

El Gato

THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF LOS GATOS HIGH SCHOOL

B. Gibson

LGHS Japanese program hosts festival

by Alex Evans
Opinion Editor

The LGHS Japanese Program hosted their 20th Anniversary Film Festival in the school theater featuring alumni appearances, a mock mini market, an art contest, and a screening of The Kingdom of Dreams and Madness. This event landed on an incredibly special weekend, as Jan. 10 is "Coming of Age Day" in Japan, a holiday held every year on the second Monday of January to celebrate adults who have turned 20 years old in the past year. As the Japanese program celebrates its 20th anniversary this year, the timing was perfect.

The event kicked off with an introduction from the LGHS senior MCs: **Caden Chou**, Japanese National Honor Society (JNHS) Co-President and **Aiden Balagtas**, Media and Communications Chair. An inspiring speech from the creator of the program, **Ann Jordan Sensei** immediately followed. Jordan Sensei discussed how she took the risk back in 2001 by "taking on a Japanese one class, and growing it into a program at a new school, and in a new part of California." Eventually the program blossomed into what it is today; along the way Jordan Sensei also launched the JNHS at LGHS in 2005. Along with the film festival, they have hosted many successful events including a Haiku Holiday Film Faire and Kezorokai — or Japanese wood planning competition.



CLUB IS KEY: The LGHS Key Club came to the event to sell Sharetea boba.

This introductory period of the event largely focused on alumni. A video compilation showcased former Japanese students detailing how they have used Japanese since graduation and their favorite memories of the class. With many of the students formerly taught by Jordan Sensei, they reflected fondly on making short films and forming bonds with other students. This was followed by a trivia game in which cur-

rent Japanese students participated, and then an intermission where attendees were encouraged to shop around the market set up outside.



DECISIONS, DECISIONS: The JNHS sold a wide variety of manga at their booth.

In the LGHS quad there were booths from various clubs, a kimono station, lunch, and more. Clubs with booths included Key Club, K-Pop Club, Sticker Club, and The Wildcat Review. To promote the market setting, all of the tables acted as different vendor stands with goods for sale. Sticker Club sold Studio Ghibli stickers; Key Club brought Sharetea boba; the JNHS table featured manga and tee shirts, the latest Wildcat Review edition, and more. Junior **Rebecca An** had a booth selling her handmaid goods, including crochet keychains, earrings, and "Go Green" stickers — a portion of proceeds from the stickers goes to the Clean Air Task Force. She also makes sales on her Instagram: fruits.press.

The feature film was The Kingdom of Dreams and Madness, a documentary released in 2013. The film follows Studio Ghibli head director, Hayao Miyazaki and his colleagues, during the preparation and release of their animated movies.

Halfway through the movie, a vote for the art contest was held. Participants had to submit an art piece relating to Studio Ghibli. The first place winner won 30 dollars, while the runner up received 20 dollars.

To close out the festival, the second part of the documentary was shown, and the winner of the art contest announced. The Japanese Program sure does know how to put on a memorable and well thought out event. If you are interested in joining the JNHS, meetings are Thursdays in room 416 at lunch. If you did not get the chance to attend, keep an eye out for their future school-hosted events.

DTA sanctions new contract for teachers

by Sophie Sullivan and Jordan Chan
Editor-in-Chief and Editorial Editor

The LGSUHS District Teachers' Association (DTA) successfully ratified a new teacher contract at the end of last semester. The retroactive contract grants an annual five percent raise to staff for each of the next three years beginning in the 2021-2022 fiscal year; just over 66 percent of voting educators supported the contract. This resolution and ratification come two months after teachers at LGHS and SHS rallied on Oct. 26 and Nov. 10, expressing concerns about the district's reserve funding.

The percentage of LGSUHS's budget allocated towards teacher salaries steadily fell from roughly 40 percent to under 35 in recent years, showing a relatively steady downward trend over time. LGHS once ranked in the top half of teacher salaries compared to nearby districts, so teachers felt significantly underpaid when assessments placed LGHS in the bottom half during the 2020-2021 school year.

DTA negotiating team member and LGHS teacher **Kevin Rogers** noted that the pay began "sliding" more than a decade ago during the 2008 recession. Before then, teachers felt attracted to district salaries because LGSUHS's revenue comes primarily from taxpayer dollars — as Los Gatos's valuations increased, so did annual pay. "Prior to that recession, our pay increases were in the range of three, to four, to five percent," Rogers explained. "It would parallel whatever the increase in our revenue was from basic aid from the taxes... But after 2008, we went in reverse. We had years where not only was there no new revenue coming in, but we were actually losing revenue."



S. Sullivan

DEJA VU: LGHS and SHS teachers first rallied for better wages last October.



STRENGTH IN NUMBERS: LGSUHS teachers advocated for change through the DTA.

This was the crux of negotiations last fall. With district salaries on a schedule, Rogers pointed out, "when you give a teacher a raise, that raise is in play for the rest of their career. You have to be able to find a raise [in the district revenue] for the duration of their career." The finalized contract balanced this line, and now promises an almost 16 percent pay raise by the end of the 2023-2024 fiscal year, in addition to upgraded vision and dental benefits.

Rogers further noted the negotiations' timing as "crucial" in the contract's ratification process. With the recent onslaught of parent coalitions, obstacles due to COVID-19, and other campus incidents — such as the vandalism in October — he expressed that teachers have felt overwhelmed and underappreciated: "We've had to pivot back and forth, and... teachers have worked really super hard in the last two years." During the pandemic, many teachers even indicated that they thought about quitting their jobs. However, the DTA had planned contract negotiations for late 2021 years ago, regardless of recent pressures.

Moving forward, DTA Vice President **Jennifer Young** said the organization "will continue to do what we need to do to make sure the Board hears our needs." Young stated that teachers began this work at rallies when educators spoke about needing "multiple jobs to be able to live even remotely nearby [LGHS] so that [they] can teach here." In addition to the late fall events, district teachers and maintenance staff rallied at a later board meeting, lining an open corridor that board members walked between open and closed sessions.

"That sense of camaraderie, being at the rallies together and standing up together, we haven't really ever done that here," Young reflected on having district-wide support. "This change needed to happen, and it wasn't on an individual basis — it was a collective, as a unit."

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LGHS develops COVID testing and preparedness plan

by **Jordan Chan**

Editorial Editor

As 3,000 students returned to LGHS and SHS for spring semester, LGSUHS made students' COVID-19 safety a priority. The schools distributed almost 5,000 COVID test kits by Jan. 4, and even more tests during the first week of school. They also made on-site PCR testing available to students during four days of the first school week, urging SHS students to test on the LGHS campus on days that testing was not available at their school. As we move forward, free COVID testing will be available from 12:30 to 4:00 PM on Tuesdays and 8:30 to 10:30 AM on Thursdays at Los Gatos.

On the first day of the semester, 90 percent of students and 93 percent of staff attended school in person. In his Jan. 9 school-wide email, six days after school reopened, LGHS principal **Kevin Buchanan** stated that "even though we only had 40 students who tested positive or became symptomatic, we had to notify about 90 of our teachers and staff that they might have been exposed due to positive or symptomatic students in one or more of their classes." He also explained that

the "biggest challenge" during the first week of school lay in the lack of coverage for absent teachers. During the first Friday back, which 15 teachers were absent, there were not enough substitutes available, and teachers with preparation periods, administrators, and counselors took their places. One or two classes also ran simultaneously in the library.

A shift to remote learning could occur if either LGHS or SHS is "unable to appropriately staff a campus to run the school safely." The district "will continue to do everything [it] can to avoid this scenario." This is one of two scenarios that will result in distance learning. The second scenario would occur if county or state officials order the campuses to close, which might happen if "a large percentage of the school population has tested positive within a short timeframe."

LGHS has halted non-essential in-person meetings, non-essential absences, and most indoor gatherings which includes eating indoors. The administration does not plan to cancel any upcoming events, competitions, or field trips, as long as they are still safe to conduct. As an extra preventative measure, the school will distribute KN95 masks, which are more effective against the highly contagious Omicron variant, for students and staff to wear on campus.

For more detailed information, please view the COVID info page of the LGHS website. There, you may refer to the COVID Testing and Quarantine Update from Jan. 4, the COVID preparedness plan, and the COVID dashboard — which includes figures on new cases throughout the district and the number of students and staff at each school campus. Students and staff members should share any positive test results with

the school by emailing lghscovid@lgsuhsd.org. If they test positive for COVID-19, they should isolate for 5 days — a reduction from the previous 10 day recommendation — and stay off of school campuses.



TESTING MY PATIENTS: Inspire Diagnostics performs PCR tests on campus.



CHECK IT OUT: Scan this QR code to view the COVID info page of the LGHS website where you may refer to the COVID Testing and Quarantine Update from Jan. 4.

CA Democrats introduce single-payer healthcare plan

by **Isla Patrick**

News Editor

California Democratic lawmakers presented Congress with Assembly Bill 1400 which proposes a statewide single-payer healthcare system on Dec. 30. If passed, the bill would provide every resident of California, regardless of citizenship, with free healthcare funded by new taxes on individuals and businesses. The legislation faces opposition from representatives of doctors and insurance companies. If the bill makes it to statewide ballots in either June or November, voters will choose whether or not to approve the new taxes as an amendment to California's constitution. The state could potentially become the first in the U.S. to offer universal healthcare.

Supporters of the bill claim that without private insurance plans and their administrative expenses, the cost of healthcare would decrease. Additionally, they expect high deductibles and co-pays to disappear with the proposed government fund. A board of directors would oversee the system, dubbed "CalCare," guaranteeing anyone in California access to any doctor while simultaneously negotiating lower costs for prescription drugs.

Governor Gavin Newsom, who supported a single-payer system in his campaign for office in 2018, stated, "It's about access, it's about affordability, and it's about time." Democrats hold a majority



SOMETHING NEW(SOM): Governor Newsom supports the CalCare system.

in both houses, but very rarely does a majority vote in favor of broad-based tax increases. CalCare needs a supermajority (a two-thirds majority) in the Senate and Assembly, followed by a voter ratification in the statewide election, to be incorporated into California's constitution.

To fund the system, any businesses earning more than two million dollars would face a 2.3 percent excise tax, and businesses with 50 or more employees would have to pay a payroll tax of 1.25

percent. Another payroll tax would impact employers with workers making more than 49,900 dollars per year, but the value of this tax has not been determined. Personal income taxes would rise for Californians earning more than 149,509 dollars yearly, with the amount increasing the more income a person collects. Californians with a yearly income over 2.5 million dollars would pay a 2.5 percent surcharge. These taxes remain at the forefront of the debate, but Ash Kalra, a San Jose Democrat, claims that CalCare taxes would amount to less than private health insurance.

Some Republicans believe that CalCare and its taxes, which could amount to 163 billion dollars per year, will drive residents out of California. Assembly Republican Leader Marie Waldron claimed, "If government-run healthcare becomes law, millions of Californians will flee the state — either to avoid the...taxes or to escape the lengthy waits for care that will become the norm."

Since Assembly Bill 1400 is a holdover proposal from 2021, it must get through the Assembly by Jan. 31. During the week of Jan. 10, the Assembly Health Committee considered the bill, which resulted in a strong indication that CalCare would achieve a simple majority in the Assembly — enough to send it to the Senate where it requires a supermajority to reach the ballots.

(Sources: ABC News, LA Times)

Tahoe snow breaks records

by **Emily Duvall**

Humor Editor

While 2021 was a mostly dry year for California, this trend did not continue into December. The month's snowfall in the Sierras broke a record set in 1970 for most snow in December on Dec. 27. While 1970's December had 179 inches of snow, December 2021 brought 214 inches. So far this winter, the area has received 268 inches of snow, a number that will hopefully increase in the coming months. Many current California residents question how the state of the drought will change after this record-breaking snowfall. The rainy and snowy season must continue in order to lessen the effect of the drought, despite the recent weather.

California's rainy season spans from Oct. 1 to Sept. 30 of the following year. So far, Lake Tahoe has already received 70 percent of its average snowfall for the year. We still have time to make up the rest of that percentage as long as weather systems continue to bring precipitation and snow.

Due to December's storms, traffic clogged Sierra roadways. Interstate-80 and Highway 50 were closed, so Bay Area residents were stranded. Photographs from neighborhoods in Truckee and outside of Donner showed the snow burying road signs and streets, even reaching the roofs of some homes.

Junior **Brianne Stuermer** took a trip to the Sierra snow over LGHS's winter break. As an avid

skier and frequent visitor of Lake Tahoe, Stuermer decided to take the trip with her family and ended up being affected by the blizzard. "[We] were stranded without a place to sleep in the middle of nowhere on the brink of a snow storm running on five hours of sleep," she said.

In addition, junior **Maya Segev** visited Tahoe more recently, during the weekend of Jan. 8, and she explained how conditions have really cleared up since the storm. "When I went skiing [that] weekend, the weather was perfect. It was pretty sunny with barely any wind. The snow was great and there was lots of powder. The only downside was that there were so many people," Segev stated. The snow from the blizzard is definitely keeping Tahoe visitors happy.

During this snowy season, Tahoe resorts have had to delay their opening and have closed certain slopes to keep their skiers and snowboarders safe. Some resorts, such as Northstar California, had to close their mountain on Dec. 27 since wind and snow conditions were too extreme for guest's safety. Since then, there have been no more closures.

Climatologists, in addition to frequent Tahoe visitors, are hoping to see more snow as the season progresses to get the area out of the dry spell it has been in for quite some time.

(Sources: ABC News, LA Times, USA Today)



S. Gouldrup

SNOW BRAINER: December's snowfall in the Sierras broke a record set in 1970 for most snow in the month.

Winter Percussion performs

by **Angela Sheu and Jordan Chan**

People Editor and Editorial Editor

With the transition to second semester and the start of the new year comes the peak season of Winter Guard and Percussion. Shortly before the holiday break, Winter Percussion at LGHS started to practice for their performances and competitions scheduled in 2022. Most of the events take place in March and April, but the musicians busied themselves with engaging workshops and training camps on campus.

While many members of Winter Percussion also participate in the LGHS Marching Band, there are striking differences between the two ensembles. Most critically, Winter Percussion does not include any wind instruments; instead it is made up of the Front Ensemble, drumline, and sometimes other auxiliary instruments. Front Ensemble section leader **Béa Rexach**, a senior who plays the marimba in Winter Percussion, noted that "it's a much smaller group." Additionally, the band practices and performs indoors, rather than on the football field. Rexach enjoys mastering his instrument and creating music as a group. He hopes that in the future, his peers will experience some of the same positives: "It's really fun. If you're thinking about joining it, join it."

Rexach encourages people to watch and support the Winter Ensemble at its nearby competitions. The ensemble will begin performing in February, continuing into March and April.

Although COVID-19 presents some uncertainties, the Winter Guard is also preparing to perform and compete this year. Their first competition will take place at the end of January. During the past few weeks, the team picked the best suited positions and props for each member of the team. There are a few main components to a color guard performance — light, blunt swords called sabres, wooden rifles, and flags — which every member uses during shows.

Winter Guard co-captains **Ria Rajasekar** and **Sarah Hansen**, seniors on the sabre line together, look forward to showing off the team's hard work.



FLY THE FLAGS: Winter Guard participants spread spirit.

Although their team performed with the Marching Band during the first semester, now Winter Guard will take part in individual indoor performances without live music. Rajasekar also added that the winter shows tend to have "more emotional" choreography and showcase different costume styles.

Both Rajasekar and Hansen have participated in color guard since their freshman year at LGHS. When asked what her favorite part of Guard is, Rajasekar replied, "I really like performing. I just like getting better on equipment and stuff like that... also the people." Similarly, Hansen explained that "meeting new people" and "the family community aspect" is what makes the team so special.

Both captains would like to encourage people of all experience levels to try color guard. Hansen encouraged her peers to check out the team, echoing Rexach's words on Winter Percussion: "it's really easy to join [and] come see what it's like... there's something for everyone." Rajasekar added, "it's not as intense or as hardcore as people think it is."

Holmes found guilty on four of seven criminal charges

by **Nathan Chen**
Graphics Designer

On Jan. 3, a jury found Elizabeth Holmes, former head of Theranos — a biotech company — guilty of four out of seven counts of defrauding investors. Holmes was found not guilty on three counts of “patient-related conspiracy wire fraud” and one count of “wire fraud relating to a Theranos patient.” Holmes faces up to 20 years in prison, a 250,000 dollar fine, and a requirement to provide restitution.

Once valued at nine billion dollars, Palo-Alto-based Theranos had investments and support from media tycoon Rupert Murdoch, former U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz, and former Oracle CEO Larry Ellison among others. Forbes magazine named Holmes, a Stanford chemical engineering dropout, the youngest self-made woman billionaire in 2014, worth 4.5 billion dollars. She claimed that Theranos’s blood-testing machine, the Edison, could test for everything from HIV and diabetes to calcium and potassium levels with just a few drops of blood. Walgreens invested in the machines and placed them in stores across California and Arizona. Holmes also claimed that the military used Theranos machines in their helicopters.

In 2015, the Wall Street Journal published an investigative report into Theranos, led by journalist John Carreyrou and ex-Theranos employees **Tyler Shultz** and Erika Cheung. Shultz, the first whistleblower to raise alarm about Holmes’ false claims about the Edison, left after only eight months on the job. He realized that the inside of the Edison machine did not match what Holmes stated the machine could do. “This technology simply didn’t exist,” Shultz told NPR’s Bobby Allyn. The 31-year-old endured intense surveillance from private investigators hired by Holmes and suffered



PANTS ON FIRE: Holmes’ lies finally caught up to her.

an irreparable personal relationship with his now-deceased grandfather, George Shultz, who avidly supported Holmes.

Cases of white-collar fraud are notoriously difficult to prosecute. Multiple lab directors testified saying that the machines were flawed and Holmes instructed them to overstate the success of the machines. Theranos also allegedly used third-party commercially-available blood test machines to get results they reported to customers, rather than their own machines. Holmes testified that she “never knowingly defrauded patients or investors.”

Holmes also accused Ramesh Bulwani of sexual and emotional abuse. Bulwani served as COO of Theranos and entered a romantic relationship with the then 18-year-old Holmes. Bulwani is 19 years older and was married at the time. Due to concerns over the Omicron variant, U.S. District Judge Edward Davila delayed Bulwani’s trial, which was scheduled to start in February.

Shultz, an LGHS graduate, is now the CEO of his own biotech company, Flux Biosciences. Navigating the same system of Silicon Valley investors who are pressuring him to exaggerate revenues and technology claims, he said, “I could see how this environment could create an Elizabeth Holmes.”



GETTING CRAFTY: Holmes made false claims about Biotech.

Shultz told NPR that after receiving news of the verdict, “my family said, ‘come on down we’re popping champagne. We’re celebrating.’” He tweeted, “This has been a long chapter of my life. I am happy that justice has been served and that this saga is finally in my rearview mirror. Proud of the impact that Erika and I had. Hope to inspire other young professionals to hold their leaders accountable.” (Sources: United States District Court - Northern District of California, BBC, NPR, The Mercury News, Twitter)

Pizza Chicago opens in LG

by **Sonali Muthukrishnan**
Editor-in-Chief

Downtown Los Gatos recently welcomed a new restaurant named Pizza Chicago di Italia. Replacing Blue Line Pizza on Main Street, the restaurant’s cozy atmosphere and simple yet delicious food makes it the perfect place to dine with your family.

The restaurant is a new more formal location of a tried and true PizzA Chicago store in Santa Clara. Founded in 1991, the establishment has won numerous awards over the years for its delicious Italian comfort food and homey Chicago-based restaurant set up. Another location of the famous pizza shop resides in Palo Alto. Famous for its deep dish-pizza, PizzA Chicago and Pizza Chicago di Italia offer a wide variety of food, including gluten-free, vegan, and vegetarian options. The establishment’s menu is founded around the idea of “simple and honest cooking” using fresh and sustainable ingredients.



HERE WE GO AGAIN: Customers enjoy margarita pizza.

favorite is the Margarita, a deep-dish pizza with roma tomatoes, basil, and garlic.

Among the variety of pizzas is an abundance of sandwich and pasta options. For their younger customers, Pizza Chicago di Italia offers two different kids’ meals, one of which revolves around pasta, the other around pizza.

The dessert menu also leaves nothing to be desired with the fan-favorite Sweetness, a giant chocolate chip cookie with ice cream chocolate sauce and whipped cream, along with cannolis, carrot cake, and chocolate cake. The restaurant also offers a selection of wine, beer, and house cocktails for any over-age customers.

The store’s beautiful and neutral decor makes it pleasant to dine in for any customer. A franchise is devoted to its core principles “great service, reasonable prices and a clean restaurant,” Pizza Chicago di Italia hopes to make customers feel at home with their hospitality. As the restaurant’s website states, “We take pride in our ability to discover the most unique flavors from around the world and share them with you. Come join us.”

Pizza Chicago di Italia is open Sunday through Thursday from 11:00 AM to 8:00 PM, and from 11:00 AM to 10:00 PM on Friday and Saturday for dine-in, take-out, or delivery.

(Sources: PizzA Chicago, Pizza Chicago di Italia)



MAMMA MIA: The restaurant serves a variety of meals.

Some of the classic dishes on the menu include garlic cheese bread served with marinara sauce, a house salad with a fresh roll of bread on the side, and many different types of pizza. In terms of pizza, the location offers gluten-free crusts, cauliflower crusts, deep-dish cornmeal crusts, “Sicilian style” flour crusts, and thin crusts. For vegan customers, they offer soy milk Mozzarella cheese. A customer

NUMU debuts new exhibit

by **Jordan Chan**
Editorial Editor

The New Museum of Los Gatos (NUMU) debuted its exhibition “In the Company of Trees” by Monterey Bay Area photographer Jane Olin on Jan. 14. The exhibit contains photographs from Olin’s series “Intimate Conversation,” which focuses on trees and Olin’s relationship with them during a time in which climate change and deforestation pose a threat to our ecosystem.

Olin has felt connected to trees since her childhood. She recalls playing amongst Douglas Fir trees as a kid and walks through forests on a regular basis as an adult. Olin explained, “the world as we know it would not exist without them, and I want to convey this sense of kinship in my work.” She also added that Peter Wohlleben’s book “The Hidden Life of Trees,” which delves into the complexity of trees and how humans should treat them, helped inspire the series. Helaine Glick, an independent curator who worked on “Intimate Conversation,” wrote that Olin’s “photographs reveal the trees as she sees and experiences them — their stately wildness, their expressive diversity, and especially the atmospheric mystery of this presence.”



TREE HUGGER: Olin focused her exhibit around nature.

Drawing upon her experience training with West Coast photographers, Olin created her images using a traditional gelatin silver printing process altered by chemical manipulation. She applied these chemicals over several hours with brushes and spray bottles, preferring this hands-on approach to computer-enhanced images. Glick stated, “the wet dark room is where she thrives... [digital enlargement and printing are] her sole nod to the digital revolution.” The results of Olin’s work in the dark room are unique, detailed photographs with little to no color that lends inexplicable depth to the exhibit. The dreamlike quality of the photos starkly contrasts the feeling of urgency to protect their subject: trees.

Executive Director of NUMU Amy Davis said that it took one or two years of conversation and planning to bring “In the Company of Trees” to Los Gatos. Davis explained that NUMU likes “showing things that make people think” and “exploring, through art and through history, a variety of topics really important to our society right now.” Olin’s work hits all of these marks, as it compels the audience to think about something they might take for granted in a new light, alluding to the climate crisis.

