rubio: Bothe-Napa Valley State Park
 - Tahlia Smith: Crane Park
- **Valley Oak High School**
 - Ivy Rose Cole: Elliot Park
- **Vintage High School**
 - Javier Perez Avina: Grape Crusher Statue
 - Yazmin Guzman: Grape Crusher Statue
 - Camila Sandoval: Vintage High School Theater
 - Abygail Sims: Memorial Stadium

Mary Angeline Maningding, American Canyon High School

The Ruins Near Shenandoah Park

“I love having a specific place I bring everyone to. It’s like I’ve introduced the trees to everyone I’ve ever loved.” One of my specific places that I bring those closest to me would be The Ruins, located near the neighborhood next to Shenandoah Park and behind the railroad tracks. I am beyond grateful to be within walking distance of this landmark because I remember the first time I discovered The Ruins I was taking a walk and was just in awe of the numerous graffiti art scattered all over the abandoned buildings. Soon after discovering this area I decided to bring many of my closest friends to the ruins to spend time together while looking at the art around us. I believe that The Ruins is a highly important landmark since it shows the longevity of the American Canyon land while also managing to bring people together despite being seen as an abandoned area.

One of the reasons why this landmark is irreplaceable is because this location holds history starting from the late 1800s. Not only was this place an area for employees and workers to do their acts of service, but the pieces of art painted on every block of cement also demonstrates a mark and act of creativity within one area. Each of these marks of graffiti shows a person's emotion and imagination at a certain point in time. I find it beautiful that The Ruins may have been viewed as a normal workplace in the past but has managed to redefine itself by becoming a place to express creativity and give others a sense of peace when stepping foot onto the landmark.

Not only that, but The Ruins feels like being in a different world for a bit, due to the landmark stepping away from the traditional and modern styles of art and architecture. With this area being surrounded by suburban houses and grassy hills, going into the ruins can make one feel like they are travelling back in time. There aren’t many places that can make someone feel that way, especially due to how modern many stores, restaurants, and houses are becoming. As many other areas have continued to progress, what is different about The Ruins is how it has been abandoned, repurposed, but still represents its past.

While many individuals in American Canyon do know about The Ruins, I have noticed that some of my friends in towns such as Fairfield or Vallejo have discovered The Ruins as well. I hope in the future I am able to host various and see more events at The Ruins, such as the Evenings in the Ruins event. With this being said, to ensure that The Ruins continues to maintain its legacy, I hope to continue to make more connections inside and outside of my community in order to bring those closest to me to The Ruins.

Daisy Avina, Calistoga High School

Calistoga Sharpsteen Museum

I was blessed to be born and raised in a community that valued historical landmarks and encouraged the small town of Calistoga to become tourist-friendly, offering the best hospitality, experience, and overall historical knowledge of how it came to be. Many places have their own story, that carry their unique journey, and yet, the Sharpsteen Museum was the one that stood close to my heart when it came to wanting to preserve a landmark. This museum is located at 1311 Washington St, Calistoga, CA 94515, showing the 1860s Calistoga town, and a white cottage beside it, keeping the artifacts and belongings inside to see how the materials from back then are any different from the modern worlds. This museum plays a part in my historical knowledge of Calistoga, teaching me the way people used to live during the Gold Rush, including the first millionaire made in Calistoga, Sam Brannan. Through this museum, I learned that Sam Brannan had a distillery, where the best wines and spirits were made and exported to different parts of California. The Sharpsteen Museum always offered my school free trips to see the different Native American cultures and artifacts that they used during their early times in this area in Napa County, and how people lived post World War 1. The Sharpsteen Museum is greatly thoughtful when it comes to preserving things accurately and precisely. They do this by contacting speakers from Native American tribes that are still close, and asking them to teach us about their cultures, checking their information, since they don't wish to give us falsified information that will cause misunderstandings of the historical Calistoga town. They often gave us souvenirs, and obsidian arrowheads to remember Native American culture. A memorable experience visiting the museum was learning that Ben Sharpsteen was the founder of this museum, and it was astonishing to know that he was a Disney animator and producer. I couldn't believe it when I learned that he had worked on movies I enjoyed as a kid, like Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, Dumbo, and Pinocchio. Seeing the preserved Disney materials and old-timey technology was something that made me feel connected to the museum as I loved Disney movies. Now, when I look back to this museum, I connect it to my love for history and look into ways that we can encourage more people to visit the museum and preserve the culture of this landmark. This museum is irreplaceable as it is the only museum that holds any historical pieces of what is left of old Calistoga, making it a significant place for Napa County, since it highlights one of the small towns in this county. To ensure that this landmark receives the attention it deserves and people gain knowledge of small towns like this one, local schools can create partnerships with the museum to allow students, similar to my elementary experience, to learn the history of neighboring Calistoga, embedding it into their history education. By exposing this museum outside of Napa County, we as a community can promote it through our social media, and hosting