Over the past 30 years of her career, Olin has won countless awards for her unique and thought-provoking photography. You can view Olin’s work, including photographs from “Intimate Conversation,” at janeolin.com or see the exhibit in-person in the Spotlight Gallery at NUMU in the Los Gatos Civic Center Plaza. The exhibit will close on Jun. 5. Davis encourages youth and Los Gatos residents, who have free entry into the museum, to stop by: “Whether you just want to look at a pretty picture or think about topics that are a little more challenging, there’s something here for everybody.” (Sources: NUMU, janeolin.com)

ASB holds blood drive alongside American Red Cross

by **Sophie Sullivan**
Editor-in-Chief

Amidst one of the American Red Cross’s worst national blood shortages in over a decade, ASB held its annual fall Blood Drive — its first donor event since 2019 — in the Small Gym on Friday, Dec. 10, 2021, collecting pints of blood from 45 student participants in exchange for a pint of ice cream each.

The Red Cross required participants to register for the drive online before completing a lengthy screening form in preparation for their appointment, which ASB scheduled from first period until after school. Upon arrival, a volunteer confirmed donors’ screened responses, took blood hemoglobin levels to determine eligibility, and began donation preparations. It took roughly 10 minutes to collect one pint of blood, as well as several tubes for testing purposes, depending on participants’ blood flow; Leadership student volunteers then chaperoned donors to a rest area and advised students to stay as long as necessary to recover. After giving blood, participants had the opportunity to track their donation (as well as check their blood type, blood pressure, hemoglobin levels, and pulse, and book another appointment) on the Red Cross’s Blood Donor app.

Senior **Maya Josifovska** braved the process to exchange a blood pint for an ice cream pint. “The big needle scared me when I saw it,” she admitted, “but the nurses were really nice and the ice cream was good.” Josifovska shared that her blood is now aiding patients at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles.



PINT FOR PINT: Students line up to donate their blood.

According to senior ASB President **Katherine Brezoczky**, coordinating the biannual blood drives is one of Leadership’s principal tasks — and this year was no different. “We had a new Red Cross system that was all online,” senior ASB Vice President **Tatum Thomas** added. The duo, who organized most of the event, began work in September, but because of LGHS’s longstanding relationship with the organization the planning process was “just a lot of back and forth emailing to secure the date... and keeping in contact about signups.”

Harold Andrews is one of the Red Cross’s donor technicians who has a unique experience with both the processing and medical aspects of giving blood. In addition to conducting phlebotomies for donors, Andrews managed post-collection for the Dec. 10 drive, which involved “putting away the blood and logging it into the computer...and loading up all the supplies.” From the Red Cross warehouse, the donated blood bags move to a Pomona, CA, processing center, and donors’ blood test tubes fly to a lab in Portland so analysts can test for 17 different bloodborne diseases.

“In an emergency or in a situation where a person needs surgery, they have to have these red

blood cells and plasma to back up their procedures... these donations are life-giving,” Andrews explained, emphasizing the value of blood donations.

ASB plans to hold its second blood drive of the year later this spring. (Source: American Red Cross)



DRIP DON'T QUIT: **Maya Segev** wears a Red Cross shirt.

- Metaverse NFTs create new millionaires
- Pandemic dramatically raises inflation rate

Non-fungible tokens (NFTs) now utilized in the Metaverse

by Macy Dennon

Sports Editor

People are excited about the new craze to hit the world of online investments called non-fungible tokens (NFTs). These NFTs are one-of-a-kind tokens, often explained in reference to an expensive rare baseball card.

Understanding the appeal and value of NFTs gets complicated when you consider that a person can just copy the digital file that somebody else may have paid millions of dollars for. However, those who make NFTs design them to combat this issue. They are designed so that the original coding or technology behind them cannot be copied. Think of it as a physical piece of artwork; the owner can possess the original painting, but different prints can be sold, or in this case screenshot. The argument against the high value of NFTs is that a copy is just as valuable as the originals because there are no original brushstrokes on a canvas, just pixels on a screen.

NFTs can work like any other speculative asset. People can buy a piece and hope that the value goes up and sell it for a profit, or they can collect NFTs just like any other collector's item. For example, Marvel Studios sold its own NFTs to collectors looking to expand their collection of Marvel collectibles.

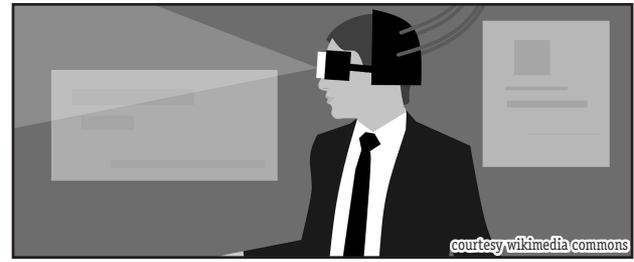
The demand for NFTs started taking off in late 2020 and exploded in popularity in 2021. Along with the popularity of this new form of digital investment skyrocketing, the fortune of the artists and buyers continues to rise.

Trevor Jones, a Canadian artist, sold his first-ever NFT project for 10,000 dollars in 2019. Just a year later, in 2020, he sold an NFT of Batman for 552,000 dollars. Some of the first NFTs ever created sold for over nine million dollars, while the most expensive NFT sold for 69 million dollars at Christie's, a 255-year-old auction house. A digital artist known as Beeple sold the piece, dubbing him one of the top three most valuable artists alive today. The piece in question is entitled "Everydays — The First 5000 Days."

There is much pushback against the rise of NFTs. Evan Cohen, the co-founder of Vicent, a powerful search engine for investment opportunities, advised the younger generations not to invest in NFTs simply because they want to join the bandwagon. Cohen said, "Do not buy it because it is an NFT. Buy it because you like the art or buy it because you think the collectible is cool. You want to participate for the asset, not the underlying technology that powers this." Researchers are worried that NFTs' popularity will die down in the market, along with their profits

and prices. They say it might be the incorrect time to enter the market if one is thinking about purchasing an NFT in 2022 or beyond.

Others believe that this is a new era for the art world. Pablo Rodriguez-Fraile, a collector who bought a Beeple NFT and sold it for 100 times the original value, sees "Winkelmans [Beeple's] rising prices as a way of proving to the public that the technology matters." Beeple, known in the real world as Mike Winkelmann says, "I do view this as the next chapter of art history." (Sources: CNBC, The Verge, cnet)



NFT SURGE: NFTs now in high demand as many people make millions.

USPS requests policy delay

by Jordan Chan

Editorial Editor

The United States Post Office (USPS) requested a delay on enforced compliance with the vaccine and testing requirements issued by the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA). The USPS asserted that the federal organization would be able to follow OSHA's guideline, called the Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS) policy, by the end of a 120-day period.

The ETS asserts that businesses with more than 100 employees — including the post office with around 600,000 workers, according to the Pew Research Center — must mandate vaccinations or weekly testing. It requires businesses to draw up and implement their own plan in accordance with ETS provisions. Both of these were originally set to go into effect at USPS on Jan. 10, but the weekly testing clause has since moved to take effect on Feb. 9 instead.

Deputy Postmaster General Doug Tulino argued that enforcement of the ETS will not only hurt USPS employees, but also negatively affect the nation as a whole, stating that we "cannot afford" to take this supposed risk. Tulino detailed some of his concerns in his letter requesting the delay. He mentioned persistent "challenges [to] our nation's supply chains" as well as concerns about employee resignations and "inadequate staffing." He added, "a dramatic loss of employees at a time when the labor market is extremely tight and in the middle of the Postal Service's Peak Season would have a potentially catastrophic impact on [USPS'] ability to provide service." During this 120-day delay period, USPS supervisors hoped to continue using preventative measures they have already put in place, such as masking, thorough cleaning of USPS premises, and isolation of symptomatic employees.

As an independent agency of the federal government's executive branch, the USPS does

not technically fall under the jurisdiction of President Joe Biden's executive order from last year which included provisions requiring vaccinations for all federal employees. However, the USPS is not exempted as a business under OSHA's rules. Furthermore, the White House did not want to back down on the matter; press secretary Jen Psaki declared, "compliance with the rule was feasible for all employers, including the Postal Service."



USPS DELAYS: 120-day delay period is invoked.

The Supreme Court heard arguments on the legality of OSHA's ETS policy on Jan. 7. In a 6-3 decision, the conservative majority ruled that, while "Congress has indisputably given OSHA the power to regulate occupational dangers, it has not given that agency the power to regulate public health more broadly," as they did with the imposition of the ETS on the USPS. "Permitting OSHA to regulate the hazards of daily life ... would significantly expand OSHA's regulatory authority without clear congressional authorization."

(Sources: USPS, OSHA, Reuters, NPR, NLR, Federal News Network, Newsweek, USA Today, SCOTUS)

Maxwell found guilty in Dec.

by Ella Marrufo

National/World Editor

On Dec. 29, Ghislaine Maxwell was found guilty on five federal charges in relation to aiding and abetting her partner Jeffrey Epstein, as well as two charges of perjury. Her charges include sex-trafficking of a minor and grooming minors for Epstein to sexually abuse. As a result, Maxwell faces up to 65 years in prison, though Joey Jackson, a CNN legal analyst noted, "Because Maxwell has no prior criminal history, she might not get the maximum sentence anyway — though the egregiousness of the crimes will lead to 'significant time' behind bars."

In addition to her various sex trafficking charges, Maxwell was also found guilty of "transporting a minor with the intent to engage in criminal sexual activity and three related counts of conspiracy," according to CNN. Prosecutors revealed Maxwell aided Epstein in luring minors into forming sexual relationships with him in several locations such as New York, Florida, New Mexico, and the British Virgin Islands. Four women abused by Epstein who testified during the trial were key factors in the prosecution of Maxwell.

In a statement to CBS News, Maxwell's family commented after her trial: "We are very disappointed with the verdict. We have already started the appeal tonight and we believe she will be ultimately vindicated." However, her family seems to be alone in their displeasure as survivors rejoiced after the trial. Though many expressed feelings of relief and closure, plenty of survivors do not believe that the trial should end here, and further hold that there are several other conspirators who should be held accountable for their actions.

In fact, CNN legal analyst and former prosecutor Elie Honig agreed that there are more people behind the scenes than meets the eye. Honig spoke on this issue saying, "This was not a two-person operation, and others should be investigated ... I think prosecutors have a real obligation to dig all the way down to the bottom." Honig believes that if Maxwell is willing to cooperate and point out others related to the investigation, she may be able to reduce her prison sentence.

In a sudden change of events — according to a joint letter from prosecutors and Maxwell's legal team — the U.S. government announced they would dismiss Maxwell's perjury charges if her conviction for aiding Epstein stands. According to Reuters, "The perjury charges concern allegations that Maxwell lied about her knowledge of Epstein's behavior during depositions taken in 2016 for a separate civil lawsuit." In a letter to U.S. District Judge Alison Nathan, prosecutors stated the charges reflect the victims' "significant interests in bringing closure to this matter and avoiding the trauma of testifying again."

(Sources: New York Post, New York Times, CBS News, Reuters, CNN)

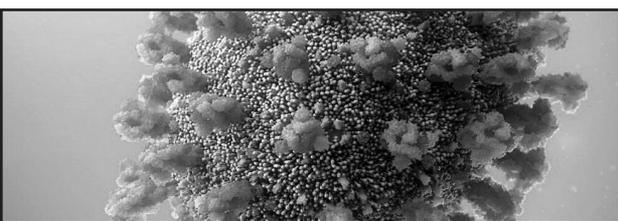


MAXWELL CHARGED: Found guilty on seven charges.

News-in-Brief: French variant and Hawaiian restrictions

New French variant: Scientists in Marseille, France, discovered a new variant of the COVID-19 virus in December. B.1.640.2, also referred to as the IHU variant (named after the Méditerranée Infection University Hospital Institute), is not considered a large threat by the World Health Organization or other health officials. The strain is not as infectious as previous variants such as delta or omicron, and has infected a confirmed 12 individuals in France; no other countries have detected the variant so far. Though it had the potential to become a more dominant variant, IHU has not broken out as largely as expected, and it is unlikely to do so. (Sources: The Independent, Voice of America, Gulf News, Daily Express)

- Alia Arafah, Opinion Editor



NEW VARIANT: A new COVID-19 variant discovered by scientists in France.

Arbery's killers sentenced: Travis McMichael — the man who shot and killed Ahmaud Arbery — and his father Gregory McMichael received a sentence of life in prison on Jan. 7 without the possibility of parole. Their neighbor William Bryan was granted the possibility of parole if he serves at least 30 years of his life sentence. Judge Timothy Walmsley sentenced the McMichaels to an additional 20 years on top of their life sentence due to assault and false imprisonment charges. In February, the three men face a federal trial for hate crimes and attempted kidnapping. (Sources: NY Times, NPR)

- Bridie Beamish, Media Production Editor

Hawaiian tourist restrictions: For those who live on the beautiful Hawaiian islands, the pandemic offered an opportunity to reclaim their natural landmarks and oceans. Now, as tourists flock in once again, Natives are trying to preserve this peace using new restrictions. For one thing, many famous sites such as black sand beaches and the Kalalau trail now require reservations. In addition, there are days on which state parks take no reservations, opting to let the environment relax. Tourists will also see a much more authentic version of Hawaiian culture as island chefs are starting to incorporate traditional foods such as ulu and breadfruit into dishes, and leis will use locally-grown flowers instead of imported orchids. (Source: Bloomberg)

- Dana Hathaway, Sports Editor

North Korean hypersonic missile: On Jan. 5, North Korea successfully fired its second hypersonic missile in an attempt to improve the country's military capability. They attempted their first experiment with hypersonic missiles in September, garnering attention from the United States, South Korean, and Japanese governments. Though these rockets can soar up to five times the speed of sound, they are praised for their maneuverability rather than their speed. According to Reuters, in one test "the 'hypersonic gliding warhead' detached from its rocket booster and maneuvered 120 km...laterally before it 'precisely hit' a target 700 km...away." Analysts believe these newly developed warheads will be the next generation of military defense. (Sources: Reuters and Washington Post)

- Ella Marrufo, National/World Editor



HYPERSONIC MISSILE: North Korea tests new missiles twice this year.

Highly infectious omicron variant spreads across the U.S.

by **Elena Rexach**
Public Relations Manager

The omicron variant of the coronavirus is sweeping the United States leading to a record amount of COVID cases.

Omicron emerged late-November of 2021, with the first cases recorded in South Africa. Since then, cases have dramatically risen, although deaths have remained fairly proportional. While omicron is highly infectious, making up 95 percent of current coronavirus cases, it has proved to be a much less virulent killer than previous variants, such as delta.

The true risk of the omicron variant is the overpopulation of hospitals. With more people getting the virus, beds fill much quicker and thus many emergency rooms are once again finding themselves full. In fact, over half of U.S. hospitals are at risk of exceeding their capacity, with nearly 125,000 Americans currently hospitalized with COVID. It is important to note, however, that some of those hospitalizations were not necessarily due to the coronavirus, but rather because the

patients tested positive upon arrival. Additionally, the widespread cases have caused a staffing shortage, making care less efficient and workers more stressed.

Experts are hopeful for the future, though, due to the patterns omicron has followed in other countries. If the U.S. undergoes the same trend as South Africa, cases are expected to peak between Jan. 9 and 13 of 2022, and then decline rapidly. The U.S. has also closely followed Britain in terms of Omicron patterns. Luckily, cases in Britain seem to have begun to decline, signaling that the U.S. likely will soon.

As the country faces such an infectious variant, the CDC updated its mask and exposure guidelines. As always, the N95 mask is the best option. Paper medical masks are another recommended option, but are most effective when paired with a cloth mask to “double mask.” Cloth masks on their own have shown to be less effective against omicron. A proper mask should not allow air to go in or out of the sides of your face; instead filtering all air through the front of the mask.

On the vaccine front, booster shots have shown to be up to 75 percent effective at preventing Omicron infections. While booster shots are still the go-to for omicron protection, Pfizer and Moderna have both begun omicron-specific vaccines.



NEW GUIDANCE: CDC recommends N95 masks against omicron.

Pfizer claims their dose will be developed by March. Dr. Anthony Fauci, Chief Medical Advisor for the White House, has not yet said whether an Omicron-specific vaccine would be necessary for immunity.

The CDC also has updated its isolation guidelines. Now, those with positive cases but no symptoms may leave isolation after five days but continue to wear a mask strictly for another five days. They also recommend that if an exposed individual has not gotten the booster shot, they should quarantine for five days. If boosted, quarantine is not needed for an exposure.

Finally, a researcher in Cyprus reportedly found a strain of coronavirus combining delta and omicron. The researcher — Leondios Kostrikis — and his team claimed to have found 25 cases of the variant. However, many experts are dismissing the finding, realizing the results were likely due to a lab error. So, while a variant, named deltacron, is possible, there is no definitive answer to its threat and existence.

(Sources: NPR, CNBC, CNN)

Pandemic-fueled inflation leads to big price increases

by **Bridie Beamish**
Media Production Editor

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, inflation increased by seven percent in the last year — the fastest increase in 40 years. After removing inconsistent prices such as food and gas, the data shows a 5.5 percent rise, the fastest climb since 1991.

Economists say COVID-19 is the driving force behind the rising prices. As the pandemic reduces the number of materials, goods, and workers, it further disrupts the supply chain, leading to an increase in consumer demand and a reduction in supply. Some of the most significant increases include a 17.3 percent rise in furniture prices, a 37.7 percent rise in car prices, and a 14.8 percent rise in meat costs. In December alone, rent costs increased by 0.4 percent and the medical care index by 0.3 percent.

Additionally, food costs grew 6.3 percent, and apparel rose by 5.8. Though gas prices dropped by 0.5 percent in December, they still remain at a 50 percent increase from the previous year. According to the National Federation of Independent Business, 49 percent of small businesses plan to raise their prices in the next three months.

Economists expect inflation to level-out and potentially decline as the omicron surge fades, and Americans begin to spend their

money on experiences such as traveling to reduce the demand for products. Despite this, there is little evidence that inflation will reduce to the target level of two percent.

According to a poll conducted by the Wall Street Journal, 56 percent of Americans say that inflation was a prime reason for their financial strain. The survey also revealed that one third of voters felt that inflation and economic issues should be the government’s primary focus. In addition, more than 60 percent agree that the economy is poor and heading in the wrong direction.

To combat essential resources from becoming too expensive, California Governor Gavin Newsom signed an executive order to prevent price gouging on at-home COVID-19 rapid tests. Furthermore, in November, President Joe Biden signed the bipartisan infrastructure bill — a bill that will ease backlogs at shipping ports, advance the movement of goods, and increase employment opportunities.

Earlier this month, the White House also announced the American Rescue Plan would grant 1 billion dollars in funding to independent meat and poultry producers. The funding is meant to augment competition in the meat-processing industry while decreasing prices for consumers. Additionally, in response to demands to ease inflation, President Biden announced it was one of his top priorities and stated, “I have directed my National Economic Council to pursue means to try to further reduce

these costs, and have asked the Federal Trade Commission to strike back at any market manipulation or price gouging in this sector.” (Sources: Wall Street Journal, NY Times, CNN, US Bureau of Labor Statistics, NPR, the White House)



NOT VERY CASH MONEY: Expensive gas prices hurt drivers’ bank accounts.

New details reveal the demographics of U.S. Capitol rioters

by **Ella Marrufo**
National/World Editor

Following the anniversary of the Capitol riot that occurred on Jan. 6, 2021, dozens of previously unknown details have come to light. Many have been led to believe that the insurrectionists were uneducated or perhaps unaware of their actions, but really the world’s perception of the people involved needs to be amended. The Atlantic suggests a new breed of rioters: more “normal” middle-class people without dedication to a political view who joined forces with extremist Donald Trump supporters.

Unlike stereotypical extremists, these people have high-paying jobs and many are business owners. They may be in any kind of professional work, such as CEOs, doctors, or accountants. According to data provided by The Atlantic, only nine percent of the rioters were unemployed. Comparatively, in the overall far-right-extremist demographic, about 25 percent were unemployed. It seems the new type of rioters’ demographic is made up of mostly people older than 35, while the extremist demographic is younger, with 61 percent being under 35.



SOMBER ANNIVERSARY: The Capitol riot was one year ago.

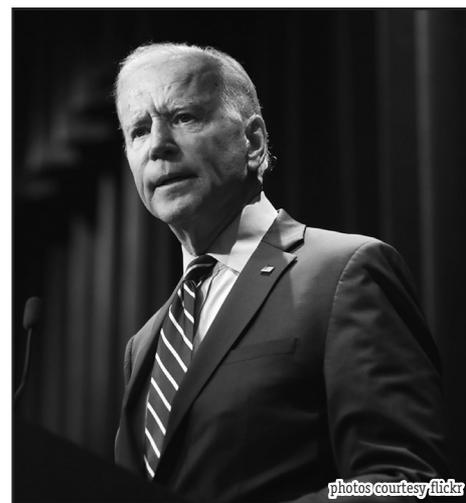
Politico claims at least 57 people who took part in the storming of the Capitol are now running for elected office. Over 24 rioters are running for Congress, state legislature, or statewide office, and around five are preparing for gubernatorial races. One rioter, Ryan Kelley, is running for governor of Michigan. Though Ryan was part of the protest on Capitol Hill, he did not enter the Capitol

itself. In an interview with Politico, Kelley said, “They’re going to try and twist it...that I’m an insurrectionist...But at the end of the day, sorry guys, I didn’t do anything unlawful or illegal. You just didn’t like what happened that day and they just want to push that insurrection narrative.”

In addition to the new information on the Capitol insurrectionists’ demographic, President Joe Biden recently made a statement on the anniversary of the attack. Biden publicly shamed Trump for allowing the storming of the Capitol and for encouraging the insurrectionists to terrorize people and the property. In his speech, Biden proclaimed, “For the first time in our history, a President had not just lost an election. He tried to prevent the peaceful transfer of power as a violent mob reached the Capitol.” Biden also added in a bitter remark that Trump’s “bruised ego” is more important than the Constitution.

This speech was a direct call-out of the former president, but also an important clarifying moment for the country. Though the speech was given with a certain amount of spite on Biden’s part, it addressed the lies, spread of misinformation, and gossip still swirling around from last year’s Jan. 6 insurrection, and ultimately placed Trump at

the head of the event. Biden finished his speech by concluding, “Now let’s step up, write the next chapter in American history, for Jan. 6 marks not the end of democracy, but a beginning of a renaissance of liberty and fair play.” (Sources: Politico, CNN, The Atlantic)



PRESIDENTIAL REBUKE: Biden criticizes Trump in speech.

News-in-Brief: Floyd’s niece shot, fish fall from the sky

George Floyd’s family targeted: George Floyd’s four-year-old grandniece was a victim in a shooting that occurred on Jan. 1 while sleeping in her bed in Houston. The shooting took place around 3:00 AM when several shots were fired into her family’s apartment. A bullet struck Arianna Delane, identified by relatives, in the torso, and the family rushed the young girl to the hospital after their call to 911 wasn’t met with a prompt response from police and paramedics. Police ultimately reached the apartment at 7:00 AM, almost four hours after the shooting occurred. Both the Houston Emergency Center and the Houston Chief of Police launched separate investigations into the delayed response, with the former pointing to an initial review which indicated that the police were not contacted when emergency services were, and the latter pointing to a miscoding of the signal. (Sources: Washington Post, NBC News)

- by **Sarah Gouldrup**, *People Editor*

Younger children eligible for booster: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) approved the COVID-19 Pfizer-BioNTech booster vaccine for ages 12 and older on Jan. 5. Previously, only those 16 and older could receive the booster shot. The CDC’s approval followed the U.S. Food and Drug Administration’s (FDA) Jan 3. endorsement. The FDA also announced in their endorsement that they are shortening the time period between an individual’s second dose and booster shot to at least five months, down from the previous six-month wait time. The FDA further endorsed an “additional primary dose” for immunocompromised 5 to 11-year-olds, 28 days after their second shot. The dosage interval for Moderna will remain at six months, and the Moderna vaccine has not yet been approved for children aged 12 to 15. (Sources: CDC, FDA, NY Times)

- by **Bridie Beamish**, *Media Production Editor*

Tree named after American star: As one of the most notable environmental activists in Hollywood, Leonardo DiCaprio now has a new tree species named after him — thanks to scientists at London’s Royal Botanical Kew Gardens. Back in July of 2020, DiCaprio was crucial in stopping the Ebo forest logging, which is the process of rampant tree-cutting that is detrimental to the local environment. A month after the Cameroon government issued an order that allowed industrial logging to begin in the forest, DiCaprio posted on social media urging his followers to sign a petition created by international scientists against the logging. This action drew attention to the government’s order, and the president later retracted his decision. Believing that DiCaprio’s post was a pivotal point in their campaign, scientists decided to honor his actions by naming a tropical tree species *Uvariopsis dicaprio*. (Sources: CNN, NBC)

- by **Sarah Gouldrup**, *People Editor*

Fish fall from the sky: During a storm on Dec. 29, residents of Texarkana — a city that borders Texas and Arkansas — reported a downpour of small fish in addition to the expected rain. Tim Brigham, a local business owner, told the Texarkana Gazette that the fish were “bouncing off the concrete.” While obscure, this spectacle is not unheard of. When tornadoes pass over rivers or lakes, they often pick up water and become waterspouts. Any unfortunate aquatic animals that may have been swept up with the water are left to plummet back to Earth. Yet, according to National Weather Service meteorologists, there is no evidence of waterspouts spawning during the storm. The phenomenon remains a mystery. (Sources: Texarkana Gazette, Texas Monthly, Weather.gov)

- by **Brynn Gibson**, *News Editor*

- New space telescope is sent into orbit
- Protests erupt into chaos in Kazakhstan

Male birth control is near the end of human clinical trials

by Jackie King
Editor-in-Chief

Birth control strictly for females has been around for years in many different forms including vaginal rings, skin patches, contraceptive injections, pills, and intrauterine devices. Despite this, birth control for men is still only widely available in two forms: vasectomy and condoms. Male birth control pills and contraceptive gels have been in the works for a few years, but recently researchers in India revealed that they are ready to launch the world's first male birth control injection.



STILL HERE: Contraceptive pills will still be available.

Seventy-eight-year-old biomedical engineer Sujoy Guha, based in Delhi, invented the single preloaded syringe that doctors will shoot into the vas deferens, the tubes carrying the sperm from the testicle to the penis; the operation will be performed under local anesthesia. Despite the procedure being more complicated than some female methods, this long-acting contraceptive will be effective for 13 years following the injection.

The drug, called reversible inhibition of sperm under guidance (Risug), has undergone years of human trials before scientists deemed it ready for the public. An injection to dissolve the inserted gel in the tubes to reverse the procedure exists, but has only been tested on animals so far.

According to reproductive biologist RS Sharma at the Indian Council of Medical Research, "[Risug] will be a world-class contraceptive for men. It is safe and effective and lasts for long. We expect it will be cleared for production in the very near future." Risug will not protect against sexually transmitted diseases.

Many scientists believe that Risug will become a replacement for the male vasectomy, but it does not yet have an approved reversal method. Michael Skinner, a reproductive biologist at Washington State University, stated that "the contraceptive aspect of the drug still needs to be assessed with expanded reversibility studies. Presently it appears more like a sterilization approach. The reversibility needed to allow the drug to become a contraceptive needs to be established." Although they are not claiming reversibility at this moment, Sharma is "confident that we will be after human trials. For the moment, the drug will be positioned as an improvement on vasectomy. It will cause less trauma to men, and there will be no surgical incision."

Because of the danger to women during pregnancy and childbirth, the importance of safe and effective birth control methods for women has taken priority over the need for male contraceptives. After nearly 60 years since the creation of the first birth control pills, women today can choose

between over 12 methods of contraceptives to prevent unwanted and unsafe pregnancies. However, despite more and more available methods of male contraceptives, in patriarchal societies like India especially, contraceptive use among men has stayed low. With female sterilization being a very popular method, the rate of male vasectomies has not increased significantly. Scientists are hoping the release and approval of Risug will raise the numbers and place more emphasis on males using contraceptives.

(Sources: Live Science, NCBI, Healthline)



ALMOST READY: A needle with Risug ready for injection.

Telescope is launched into space

by Nathan Chen
Graphics Designer

On Christmas Day the 10 billion dollar James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) launched from the European Space Agency's launchpad in French Guiana, opening the next era of space exploration and becoming a symbol of human ingenuity.

The Webb telescope will take measurements of infrared light emitted as long as 13.5 billion years ago. It will sit at a special location behind the Earth, where it can stay in a somewhat stable position while using minimal amounts of fuel.

To take these measurements, the most advanced instrument needs to be at an astonishingly cold seven degrees Kelvin, or -266 degrees Celsius. The cooling methods to shield the telescope from 200,000 Watts of power from the sun also have to be extremely energy efficient, reliable, and have very little vibration. NASA settled on a sunshield, which offers passive cooling (which means it does not need energy) and a cryocooler for active cooling, which consumes energy.

The sunshield — about the size of a tennis court — needed to be light, strong, durable, dimensionally stable, and reflective. NASA chose Kapton, a type of high-performance plastic, coated in aluminum. The first layer closest to the sun is also coated in silicon, which allows it to disperse heat quickly. The shape of the sunshield also ensures that heat radiation is angled outward and escapes. The sunshield deployment is the most nerve-racking part of the process, since most of the 344 points of failure that could ruin the entire mission are associated with the sunshield.

The cryocooler, costing 150 million dollars to develop, uses the best innovations in thermoacoustics to meet all the necessary conditions for the telescope. Using sound waves to create different pressure zones (and thus different temperature zones) in a tube, the system passes liquid helium

through the tube, taking cooled helium to the telescope and heated helium to the center of the sunshield to disperse the heat. With the sunshield and the cryocooler, the instrument can be cooled down to 6.2 degrees Kelvin.

The mirror element is also incredibly accurate. Each gold-plated beryllium hexagon can move and bend in amounts measured by wavelengths of light. Gold is an excellent reflector of infrared light and resists corrosion. Beryllium is very light and is resistant to temperature changes. Even at 25 meters squared, the entire mirror element is 62 percent lighter than Hubble's glass mirror at 4.5 meters squared.

New technologies developed for JWST have other useful applications back on earth. Companies are developing new optometry machines using JWST's mirror technologies. New electric motors are using the telescope's precise measuring techniques. Special cold-operating circuits are also helping Hubble improve through replacing its components.

Students, astronomers, and amateurs alike are patiently waiting for the first exciting pictures to beam back to earth.

(Sources: NASA, Real Engineering)



EYES UP: NASA team working on the JWST before its take off.

Pills help treat COVID-19

by Jordan Chan
Editorial Editor

Two pills designed to treat COVID-19 show promise amidst the recent surge of the omicron variant. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authorized both Pfizer's Paxlovid and Merck pill and Ridgeback Biotherapeutic's Molnupiravir pill for emergency use in December 2021. Research shows that Paxlovid has an 89 percent efficacy rate at reducing hospitalizations and deaths from COVID, and Molnupiravir has a 30 percent efficacy rate. Dr. Patrizia Cavazzoni, the director of the FDA's Center for Drug Evaluation and Research, stated, "[The Paxlovid pill] is a major step forward in the fight against this global pandemic."

Patients will take these pills in early stages of infection: as soon as they possibly can after a positive diagnosis and within a few days of the onset of symptoms. While patients 12 years and older may take Paxlovid, individuals must be 18 or older to use Molnupiravir due to potential interference with bone and cartilage growth. The pills are not readily available in most pharmacies yet, and patients must receive a prescription to use them. Their emergency use authorization does not allow for pre- or post-exposure prevention of the virus. Researchers assert that COVID-19 pills will not replace a vaccine nor come close to the effectiveness of getting vaccinated against COVID, in part because the treatment does not target the virus' spike protein.

In December, the United States federal government contracted with Pfizer to purchase 10 million courses — treatments prescribed for a continued period of time — of their pill, paying Pfizer 5.3 billion dollars. On Jan. 4, the government stated that they would double this figure, hoping to have a much greater number of courses in the new year. They also bought three million courses of Molnupiravir for 2.2 billion dollars.

In comparison to the 200 million combined doses of Moderna and Pfizer ordered when these vaccines launched, the number of pills ordered is limited, causing some to voice concerns about the magnitude of this new development. Will Harper from the Contra Costa Health Services in San Francisco explained, "there's simply not enough of it for it to be a game changer." However, Albert Bourla, the Pfizer CEO, hopes to "broaden patient access" by working directly with the government.

Some pharmacies like Walgreens have already received and distributed both the Paxlovid and the Molnupiravir pill. Walgreens has a federal partnership that allows them to provide the treatment in select stores picked based on a number of factors such as vaccination rates, risk, and testing capabilities.

In the next few weeks, the European Union plans to issue a decision on whether they will also issue an authorization of the Paxlovid pill. Cavazzoni has advised that pills may be a "tool to combat COVID-19 at a crucial time in the pandemic as new variants emerge." In the U.S., President Joe Biden asserts that they "have the potential to dramatically alter the impact of COVID-19."

(Sources: NBC, NPR, Reuters, FDA, NY Times, SF Chronicle, Fortune)



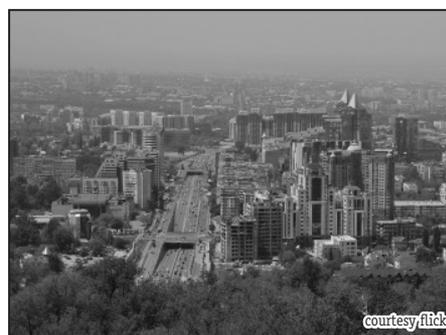
IT'S HERE: Molnupiravir pill is ready for distribution.

Chaos erupts in Kazakhstan over sudden gas price jump

by Mathew Fehr
National/World Editor

Chaos erupted in Kazakhstan on Jan. 1 after the government removed a price cap on fuel, resulting in a drastic and sudden increase in gas prices. Violence broke out as protesters clashed with government security and police forces. Almost 8,000 people were detained as of Jan. 10 according to Al Jazeera, while The New York Times reported that over 2,000 were injured last week. The Kazakh state media channel Khabar 24 reported that 164 people have been killed, although it should be noted that authorities have restricted internet and social media access in the country, making information questionable.

In response to the increase in rioting and looting — which left a presidential residence and mayor's office burned, along with other buildings — President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev ordered Kazakhstan's security forces to shoot and kill anybody participating in the protests. In a televised address, he referred to those involved in the unrest as "terrorists," "bandits," and "militants," warning that "those who don't surrender will be eliminated." Tokayev also requested military assistance from Russia, which shares a border with Kazakhstan.



HIGH SKYLINE: Bird's eye view overlooking Almaty.

Troops and military hardware from the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) began arriving on Jan. 6, totaling roughly 2,500 soldiers and 250 pieces of equipment.

Although President Tokayev is the official leader of the country, former President Nursultan Nazarbayev is effectively running the government behind the scenes. Before his departure, Nazarbayev sought assurance that his family and assets would be protected. The elections were consequently rigged so that his handpicked successor, Tokayev, could

become president while Nazarbayev remained on the security council. As a result, the ongoing pandemic, and resistance from the old elite, initial promises by President Tokayev to implement political and economic reforms have failed to transpire. However, the current crisis may serve as a turning point of sorts for the country's leadership structure. Following the outbreak of the protests, Tokayev dismissed his cabinet, accepted the Prime Minister's resignation, and forced Nazarbayev off the security council.

While the current protests began because of the spike in fuel prices, discontent with the government is not new. Kazakhstan gained independence in 1991 after the Soviet Union collapsed, and its citizens have retaliated against inequality and government corruption multiple times. The current unrest comes shortly after the tenth anniversary of another strike, during which the police fired into a crowd of oil workers protesting wages and working conditions, killing at least 16 and injuring around 100 people. Protests over the past decade include one in 2014 over a currency devaluation, another in 2016 after foreigners were allowed to rent agricultural land in Kazakhstan for 25 years, and one more in response to the rigged 2019 election.

Speaking to Parliament on Jan. 11, President Tokayev said that "the main mission of the CSTO peacekeeping forces has been successfully completed." The Russian-led military presence will leave Kazakhstan over a 10-day period beginning on Jan. 13. Tokayev has since appointed a new government and attempted to distance himself from Nazarbayev, saying that the public outrage over income inequality was justified.

(Sources: NPR, Al Jazeera, NY Times)



GET OUT: A building catches on fire during the protests.

EDITORIAL

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- Students should communicate their needs to LGSUHSD

Communication with the Board betters the community

by Alex Evans and Kate Gruetter
Opinion Editor and Culture Editor

As students returned to campus after winter break, most classes at LGHS had reduced attendance because many students contracted COVID-19. Those affected are having issues staying caught up with their work and students on campus are experiencing general unease. Members of the community have varied opinions about how to continue forward with school during this high-transmission period. Considering these factors, teachers and students must focus on respectful and efficient communication, and students specifically need to educate themselves on the ways they can communicate with the Los Gatos Saratoga Unified High School District (LGSUHSD) Board of Trustees and utilize this resource.

It is important for the administration to answer any student questions about quarantining and getting tested, as well as other concerns, to the best of their abilities in a timely manner. When students bring up the possibility of going back online, teachers need to address these realistic questions rather than brushing them off. Teachers should communicate calmly and honestly with their students, even though they may be in the dark and have questions as well.

Conversely, it is vital that students not place blame or frustration on teachers. Staff are also experiencing the consequences of COVID, and they too have a lot on their plate. Overall, students and teachers need to respect each other and establish a mutual understanding that neither group has all the information and recognize the importance of open communication. While it is essential for teachers to listen to students' feedback, pupils must respect that teachers and administrators are also adapting to the situation at hand. Instructors like **Kristen Austin** are focusing on communication and implementing a student buddy system so students at home have someone to rely on. "If they have any questions

about the class or they don't understand something or they can't get a hold of me...they can ask each other." Systems like this that establish effective communication are vitally important to an efficient semester despite quarantining and loss of class time. Austin elaborated, "I just think in general everybody needs to be gentle with each other and understanding because it's a stressful time already, but it doesn't have to be stressful if we are easy on each other and flexible."

With highly contagious COVID-19 variants like omicron spreading, it's difficult to avoid an exposure or positive test, making it critical for staff to be flexible for students who must quarantine at home. **Serra Ancin**, a sophomore who had to self-isolate after multiple exposures, stated that "it would have been better if teachers would be more flexible with due dates and uploaded videos or recordings of lectures/discussions and just generally more instructions for students at home." She reported that the lack of specifications on protocols for sick students made completing assignments difficult, and that grasping concepts while simultaneously catching up with work from all of her classes was difficult. However, Ancin took action and made sure to email her teachers and ask questions when she returned to school. This communication is the key to working through the uncertainty of this semester.

With many COVID-centered concerns, it is essential for members of the community to recognize the resources they have and voice their concerns. The LGSUHSD Board of Trustees consists of five publicly elected members with Superintendent Michael Grove at the head. The work of the board is comprehensive and influential to our district schools, as they formulate many of the health, safety, and education policies governing our district and take public requests into consideration. LGHS senior **Katherine Brezoczky** represents LGHS at board meetings as our student body president. Due to general unawareness

of the board's powers as a public district, many get frustrated when the board does not act on certain complaints. However, reaching out can still be beneficial with many school-based issues. To address the board with COVID-centered worries or on-campus patterns, students must attend office hours, give public comments, email board members, communicate with our ASB president, and develop organized groups to create change.

Now is the time to bring concerns regarding COVID to the board; students are the ones on campus and should express their feelings and experiences with the board directly. The board has publicly established their desire "to be accessible, consistent, and fair in dealings with complaints and concerns from the community." The board upholds this through their office hours sessions — in person and online meetings where students, staff, and parents have the opportunity to meet and discuss their concerns with "current topics in education and in our schools." Scan the QR code to view future sessions. Students should use this resource to interact with board members directly and highlight issues with COVID they may not be aware of. LGHS history teacher **Stephanie Pearson** recalls that in the office hours she has attended, there was no student attendance. Pearson suggests this could be because "students just don't know that it's available."

Another resource for community involvement and interaction provided is the public comment section during the monthly board meetings. The first step in the process is taking a look at the board homepage where their schedule and loca-

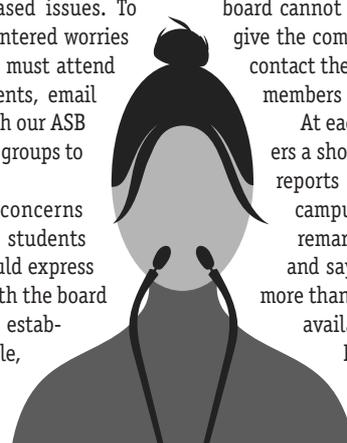
tions are available. Community members can deliver a two minute speech addressing topics discussed during the meeting or district issues. While the board cannot respond to the requests, they will give the comments an audience. If you need to contact the board but want confidentiality, all members are also reachable via email.

At each board meeting, Brezoczky delivers a short prepared speech; commonly this reports on events that are happening on campus or general student opinions. She remarks, "If anyone wants to come to me and say 'Can you tell the board this?' I'm more than happy to do it." By making herself available as a student representative, Brezoczky explains that students with concerns hopefully feel less intimidated going through

her, since they don't have to comment directly to the board.

At LGHS, there is strength in numbers. If a group is passionate about something and takes action, like students affected by COVID-19, there is a better chance of the board listening and heavily considering it.

Students have the opportunity to make changes that directly impact our school environment by interacting with the board. For COVID management, consider using the board as a resource. Before getting upset about the lack of student perspective in board decisions, we need to understand that we can easily get involved through attending the meetings and office hours or through our student body president. Similarly, the board has the potential to make changes surrounding COVID, so students should recognize their resources and express their wants and needs.



Scan this QR code to view the schedule for the remainder of the 2021-2022 office hours sessions. The Board of Trustees invites members of the student body, teachers, and parents to contribute directly their observations and desires at these meetings. Sessions are held on the LGHS and SHS campuses, as well as online.



JANUARY/FEBRUARY

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
23	24 Spring Sports Parent Night	25 Board Meeting 4:30 PM	26 Eighth Grade Welcome Night	27 Boys' Wrestling v. Wilcox	28 Girls' Soccer v. Mt. View	29
30	31	1	2 Boys' Soccer v. Santa Clara	3	4 Girls' Basketball v. Saratoga	5
6	7	8 Boys' Wrestling v. Lynbrook	9 Boys' Soccer v. Gunn	10	11 El Gato Applications Due	12
13 Valentine's Day	14	15 Boys' Varsity Lacrosse v. Saratoga	16 Girls' Soccer v. Homestead	17	18 Boys' Wrestling CCS Championships	19 Boys' Wrestling CCS Championships
20 February Recess	21 February Recess	22 February Recess	23 February Recess	24 February Recess	25 February Recess	26

HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY?

SEND ALL THOUGHTS, COMMENTS, & QUESTIONS TO:

lghselgatochiefs@gmail.com

EL GATO

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- Evans criticizes New Year's resolutions
- "That girl" Tik Tok trend is unrealistic

OPINION

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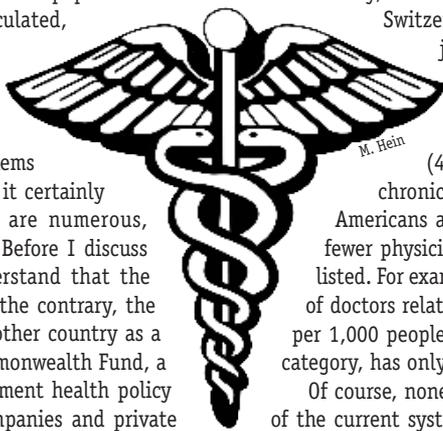
American healthcare is in need of drastic improvements

by Matthew Fehr
National/World Editor



If the ongoing coronavirus pandemic made one thing abundantly clear, it is that the healthcare system in the United States is woefully inadequate. As cases rise and a significant subset of the population refuses to get inoculated, hospitals are overwhelmed, understaffed, and unable to provide the critical care for which they are responsible.

While COVID has highlighted the problems with this country's approach to healthcare, it certainly did not cause them. The issues present are numerous, widespread, and have existed for decades. Before I discuss specifics, though, it is important to understand that the United States is not strapped for cash. On the contrary, the U.S. spends more on health care than any other country as a share of the economy according to The Commonwealth Fund, a nonprofit which supports research to implement health policy reform. However, when pharmaceutical companies and private



insurers buy off politicians, their priority is no longer about being efficient with federal spending. The end result is a system that price-gouges its consumers while providing subpar service.

With that established, let's talk specifics. The United States' poor healthcare can be quantified in numerous ways when compared to other wealthy countries — specifically, Australia, Canada, Germany, New Zealand, France, the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, Sweden, and the UK — but here are just a few: out of those countries, the U.S. has the lowest life expectancy (78.6 years), the highest suicide rate (13.9 deaths per 100,000 people), the highest obesity rate (40 percent), and U.S. adults have the highest chronic disease burden (28 percent). On top of that, Americans also visit the doctor less frequently and have fewer physicians available to them than all of the nations listed. For example, Norway — which has the highest number of doctors relative to its population — sits at 4.8 physicians per 1,000 people. The United States, which ranks last in this category, has only 2.6.

Of course, none of that addresses two of the biggest failings of the current system: the number of uninsured Americans and

the incredibly high price of drugs. According to the CDC, 8.6 percent of people were uninsured in 2020. That's 28 million people without access to potentially life-saving treatments, doctors, and emergency care. While Medicaid does exist to assist those with low income, it clearly misses a substantial portion of the population. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, there are around seven million non-elderly uninsured people eligible for either Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program. That number makes up over one-fourth of the 27.4 million people who were uninsured in 2020.

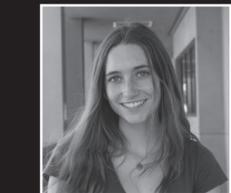
Additionally, because the U.S. doesn't regulate drug prices, Americans spend more on prescription drugs than any other country in the world. According to the RAND Corporation, a nonprofit think tank that provides research and analysis to the U.S. Armed Forces, prices in the U.S. are 2.56 times higher on average than in 32 other countries — an absurd statistic for a country that persistently claims to be superior in every way.

The last major piece of healthcare legislation, the Affordable Care Act, was passed 12 years ago in 2010. While it made substantial progress towards creating a more comprehensive and inclusive system by providing coverage for 20 million previously uninsured Americans and generally lowering the cost of healthcare, we still have a long way to go.

(Sources: Bloomberg, CDC, Center for American Progress, The Commonwealth Fund, RAND Corporation, Kaiser Family Foundation)

People should avoid New Year's resolutions mindset

by Alex Evans
Opinion Editor



Though it is a new year, everyone indulges in the same old tradition: New Year's Resolutions. While these goals can inspire people as they start fresh this year, they can also create a restrictive mindset, setting unrealistic standards. Instead, people should focus on making realistic goals and check in with their progress

periodically throughout the year. By doing this, people are likely to achieve more and alleviate the overwhelming emotions attached to entering 2022, or any new year.

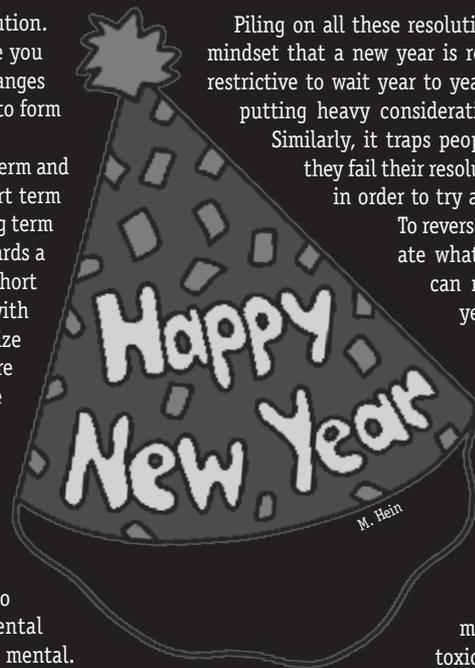
Avoid putting so much stress on yourself at the beginning of the year; goals do not have to be immediately tangible. Many introduce new tasks to their day when setting up their resolutions — this could include drinking water, working out, sleeping more, spending more time with family, etc. It is overwhelming to achieve all these additions day after day while also keeping up with the tasks everyday life presents.