events for people to visit and take a look at the artifacts and the culture tied to these fun facts. Overall, the Sharpsteen Museum is a historical place full of grandeur pieces, facts, and culture. Everyone needs to learn about how Calistoga was modernized over the years and has become how it is today, keeping it in business, and encouraging authentic traditions to be valued.

Zeneb Cortez-Arroyo, Calistoga High School

Bale Grist Mill: A Historical Landmark Worth Preserving

Sited in the middle of Napa Valley, Bale Grist Mill State Historic Park is a witness to California's early farm pioneer history. The 1846 mill at 3369 St. Helena Highway, St. Helena, CA, had been an agriculture center where the neighboring farmers took the grains to be milled into flour. The property now boasts a fully restored water-powered grist mill that provides its visitors with an idea of what milling in the 19th century was like. Its massive wooden structure, its enormous waterwheel, and the oak trees that envelop it create a lovely and educational experience for any individual who visits the property. Bale Grist Mill is not only a historical treasure but a testimony to the heritage of the surrounding agricultural area and will endure against the test of time.

The Bale Grist Mill is particularly important to me because of my particular interest in history, cooperation, and conservation. As a learning-by-doing and observing history, being able to go inside this mill made me realize for myself how the people of the past relied on each other to support their communities. The intricate grain milling process required coordination, caution, and devotion—values that have been carried forward through my volunteering, engineering, and sports. Wheel and waterwheel rotation operating grinding stones exposed me to coordination, a term in which I have also relied on collaborators, facilitators, and peers to achieve common goals in projects outside the classroom.

The Bale Grist Mill needs to be preserved because it is a physical link to the past and an emblem of Napa Valley's history. It is a relic above others because it provokes the resourcefulness and resilience of the pioneers of Napa Valley. If not for remnants like those from the past, future generations would never understand the sweat equity and craftsmanship that created our cities. The mill also gives the people pride and identity. It ties citizens to Long Island's rural heritage, never ceasing to remind us why local self-sufficiency and the use of resources are so vital. Saving and restoring the Bale Grist Mill is an issue of making the historical, educational, and cultural value of this historic mill available for future generations to appreciate.

Beyond its historical significance, the Bale Grist Mill also functions as a site for community events and educational programs. The exhibit milling process is arranged so that the visitor can have a tactile and experiential experience in a manner that makes history come alive. The shared experience tends to reinforce the sense of community and interest in local history. To lose this landmark would be to lose an important educational tool and a space where people can come together and learn, think, and reflect upon their heritage.

In all, the Bale Grist Mill is a worthwhile piece of property that should be preserved since it is worth its value as a piece of history, as local interest, and as a means of possible future generations' learning. For me, it stands as a testament to the power of teamwork and persistence, values by which my life has been characterized. Saving this property enables its history to still inspire and educate, keeping a significant piece of Napa Valley history open to the public.