Instead, focus on goals relating to mental health and build them out throughout the year. Maybe start with the goal of sleeping more for the new year, then once you get the hang of this one big

change to your schedule, add in another resolution. Sleep more, and also read every day. Then once you can manage both, add in another. Lifestyle changes should be gradual, because habits take months to form and can be tiring to fulfill at first.

In addition, recognize which goals are long term and short term in order to avoid frustration. A short term goal can be doing the same task daily, and a long term goal requires different tasks daily building towards a cumulative end achievement. You can have the short term goal of not procrastinating, which helps with a long term goal of earning good grades. Recognize the difference between different goals and figure out how much daily effort you should contribute to your goal each day, to avoid getting flustered.

An alternative take on a New Year's resolution is adopting a new mentality. A goal does not have to be visible, as long as you feel the positive effects. Goals surrounding mental health are commonly overlooked because people fail to realize that their tangible goals require mental change as well, or that goals can be purely mental.



Piling on all these resolutions at once contributes to the toxic mindset that a new year is required to set goals. It is incredibly restrictive to wait year to year before introducing a new habit or putting heavy consideration into how your life can change.

Similarly, it traps people into a closed mindset that when they fail their resolutions, they have to wait another year in order to try again.

To reverse this, people must realistically evaluate what mental and physical changes they can make over the course of the entire year. This works to reduce becoming overwhelmed by setting a ton of resolutions at the start of the year and helps to create more opportunities to set healthy, shorter term goals. By evaluating goals monthly, or even weekly, you are much more likely to achieve them. Even though you are likely not reading this on a new year, work to reevaluate your goals more frequently and break apart the toxic New Year's mindset.

Female body hair is natural : Being basic is not always bad

by Lucy Sells
Media Production Editor

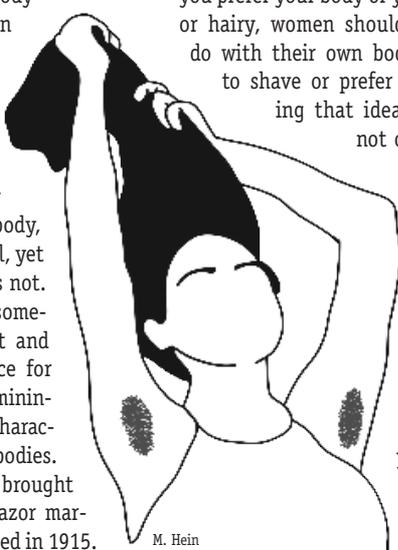


At nine years old, I apprehensively took on personal practices the patriarchy expected of me. I learned to pluck my eyebrows, shave my armpits, and shave my legs. I accepted that body hair on women is disgusting

and unfeminine. I learned that men would not love me if I was not hairless. I learned that my growing body hair was disgusting and needed to be changed. Our society needs to reverse this toxic mentality and normalize the acceptance of body hair on feminine bodies.

Millions of years ago, our ancestors were covered in hair. This hair protected the skin from external harm and kept them warm. With the rise in temperatures came a loss in body hair. Today, human hair grows in order to protect the body, regulate temperature, disperse odor molecules, allow the skin to heal, and even to show expression. Hair growth is a completely natural and beneficial process for all bodies. Hair is crucial to the body, and removing it should be abnormal, yet society has convinced us that it is not.

Although body hair removal sometimes happened in ancient Egypt and Rome, it became common practice for 20th-century American women. Femininity shifted from a focus on moral character and began to focus on female bodies. Also, a growing capitalist market brought hair removal products. The first razor marketed towards females was introduced in 1915.



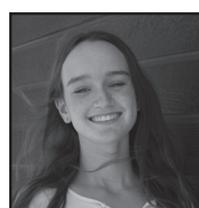
Gillette and other hair removal brands began to popularize and push the idea that women needed to remove underarm and leg hair. Over time, removing hair became a necessary part of every woman's life.

Not only is forcing hair removal sexist, but it perpetuates the eurocentric beauty standards forced on people of color. Hair removal became a new practice because of Americans, specifically white women, having thinner, lighter hair than women of color. In return, women of color have spent years shamed and targeted for their body hair. Their natural body hair does not mimic that of White models and actors seen in the media. Rebecca Herzig, a professor of gender and sexuality studies at Bates College in Maine said, "You can track patterns of anxiety about hygiene, beauty, [and] personal care according to different migratory patterns to the U.S." Forcing this standard upon women causes harmful mental health tolls.

Hair growth is natural and beautiful. Whether you prefer your body or your partner's body shaved or hairy, women should get to choose what to do with their own bodies. It is perfectly okay to shave or prefer shaved bodies, but forcing that idea onto another person is not okay.

Passivity only helps enforce the standard; stand up to those who say that smooth and shaven is the only way. Normalize this natural process, and stop confining women to western standards. You define your own femininity and whatever choice you make is wonderful. (Sources: The Guardian, Mic.com, Allure, NBC News, The Atlantic)

by Dana Hathaway
Sports Editor

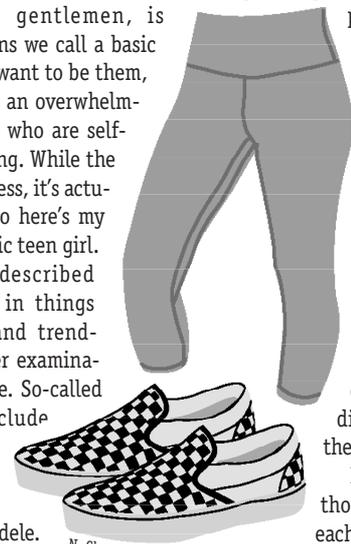


We all know them. Vans, Air Forces, Lululemon, messy bun, Santa Cruz sweat-shirts, Tiktok trends, Nike pros, scrunchies, Starbucks, and boba tea. This, ladies and gentlemen, is

what in the world of teens we call a basic person. No one seems to want to be them, for fear of getting lost in an overwhelming sea of similar people who are self-obsessed and uninteresting. While the term "basic" seems harmless, it's actually pretty frustrating, so here's my take on the word as a basic teen girl.

Originally, 'basic' described people only interested in things mainstream, popular, and trending. However, upon closer examination, this isn't really true. So-called "basic" artists may include Olivia Rodrigo and Taylor Swift, while in reality, the leading artist on Billboard's Artist 100 is...Adele. She's been there at #1 for the past four months. What about clothing? Macy's leads online retail, not Lululemon.

The difference is that to qualify as basic, something must be popular amongst teenage girls. That's pretty ridiculous, especially considering that I see at least four guys at my school wearing the same Nike shorts every day. Yet we do not assume that they are any less unique or interesting, the way one might upon seeing a Brandy Melville-clad 15-year-old. It seems like a



double standard, especially because the superficiality associated with basic girls is usually applied to teenage girls as a whole, while mainstream interests commonly seen as masculine — such as sports, jerseys, and cars — do not face the same scrutiny

Plus, even if the word "basic" was applied equally to all groups of people, is it really such a bad thing? Clothes, music, shoes, and looks don't just magically become popular — popularity happens because people genuinely like them. However, there is still a fear of being seen as basic embedded in phrases such as "white Vans are so basic, so I got light blue" and "I would post this, but I really don't want to look basic." The fact is that while people view the basic girl as a copy of every other teenage girl out there, everyone has things in common with others — that's what popularity is. If anything, the popularity of something should make people more confident in trying it rather than discourage them from buying things they enjoy that make them feel confident.

Having a collection of interests and thoughts that define us is what makes each and every person unique, and if some of those interests align with others, all the better. I have a plethora of less common interests, but tons of common ones as well. I love my worn Vans, boba is one of my favorite drinks, and three out of five school days you will catch me in athletic leggings. I like what I like, and if that makes me basic, so be it. I'm going to enjoy everything in life that makes me happy, basic or not, and everyone — including the boy who told me he'd never been to Starbucks because "it's for middle school girls" — should feel free to do the same.

Arafef argues for sustainable and cruelty-free products

by Alia Arafef
Opinion Editor



While many advocates for ethical consumption focus on fast-fashion and wasteful clothing brands, they often fail to address the equally pressing issue of immorally produced makeup. Most large makeup brands use animal testing, which is cruel and unnecessary. In addition, the mineral mica, which is used in most makeup products to add a shimmer, can be linked to child labor in India. It is not difficult to find cheap, green alternatives, so there is no excuse for using unethical products when an abundance of cruelty-free options are available.

Animal testing is not required by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The decision to use animal testing to ensure a product's safety is up to the producer, even though there are other methods to do so. Animal testing is costly, not always accurate, and cannot be consistently applied to humans. While only 60 percent of products passed through the first round of testing on animals, nearly 89 percent fail the next round of human trials.

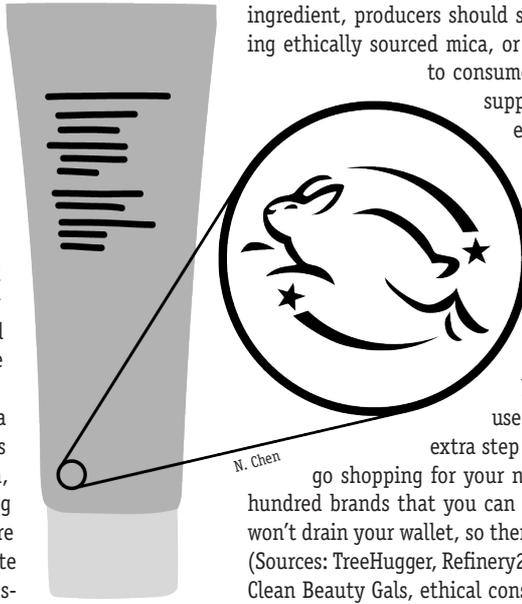
In addition, animal testing is a cruel and painful process for the animals involved. Testers rub cosmetics onto the animals' shaved skin, drop serums into their eyes, and force different chemicals down their

throats. Animals are seen as disposable tools and used repeatedly until they die. While this testing is banned in the European Union and limited in some of the United States, many makeup companies test their products in China, where the government does not regulate such work. Nearly half a million animals used in testing every year could be spared if companies use alternative methods to animal testing — such as in-vitro systems or donated human tissue — or people avoid animal-tested products. Keeping in mind how awful animal testing is, consumers can and should directly make a decision to not support such practices by researching cruelty free options. Organic, vegan, cleanly produced clothing is often expensive, but the same cannot be said for cosmetics.

Twenty five percent of the mineral mica is linked to illegal child labor in India. This mineral adds a shimmer to highlighters, blush, and other products. In these mines, young orphans — some only five years old — are exploited because they have no one to advocate for them. Their small stature is the only pos-

sible option because they are required to crawl through these small spaces. Children often die in the mines, or unregulated work conditions leave some injured for life. Rather than buying makeup that uses this ingredient, producers should shift to using synthetic mica, supporting ethically sourced mica, or not use the ingredient at all. It is up to consumers to be aware of the brands they are supporting and look closely at the ingredients and practices of the companies they buy from.

As a consumer, you can support brands that are cruelty free, vegan, fair trade, and organic. Look for the Leaping Bunny symbol on the products you buy to ensure they are cruelty free. Brands such as Lush, Milk Makeup, and The Body Shop are both cruelty free and ensure they do not use illegally sourced mica. Take the simple extra step to search up ethical brands before you go shopping for your next makeup haul. There are at least a hundred brands that you can feel comfortable supporting, and that won't drain your wallet, so there is no reason not to make the change. (Sources: TreeHugger, Refinery29, FDA, ScienceDirect, ethical elephant, Clean Beauty Gals, ethical consumer)



Use accurate ethnic terms

by Sonali Muthukrishnan
Editor-in-Chief



Historically, people of color did not get to choose the name of their ethnic identities, and were instead forced to accept the name colonizers gave them. Today, people of color have

taken back the right to name themselves, making it even more vital that we respect individual ethnic identities. In particular, we need to address whether we should call Native Americans, or Indigenous people, Indian. Native American people, who have their own unique cultural identity, should be referred to with a different term — one that doesn't already refer to another group of people.

First of all, Native Americans should not be referred to as Indians because it perpetuates the idea that all Brown people are the same. As a kid, I distinctly remember being asked if I was Native American when my class discussed the history of our country and the people who lived here before European colonization. While the Indigenous identity is incredibly rich, it is damaging to any person of color to be misidentified as part of another group. Indian people come from an entirely different continent. We have a different cultural background. We eat food that vastly differs from that of Native Americans. We have different holidays and religious ceremonies.

Both of our civilizations experienced colonialism, but India witnessed colonizers come and leave while the Indigenous community watched them make America their home. We have basically nothing in common except for the fact that we are all

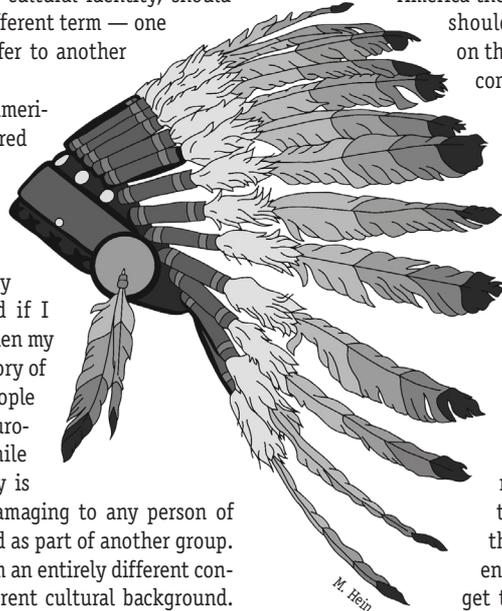
people of color. By referring to both groups with the same term, we help perpetuate the idea that both of these groups are the same and exist without much difference, while the opposite is true.

Also, as we all know and recognize, Christopher Columbus made a mistake thinking that he landed in India. He was wrong. So why are we still referring to Native Americans as Indian American when we are all cognizant of this racist mistake? We should actively try to refer to the Indigenous community correctly and not continue to feed into this incorrect assumption.

Lastly, referring to Indigenous people as Indian makes it seem like they are from a foreign land. The Native American community was the first to make

America their home, and their title should honor their history on this land. The Indigenous community is at home on this land because they cultivated it first, and referring to them with a term that implies that they did not originate on this land does not credit their heritage and connection to American land.

To clarify, if the Indigenous community prefers to be referred to as Indian, then we should respect their wishes. The Indigenous community should get to pick the name their identity lies under; they deserve that privilege. It is vital that we refer to groups of color correctly. We imply the way we think about people of color through the terms we use to describe them, so I urge you to think twice before calling an Indigenous individual an Indian American. The Indigenous community are Native Americans and deserve to be referred to as such.



Health aesthetic is harmful

by Elena Rexach
Public Relations Manager



Once again TikTok has managed to produce yet another problematic microtrend. The "that girl" aesthetic is one of minimalism, modernity, and perfection. It centers around the idea of

a supposedly balanced and healthy lifestyle, featuring workout motivation, clean eating, and various general wellness tips. Influencers showcase their Pinterest-board lives, often including outrageously productive morning routines and perfected exercise regimens. However, all of this comes wrapped in muted-tone leggings and sports bras, societally desirable bodies, and expensive health products.

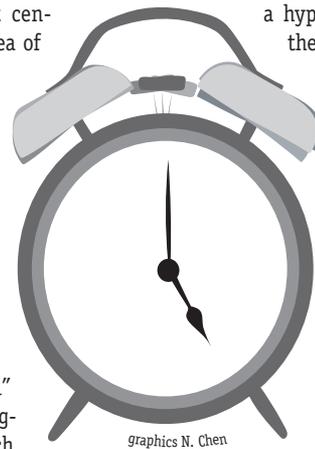
While it's easy to get caught up in such aspirational media, the concept of "that girl" actually creates a very slippery slope of misogyny, insecurity, and materialism, all of which become glaring issues upon a second glance. For example, the aesthetic bases itself on comparing yourself to other women in order to strive for excellence, which is seen as the role of "that" girl. The name comes from the idea of someone referring to a woman as "oh, that girl," essentially aiming for women to compete against each other in order to win over an external gaze. While in theory this aesthetic promotes journeys of self love, in reality it works as another form of misogyny. One should not need to be better than everyone else to feel good about themselves.

Additionally, the ideas of being "that girl" often lie with disordered undertones. Most

popular influencers under the aesthetic are thin, fit, white women. They give instructions to become "that girl," unintentionally promoting themselves as the picture of health, and therefore the end goal. These influencers are not typically nutritionists nor exercise aficionados, and the steps they advise may not necessarily be healthy, leading viewers to believe overexercise and a hyperfocus on nutrition is the answer to a healthy life.

Furthermore, community members and influencers who fit under the aesthetic often share products they believe can help you achieve your goals, whether it be a green smoothie kit, sunrise alarm clock, or stainless steel cup. With such abundance of this behavior, it often feels like you must own certain things in order to be healthy. While this sort of materialistic behavior is common nearly everywhere online, it is a notable fixture of the "that girl" culture.

The most worrisome aspect of this aesthetic is that it subtly promotes the idea there is one way to live a balanced lifestyle, which is simply not true. You won't magically be healthy by waking up early and eating greens, nor are you automatically unhealthy if you don't do those things. I hesitate to even use the word healthy, as it is so often misapplied in modern media. The lesson here is that being healthy has a different look and feel on everyone. Comparing yourself to other women to achieve validation from yourself or others is not a good mindset to have, and exposes the internalized misogyny that is ever present in today's society. A balanced lifestyle should sustain itself, not be fueled by competition and insecurity.



Gruetter preaches the importance of healthy grudges

by Kate Gruetter
Culture Editor



The start of 2022 is a time to reflect on past years and make resolutions to ensure a better future. Going into 2022, it is of the utmost importance to prioritize your mental health and feelings. An important step in this journey is to keep holding grudges. Don't apologize when it is unnecessary and don't forgive people

for past actions or behaviors. Set boundaries and accept that preventing certain people from being in your life is necessary and beneficial.

Holding grudges is healthy; it allows one to reevaluate and distance themselves from a certain situation. It also allows for better reflection: you are able to find time to really consider what is best for you and your life in the long run. If you're planning on reentering a relationship, the time you spent holding a grudge could help you set boundaries you wish were respected previously. "Sometimes people hold a grudge while they're developing their own sense of self or value system," Brooke Sprowl, the founder and clinical director of My LA Therapy, explains.

Holding grudges also helps promote a sense of self love and self appreciation. It establishes self respect: when you stop interacting with someone who has hurt you, it shows that you're respecting and valuing your own needs before others. "Grudges give you time apart from a relationship to help you find clarity. You might also come away with a better understanding of your own needs in any kind of relationship where you're holding a grudge," Sprowl elaborates. By understanding your own needs, you can learn to support yourself better, while also improving your relationships with others.

Additionally, holding a grudge or setting a boundary can improve your communication skills and empathy. As previously stated, it helps you understand what you need and what you want in a certain situation, whether a friendship, a romantic relationship, etc.

Distance can help you learn how to better convey these feelings to others. By holding a grudge and clarifying your mentality before returning to a situation, you are more likely to successfully navigate it instead of accidentally forgiving unacceptable behavior or expressing your anger and resentment.

Holding grudges can also be necessary for extended amounts of time, and even indefinitely in some cases. It helps set boundaries and prevent toxic friendships or relationships from continuously occurring. When a person holds a grudge, they are refusing to accept unjust and harmful behavior. Forgiving someone for this behavior erases these boundaries. It leaves one vulnerable to accepting similar hurtful behavior in the future. Starting a new year, it is important to avoid falling back into damaging and negative situations, specifically involving those who have hurt you in the past. (Source: Brit+Co)



JANUARY

NEW YEAR'S



Kate Gruetter, Culture Editor

If you struggled to sleep in 2021, you most likely turned to the most favored supplement of teens everywhere: melatonin. Available in pills or gummies, three mg or five mg, the wondrous FDA-approved drug promises peaceful, well-rested sleep.

However, we as a society have become too dependent on it, so this year, I challenge you to quit melatonin. Don't up your dosage, lower it, and face your insomnia head on. Become independent, free of such sleep dependencies, and live life on your own terms. Stop depending on melatonin to solve your restless problems. Seize control and sleep without it!

Brynn Gibson, News Editor

I am all for taking a break from driving out negativity; however, clearing out your car's windshield and other cars when you're stuck in traffic is not the key to finally defrost my windshield.

December was a haze of seeing out the front windshield. The luxury I could do without was the days where I drive down the driver's side window. In 2022, I will press both the buttons and wait until all of the windows are properly warmed before

Elena Rexach, Public Relations Manager

Eating healthier seems to be a platitude of the resolution world, but rarely do I hear anyone elaborate on what exactly falls under the elusive category of "nutritious foods." To that, I present a solution: tofu.

Hear me out — it's rich in protein, easy to digest, and brilliantly seasonable. You can scramble, grill, fry, roast, steam, marinate, and bake tofu; you can even eat it raw! The possibilities are endless. I have always been a tofu appreciator, but this year I am making a mindful effort to explore the universe of this magnificent soy product. I have little clue as to what could be gained from this, but perhaps the experience of eating tofu is a reward in itself.

Sophie Sullivan, Editor-in-Chief

I may have almost died as a result of being hospitalized for my respiratory condition. The embarrassment from my loud wheezing asthma symptoms is a memory I wish my lungs had forgotten.

This year, I'm committing to experiencing the horrid hot air conditioning attack again. Whether I do it by building stamina or by procrastinating, I will run a mile every day this December. I will be able to run one (1!) mile.



RY 2022

RESOLUTIONS



your surroundings and block-
you actually do need to see the
u drive. An icy and opaque front
ndfulness. This is the year I will
ld before leaving my driveway.
ardous month in particular;
shield in the morning was a
But not anymore. Gone are
own Los Gatos Blvd. looking
low. It's time for change. In
e front and back defrost but-
my mirrors and windows
e my pedal hits the metal.

Alia Arafah, Opinion Editor

I am writing and publishing this resolution to hold myself accountable for finishing my temperature blanket. This year, I decided to take on crocheting a temperature blanket while having zero materials and nonexistent crocheting skills.

If you haven't heard of it, a temperature blanket is a blanket in which each row is a different color based on the daily temperature that results in a unique and a wonderful keepsake to remind you of your year. I decided to hit up Michael's and purchase yarn, but I have one problem: I still have to learn how to crochet. So, my resolution this year is both to learn how to crochet and follow through with my blanket so that I can feel a sense of accomplishment and stay warm at night with my handmade throw.



in-Chief

a newborn while hospi-
condition, but somehow the
red face/sweaty baby hairs/
ptoms is worse. Like, some-
d just taken me out early.
itting myself to never expe-
air circulation of an asthma
o it correctly by building up
ting like normal and running
mber, I'm dedicating 2022 to
) mile without meeting God.

Maya Gomez, Sports Editor

As someone who has been gluten-intolerant for nearly a year and a half, I have learned to be cautious about what I put into my body. You can frequently find me checking ingredient labels in my pantry and opening pre-packaged food inside an Italian restaurant in hopes of preventing a bout of sickness. But I will be leaving the excuses "I probably ate too much" and "It's side effects from my medications" in 2021. The reality is that I am not, in fact, curled up in bed in pain because I decided to get on the treadmill hours after dinner. The handful of Cheez-Its and the slice of avocado toast that resides inside my stomach are undoubtedly to blame.