Nicolai Lopez-Magro, Napa High School

Trancas Crossing Park

Tucked behind two wineries near the Trancas/Soscol intersection lies a narrow paved road. The asphalt declines until it reaches a tiny bridge, suspended only a few feet from running water. Here lies Salvador Creek, only a few hundred yards from meeting the languid Napa River. Once you cross, you are met with a ring of pavement connected to a mile long paved loop. Welcome to Trancas Crossing Park.

I remember a younger me gleefully skipping down the hill with my dad and his mom and our little frenchie. He warned me not to touch any underbrush in fear of poison oak, recalling with incongruous smiles of remembrance his childhood rashes from the plant. Those red insignias of three leaves glittering in the autumn sunset have vividly lived in my memory since that day.

Down further at the roundabout I could see large clearings, the passing of summer evident due to the golden strands of grass replacing the green blades. Surrounding the clearing were native trees, like our beloved black oak trees; close to the earth I was often blessed with the sight of purple winecup clarkias. Nearby was a tall pole sticking out of the ground, signs toward the top marking the water level of the area during different floods.

Older now, I visit the park less often. These days I can feel the difference in the air as I near the water level of the river, fondly remembering the toxic diadems and the rocks I had seen lizards sunbathe on. Now I survey the trees, trying to find ones with low limbs so I can climb them. Other ones I run my hands over searching for mosses but being met with luscious lichens. I try my hardest to remain indifferent when I feel bugs crawling across my skin and focus on the wind on my face and replicating what bird whistles I can hear around me. By these trees and grasses and living things I am reminded that not all is lost. Preserved here is what our luxuriant flood zone looked like centuries ago, before commercialism forever changed our valley.

With industrialization and a fundamental shift in values toward focusing on fiscal gain, we have created a society where nature is an afterthought. Instead of changing our ways to allow the gift of life to flourish, we have forced the environment to grow around us.

But here, in this little slice of what once was, our community can be united with nature rather than dominate it. Rather than plow down Earth's hard work for temporary reward, let us respect and become one with the biosphere that's been billions of years in the making. Places like these remind us what we lose if we don't take action. Here, in the Trancas Crossing Park, we can be inspired to preserve the only home we've ever known.

Antonio Bazan, New Technology High School

Duckpond at Streblow Drive

Napa County has a diverse assortment of parks and leisure places, but the one most special to me is the duck pond located just off Streblow Dr, across from Kennedy Park and the Napa Golf Course. It's a beautiful body of water surrounded by flat terrain. The shrubbery next to the small road that diverts off of Streblow Dr are all small and dispersed about. Meanwhile, the wooden posts that line the sandy area next to the road are degrading and covered by various mosses. Across the pond are the more vivacious grasses and vegetation that shroud parts of the pond. Standing at the bank of the pond has a distinct feel. For whatever reason it feels as though the wind is strongest there, and wherever you step your shoes are bound to get muddy, but these things make me enjoy the pond even more.

It's a place I associate with my earliest memories. I remember going with my brother and mother to watch the ducks and being so excited to see them in the way only four-year-olds can be. It's my earliest experience around both wildlife and bodies of water, two things that now deeply matter to me and my future education. I am sure it's the same for many other kids in Napa. Everyone knows where the duck pond is and almost everyone has been there at some point. It's an awe-inspiring experience to see so many animals gathered in one place especially when you're a child. Being there is like experiencing a foreign world absent of worry or strife.

It's one of the few places in the community centered around nature. The wildlife is abundant and the pond itself carries a calming presence. Located among the highway, the college, the baseball fields, and recreation facilities it deserves preservation for its position as a joining place between the natural world and the synthetic. Its presence is important in inspiring the next generation to experience the outside world and to stand still for a moment. Everything we experience happens at a breakneck pace and there is an exponentially growing necessity to keep moving, but there is importance in stopping for a moment and noticing things as they are. I think the duck pond is one of those places in the community that best allows for those moments. My hope is that the duck pond will always be a place for Napa County residents to enjoy the slower moments in life and to find the inspiration to explore the natural world both through education and daily observation.

Sophia Honig, St. Helena High School

Rutherford Grange

The Rutherford Grange, located at 8550 St. Helena Highway, is not just a building, but a home for all the people in Napa Valley. Built in 1916, it has become a staple for everyone, myself included. The Rutherford Grange is unique in every way. Its beautiful structure is unlike any other and upon entering the building one can feel the stories, laughter, and joy that has filled it many times before.

So many things in life are endlessly changing but the Grange has been my one true constant. At the age of 4, I went to a Christmas party and when arriving I was met with music, dancing, and even Santa Claus! It was a night I would not soon forget, for the love that the Grange had to offer was imprinted with me forever. Similarly, the day we had my younger sister's birthday party there. Kids bouncing off the walls, parents chatting, and Princess Jasmine doing face paint off to the side. Our family surrounding her while we sang Happy Birthday as she giggled with her tiara on. The Grange is unique in this way because it brings people together, it has the ability to create irrevocable bonds between people who were once strangers.

Joy continues to fill the Grange, but it was during times of hardship that I saw its true strength. During the devastating 2020 fires, many families were displaced and left with nothing but the clothes on their backs. The people of Rutherford worked together and created a place where those families could find new clothes and other much-needed items. This was held in the heart of Rutherford, the Grange. I was given the amazing opportunity to volunteer with them during my free time and as the drive was merely five minutes I went at any given moment. The amount of people that we received donations from and were able to help in those few months was astounding. And although I was only in 8th grade at the time I was able to witness the pure good of countless individuals.

There is so much to be said about the Rutherford Grange. It is somewhere to create friendships, build memories, bring people together, and so much more. There is no other place in Napa County that has the power or ability to make such an imprint on countless individuals. Its magic and memories implanted in its walls are irreplaceable. The Rutherford Grange is a historical masterpiece in the heart of Napa County that has done so much for our community and without it we would not be as bonded as we are today. It represents everything we stand for, love, laughter, community, and unity.

Claire Kellogg, St. Helena High School

Pope Street Bridge

A soft breeze travels through the open car window, carrying the natural, grassy aroma of the Napa River into your face, entangling it through your hair, filling your nostrils with the sweet scent, and running it deep into your core. The summer sun warms your skin, and unable to control yourself, you reach through the open window and connect your hand with the rough, cool stone of the Pope Street Bridge—a sense of community and pride running through your body.

The Pope Street Bridge is a triple-arch stone bridge that connects Pope Street in St. Helena to Silverado Trail, and it was built by R.H. Pithie in 1894 from resources of a local quarry on Monticello Road. From horse-drawn carriages to modern day vehicles, the 175-foot long, narrow bridge has withstood seasons of heavy rain, flooding, and several earthquakes. As the oldest stone bridge in Napa Valley, the bridge has witnessed the growth of community, economy, and identity; but despite change, the bridge remains a historical constant in the 30-mile region. Its initial purpose was to provide another location to cross the Napa River—connecting the hills to the valley—and while that still stands a major role of the bridge, it's grown to harbor a physical and symbolic representation of the paths we take in life.

As Napa Valley consists of several small towns, the St. Helena High School community gathers students—including myself—from Napa, Angwin, Pope Valley, and more locations. For almost the majority of students, we physically drove across the path of the bridge every morning. However, throughout our childhood, through the schools of the St. Helena Unified School District, all of my classmates and I symbolically drove across the Pope Street Bridge into St. Helena together—even those that never physically crossed it. We followed the same trail of K-12 education, our young minds bubbling with excitement of discovering our personal passions. Now, as Seniors about to graduate high school, we all will pause in the usual after school traffic on the Pope Street Bridge one last time at our graduation; and one by one, we will reach the front of the line at the “STOP” sign, and drive off on our separate paths of uncertainty as we leave for college, enlist in the military, enter trade school, or even study abroad in another country.