DECEMBER 2021

- Marvel introduces Spider-Man: NWH
- Andrew Garfield stars in Tick, Tick... Boom!

CULTURE

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SHEU DISCUSSES GENDER ALIENATION IN TV AND MEDIA

by **Angela Sheu**
People Editor

As the number of films, television shows, and games released by studios increases, so does the variety of stories they tell. All stories encourage us to identify with the characters they portray. They entertain us, comfort us, teach us, and remind us what it means to be human. However, the same stories can project ideas about invalid ways to live, othering, instead of welcoming, their audiences. In particular, creators' alienation and villainization of gender nonconforming characters eliminates the true complexity of living outside the gender binary.

Since ideas of gender are entangled with what many consider normal human existence, portraying a lack of — or deviance from — a traditional gender is a narrative shortcut for highlighting a character's alien qualities. When used solely in juxtaposition with human characters, it implies we cannot relate to nonconforming characters on a fundamental level because they are inherently less human.

In the show *The Good Place*, Janet is a cosmic database aiding a cast of human characters through the afterlife. The character presents as female while repeatedly correcting others with, "I'm not a girl." The narrative does not further explore Janet's gender or experiences. Instead, these comments serve only to contrast

Janet's lack of humanity — and gender — against the human cast, reflecting a trend of characters who diverge from a gender binary being disproportionately not human, and instead aliens, robots, or animals. These characterizations subconsciously suggest to the audience that gender nonconformity is strange, unhuman, and unrelatable.

Archetypes affect all characters, even those who are human. In narratives, we follow, and thus relate to, a story's protagonist. Throughout stories, our connections to protagonists reaffirm our heroes' humanity as they face their opponents, reinforcing which traits we perceive as relatable. The Disney animated movie musicals that marked the studio's resurgence in the 1990s exemplify hero and villain archetypes; in these movies, the audience follows a disproportionate number of heroes who exemplify traditional gender expectations fighting villains who don't. Snow White and Ariel are delicate and submissive, while the Evil Queen and Ursula are butch, unmarried, and in positions of power. Aladdin and Hercules are athletic and bold, while Jafar and Hades are effeminately camp. Only following protagonists who uphold gender expectations suggests that only these kinds of people are relatable, thereby alienating people who don't. Simultaneously, the heroes vanquish these

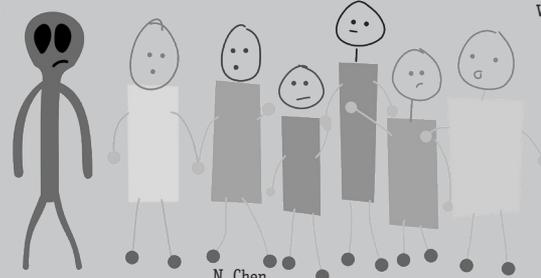
nonconforming villains at the end of their stories, suggesting people like them — whether villainous or gender nonconforming — should and will be punished for their deviation.

In recent movies, Disney has shifted away from their traditional hero-villain relationships, instead focusing on the more complex personal development of individual characters. This shift demonstrates that stories can be compelling

without vilifying nonconforming characters. However, studios must continue to be more inclusive by portraying nonconforming traits and characters in all parts of their movies' casts.

We should not eliminate portrayals of alienation alongside gender nonconformity; these stories can resonate with audiences through characters who

transcend universal definitions. However, the diversity of ways in which we tell stories — through people as well as aliens, through heroes as well as villains — should capture everybody in our society. All individuals are human and deserve to be reflected as such in the stories we share.



N. Chen

Duvall and Gibson debate their opposing opinions on Sing 2

by **Emily Duvall and Brynn Gibson**
Humor Editor and News Editor

Recently on TikTok, people of all ages, but mostly teens, have praised Illumination's newest animated motion-picture, *Sing 2*. Yet reviews are not one-sided. Others claim the producers put more effort into hiring a star-studded cast than developing a plot. Two El Gato staff members, **Emily Duvall** and **Brynn Gibson**, stand divided on this issue.

Emily: *Sing 2* is truly a wonderful film. It nails comedic timing. The writers know exactly when to switch between light hearted comedy to a more serious and melancholy tone, touching on aspects of romance, failure, perseverance, comedy, drama, and music all in its 110 minute run time. Going through the team's journey of making it big does not come without obstacles, and the film acknowledges these challenges. Although there is not as much character development as the first film, it still looks deeper into a few characters. And, this featured character growth is exceptional.

The movie has a heartwarming charm to it, with the introduction of many new characters who intertwine with those of the previous film. We get to see these characters grow, demonstrated in the final

performance of "Out of this World," composed by the wonderful Gunther, at the end of the film. "Out of this World" showcases each original character's talents, showing the audience a heartwarming cumulation of the work they put in to get there throughout the film. Although I did enjoy the film to its fullest extent, I think at times we could have used some deeper looks into more of the characters as the first film does. Overall though, I think there is a nice balance between old and new, and the characters are beautifully developed. #BusterMoon4life.

Brynn: Usually I value and respect Emily's opinion, but in this case I do not. I did enjoy watching *Sing 2*, but not because it was good. I just enjoyed making fun of it. The experience reminded me a little of watching the movie *Trolls*, with the emotive power on the same level as the infamous line "singing killed my grandma." I feel like they probably spent more time getting Bono to agree to be in it than writing. The story relies too heavily on existing popular songs and storytelling clichés. Scenes meant

to be touching feel insincere and shallow, and are difficult to take seriously.

Brianne Stuermer, a junior at LGHS, remarked that "it was instantly jarring when I walked into the theater and Billie Eilish was playing, I think they literally just made the movie to spoon feed Billie Eilish to children." Concerning the attempts at tear jerking moments, Stuermer stated: "I didn't cry when the lion was looking at pictures of his dead wife but I did cry when the gorilla started singing in the cafe. I wasn't prepared for that to happen."

I know animated children's movies don't always need to be the most intellectually developed; maybe my disappointment in this movie is just a side effect of growing up. Maybe I can't enjoy films below a certain caliber of maturity. But that definitely isn't true because *Surf's Up* is my favorite movie. I am not a hater; the movie is just too glaringly a money grab for me to respect it.



M. Hein

Megan Thee Stallion graduates TSU

by **Lucy Holland**
Editor-in-Chief

On Dec. 11, 2021, Megan Thee Stallion became Megan Thee Graduate. The rapper, whose real name is Megan Pete, received her Bachelor of Science Degree in Healthcare Administration from Texas Southern University (TSU), upholding the promise to graduate she made to her late mother and grandmother.

As a world renowned, Grammy Award-winning rapper, Megan Pete had no necessity for a college education. With four chart-topping

albums, 32 million monthly listeners on Spotify, and a recent deal with Netflix to write and produce a new television series, Pete is one of the most successful female rappers in the world. Pete entered the music industry at the same time that she was pursuing an undergraduate degree in nursing from Prairie View A&M University. She soon realized that this wasn't quite the path she wanted to take, telling Rolling Stone, "I thought I wanted to be a nurse and then I found myself at school and I was like, okay, definitely don't want to be a nurse." She switched her major to healthcare administration, then her rap career really started to take off. After some time at home taking classes through community college, Pete decided she wanted to "go back on campus" and enrolled in TSU.

After losing her mother and grandmother, the women who raised her, Pete told Rolling Stone, "Before they passed away, they saw me

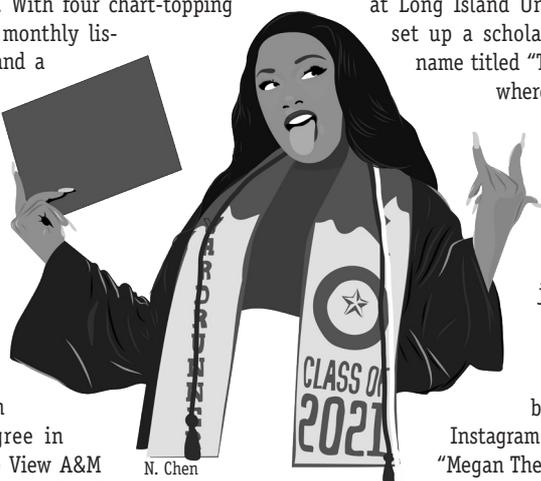
going to college and they were really hard on me about finishing college, so I was like, 'you know what? I'm not just doing it for myself, I'm doing it for them too. I want them to be so proud.'

The rapper has also helped many other women fund their college education, hosting a beauty pageant with the winning "Cognac Queen" receiving a 2,500 dollar scholarship, gifting two women of color 10,000 dollar scholarships, and offering a full-ride scholarship to a student at Roc Nation School of Music, Sports & Entertainment at Long Island University. TSU also

set up a scholarship fund in her name titled "Thee Megan Fund," where donors can make "tax-deductible donations...to help other TSU students cross the finish line at graduation, just like Megan!"

On the day of her graduation, Pete posted celebratory pictures to Instagram, captioning them, "Megan Thee Graduate. I know my parents are looking down on me so proud. Thank you for all the love today."

In 2019 Pete told People Magazine, "I really wanted to be an administrator over a hospital, but I knew I still wanted to be Megan Thee Stallion. I was like, 'What can I do?'" So, she decided that with her degree, she wants to open up assisted living facilities and hire recent graduates, because "Nobody ever wants to hire you fresh out of college. They feel like you have no experience, so I want to create a place where you can get experience." (Sources: Rolling Stone, Instagram, People, TSU, CNN)



N. Chen

NO WAY HOME HITS THEATERS

by **Sophie Sullivan and Dana Hathaway**
Editor-in-Chief and Sports Editor

Warning: there will absolutely be spoilers for *Spider-Man: No Way Home* in this article. Read at your own risk.

We all know that with great power comes great responsibility — and Marvel certainly upholds both ends with its newest arachnid feature, *Spider-Man: No Way Home*.

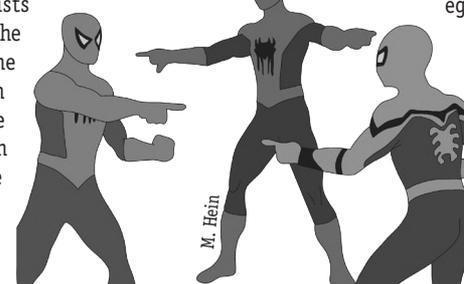
The 148-minute feature picks up at the tail end of its 2019 Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) predecessor, *Spider-Man: Far From Home*, with antagonist Mysterio revealing Spider-Man's identity moments before dying. After Peter Parker (Tom Holland) and his friends are rejected from MIT due to their involvement with the superhero, Parker turns to Doctor Stephen Strange (Benedict Cumberbatch) hoping the sorcerer can force the world to forget that Peter Parker is Spider-Man. In typical MCU fashion, everything that can go wrong does go wrong; Strange's corrupted spell draws historic Spider-Man antagonists from all parts of the multiverse into the Holland Spider-Man universe. With the help of Spider-Men from earlier movie adaptations of the comics — played by Tobey Maguire and Andrew Garfield — the three work to "cure" each villain's insanity before they return to their respective universe, but not before the Green Goblin kills Aunt May. In a sandy final fight scene at the Statue of Liberty, Peter realizes the only way to send each villain "home" is for Dr. Strance to cast an amnesiac spell so that everyone forgets that Peter Parker never existed.

Throughout the past 20 years, the Sony Spider-Man franchise has followed several adaptations, enthralling fans in its latest installment. The first

three *Spider-Man* films, directed by cinematic genius Sam Raimi, introduced those who had not read the comics to the first version of live action Peter Parker, played by Tobey Maguire. Sony then switched directions to release two more *Spider-Man* movies with Andrew Garfield as the web-slinging superhero, before finalizing negotiations with Marvel to usher in a new era of *Spider-Man* centered around 20-year-old British actor Tom Holland. Bringing together all three plot lines and *Spider-Men*, *No Way Home* was the most anticipated *Spider-Man* movie to date, and drew over 54 million people to theaters as of Jan. 9.

Despite Holland's spotlight, the rest of the cast (especially Maguire, Garfield, and Zendaya) significantly contributed to the dynamic film. Zendaya, who stars as MJ (*Spider-Man's* girlfriend) brought her wit and sarcastic pessimism to the film. In addition, Garfield and Maguire both brought their signature humor, talent, and good looks to their mid-movie appearance. Previous *Spider-Man* actors' revivals provided nods to familiar scenes and easter eggs — including Willem Dafoe's "I'm something of a scientist myself," and Garfield's scene catching a falling love interest. The talented castmates made for one of the most successful box office films of all time as it became the second-most successful movie on opening day and opening weekend, sliding in behind *Avengers: Endgame*.

While the first Holland trilogy has undoubtedly come to a close, the typical end credit scene was used to allow viewers a sneak peek into the upcoming release of *Dr. Strange in the Multiverse of Madness*. Strange's crucial role in *No Way Home* primed him to get his own box office moment on May 6, 2022 where Strange and Wanda Maximoff once again lure fans, popcorn in hand, to the big screen. (Source: Box Office Mojo)



M. Hein

GARFIELD AMAZES FANS AS JONATHAN LARSON IN TICK, TICK... BOOM!

by **Ella Marrufo and Bridie Beamish**

National/World Editor and Media Production Editor

Although the catchy and heartfelt musical *Tick, Tick... Boom!* came out in late November, the movie starring Andrew Garfield gained a second wind after Garfield's well-received role in *Spider-Man: No Way Home* renewed the actor's popularity. *Tick, Tick... Boom!* features Garfield as the creator of *Rent*, Jonathan Larson, a broke, aspiring playwright who struggles with a mid-life crisis and tumultuous relationships with his girlfriend and best friend.

Tick, Tick... Boom! is a true story based on both Larson's autobiographical play — which the movie is named after — and Larson's own life as provided by his close confidants. The stereotypical starving musician, Larson lives paycheck to paycheck in his Manhattan walk-up. He longs to become a Broadway sensation like his mentor Stephen Sondheim, but he also feels a certain amount of anxiety pushing him to find a "real job" as his thirtieth birthday is coming up. Torn between a simple, well-paying job, and

becoming a Broadway sell-out, Larson finds himself at a crossroads. What the audience knows that he does not, is that Larson dies of an aortic aneurysm before he ever gets to see his newly written musical *Rent* become one of the most renowned Broadway musicals of all time.

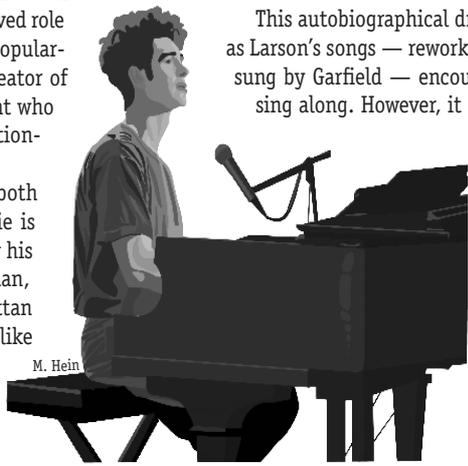
This autobiographical drama is charming, upbeat, and playful, as Larson's songs — reworked by director Lin Manuel-Miranda and sung by Garfield — encourage you to dance on your couch and sing along. However, it is also the unfortunate and tragic tale of an artist who was just a day shy of getting everything he wanted before his untimely death, as well as a man whose best friend and girlfriend ultimately disappeared from his life.

Miranda's movie is nothing short of show-stopping and incredibly lovable. With a highly relatable main character, it was easy to insert myself into the film — questioning and hating Larson

at times, then sympathizing with him and marveling at his creative genius. Additionally, Larson's mid-life crisis, panic over getting older, and fixation on success had me finding a piece of myself in the meta-musical. To put things simply, if you have ever questioned your existence or the meaning of life at 3 a.m., buckle up and grab some tissues because this is the movie for you!

Larson's tale is told impeccably and with immense consideration. His songs are enhanced through the movie's visual representations — differing from mere audio or literature as the audience is immersed in Larson's mind. However, the film is so much more than a rendition of Larson's musicals. It explores him as a person, not just a talented playwright. Larson describes the ticking noise he metaphorically hears all around him as signaling that his opportunities for success are soon to boom. *Tick, Tick... Boom!* encapsulates the raw trials, tribulations, and triumphs of producing art and dedicating themselves to their passions.

With exceptional cinematography, dedicated and talented actors, and a moving, thought-provoking story, *Tick, Tick... Boom!* is an inspiring and transcendent must-watch for all, including those who claim to hate musicals.



M. Hein

Sells gushes over Disney film Encanto

by **Lucy Sells**

Media Production Editor

Although it opened in theaters on Nov. 24, 2021, the newest animated Disney movie, *Encanto*, has continued to grow in popularity since its release to Disney Plus a month later. The animated film received great reviews from critics and watchers alike, with a 91 percent on Rotten Tomatoes. Making over 215 million dollars worldwide, *Encanto* was the highest-grossing animated movie of 2021. Nominated for three Golden Globe categories, the film won the award for Best Animated Feature Film.

Set in Colombia, *Encanto* begins with Alma Madrigal (Maria Cecilia Boero), her husband, and their infant triplets fleeing their peaceful village. When Alma's husband dies, the Madrigal family is blessed with a magical candle, which grants the Madrigals a magical house, and when each new child in the family turns five years old, they gain a magic power. The Madrigal family helps bless their town with each of their gifts. When she turns five, Mirabel Madrigal (Stephanie Beatriz) does not receive a magical power. Mirabel spends the movie trying to find her role in a family where she is the only person without special abilities. Although the magical Madrigals seem perfect from the outside, the family members have spent years

cracking under the pressure of being perfect. Mirabel must help heal the family and teach them their true worth.

Encanto's story is brilliantly written and captivating, and its music is unmatched. The talented Lin Manuel Miranda, who wrote *Hamilton*, *In The Heights*, *Moana*, and *Tick, Tick, Boom!*, created the incredible songs on the *Encanto* album. Drawing inspiration from salsa and hip-hop, Miranda uses traditional Colombian instruments for each song. The *Encanto* soundtrack has even overtaken Adele at the number one spot on *Billboards*' top 200. As of Jan. 10, one of *Encanto*'s numbers, "We Don't Talk About Bruno," is the most-streamed song on Spotify. Not only are the songs wonderful, but the score, by Germaine Franco, is incredible. The music fits perfectly, enhancing the scenes without overpowering them.

Encanto shatters Hollywood stereotypes of a violent Colombia and highlights the beauty of the country with expert detail and stunning scenes. With strong, diverse, and authentic Latin characters, *Encanto* brings much needed representation to the media. The film features a talented, entirely Colombian cast. Disney remarkably portrays breaking the cycle of generational trauma in families, specifically of Latin heritage. Using the different family members' powers, songs, personalities, and other wonderful symbols and imagery, *Encanto* brings light to a deep issue while simultaneously making the movie entertaining and kid-friendly.

I highly recommend *Encanto* to any person of any age; you can still view it in theaters, on Disney Plus, or on Amazon Prime Video.



N. Chen

All The Young Dudes is a must read

by **Kate Gruetter and Sarah Gouldrup**

Culture Editor and People Editor

If you're looking for a 526,000 word, 1,200 page fanfiction to get your tears flowing and your heart racing, *All The Young Dudes* (ATYD) by MsKingBean89 is the piece of literature for you. Published on Archive of Our Own and finished in 2018, the fanfiction (fanfic for short) is set in the Harry Potter universe, and follows the early life of the Marauders, a group which includes Harry's father James Potter, the infamous Sirius Black, the former professor Remus Lupin, and the traitor Peter Pettigrew.

Beginning with the Marauders first year at Hogwarts and ending before the events of the Order of the Phoenix, the fanfic details the origins of the Marauders friendship, as well as the relationships they have with students who are only briefly introduced in the Harry Potter series. This includes Regulus Black, Lily Potter, and Marlene McKinnon, all overlooked figures in the original series, but influential and important characters in ATYD.

The fanfic also helps to better explain the Marauders' dynamic and personalities, giving Harry Potter fans a better understanding of the characters; an example is Peter's transition from a close friend of James to his involvement in James' demise. It explains Sirius's choice to distance himself from the noble House of Black, and how Remus became a Hogwarts teacher.

More important than all of this, however, are the relationships depicted in the fanfic. Despite J.K. Rowling's original aversion to including any LGBTQ+ representation in the novels, *All the Young Dudes* invites readers

into a world filled with queer characters growing up in a less than welcoming environment. Through Remus's narration, the fanfic details the struggles of coming to terms with your sexuality, especially when you are figuring it out at a slower pace than your friends. After a summer of exploring his sexuality and realizing he's gay, Remus' return to Hogwarts during his fifth year introduces a

whole new layer to the already-complex fanfic: a friends to lovers plotline. Redefining the word "slowburn," the fanfiction has readers at the edge of their seats as Remus Lupin and Sirius Black slowly grow closer and move past a platonic friendship. Over the course of their fifth and sixth years, the two ultimately confess their feelings for each other, becoming "wolfstar," a fanmade ship name.

The queer representation isn't limited to Remus and Sirius, as the inclusion of characters from different parts of the community elevates the fanfic from a traditional retelling of a popular, canon ship, to a story that intertwines universal queer experiences into the plot. These experiences are exhibited in a multitude of characters. For example, one of the main characters in the fanfic, Marlene, is gay and her relationship with her girlfriend Yaz is highlighted throughout the story. The author also establishes a character Christopher, who, through Remus' point of view, the reader watches come to terms with his sexuality and grow comfortable in his skin, especially when the two boys find solace in each other as the only two queer students they know.

Whether you liked Harry Potter or not, *All the Young Dudes* is a story filled with camaraderie, hope, tragedy, and misfits that's meant for anyone who's ever been a teenager.



N. Chen

El Gato Recommends: Fingers Crossed, Queer Eye, and more

If you love heart-warming reality television as much as I do, then you should add Netflix's *Queer Eye* season six to your watchlist. Like the previous seasons, the show follows five queer men, Antoni Porowski, Tan France, Karamo Brown, Bobby Berk, and Jonathan Van Ness, as they give complete strangers total makeovers. Each member of the group has their own specialty and works to improve the life of whoever is on the show, changing both their appearance and their mentality. In the sixth season of *Queer Eye*, the self-proclaimed Fab Five take on Texas. Though they had to take extra precautions due to the pandemic, the show demonstrates that people's lives can continue and that progress is possible despite tough conditions. Watching an episode of *Queer Eye* will never fail to put a smile on your face or tears in your eyes, so go check it out!

- **Alia Arafah**, Opinion Editor

On Jan. 5, up and coming musician Lauren Spencer-Smith released her long awaited song "Fingers Crossed", which instantly soared to the #1 spot on the charts. Months prior to its release, Spencer-Smith went viral on TikTok when she shared a snippet of the song, quickly acquiring millions of fans anxious for the song's release. Some fans were slightly let down because the original

demos she released on TikTok featured a more angry melody, whereas the released version comes across as calmer. Regardless, the song is beautifully crafted, and to anyone looking for the perfect break-up anthem, this song is calling your name.

- **Michaela Thimot**, Culture Editor

If you're looking for a heart-wrenching, feel-good novel, look no further than "Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe" by Benjamin Alire Sáenz, a complex coming of age story that delves into the loneliness and confusion that emerge during one's teen years. The story unravels through the eyes of Dante, a young boy who struggles to find his identity as he grows up, and the beginnings of his friendship with Aristotle. The two become close as Dante learns what it's like to let someone in and communicate what he's feeling. As the years go by, Dante discovers what it means to have a person who is there for you through any and

all situations. Exploring family trauma, secrets, self identity, and sexuality, this novel details a tragic, yet hopeful story of two boys and a friendship worth keeping.

- **Sarah Gouldrup**, People Editor

On Dec. 17, 2021, Marvel Studios released a teaser trailer for the upcoming Marvel film *Doctor Strange: Multiverse of Madness*, alongside the film *Spider-Man: No Way Home*. Featured in the second end credit scene of *NWH*, the trailer included major characters from the current Phase 4 such as Wanda Maximoff and Doctor Strange. The teaser hinted at a possible dark turn for Strange, perhaps an evil variant, or version, of himself he must face. It also portrayed Wanda as the Scarlet Witch, a character featured in the original comics, possibly toying with black magic. The movie's expected release is May 6, so make sure to mark your calendars and clear your schedule so you're sure not to miss it.

- **Kate Gruetter**, Culture Editor



M. Hein

- Gibson pleads for bug kindness
- Dennon details her writer's block

HUMOR

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Gibson begs you to be kinder to the bugs in your life

by Brynn Gibson

News Editor

Once someone called me a pacifist after I took a spider outside instead of killing it. That really resonated with me. So, as one does, I adopted that as a personality trait and will never shut up about it. If you are the type of person who would squash a bug, all I have to say is that I hope someone does the same to you.

I love bugs; they are so cool. I was the kid who saved bees from drowning in the pool and imprisoned roly pollies in Tupperware. I still go outside in the rain to find snails, and I feel bad when I have to kill the fleas that crawl off my cat and onto my bed.

It's human decency to respect living creatures. I literally do not care if you were bitten by a black widow as a child. If you find an insect in your house, grow up and ask your dad to take it outside. You aren't special. I too have had bad experiences with insects, but that doesn't stop me.

When I was six I was ambushed by a gang of cockroaches. It was a summer night in Hawaii, and I was running around on a golf course when I stopped for just a brief moment.

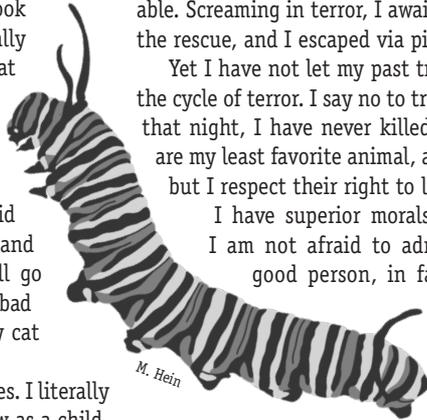
I glanced down and watched as a swarm of black cockroaches approached me from all sides. I was barefoot, puppies exposed, completely vulnerable. Screaming in terror, I awaited my demise. My dad came to the rescue, and I escaped via piggyback.

Yet I have not let my past traumas affect me. I stopped the cycle of terror. I say no to trauma. In the 11 years since that night, I have never killed a single cockroach. They are my least favorite animal, and I am terrified of them, but I respect their right to live.

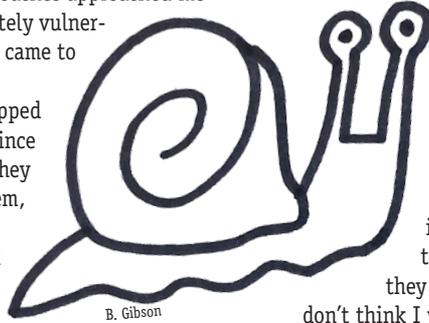
I have superior morals to everyone else and I am not afraid to admit it. I am such a good person, in fact, that I relentlessly

bullied a kid in elementary school for stepping on a worm on purpose. He absolutely deserved it and I would do it again with zero hesitation.

You would think that my heightened moral compass would aid me in my selection of friends. Apparently not. On the matter of bug rights, my friend, **Victoria Anderson** stated, "If there is a fly buzzing around my room I am going to kill it." This is coming from a member of the Environmental Outreach Club. People are so fake these days.



M. Hein

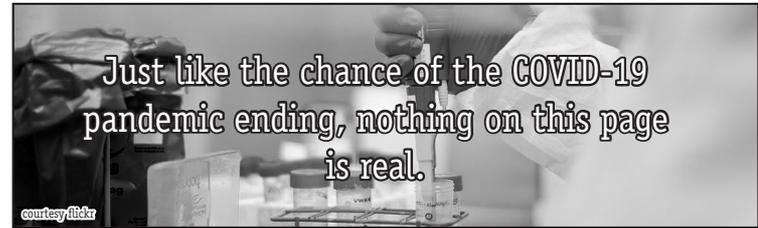


B. Gibson

Brianne Stuermer had a better response: "One time I found a caterpillar on a pumpkin patch field trip, I prayed to God that it wouldn't get eaten by a worm. I like to think it lived a long and happy life and died of natural causes."

I am not perfect. Last summer I helplessly watched a cockroach drown in Victoria's pool because I was too petrified to do anything about it. It haunts me to this day. However, both of the people mentioned before were present, and they too refused to remove it from the pool and I don't think I will ever forgive them for that.

To conclude, I am better than all of you because I'm not afraid of spiders and used to pet bees in fifth grade.



Just like the chance of the COVID-19 pandemic ending, nothing on this page is real.

courtesy flickr

Davidson raves about "AMAZEBALLS" MINION RUSH

by Cara Davidson

Center Editor

I had an amazeballs childhood. Like really, it lowkey hit. Of course I had hard times — I experienced the epic highs and lows of elementary school wall ball. From getting my lunch thrown over the fence in kindergarten to a second grader destroying my favorite bouncy ball in fourth grade, I definitely experienced some true tragedy during my time blossoming into middle school-hood.

I always had people who supported me, but people are temporary. There is only one thing that truly stuck with me through it all, something that would never hurt me. And that thing is Minion Rush.

I can still remember the devastating times before Minion Rush was released. I would sit in silence, contemplating my very existence after school — you know, as third graders do. The people in my life like to refer to the tragedy that was 2012, as BMR: Before Minion Rush. BMR, I was a listless child; I never laughed, I never sang. All I did was be sad.

And then, it happened. All at once, my life was turned upside down. On June 10, 2013, Minion Rush was released — along with the biggest flood of serotonin Cara Davidson's brain has ever encountered. Writing about it makes me flustered, so flustered in fact that I have begun to write in third person.

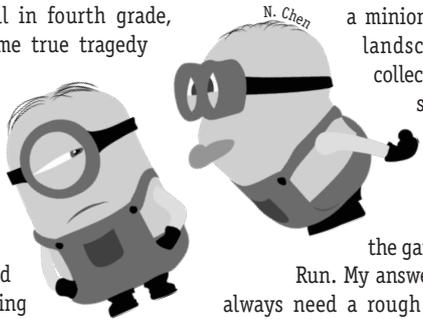
So, Minion Rush. What is it? If you're asking yourself this, you might as well fill out a questionnaire on whether or not you have depression because I refuse to believe that people can be happy without the pure serotonin that is Minion Rush. For those of you who are not fortunate enough to

have ever played this magnificent game, I first just want to clarify that I am so sorry. Please contact me for moral support as I obviously know what I'm talking about based on my dependency on a game based on a children's movie that was released when I was five years old. Minion Rush is a game that you can download on your phone where you are

a minion running along the various landscapes coded into the app, collecting bananas and being, well, slay. Can you imagine anything better than being a minion? Because I can't.

Some amateurs may compare Minion Rush to the game Subway Surfers, or Temple Run. My answer to this comparison is: you always need a rough draft. Subway Surfers and Temple Run may SEEM like the exact same game, but this is just not true. In these two games, an antagonist is chasing you. I don't know about anyone else, but all this does for me is causes me heart palpitations. Sorry, Temple Run programmers, but I don't really enjoy being chased by a massive and horrendous-looking monkey, it's just not something that I like to do. Minion Rush HAS a goal. To collect more bananas, and to unlock new levels and avatars. Who doesn't want more bananas (as a minion) and who DOESN'T want to be "Skeleton Bob" minion? (I have yet to unlock Skeleton Bob and it's really keeping me going).

Minion Rush is the answer to all of your problems. Dog died? Minion Rush. Never felt the embrace of a woman? Minion Rush. Short? Minion Rush. There is no problem that Minion Rush cannot solve, and I live by that. There is a surplus of voids that friends, therapy, food, or sleep CAN'T fill that Minion Rush CAN fill. And again, I live by that. This has been nice, goodbye. #NotSponsored #Minion #Dash.



N. Chen

Morley scarily stabs her thumb

by Emmy Morley

Media Production Editor

Every year, I make a vision board. Pictures, glitter, gel pens, the works. Usually it makes for a pleasant afternoon of me-time. This new year, however, my experience was quite harrowing.

It was all fun and games until I ran out of thumbtacks for my pictures. But I'm an adaptable woman. Resourceful, even. So I decided to substitute the tacks with a stapler. After rifling through my drawers I found a mini, pink, glittery stapler no larger than my pointer finger, which I thought it would do just fine. So here I am, in my fuzzy socks and hoodie, jamming to Taylor Swift's hits, when the stapler jams. As "New Year's Day" starts playing, I wrestle with my stapler to the sweetest song on Reputation. I press the stapler into the cork board with the might of a gym-bro fresh of a heartbreak and pumped full of pre-workout. No luck. I adjust my grip and try again. Goose egg. Nada. Finally, I just slam that sucker full force into the board and it works! I got the stapler to staple. Except I managed to miss the entirety of my cork board and instead stapled directly through my right thumb.

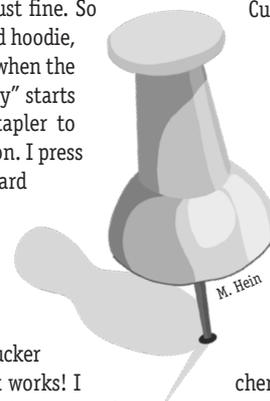
I stared at the thumb. The thumb stared back at me. I felt nothing at first. And then I felt A LOT. Like Mark Watney in that one scene in the Martian, I prepared to extract the thing from my own skin. I took a deep breath and pulled. No movement. I used my acrylic nails like a pair of tongs and yanked. I was free. I would find out later this satan of school supplies had likely lodged itself in my bone, hence the resistance. But at the moment, I didn't care. I was free!

Then a new issue arose. My thumb began gushing more than my grandmother at Thanksgiving. I swear I could feel the pints leaving my body. The Red Cross could have come in with buckets and made their blood drive goals on me alone. In a matter of seconds, my room became the set of a particularly gory episode of CSI. Blood everywhere. On my new fuzzy socks. My desk. Disaster.

I dashed down the hall and shoved my hand under the faucet so the cool water could soothe the pain and wash away the blood. There was so much blood I was genuinely concerned Edward Cullen might emerge from the drain with an appetite. I caught my breath, put pressure on my wound sustained in battle, and began to search for a band aid. Turns out, I live with the most ill-prepared family in case of an emergency. Not a single bandaid in sight. Not even a Nemo Band-Aid. As I previously stated, I'm a resourceful woman, so I wrapped my thumb in a solid inch of toilet paper and secured it with good old Scotch Tape.

I entered my room again to find the cherry on top of the entire situation — the red, bloody bow that tied this whole disaster together. The vision board I had spent the last four hours on was covered in drops of blood. And you know what, dear reader? I hung that sucker up anyway. Smack dab in the middle of my wall. Why, you ask? Symbolism. Does it look like liberal art student's failed modern art final? Yes. Will I proudly display it despite this? Yes.

I would hope my bloody board is not symbolism for the year to come, but instead a gory goodbye to a long, arduous 2021. Needless to say I will take more care when it comes to handling sparkly, pink, mini staplers.



M. Hein

Sells judges you based on your favorite month

by Lucy Sells

Media Production Editor

It's the new year! Time to go through every month again. People have their preferences of which months they love and hate, but mine are correct. Get ready to face the cold hard truth.

January: If your favorite month is January, you genuinely scare me and I do not like you. I cannot comprehend your way of life, but I am not sure I want to dive into that mess. If you like January, either it is your birth month, or you have many issues (Probably both).

February: If February is your favorite month, you are incorrect. February is just kinda boring. If you like the month, you are probably a hopeless romantic or a Pisces, but same thing.

March: Whose favorite month is March? I have never heard anyone say, "Gosh I just love March!" The only significant event is St. Patrick's Day, which is not nearly enough to balance out the crushing weight of being so far from summer and December break. You don't exist, right?

April: I am definitely biased because myself and many other incredible and gorgeous people are born in April. Having April as your favorite month is uncommon, but not a bad choice. Honestly, April isn't that cool, but at least it isn't January.

May: If you like May, you are a top-tier person. I associate May with great memories, and it is the fun, non-finals, part of ending school for the year. The only downside to May is that there are no holidays. If May floats your boat, I feel like you are a granola person who most likely likes oat milk and dogs.

June: Ya basic. We get it, you like summer and probably go somewhere fancy every year. June is like July's weird younger sibling that is always following July and its friends around, trying to join their group. If you like June, I can understand why, but that doesn't mean I respect your decision.

July: Congratulations! July is a great month to love. It is the perfect summer month, with no priorities. The beautiful summer sandwich between June and August. You probably prefer the beach over the mountains and post about your açai bowls, but those things aren't necessarily bad.

August: If you like August, why? WHY? August is hot and sticky, but you can't cool down. It is back to school and anxiety. There is nothing to look forward to and no end. No holidays and no happiness. At least you are better than January lovers.

September: Do you really like September or did you just choose a random month to be quirky? I guess fall is pretty cool, but otherwise, everything is bad. It still feels like the beginning of the school year, but just more work. September is mid.

October: If your favorite month is October, I love you. You are way too cool for me, but I humbly ask for your hand in marriage. You definitely like October for Halloween and that's awesome. I feel like you smell really good and probably like apples. You are a great human being.

November: If your favorite month is November, I can see why, but I am flabbergasted at the same time. Thanksgiving can be cool if you want to just ignore the history and eat the food. College kids start to come home which can be great. Overall, November is a pretty mediocre month.

December: Although this is the most basic month to love, you aren't wrong. Everyone is in good spirits, there is snow and rain, and family comes to town. There are so many holidays to celebrate and so many warm drinks to try. You might be a little boring, but that is okay.



N. Chen

DENNON ELABORATES ON WRITERS' BLOCK

by Macy Dennon
Sports Editor

Hello. I am thankful that I am even starting this article. That is right. I have been stumped about what to write about since I raised my hand, saying I would write a humor article this month. I will lay out my five stages of grief of, in this case, writers' block.

First stage: Overconfidence. When I raised my hand, I was so confident I would get inspiration for something funny from my past experiences. But nothing, and I mean nothing, came to mind. I overlooked this issue, still confident that the world would magically give me an idea in the next few days. This was when I learned that magic is as real as my love life (nonexistent), leading me to stage two.

Second stage: Trying to find an idea. This is when my mind goes through the process of viewing every memory, just like in the movie Inside Out. The Joy of my brain is trying to find these funny moments while Sadness just keeps getting in the way, but that is a story for another day. If only Bing Bong would come and save the day, but Bing Bong dies in the middle of the movie. But sadly, I once again have no luck in the finding ideas department. Seriously. I think the things controlling my brain and

memory took a day off to watch the new season of Euphoria because they are nowhere to be found.

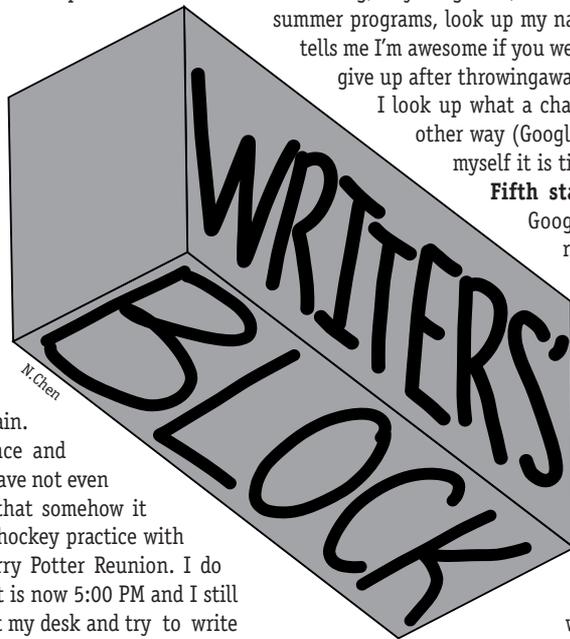
Third stage: Ignoring the problem. At this point, I just pretend that I do not have a deadline coming up, and I do not have to write a humorous article by the end of the weekend. All I have convinced myself to worry about is my Plato Project ideas (which, to be honest, are also going through these same five stages). Now that I am thinking about it, this might be a bigger problem than I once thought. Anyways... I proceed to put off this article, leading us to the morning of Jan. 9. This article is due by the end of today, yet I have not started writing it. Here comes the overconfidence again.

Fourth stage: Resurfacing overconfidence and distractions. It is now the day of, and I still have not even touched this article. Once again, I believe that somehow it will work itself out in the end. I go to field hockey practice with no worry and come home to watch the Harry Potter Reunion. I do not know where those five hours went, but it is now 5:00 PM and I still haven't found an idea. I decide to sit down at my desk and try to write

something, anything. But, instead, guess what I do. I start researching summer programs, look up my name in the Urban Dictionary (it basically tells me I'm awesome if you were wondering), try to clean my room, but give up after throwing away one gum wrapper — progress!. Finally, I look up what a chair would look like if our knees bent the other way (Google it. You won't). Now it is 6:30 PM. I tell myself it is time to start.

Fifth stage: Utter panic. Did I trick you into Googling it? Is it not that mind-boggling, right? I was kind of disappointed. Anyways let us talk about stage five. It is crunch time, time to go. Yet, my mind is still BLANK. My heart is going as fast as Busta Rhymes in the song "Look at Me Now." DING DONG. The stress has arrived. It is now time to grind out an entire article, and that is what I did. To be honest I really faked it till I made it.

This has been a week in the brain of one Macy Dennon. I hope you enjoyed your stay. Now I have to go write two more articles. Wish me luck.



ARAFEH ADDRESSES HER CHICKENS

by Alia Arafeh
Opinion Editor

If you know me, you know I complain quite often about my brother's pair of cockatiels. Though the cockatiels get all the attention, my chickens (well, my mom's chickens, since she is the only person who takes care of them and remembers they exist) are just as weird. It is time I give the chickens their time to shine.

There are two groups of chickens in my backyard: the pandemic babies, and the ancient ones. Since the old ones, if permitted, would peck the babies to death, they have to be separated. Boomie and Zoomie are the two pandemic children, and they act like it. They were raised inside with our full attention, pooping all over the carpet and peeping to no end. I am almost sure Boomie has some sort of undiagnosed twitching problem, and Zoomie is not exactly comfortable with her gender identity. Since there are no roosters around, Zoomie cockadoodledoos at all hours. Apparently that's a thing they do? It is the first I've ever heard of hens screaming just 'cause there are no men around. She needs to be more confident in herself as a woman I think.

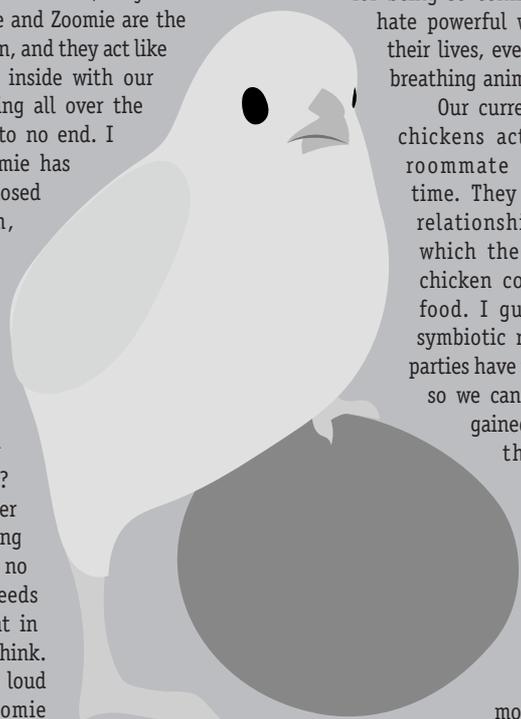
While Zoomie is loud and outspoken, Boomie has both a twitching problem and paranoia. She lays eggs (unfertilized, obviously) and sits on them for months. It's called brooding but I prefer to call it stupidity. Boomie, babe, those eggs are never going to hatch. Not to mention, the eggs she lays are not particularly large. The best size comparison is a Cadbury

chocolate egg. Yes, they're that small but not as delicious.

As dysfunctional as the little chickens are, they are no less crazy than their predecessors. In the past, my chickens, collectively, have eaten a whole rat, a dead baby bird, grass out of each other's mouths, raw chicken (by jumping onto a fire pit and snatching a piece), cooked chicken, both wet and dry cat food, and more. They also frequently beat on the cat in addition to stealing his meals. I cannot explain their behavior or their food choices, but I do have to respect them for being so confident. I can never hate powerful women just living their lives, even if they're eating breathing animals.

Our current group of older chickens actually took in a roommate for a period of time. They had a symbiotic relationship with a rat in which the rat lived in the chicken coop and ate their food. I guess since it is a symbiotic relationship, both parties have to gain something, so we can say the chickens gained forgiveness from the rat for their ancestors having eaten one of the rat's relatives. I would imagine it turned out to be a nice living situation.

I have many more chicken stories that I am holding back simply because of word count, but all I have to say is you should totally invest in some chickens! Follow mine and Oprah Winfrey's example and get your own group of egg-laying women. You can disregard the cannibalism and the generally carnivorous nature of the chickens — I'm almost sure they draw the line at human meat.



Gruetter reviews book tropes

by Kate Gruetter
Culture Editor

Holy trinitities exist in all aspects of the world, including Christianity, Glee, and Captain America and the Winter Soldier. But one that has gone unacknowledged is the holy trinity of privilege allowed to readers: knowledge, judgment, and superiority. These benefits all relate to each other: knowledge provided by reading leads to intellectual superiority, resulting in judgment of non-readers who are deemed inferior. Therefore, for the continuation of this article I claim the privilege of judgment, one I will exert as I examine popular, intriguing, and obscure book tropes.

One popular trope is that of enemies to lovers, a trope I consume like pizza and enjoy like crappy rom coms. This trope is made for those who lack a love life, yet still believe we can find a partner. Forming a connection based solely on hate, without emotional vulnerability, appeals to those of us romantics who hate the actual risk of romance.

Friends to lovers was made by publishers for readers with trust issues because falling in love with your best friend doesn't require any sort of risk or uncertainty. The trope is usually the most predictable, but tiringly irritating, taking detours of jealousy, separation, and questioning — usually resembling a path of friends to lovers to enemies to dogs to lovers to siblings to friends to lovers. Don't get me wrong, the friends to lovers trope is cool,

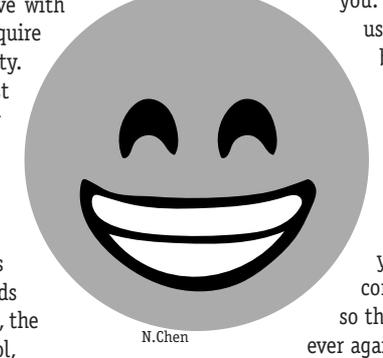
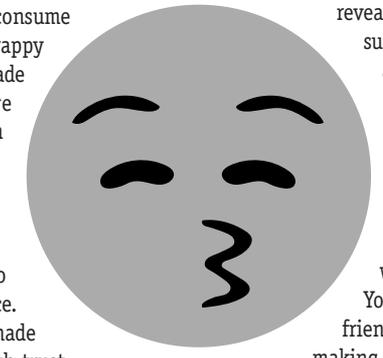
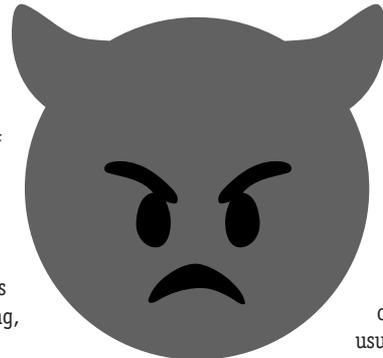
but it is made for boring people who like boring, predictable love stories.