While our ancestors are no longer with us, and I will leave for Southern California in only months, the Pope Street Bridge always remains a community identity despite our physical location. The preservation of the bridge is not only in remembrance of its historical significance, but of the memories we collectively have of crossing the narrow bridge. Knowing the Pope Street Bridge will always continue to hover over the Napa River fills me

with excitement for when I come back to visit my childhood community in the future, and will forever remain in my memory as a highlight of my identity.

Olivia Reble, St. Helena High School

Saint Helena Public Library

Some of my fondest childhood memories were the sunny days spent at the Saint Helena Public Library, located fittingly at 1492 Library Lane. I can recall the walking field trips we took as an elementary class to sit and have story time with Leslie the Librarian in front of the beautiful, eclectic mural in the Kids Room. For me, the Library was always a place of exploration and wonder. I would have the time of my life scooting along on the big wooden horse, playing house with friends, or creating a delicious velcro meal in the kids' play kitchen. I even remember checking the shelves every day after school with my mom to see if the new Diary of a Wimpy Kid book was finally checked back in.

With all the activities I could partake in, the Library was full of numerous small yet magical traditions. Guessing the number of candies in the jar at the librarian's desk became a weekly ritual. Dropping a book into the metal return slot and waiting for the loud thunk—sometimes even catching snippets of librarian chatter in their offices—added to the charm. As I grew older, the Library remained a constant in my life. With my mom working late, it became a daily refuge for me where I was always surrounded by friendly smiles and, of course, the sweetest black cat, Elsie. I spent nearly every day after school at the library in middle school, and during the summer, I would walk down with my sister to get a head start on the annual Summer Reading Contest, eager to win the coveted prizes.

Additionally, the Library was a place where I was able to truly connect with my community. Having to stay there until pick-up time, I would always encourage my friends to come along, and together, we made the most of our time there. We played hide-and-seek in the surrounding vineyards, whispered and stifled our giggles among the bookshelves, and tested our wits in chess matches in the newspaper room. I still laugh at myself remembering the time I moved a rook diagonally when playing against my friend Claire—only to have an older gentleman silently observing the duel softly chuckle and shuffle past.

It's these little moments that make the Saint Helena Public Library so near and dear to my heart—and to the heart of the community of Saint Helena. For nearly all locals, this Library is more than just a mere building; it holds the art, history, and stories of Saint Helena and its residents within the books on its shelves, the canvases on its walls, and those who walk through its doors. To ensure the Library's legacy lives on, I will continue to advocate for its continued preservation and relationship with the community. Knowing firsthand the impact it has had on me, whether through continued story time, reading contests, guest speakers, workshops, arts & crafts activities, or local history exhibits, I want to ensure the Library remains a colorful, welcoming space for future generations to come.

Melania Rubio, St. Helena High School

Bothe-Napa Valley State Park

Growing up in Napa Valley, I have always been surrounded by breathtaking landscapes and nature. Just five miles north of St. Helena, off the highway, you arrive at a very special place known as Bothe-Napa Valley State Park. I first visited Bothe Park when I was around five years old, and all I remember is how much fun I had. The park offers so much—hiking trails, a community pool, picnic areas, camping grounds, and more.

Four years before I was born my father began experiencing severe back problems from years of laborious work operating construction machinery. His condition worsened over time, and when I was seven years old, he tragically took his own life. My last birthday with him—my seventh—was celebrated at Bothe Park. I got to blow out my candles with him one last time, hit my piñata, and celebrate with my family and friends, surrounded by tall redwood trees. I still remember the exact spot where we gathered. It's a cherished memory that deepens my love for this state park.

Aside from the familial connection to the park, my passion for cross-country running also connects me to this place. For the past three years, I have been a member of the St. Helena High School Cross Country team. Bothe Park happens to be our home course. Out of all the races I've run, I truly believe we have the most dynamic, beautiful running trail. I ran my first race there as a freshman and had my last one as a senior this past November. The joy I felt running that course is indescribable. It was challenging, but every step was worth it.