Now this next trope is and always will be my absolute favorite. It combines the zing of enemies to lovers with the understanding of one another shown in friends to lovers. It is none other than the angsty, dramatic, fantastic, enemies (or friends, not picky) to lovers to enemies. This trope almost always ends in a return to lovers, but the witty comebacks and dramatic encounters as a result of romantic history and betrayal really rounds out the storyline.

The forced proximity trope is made for readers who refuse to make the first move and therefore rely on setting or circumstance. This plotline is usually the climax of a relationship, and almost always ends in emotional reveals that leave one of the characters supporting and caring about the other a bit more than they did previously. Every time this trope comes shows up in a novel, I go absolutely feral with excitement.

The found family trope was made for all of you depressed literature kids who have bad relationships with your own family members. You are either overly attached to your friend's parents, or you have no friends, making this trope even more attractive to you. This trope is innocent, happy, and usually gives characters who have been through hell a bit of a break. That is until one of the characters involved in the found family dies a gruesome death. But that's not what we are discussing right now.

If you like the Mafia trope, I hope every book you read gives you a paper cut and the blood completely drowns the book in red so the words never see the light of day ever again.



GOMEZ OBSERVES DRUNK WEDDING

by Maya Gomez
Sports Editor

Let me preface this by making it clear that I do not endorse underage individuals putting themselves in situations where alcohol is present. However, there are environments where drinking is always going to be a common theme, namely weddings. This does not necessarily mean that you have to participate in the drinking in order to have fun. Because, truth be told, being one of the only underage people in a room full of drunk adults is the funniest thing ever.

Now it is common knowledge that alcohol tends to impair one's typical abilities; minds turn to fog and legs turn to Jello. You know that too many cocktails were involved in the mix when Aunt Debra starts trying to grind on her 60 year-old husband on the dance floor. You'd think you can simply remove yourself from the situation, right? Wrong. I mean, anyone over the age of 21 had to have drank at least three glasses of wine before daring to try the running man dance in four inch heels.

Tread carefully though; laugh a little too loud and that one girl may try to challenge you to a dance battle (Tequila edition). So, just move rooms. Try going to get food. Ooh! Wrong move. Remember that thing called "the munchies?" Because I sure do, and so does the catering staff. Those poor, underpaid employees who are having to stop Uncle Gary from eating the entire plate of stuffed mushrooms while

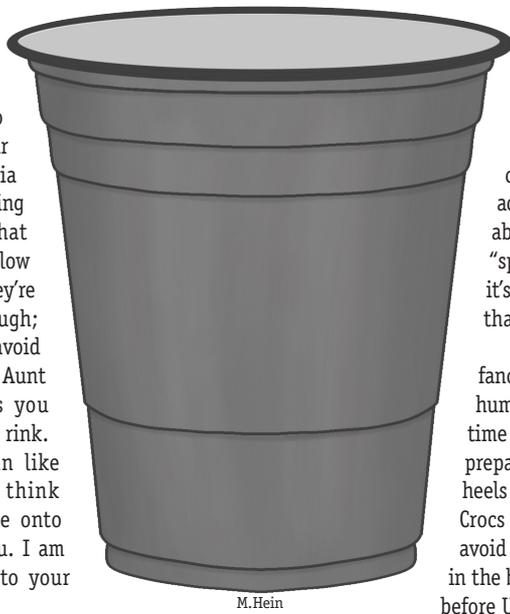
he repeatedly claims that they "mix well with the champagne," are probably trying just as hard as you to keep a straight face.

Maybe try moving to the sushi bar? Uh oh, your journey to the California rolls are undoubtedly going to be interrupted by that one couple trying to swallow each other's faces like they're in Grease. Be careful though; as you turn around to avoid the PDA, you might see Aunt Debra running towards you like she's in a wrestling rink. This is your cue to run like the wind! Don't even think about trying to take me onto the dance floor with you. I am not, in fact, the whip to your nae-nae, Debra.

Quick, do a U-turn and slide past Rizzo and Kenickie as fast as you can! Now where could you go for some peace and quiet?

You'd think the bathroom, right? Well you thought wrong. The second you step inside the pink painted walls of hell, there's no turning back. Now here's my experience going into the ladies room: you're either stared at by older women or tween girls, both of whom are judging your clothing choices. There are two roads you could go down. You choose acknowledgment? The tweens will start gossiping with you about the bride and the 30-somethings will ask about the "special friends in your life." You choose silence? Just kidding, it's the same outcome! You'd better get ready to overshare because that's the only way you're getting out of that bathroom alive.

By the end of the night, you're probably exhausted and the fancy heels left you with more blisters than you thought was humanly possible, but you had a good time. And hey, maybe next time you'll have an even better time, now that you know what to prepare for. Your new wedding packing list consists of; a pair high heels so you can tell Debra that you "didn't bring dancing shoes," Crocs to change into the minute she's out of sight, sunglasses to avoid awkward eye contact with the pre-teens and gossiping women in the bathroom, and a ziplock bag to sneak stuffed mushrooms into before Uncle Gary snatches them all.



M.Hein

- Pearman excels at soccer and football
- Martins-Juncker channels her talent

PEOPLE

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RAZA LEADS STUDENTS ON ROBOTICS TEAM AND IN CLUBS

by Angela Sheu

People Editor

Throughout his time at LGHS, junior **Faris Raza** has displayed incredible initiative and leadership not only within his academics and extracurriculars, but also through his efforts to shape the well-being of the campus community.



As a Programming Lead on the LGHS robotics team, he mainly works on robot software. He manages projects and delegates tasks for the programming sub-team, which is important because “without any code, a robot can’t really do anything at all.” Besides controlling the robot, programming students also work on scouting, or analyzing data from other teams, and computer vision, or sensing objects on the field during competitions. The team has not attended competitions for two years

due to the pandemic, so Raza really enjoyed a small group Hackathon the team did last year, explaining, “I was the only programmer on the team, and I felt an actual impact through what I did.”

Raza applies his interest in STEM not only in the robotics’ team environment, but also on his individual projects in Advanced Science Research (ASR). Raza is currently studying how mutations in the SARS-CoV-2 affect its binding to human cells’ receptor proteins, causing it to become more contagious. He is in the process of writing a research paper, which he noted is “a really unique opportunity.” Last year, he made a glove which used accelerometers, gyroscopes, and different flex sensors to track hand movement in real time to translate ASL to speech. He utilized knowledge about sensors he gained from robotics and finished with a low-cost hardware project.

From the start of his high school career, science and math classes have engaged and inspired Raza. One of his favorite classes was Honors Biology; he recalled, “I thought I was just going to be a typical CS kid who is only interested in physics and math, but Honors Bio really impressed me.” The class pushed him to his boundaries and inspired him to learn more about bioethics and biotechnology. One of his favorite current classes is AP Calculus BC because of “how fast paced

the curriculum goes” while allowing him to “still comprehend it.” Additionally, he found that calculus topics are central to many other parts of STEM, such as physics and computer science.

Raza has always been interested in being a leader, which he ties to his interest in geopolitics. He enjoys taking a leading role in helping other students on campus as president of Cats Homework Help. The club provides free tutoring, a purpose he considers “really beneficial and also enriching.” He is also a member of the peer-to-peer group Providing Awareness for Wildcat Students (PAWS). He was drawn to the group because it allows students to “come together and bring light to lesser-known topics from the school, as well as the world.” He also noted, “a lot of students might not have much interest in reading stuff, so I think student publishing is an accessible way for students to be more involved.”

He appreciates the opportunities he has accessed throughout his high school career, saying, “even within Silicon Valley, some schools have robotics, but very few have something like ASR or peer-to-peer groups.” He advised, “it’s really important to take advantage of all the opportunities we have at the high school. Explore different clubs and different programs. It’ll definitely be worth your time.”



photos courtesy Raza

Dicicco takes to the skies

by Macy Dennon

Sports Editor

A student pilot and current sophomore at Los Gatos High, **Delaney Dicicco** will undoubtedly impress you with her quick-witted comebacks and determination to achieve her goals. This student found her home in the sky at a young age, picking up the skill of flying since before she can remember.



courtesy D. Dicicco

Dicicco reminisced on her flight experiences, noting that she cannot remember a time when flying was not a significant part of her life. Her dad, a commercial pilot for United Airlines, taught her everything she knows. He inspired Dicicco’s accomplishments, as he encouraged her to pick up flying at a young age. She said, “there are even photos of me at three years old flying a plane [alongside my dad].” She is very thankful for her father, and she stated, “My dad’s my dude. Everybody has their person; my dad is mine.”

Her dedication to flying became apparent when she was a freshman in 2020. A typical day for this pilot-in-training started at 5 AM, when she and her dad would drive down to their hangar by Hollister Airpark. They would fly before school started,

after which Dicicco would go home to take her online classes; sometimes, she would even stay at her hangar to complete school. Dicicco says that “normally after school, we would fly again in the Cessna 120 or Cessna 180.” When asked if she wants to be a pilot one day, Dicicco says, “it would be a really cool job as I love flying so much; but honestly, I am going wherever life takes me.”

On her free days, she likes to go to the hangar and get in as many in-flight hours as she can; before Dec. 12, 2021, this was in preparation for her first solo flight. To solo, or fly by yourself, you need enough in-flight time to feel comfortable in the air, in addition to being at least sixteen years old. Dicicco was so confident about taking the next step in her piloting career that she chose to solo on her sixteenth birthday.

On Dec. 12, 2021, Dicicco took her first solo flight. She explained that “all of my hard work paid off. I had the people I love and care about watching me.” Dicicco could legally fly a plane alone before she could drive a car by herself, an impressive achievement for a high school student or teen in general. Her favorite moments from that day were the feeling of taking off, lifting all of the pressure off of her shoulders and rewatching the video of her father’s reaction. She said, “his big smile made me so happy.”

Flying is a massive part of Dicicco’s life, but she balances a job and schoolwork alongside her flight studies. Dicicco studies almost every day, flies at least two days a week, works four days at her waitress job and goes to school five days a week. She plans on getting her pilot’s license, or private pilot’s license, in 2022 when she turns seventeen. The license allows you to carry passengers. She says that she is “excited for that next step,” but for right now, she is delighted with what she has achieved.

Dicicco’s positive attitude will be sure to put a smile on your face, but her accomplishments as just a 16-year-old are already awe-inspiring.

Pearman kicks off the new year

by Dana Hathaway

Sports Editor

LGHS sophomore **Sam Pearman** has already found success in his athletic career, academic work, and social life. Despite not playing any high school sports during his freshman year, this star kicker and center back has found a home within the LGHS soccer and football programs — both of which, according to Pearman, “[make him] love high school.”

Soccer, which Pearman has played “pretty much since [he] can remember,” is where he first found a passion for sports. After moving from Kentucky to Los Gatos in the eighth grade, he joined an extremely competitive local soccer team, Santa Clara Sporting, where he participated in numerous tournaments and played with his team as a National Premier League (NPL) team. However, the pandemic brought an unexpected halt to his first full year with the team. While he rejoined Sporting and went to youth nationals, COVID rules prevented him from competing with both his club team and the high school. Thankfully, due to rule changes Pearman has a chance to pursue the sport at the high school level this year as the only sophomore on the Wildcats Varsity soccer team. When asked about his role on the team as a starting center back, Pearman explains that “I have one of the best views of the field, so I can tell people where to go and be in terms of their position because I’m kind of one of the last lines of defense.”

Pearman’s other main sport is football. He used the legs soccer gave him to kick 56 points for the LGHS Junior Varsity team this year, in addition to three points for Varsity during playoffs. He explained that he’s only been kicking “this season, but I learned I could kick back in 2020 and 2021 when quarantine was going on...I wanted to learn if I could play football so I went out one day and tried it by myself.” Pearman noted that while he has “a little bit of free safety and receiver training,” it is clear that his significant talent lies in

kicking. Pearman summed up his season, saying, “I think it went really well. I got to meet a lot of new people that are sophomores, and it was really just overall fun. I enjoyed pretty much every minute of it and I wouldn’t want to be anywhere else than working on kicking and being around my teammates.”

Sports may be a big part of his life, but Pearman’s life is not all sports. He is very academically motivated and is currently taking two advanced classes — AP European History and Algebra II Accelerated. He also is taking Digital Photography, which he said is “a chance to learn a new skill that I never had before... when I got into it, I didn’t know much about it, and now I’ve learned a lot more about editing. I see things differently now.”



courtesy S. Pearman

The reason for Pearman’s accomplishments lies in his home life. When asked about his inspiration for sports and life, he barely paused before answering, “my mom and dad. They’ve always pushed me to be the best person I can be and to be respectful and kind to everyone [and] to treat everyone fairly, but stay competitive.” He also mentioned his two brothers in seventh and eighth grade, and the older brother energy is evident as he uses sports and academics to pass on those same traits that his parents taught him to his younger siblings.

Pearman’s admirable balancing of his activities alongside his athletic and academic talent has proved him to be reckoned with everywhere he goes. His one slight flaw is his regrettable Fantasy Football season, of which he officially says: “I have no comment.”

Bianchi recounts her experiences from a semester abroad

by Georgia Kaufman

Media Production Editor

During her fall semester abroad in Spain, junior **Lucia Bianchi** spent August through December of 2021 adapting to the living regulations of a completely different country. Despite spending her first two years of high school at Los Gatos High School, Bianchi holds dual citizenship in both the United States and Spain, which allotted her a semester abroad in the city of San Sebastian.

As a dual citizen, Bianchi learned in July that she would attend San Patricio Colegio Inglés (St Patrick’s English School) in San Sebastian. With the full support of both of her parents who also studied abroad in their years of high school, the junior prepared for the entirety of fall semester

in the spare bedroom of her aunt’s home in Spain. Bianchi listed a multitude of differences between Los Gatos and her new home for the past four months.

Bianchi noted that “the biggest difference [is] probably that San Sebastian is a city. Los Gatos is a much smaller town where it seems like everybody knows everybody. Although San Sebastian is not as big as cities like New York and San Francisco, it was a big change from what [she is] used to.” She added, “[they] also walk everywhere. People can really walk from one side of the city to the other in about 45 minutes.”

In regards to the education system in Spain, Bianchi explained that the careers of young students technically begin in primary school, and that Spanish students “do their first two years of college in America’s last two years of high school.” She mentioned, “there were two different ‘elective’ paths that students could take: writing and science.” Bianchi related that school “acted like it did in [her] elementary school. Teachers would move to your classroom and you typically stayed with the 30 people who were also in your ‘college course.’”

Following up on the minimal number of students in her course, she implied that the school — educating grades K-12 — only had around 60 students per grade.

On the topic of new friendships, Bianchi admitted that she “kind of needed a fresh start...[she] was super worried that making friends at a school where people have known each other since they were three would make [making friends] a lot harder.” Luckily for Bianchi, she was able to find a group of friends quickly; this led to her spending countless nights out with friends, though she made sure to spend days in with her family. She recognized “doing [her] semester abroad was honestly a life changing experience — no matter how tacky that is to say.”

With a smile on her face, Bianchi noted that she “has grown a lot as a person over the last four months.” She stated, “obviously, moving across the world put a lot of new things into perspective...I felt like I was able to really enjoy my life in San Sebastian without having to worry about what was going on in the States.”

If you see Miss Lucia Bianchi in class, be sure to start a conversation. Although she did just spend approximately four months in a foreign country, the girl is also one of the most personable and animated people at Los Gatos.



courtesy L. Bianchi

Ross explores filmmaking

by **Alia Arafah**
Opinion Editor

Future Oscar-winning filmmaker and current LGHS freshman **Ashton Ross** is sure to catch your attention with his charismatic personality and vibrant energy. Though he has only been at LGHS for one semester, Ross has already made a lasting impression on the community through his passions for filmmaking, history, and running. Using the inspiration he gets from his brothers and his own creativity, Ross continues to explore these outlets.



courtesy A. Ross

Ross's interest in filmmaking began when he was little. He remembers that, as a kid, he would make "iMovie trailers...and goof off." Though he cannot recall exactly when the interest took off, he explained that he was "always obsessed with [filmmaking]. I got really into it in seventh grade, and I got into the details of how you do certain things, like scriptwrite." Last summer, Ross interned as a KCAT camp counselor, during which he taught young kids about film and continued his own education. Currently, Ross is taking the Multimedia Journalism elective, which he enjoys

since it allows him to combine his interests and have full creative liberty. Ross is unsure about his future plans, but knows he would like to continue filmmaking. "I definitely want to pursue [film] in some way," he said. "I've always liked the idea of directing...writing films and making full films."

Ross combines his talents in filmmaking with his interest in history and politics. During the pandemic, he racked up over 2,000 hours on a historical video game called Civilization Six. "I don't know if I should be ashamed of that or kind of happy," he joked. In terms of politics, Ross felt like he was "living in [his] small world prior to COVID. . .and then one day it all just exploded in [his] face." Following the social justice movements that began during the pandemic, Ross became more "engaged because a lot of very serious stuff was happening," and he felt he should "pay attention."

In addition to filmmaking, Ross goes on runs in his free time, pursuing his fondness for the sport by joining the LGHS cross country team. In the fall, Ross ran three races with the team and greatly improved his times. "The first time I ran a race it was kind of hard. . .and [the next race] felt so much easier," he explained. His first race time was 25 minutes, and he ended the season with a 22-minute time.

In all of his interests, Ross feels inspired by his brothers, Trevor and Mitchell Ross. "They definitely influenced me," he stated. Ross feels that his relationship with his older siblings "in some ways makes [him] more mature," and "lets [him] know things a lot of people [his] age don't know." He uses this knowledge to his advantage, taking guidance from his brothers and applying it to his individual interests.

Ross has over three years left at LGHS to continue coupling his interests and making his voice heard. If you ever need to be energized by an always-lively soul, you can probably find Ross running around town or filming a new video.

Cheetham pursues rowing and drama

by **Georgia Kaufman**
Media Production Editor

Despite coming all the way from London, England, senior **Jackson Cheetham** has quickly made his mark at the school as an icon. He is both an athletic and academic star whom many at Los Gatos have gotten to know as quite the charmer.

In contrast to the city of London, Cheetham recognizes that "[Los Gatos] is very different... there's a lot less cultural diversity." After moving to the states in July of 2019, the senior noticed that perhaps the biggest change he has encountered is "everyone [asking him] to say words [in his accent]."

In London, Cheetham pursued rowing in the early years of his high school career. Since moving, Cheetham has once again taken up the sport of rowing. He stated, "I didn't realize I would be rowing this year as a senior — I took a bit of a two and a half year hiatus and I never thought I would return back to that." He joined the Los Gatos Rowing Club's Novice Men's team in the fall of 2021 and was brought up to Varsity within the first few months.

Extremely humble, Cheetham admitted that he "didn't realize [he] would become one of the fastest on the team this year." As his talents of strength and technique were noticed shortly after the Head of the Charles in Cambridge, MA — one of the biggest regattas of the fall season — the team has plans to make it to nationals in Sarasota, FL, as well as Henley in Henley, England, with Cheetham in the boat.

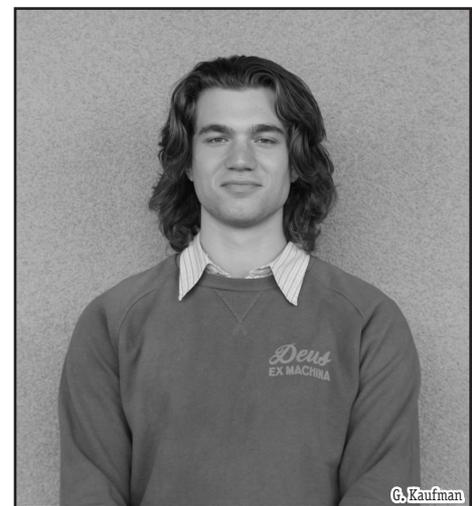
Cheetham also spoke on how rowing has affected his social schedule, stating, "it's sort of brought a whole new dynamic to my life and I feel quite lucky in the sense that it's only gone in the positive direction."

Not only does Cheetham pursue rowing, but he also actively participates in the drama community.

He mentioned that he "originally wanted to go to an arts school for college. Film schools would help my future with going on the right trajectory of being an actor," whereas now it is more likely that he may attend school for rowing and get into a well-respected university while doing so. He admits, "I've always wanted to be an actor, and there are a few obscurities between [rowing and theater], but it is what it is, really."

Cheetham found out that he wanted to be an actor when he was in London as he "participated in drama for the school. [He] thinks that's where everything sort of started for [his] acting career. Anything Shakespeare or any type of contemporary theatre was what [he] was drawn to."

Cheetham is one of the most humble students here at Los Gatos. He is known for his kindness and positivity, so if you see an extremely tall British man, don't be afraid to go up and ask to exchange a few words. He doesn't bite and is sure to turn small talk into one of the most reflective and honest conversations of your life.



G. Kaufman

Martins-Juncker channels creativity through art

by **Angela Sheu**
People Editor

Senior **Marina Martins-Juncker** brings talent and passion to the LGHS campus. A lifelong artist, she has made art for as long as she can remember and has no plans to stop.

Art "has always been [her] thing" because she finds that it relaxes her and enables her creativity. She explained, "no matter how many hours I spend working on something, it never gets boring or tiring." She enjoys the artistic freedom of exploring all media and is enrolled



in Art 4 at LGHS, in which she works on traditional art projects with mainly acrylic and occasionally oil paints. Recently, she created a portrait for a project, which she considers the best portrait she has ever created. She enjoys sharing her work and said, "my dad hung it up in our house, so I get to see it every day."

Martins-Juncker continues to pursue art in her free time by creating digital art on her iPad at home. She also enjoys playing video games "because [she] can have a fun time doing something [with friends] even when [they] can't meet in person." Video games also often serve as a common interest and conversation topic when she meets people for the first time. She recalled that a "common love for video games was actually the conversation starter with my best friend Mira."

As an only child, Martins-Juncker is close with her parents. "They're very nice, and they teach me a lot of things about life," she explained. "They are like my rock, and I love them a lot." Her dad is Swiss, so she learned his native language, French, at a young age. She also learned Portuguese as a child from her mom, who is Brazilian. She spoke both languages before entering school, but after she fell out of practice, she slowly lost her linguistic ability. She recalled, "as [I went] to school, people there always [spoke] English, so [I] stopped speaking [my] native languages from home...It got to the point where I understood French and Portuguese, but I couldn't say any little bit at all." Taking French in school has enabled her to regain the language, and she now speaks it with her dad and his family. She is currently taking AP French at LGHS.

Outside of her two elective classes, she also enjoys English. She explained, "I've always liked English. It's always been one of my best



photos courtesy M. Martins-Juncker

academic subjects." Martins-Juncker does not struggle to write essays or participate in class, and she "really [likes] having thoughtful discussions with friends."

Martins-Juncker plans to enroll in community college for the first two years after graduating high school, before attending a different university in order to get a variety of experiences. Her dream would be to "live in LA because I want to be close to my parents while also having a different experience." She wants to study either digital art and animation for movies, TV shows, or even video games. "I really want to do a career in stuff that I care about," she said.

Through all facets of her life, Martins-Juncker exemplifies incredible ability to channel, pursue, and share her passion.

ANCKARMAN EXCELS AS A PLAYER AND TEAMMATE

by **Kate Gruetter**
Culture Editor

Ask Los Gatos High School freshman **Alice Anckarman** what she's doing after school, and she won't hesitate to respond "sports." Whether she's scoring goals on the soccer field or playing wing on the field hockey team, Anckarman can't be summed up as simply athletic. What Anckarman possesses is strong will, dedication, and hard work, all of which cement her as a key player on the field, and someone to respect off the field.

Anckarman's involvement in sports was inspired by her older sister, **Mathilda Anckarman**, a former LGHS soccer player. "I've been playing soccer my whole life and my sister played for the high school," Anckarman explained, continuing that "she kind of influenced me to play." Despite holding different positions on the field, Anckarman followed in her sister's footsteps, playing on the Junior Varsity girls soccer team this year.