As a way to give back, our team volunteered each year to maintain and improve the park's trails. Over the years, I've contributed around 20 hours of community service to Bothe Park, helping clean, maintain, and create new trails. I've also had the amazing opportunity to camp there. My first camping experience was at Bothe Park with my mom and sisters. Since then, we've made it a tradition to camp there every other year, spending quality time together while appreciating nature and wildlife. My sisters and I also love hiking, providing a range of beginner-friendly paths and more advanced routes—both with different trees, creeks, and critters to see. Upon attending university, I aspire to pursue a career that excites and motivates me while allowing me to help people and my community. I hope to major in environmental studies. I am passionate about the health of our environment and eager to find sustainable solutions to reduce our carbon footprint, ensuring a thriving future for generations to come. Living in California, I have personally experienced the devastation of wildfires in recent years. In a region that faces environmental challenges such as wildfires and urban development, the park stands as a testament to Napa County's commitment to preserving its natural heritage. Today, Bothe-Napa Valley State Park stands

as a symbol of environmental preservation and historical remembrance. The park not only protects the natural beauty of Napa County but also educates visitors on the Indigenous and pioneer histories of the region. In preserving both nature and history, Bothe-Napa Valley State Park remains a living landmark, bridging the past and present for locals and visitors alike. I am determined to contribute to these efforts and make a meaningful impact.

Talia Smith, St. Helena High School

Crane Park

<https://youtu.be/US0wBgN0z9U?si=mt72yRHYgLkP87gA>

Ivy Rose Cole, Valley Oak High School

Elliot Park

One of the places that I feel like tells a story for my family is Elliot park, a park located in American Canyon in the middle of Elliot Drive. This park is irreplaceable because me and my family had many memories there, including some with my uncle that recently passed away. The park itself is a beautiful and inviting landmark. One of the first things that stood out to me, as a child, is the vibrant blue, red, and yellow play structure. With all the bright colors, I always thought it was a symbol of childhood joy and community of life. In front of the playground is a basketball court, where my uncle and I spent many afternoons. I would watch him shoot basketballs, admiring his skills, while he would watch me play.

The basketball court is a space where we bonded, and it's these moments that truly connect me to the park. As I got older, and when my niece was born, we started bringing her along to share these moments with us. This time, I was old enough to shoot the basketballs and make it in. That turned into me and my uncles competition, as my niece would play and admire our skills. This is important to me because it makes me feel happy and excited that this landmark will forever be connected to my family, and my history.

Another part of Elliot park that has always captured my attention is the rock garden. Over the years, children from the community have painted rocks with colorful designs and leave them at the front of the park. This makes me think and reminisce about the contests me and my uncle would have when we would find new rocks, paint them, then bring the back to the garden. My uncle was a really big role, especially when it comes to talking about this landmark. After his passing, I now take my niece to this site and we would share all the moments we did with my uncle. This makes me feel as if our story is connected to the towns history.

Preserving this historic site is not about maintaining the structure, it is about honoring the identity of it, and the stories that bring us together to enjoy it as a family. To make sure this park's legacy lives, not only would I still leave painted rocks with inspirational messages for the individuals that hang out there, but I will also continue me and my uncles moments, even if he is not here to do so. Surrounding my kids with this historic site and doing the things I did as a kid will help show them how this connects us to the past. As they grow older, I will be sure that they understand the value of protecting this landmark, and why historic preservation matters. They will be able to appreciate the legacy of the park, and pass it on to future generations.

Javier Perez Avina, Vintage High School

Grape Crusher Statue

The Grape Crusher Statue is a landmark that stands out in the vineyards along Highway 29 in Napa. This statue, which stands above a hill with a view of the valley, shows a man operating a vintage grape crusher, symbolizing the dedication of people who established Napa's wine industry. It is a monument to the workers, winemakers, and farmers that helped develop this region. For me, the Grape Crusher is more than simply a statue because it represents the hard work and sacrifice that have made Napa what it is today. I have seen the work that goes into growing and harvesting grapes because my father has worked in the wine and vineyard industry for many years. Every time I pass the statue it reminds me of the workers that get up early to work in the vineyards that maintain Napa's success. The statue acknowledges them, just as I admire my own family's efforts. Beyond my personal connection, this landmark is significant for all of Napa County. It symbolizes the region's popularity as one of the world's leading wine producers. The wine industry is more than just luxury because it began with dedicated individuals who transformed a fruit into a successful business. The Grape Crusher serves as a reminder that Napa's success was built by many hands, sweat and hard work that helped turn Napa in what it is and continues to be, not just the names on wine labels. It is important to preserve the grape crusher's legacy. While the statue is impressive, its message must be passed down to future generations. I would like to see more educational signs at the site that describe its history and the importance of grape workers in Napa's growth. Schools may arrange class field trips to the statue so students can know its true meaning, and local artists could develop creations inspired by its message. By telling its story it will ensure that its hard work, dedication, and community remain central to Napa. The Grape Crusher is more than a piece of art and the main meaning is that it is a symbol of the labor, tradition, and dedication that make Napa what it is today. By protecting its meaning and sharing its story, we honor the people who have shaped this land and inspire future generations to do the same.

Yazmin Guzman, Vintage High School

Grape Crusher Status

A place in Napa County that holds deep personal significance to me is the Napa Crusher, located on the outskirts of town. The Crusher is not only symbolic for me personally but also for the entire community, especially as a senior at Vintage High School. Growing up, I spent many afternoons with my family at the Crusher. It became our special spot for family picnics, Easter egg hunts, and long, joyful days spent together in nature. As a little kid, it was easier to hide eggs up there with just the six of us, making for some of my fondest memories. The quiet, peaceful atmosphere of the Crusher made it the perfect setting for our family outings, and the stunning view of Napa from the top added to its charm.

Now, as a senior at Vintage High, the Napa Crusher has transformed into something even more meaningful. It is the mascot of our high school, symbolizing strength and community spirit. The Crusher is where we gather for our Senior Sunrise and Senior Sunset events. At the beginning of the school year, we come together to watch the sunrise over Napa, and at the end of the year, we return to witness the sunset before we part ways and start the next chapter of our lives. The Crusher has become a gathering place where our class comes together to mark the passing of time and to share moments of connection and reflection. The last time I was there, I spent hours sitting with my friends Ashley Martinez and Alexandria Alegria, talking, laughing, and enjoying the breathtaking view of Napa below.

The Napa Crusher is a place that represents so much more than just a scenic viewpoint—it's a symbol of community, connection, and memories that I will carry with me for the rest of my life. The Crusher holds a special place in my heart because of the countless memories made there with my family. But its significance has deepened over the years, especially as I've shared it with my friends and peers. The last time I visited the Crusher with my friends, it was bittersweet. My dear friend, Ashley Martinez, had recently been in a car accident, which left her with a traumatic brain injury. She has been unable to join us for moments like that, and every time I visit the Crusher now, I remember those days spent with her, hoping for her recovery. The Crusher is a constant reminder of the strong connections I've built in Napa—whether it's with my family, my friends, or my community.

For Napa County, the Crusher also represents a sense of belonging and support. It is where I learned the importance of leaning on others when life becomes difficult, and where I was reminded of the warmth and love that exists in this community. Napa has always been a place where I've felt supported, and the Crusher symbolizes the strength and resilience that I've found within it.

To ensure the legacy of this landmark, it's essential to continue honoring it as a place of connection and reflection for future generations. I would advocate for its preservation, not just as a beautiful spot to visit, but as a place for students, families, and community members to gather, celebrate, and create their own memories. I'd also encourage more events or initiatives that bring people together at the Crusher, allowing everyone to feel the same sense of community that I've felt over the years.

Camila Sandoval, Vintage High School

Vintage High School Theater

According to Google, a landmark is anything that is easily recognizable. In a few months, I will be leaving for college and won't be seeing much of Napa. Things will change, and I might not recognize certain places, but one building I will always recognize, no matter how long I'm gone for, is the little theater at Vintage High School. Going into high school, I had no idea what to expect—really, who does? But I knew that the best way to find a place where I felt like I belonged was to join clubs. I saw all of the other clubs, but nothing stood out to me. Well, except for the one club that has a building all to itself: the theater club. I still remember the first time I walked into that building—I was speechless. I walked into a room that had posters, art, pictures, and so much more. It was like a room I had never seen before. That wasn't all. Exiting one side, there was a room dedicated to hair and makeup, which was also filled with things on the wall. Then, leaving the makeup room, you enter the theater. The moment I saw that theater, I knew all my days would revolve around it. Four years later, and I still get goosebumps every time I walk into that building. Many students have shared their creativity by either being on stage or backstage, contributing to the community, which I believe has helped it. The theater has become more than just a building—it's a symbol of artistic expression and community spirit. It's a place where students and the public come together, whether to witness a play or to support the arts. Napa, a town known for its natural beauty and wine, also has a rich cultural side that thrives in places like this. I believe Napa is a place where creativity thrives in many ways: through our wines, statues downtown, restaurants, and countless other forms of art and culture. What makes the theater at Vintage High School irreplaceable is its unique combination of creativity, history, and community impact. Over the years, it has seen countless productions, each one a reflection of the hard work and talent of the students who have passed through its doors. It's a place where generations of young people have learned to express themselves, face their fears, and work together to create something bigger than themselves. It holds memories of performances, rehearsals, and the kind of learning that can't be found in a textbook. To ensure its legacy lives on, I would advocate for preserving not just the building, but the spirit of the theater itself. I would work with local organizations and alumni to create a program dedicated to supporting the arts and ensuring that the theater remains a vital part of the community.

Abygail Sims, Vintage High School

Memorial Stadium

Located in the heart of town on 1340 Menlo Avenue, Memorial Stadium is found right by the school of Napa High. From the outside, Memorial Stadium may just look like a regular football field: ticket booths, snack shacks, high rows of bleachers and a turf field. To anyone who went to Vintage or Napa High, it is a symbol of unification between two schools through their yearly rivalry at Big Game, and a place for the genuine small-town Napa folk to socialize. Both Napa High and Vintage share this sports stadium, where countless football, cheer, soccer, and lacrosse athletes have spent their memorable high school sports seasons.

As a part of the Vintage Student Government Class, I have a special connection to Memorial Stadium. Each summer and fall, our leadership class works diligently to plan out the decorations and handouts for the Big Game and Homecoming football games. On the day of the Big Game, we would get to school at 6:30am to set up two Big Game Rally's, then would drive over to Memorial Stadium at 12pm to set up decorations for the game later that night. This day strengthened our leadership team comradery each year while building the annual balloon arch that was so long it stretched from one side of the locker room to the other while putting it together. Our leadership team would see our vision for the stadium come to life, while finishing our decorations. We would return later that night to watch the Big Game, and cheer on Vintage. I have spent the past four fall seasons looking forward to each home football game. We would plan the dress-up theme in leadership, and I would show up to each one fully dressed up with all of my friends. The band would play next to the student section while the cheerleaders performed their routines below. Some of my favorite memories from high school have been sitting in those stands with my best friends cheering on our football team.

Memorial Stadium signifies tradition in the town of Napa, and both the Napa and Vintage High Schools. Our leadership team has witnessed many of our school traditions sadly fade, however playing at Memorial Stadium is one that our school looks forward to each year. Last year we celebrated 53 years of Big Games between the two high schools. This is generations of football players, cheerleaders, alumni, and band and collar guard members who are brought together through this landmark.

Although Memorial Stadium has been renovated and parts rebuilt, the original Memorial Stadium was first built in 1951. I believe that this stadium should be protected, as it has been a central part of our town and high schools for over 50 years. By making Memorial Stadium a historical building in Napa, this Stadium could be a living

representation of the Napa Unified School District's History for years to come. I encourage the city of Napa and its community members to take the steps to make Memorial Stadium a historical building, and protect this symbol of tradition in Napa.