However, Anckarman isn't simply a player. In December, her soccer coach awarded her MVP for Los Gatos High School's team



in the Firebird Classic showcase. The coach, **Richy Licon**, put it simply, saying, "she deserved it. She scored ten goals over a period of playing and she worked hard and got it." Not only is Anckarman a top scorer on the team, but Licon also described her as "a great player. She listens, she's very coachable...she's smart on the ball and knows how to play soccer."

Anckarman is not only a great player to coach — she's a great player to be on the field with as well. Sophomore and center midfielder **Gracie Sloane** describes Anckarman as "a team player. She's fun to play with and she works hard." Anckarman finds support outside of her team as well, and when asked about who her biggest supporters are, her answer came easily. "It's definitely my parents. They're always there at my games to encourage me," she elaborated.

On the field, Anckarman keeps up her dedication to hard work, describing her mindset as "just to play 100 percent." Continuing, Anckarman stated that her mindset is to "not give up even if I get tired...I just try to do the best that I can." Not only does her on-field mindset focus on hard work, it is also centered on a competitive spirit. "I want to win," Anckarman



photos courtesy A. Anckarman

confessed. "I think it comes from siblings at home. I always wanted to win board games or whatever we were doing at home."

Anckarman's accomplishments are not limited to soccer. Last fall, she played field hockey for the high school as well. Reflecting upon the sport in relation to soccer, Anckarman described that "the running [helped] a lot...in soccer." She also plays soccer outside of school, competing on the 2007 Los Gatos United Team. "My first coach for Los Gatos United...really helped me because he humbled me by putting me on the second team," Anckarman explained. However, she didn't look at this as a setback, but instead an opportunity. "It made me want to work really hard," Anckarman described, stating that when this work paid off it "really made my confidence go up and helped me become the player I am today."

Anckarman is a name to look out for; boasting the title of MVP, she is sure to show off her tremendous talent in the coming season.

- COVID continues to affect Wildcat sports
- Winter Olympics arrive amidst omicron

SPORTS

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COVID-19 brings Wildcat hoopers unexpected obstacles

by Lucy Holland
Editor-in-Chief

With the recent surge of COVID-19, both recreational and professional sports across the country have faced setbacks and new restrictions, with indoor sports like basketball taking the brunt of the effects. At LGHS, winter sports athletes are experiencing canceled games, lost practice time, and canceled team bonding experiences.

During the first week of the new year, the LG girls' basketball program faced the possibility of completely shutting down. "All except for two players got COVID; even [the] two coaches got it," according to junior **Kiera Dodd**, captain of the Varsity team. "Our team is only 10 girls, so we couldn't even qualify to play any games. We all just had to quarantine." Scheduled to start on Wednesday, Jan. 5, the team's leadership elected to postpone their regular-season debut until Jan. 14. The team reigned victorious with a 54-40 win against cross-town rivals Saratoga High School.

Before facing the abrupt pause in their season, the team was rolling from a successful 10-1 preseason record. Dodd added, "it was so hard missing because [the team was] in such a good groove...It's been a little rough getting back into the swing of things because even just a week off made [the team] out of shape and a little rusty." Looking on the brighter side, Dodd revealed, "it made me realize how much I missed the team." Girls' Basketball coach and Los Gatos physics and computer science teacher **Matthew Holm** embodies the Wildcats' "make it work" mentality, stating, "Despite the challenges and the restrictions, it's just

so great to be able to have a season and so we just were so happy every day to get to be in the gym."

Junior boys' Varsity basketball player **Victor Josifovski**, furthers this positive outlook on the season, stating, "at the end of the day these are just the cards we've been dealt and we just adjust accordingly." Josifovski's team was not hit as drastically as the girls'; the boys filtered in and out as they test positive, quarantine, then return to play on differing schedules. Thus far, the boys' Varsity team has yet to have any games canceled, but have had to make



ON THE PROWL: Varsity player **Claire Galbo** aims to pass through heavy defense.

due in games and practices with limited numbers. Josifovski continued, "playing with fewer guys has been weird, but our coaches have kind of given us a 'keep it moving' policy, so the team continues to move full throttle even though certain guys are out and what not."



FOR THE WIN: In an intense match against Leigh, LG took a 58-31 win.

The team currently boasts a 3-1 league record, with wins over Monta Vista, Gunn, and Wilcox. Josifovski credits their success to his coaches, stating, "I think our coaches have really kept us on track by just being solid and not trying to panic us, but also staying very diligent in our COVID policies.... Huge credit to the coaches for keeping us together."

Though the Wildcats' seasons faced a tumultuous start, the teams continue to succeed in a safe environment. Grab a mask and don your orange and black to come watch the LG basketball teams compete for the remainder of their seasons.

Buccaneers release wide receiver

by Trent Barlett

National/World Editor

While excellent on the football field, National Football League (NFL) superstar wide receiver Antonio Brown's off-the-field antics have brought him a large amount of criticism. While playing for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers Brown made headlines once again.

In his first full game back after a bad ankle sprain, Brown took off his uniform and pads and proceeded to throw those items into the stands and walk off the field. The incident occurred during the second quarter of a Buccaneers away game against the New York Jets. As soon as the events unfolded, a media frenzy highlighted Brown and his actions.

Once the game was over, the Buccaneers held a post-game press conference, during which Head Coach Bruce Arians stated that Brown "is no longer a Buc." Star quarterback Tom Brady explained, "we all love him and care about him deeply. I think everyone should be compassionate and empathetic toward some very difficult things."



KICKED OUT: Brown's antics shocked his coaches and fans.

However, once Brown voiced his opinion to his 6.3 million followers, the accusatory narrative shifted in his favor. On his Instagram, Brown posted screenshots explaining his actions during the game to his followers. The pictures detailed conversations with his trainers and coaches, alleging that the team's staff did not care about his health and injured ankle. Brown also alleged that the coaching staff cut him mid-game after he refused to play on his ankle.

An ankle sprain, to which the severity was unknown, kept Brown off the field for more than two months. Brown only came back to the team to play against the Carolina Panthers on Dec. 26. Unfortunately, during that game, he re-aggravated his ankle injury, but managed to play through the pain. The following week he did not practice at all, and claimed that he was forced to play. In one of the screenshots Brown posted, Arians told the wide receiver, "make sure you're ready for tomorrow. We ARE NOT resting for the playoffs." After these texts were released to the public, Brown's agent alleged that Brown had a torn ligament and bone fragmentation around his ankle, but was still required to play.

As the story kept unfolding, the Buccaneers officially released him on Wednesday, Jan. 5, making Brown an unrestricted free agent. On Jan. 18, Brown is slated to undergo surgery on his ankle to repair the torn ligament and bone fragmentation.

While many are still skeptical of the situation, the NFL players association has declared that it will open an investigation into Brown's claims.

With the post-season upon us, Brown's future remains uncertain, and many are wondering if he will ever play again in the National Football League. Although his future is up for debate, fans wish him a speedy recovery and hope to see him on the field again soon. However, critics are saying he doesn't deserve another shot to play after all the controversies he has caused.

(Sources: ESPN, CNN, Yahoo)

Bulldogs win CFP after 41 years

by Senji Torrey

Public Relations Manager

Just over a week into the new year, college sports turned its attention to Lucas Oil Stadium to experience its largest event of the entire year: the College Football Playoff (CFP) National Championship. Though the matchup between Georgia and Alabama undeniably began sluggishly, when the clock finally ran down, not a single person was in their seats.

This year's CFP Championship held particular meaning for both sides, and the implications spread far past the golden trophy. For Alabama, the game served as a teacher vs student test as Alabama Head Coach Nick Saban prepared to take on his former understudy, Georgia Head Coach Kirby Smart. For the Bulldogs, this game gave them the opportunity to avenge their Southeastern Conference Championship loss during which the Crimson Tide handily won by a score of 24-41.

Georgia came into this grudge match fired up. Senior quarterback Stetson Bennett launched a tight 52-yard bomb downfield to junior wide receiver George Pickens. Though they couldn't finish the drive with a touchdown, a field goal by junior kicker Jack Podlesny put them back in the game with a score of 3-3. Podlesny's right leg would be called on again at the end of the second quarter for what turned out to be a personal best 49-yard field goal.

The Bulldogs weren't the only team relying on their kicker, with Alabama looking to junior kicker Will Reichard for four field goals, accounting for over half of their total points. To be fair to the Tide, Reichard's four kicks set a CFP Championship game record for most field goals made.

Aside from kicking, defense seemed to be the name of the game for both teams. The first half would be described by most fans as "boring" or even "underwhelming," yet the countless field goals that had to be taken in lieu of the far more favored touchdown is simply a testament to the



NATIONAL CHAMPS: After 41 years the Bulldogs reclaim the trophy.

lockdown ability of both defenses. Alabama's defensive line had a field day, recording five sacks and forcing another five puntaways before the end of the game. The Dawgs hounded the Tide's run game, allowing an unbelievably low 30 rushing yards the entire game. The old saying "defense is the best offense" rang especially true for Georgia in the closing minutes of the game, when freshman defensive back Kelee Ringo elevated for an interception that he ran back for a game-sealing 79-yard pick six.

On the offensive side of the ball, both teams displayed why they are the two best squads in the nation. Georgia's Bennett passed for 224 yards, going 17 for 26 in the air with no interceptions, and caught fire in the second half of the game, marching the Bulldogs down the field for two touchdown passes.

Saban opted to throw the ball as well, handing Heisman-winning quarterback Bryce Young the reins. Young did not disappoint, throwing 57 times and connecting on 35 of them for 369 yards. Tight end Cameron Latu was a ball magnet, racking up 102 yards with five receptions.

Ultimately, 41 years after their last CFP Championship win in 1980, the Dawgs had their day, finally lifting the CFP trophy high in the sky. After the game, coach Kirby Smart simply said "I hope it doesn't take that long again."

(Sources: ESPN, University of Alabama Athletics, University of Georgia Athletics, Sports Illustrated)

Formula 1 fans prepare for the 2022 season after 2021's end

by Ella Marruffo

National/World Editor

Following the end of the 2021 Formula 1 (F1) season on Dec. 13, many fans are already looking forward to next year. With Netflix's promise of a fourth Drive to Survive (DTS) season, new drivers expected to enter the grid, Lewis Hamilton's possible retirement, and an entirely new race car configuration, 2022 will undoubtedly be a year to remember.

When season three of the F1 reality TV show DTS streamed on Netflix, it was immediately a hit with fans as well as those who had not heard of the sport before. Arguably, DTS single-handedly changed the popularity of F1 from an underground, to a commonplace, topic of discussion for the public. For instance, ESPN explained that "the 2021 season is averaging 931,000 viewers through 14 races, which is 53 percent higher than the 2020 season average and 40 percent higher than the first 14 comparable races in 2019." In somewhat of a teaser, Williams driver George Russell revealed season four of the show was in production in an Instagram post on Apr. 8, 2021.

Two new drivers will join the 2022 grid: Alex Albon and Guanyu Zhou. Though Albon is no newbie to F1 (having been on the Red Bull and Alpha Tauri teams two years ago), fans have anticipated his return. Zhou, on the other hand, will be entering F1 as a rookie, successfully moving up

from Formula 2 last year. As the first Chinese F1 driver ever, Zhou fought hard for his spot on the Alfa Romeo team. According to the South China Morning Post, "Zhou closed out his F2 career with a victory in the sprint race and a second place in the feature event during the final weekend in Abu Dhabi." Zhou also finished third in the F2 2021 driver championship.

After the 2021 season's last race in Abu Dhabi which crowned Max Verstappen champion, fans were left wondering whether Mercedes' seven-time world champion Lewis Hamilton would remain in the sport or not. Hamilton and Verstappen were neck-and-neck in the final race with Hamilton in the lead, when suddenly the safety car was deployed due to an on-track accident. Once the commotion had settled and the race was clear to start again, the gap between Verstappen and Hamilton was much shorter, which allowed Verstappen to take first place. Mercedes, believing the overtake was unsportsmanlike, filed several complaints with the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA). In an effort to resolve the situation, the FIA stated, "The circumstances surrounding the use of the Safety Car...have notably generated significant misunderstanding...that is currently tarnishing the image of the Championship and the due celebration of the first Drivers' World Championship title."

Another exciting aspect of the 2022 season is the brand new car design. Not only does it look different — far longer and sleeker than its predecessors — it packs some serious technical differences as well. For years "dirty air" and a loss of downforce have been nagging issues in need of amendments. Now, however, engineers promise these new F1 cars will be modified to avoid dirty air and therefore promote closer racing, and a more exciting battle. Though these new cars lack a drag reduction system, which allows for faster laps and plenty of overtakes, the hope is that with the new aerodynamics, it will no longer be needed. (Sources: Formula 1, NY Times, South China Morning Post, USA Today, Express, SI, Essentially Sports, ESPN)



ZOOMING: A decked out Formula 1 race car makes its way around the race track.

NBA returns for the New Year

by **Senji Torrey**

Media Production Editor

With the new year comes new surprises for America's second favorite sports league, the National Basketball Association (NBA). One NBA team, however, has received a few more gifts than the rest. Whether it's a long-awaited player returning or the ever-changing fight for the top, the Golden State Warriors' roller coaster of a year has already started off at top speed, and does not show any sign of slowing down.



TO THE SKY: Stephen Curry celebrates a three pointer.

Perhaps the biggest return in the entire league was the Golden State Warriors' own Klay Thompson who suited up again after a lengthy hiatus. After a spine-tingling reintroduction before a home game against the Cleveland Cavaliers, Klay heated up quickly, scoring the Dub's first points with an acrobatic layup. In 20 minutes of play, Thompson went on to score 17 points and record another three rebounds, leading the Dubs to a 96-82 victory.

After the game, Thompson reflected on his journey, saying "I'm just so grateful to be out here, and [for] the love that I received." He later added that "I did not know I was going to dunk on somebody [on my] first game back. So...hooray for me."

With a win over the Cavaliers, the Warriors reclaimed their spot at the very top of the contentious Western Conference table. The table is so contentious, in fact, that the Warriors only edged out the Phoenix Suns for first place on a technicality: Golden State with 18-3 and Phoenix with a 17-5 record at home.

Though these two squads will not see each other again until Mar. 30, the Warriors meeting with Eastern Conference Brooklyn Nets is coming up much sooner on Jan. 29. The Warriors won their first matchup between Brooklyn early in November by a score of 117-99. However, the Nets have welcomed back a star of their own, Kyrie Irving.

Irving opted out of the initial games of the season after refusing to take the COVID-19 vaccine. He has now reassured Nets' fans, saying "don't believe that I'm retiring, don't believe that I'm gonna give up this game for a vaccine mandate."

He made good on this promise on Jan. 5 when he stepped on the court against the Indiana Pacers. With 32 minutes on the hardwood, Irving managed to score 22 points, just one spot under teammate Kevin Durant, who scored 39. Irving shot 52.9 percent during the game, indicating a swift ramp-up back into the NBA that could spoil Golden State's league-leading defensive rating of 102.1 points allowed per 100 possessions.

Recent good showings from Jordan Poole and Andrew Wiggins, as well as the backbone failsafe Steph Curry has put Golden State in the right position to take on the star-studded Nets. Add in the recent victories over three of the other top five Eastern Conference teams — the Philadelphia 76ers, Miami Heat, and Chicago Bulls — and it is looking as though the Warriors already have their GPS dialed in on the playoffs; now they will simply have to stay on the route to victory. (Sources: ESPN, NBA, AZ Central, Player's Bio)

Novak Djokovic faces backlash

by **Trent Bartlett**

National/World Editor

With the Australian Open, the first of the four Grand Slam tennis events, starting this week on Jan. 17, the world's number one ranked tennis player, Novak Djokovic, will be unable to defend his title due to legal battles over his refusal to get vaccinated. Australia currently requires vaccination to enter the country on a visa.

Djokovic, a vaccine skeptic, came out against receiving the COVID-19 vaccine and claimed a medical exemption to enter Australia. A judge in Australia granted that medical exemption on Jan. 4, the tennis star announced via Twitter. However, when he arrived in Australia on Jan. 5, he was not allowed to enter the country and was put into a holding cell. It was later announced that he was held because his visa was invalid, putting him in the position of possibly facing deportation. A judge proceeded to allow the tennis star to practice at the Melbourne tennis park. However, the legal situation has gathered attention worldwide, with Djokovic receiving praise and criticism for his actions.

While Djokovic's lawyers fought his entry, it was revealed that he tested positive for COVID-19 on Dec. 16, which granted him an exemption status to enter Australia. However, the public quickly realized that Djokovic did not follow required isolation guidelines and instead met with people while aware that he had the virus. Another fact added to the already controversial situation was a checked box on his immigration visa, stating that he had not traveled abroad two weeks before entering Australia. This was false as he traveled from Spain to Serbia just eight days prior.

Djokovic has since apologized for both incidents, but stated that a misclick on his visa was a "human error" on behalf of his tra-

vel agent. However, that has not halted criticism from the Australian government and other tennis fans worldwide.



EYE ON THE PRIZE: Novak Djokovic gets ready to smack the ball.

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison told the world, "[Djokovic] visa has been canceled" during a press conference. But less than 24 hours later a judge reversed that decision and allowed him to leave the hotel that asylum-seekers are placed in until they see a judge.

While Djokovic's legal battles continued, the Australian Immigration Minister, Alex Hawke, decided to cancel his visa and ordered him back into the immigrations hotel in Melbourne. Djokovic and his lawyers appealed the decision once again, however, his appeal fell short, and he was forced to leave the country on Jan. 16. However, this might not be the last of his legal troubles, as more and more countries are requiring vaccination to enter, or local governments require them to play sports. This includes France and New York, where two other tennis opens are scheduled. (Sources: BBC, NY Times, Yahoo, Reuters, Politico, CNN)

2022 Winter Olympic athletes prepare to compete

by **Nathan Chen**

Graphics Editor

Between Feb. 4 and Feb. 20, the 2022 Winter Olympics will proceed as planned in Beijing, China. The international sports competition will feature Alpine Skiing, a Biathlon, Bobsled, Cross-Country Skiing, Curling, Figure Skating, Freestyle Skiing, Ice Hockey, Luge, Nordic Combined, Speed Skating, Short Track Speed Skating, Skeleton, Ski Jumping, and Snowboarding.



TAKE FLIGHT: A professional skier makes a jump at Olympics.

New events added this year include Freestyle Skiing Big Air, Women's Monobob, Mixed Team Snowboard Cross, Mixed Team Aerials, Mixed Team Track Relay, and Mixed Team Ski Jumping.

China's mistreatment of Uyghur Muslims, their harsh measures against protestors in Hong Kong, and the recent disappearance of athlete Peng Shuai have led to protests and boycotts by foreign government officials. Although no country has prevented athletes from competing, several countries have announced that government officials will not be present at the ceremonies, including the U.S., U.K., Australia, Canada, and most recently, Japan.

The coronavirus has also caused wavering confidence among organizers, athletes, and spectators. The Chinese government has set up an Olympic bubble, sealing off media and athletes from citizens. According to current regulations, some domestic fans are allowed to attend events, but cheering and shouting is banned. The National Hockey League pulled all their athletes from the Olympics (stating a rise in COVID cases) and will use the extra time to make up postponed games in the current

season. The International Games Committee has repeatedly said that the Olympics will continue as planned, regardless of concerns over the Omicron variant.

A specially built train between Beijing and Zhanjiakou, where most of the snow events are held, will transport athletes and journalists between the two cities at 217 miles per hour. Holding 564 passengers, the driverless train has cars specifically designed for broadcasting. "The Bird's Nest" stadium, used in the 2008 Summer Olympics, will be the site of the opening and closing ceremonies, while the National Aquatics Centre, nicknamed "The Water Cube," will hold an ice rink and will be renamed as "The Ice Cube." Other buildings are new, like the National Sliding Centre, the National Ski Jumping Centre, and the National Biathlon Centre. All of these buildings have future plans to be used as tourist attractions, ski resorts, and training centers.

Winning his sixth consecutive U.S. National Skating Championship, Nathan Chen joins Jason Brown and Vincent Zhou on the U.S. Men's singles figure skating team. Mariah Bell, Karen Chen, and Alysa Liu make up the U.S. women's



TARGETS SET: Curling team sweeps to get close to the target.

singles figure skating team. At the U.S. Olympic Team Trials for Curling, John Shuster won his fifth consecutive title with his team. After a gold medal in Pyeongchang in 2018, the men's team hopes to earn another one in Beijing. Tara Peterson and her team will compete in women's curling, working hard to earn a medal this year.

With many athletes eager to participate, Team USA will no doubt bring home a whole host of medals at the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics. (Sources: AP News, Insider News, NBC Olympics, The Times, Olympics, TEAM USA, Washington Post)

Ice hockey player Evander Kane causes issues in the NHL

by **Michaela Thimot**

Culture Editor

After his second violation of COVID-19 protocols, the San Jose Sharks placed left wing Evander Kane on unconditional waivers, announcing his contract termination a day later. Quickly after the team's decision, the National Hockey League (NHL) Players Association decided to challenge the Sharks' decision and file a grievance on behalf of Kane.

Back in October, Kane was originally suspended for having a fake vaccine card on multiple occasions. The Sharks placed Kane on their American Hockey League (AHL) affiliate, the Barracuda, while they searched for a team to trade with. The team could not find a trade for Kane, even though many of his teammates stated they did not want the player to return. Even his AHL team did not believe he should stay, as he allegedly skipped practices multiple times for a sore shoulder or food poisoning.



RULE BREAKER: Kane's teammates expressed disappointment in him.

Throughout his professional career, Kane has been involved in a variety of issues, many that had led to his dismissal from teams. In 2014 a Vancouver man sued him for assault damages while he was a member of the Winnipeg Jets. Following the incident, he felt his team no longer supported him and was soon traded to another team. In 2016, while Kane was with the Buffalo Sabres, a woman sued him and claimed he had attacked her after inviting her to his room. Just weeks later, he was arrested in a bar for harassing three women, but they dropped the charges soon after.

Kane has caused issues on the ice as well, and his lack of effort to show up for team practices made his teammates and coaches view him as unreliable. The player would reportedly orchestrate a variety of excuses to explain his lateness or absences, and the entire team took notice. In July 2021 his wife, Anna Kane, put posts up on social media detailing that her husband would allegedly bet on games dealing with his own team and on occasions would even attempt to throw games in order to win a bet. The NHL investigated the claim and failed to find evidence supporting Kane's wife's claim, and Kane pointed out in an interview that the allegations may be related to their ongoing divorce. Although these accusations were found to be false, Kane did have a history gambling. In 2019, a casino in Las Vegas sued him for reportedly not paying 500,000 dollars of gambling debts.

Despite the continued allegations and controversy surrounding Kane, there are NHL teams who are still looking to sign the player to their team because of his talents as a hockey player. Ken Holland, general manager of the Edmonton Oilers, confirmed the team's interest in the 30-year-old winger. Despite Kane having caused several serious

issues, Holland states that he, "believe[s] in second chances. It's hard to be perfect, we all make mistakes, some make big ones, some little. If [the players] make mistakes, [they] have to learn from it, and try to change."

On Dec. 29, Kane crossed the border to Canada before his 10-day quarantine was up, violating the league's COVID-19 protocol and causing a new NHL investigation which will likely delay the player signing anywhere in the near future.

(Sources: Sports Net, Edmonton Journal)



LONGING GAZE: Kane looks over to the team that he would soon be kicked from.



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POM: Senior Bohane commits to Stanford men's soccer

by Jackie King and Sophie Sullivan
Editors-in-Chief

After almost 16 years on the field, the sport of soccer is no mystery to LGHS senior **Zach Bohane**. Having played since age two, this midfielder is excited to take his sport to the next level after committing to play Division one Men's Soccer at Stanford University.

Bohane found his love for the sport after "kicking a ball around with his dad," and soon began playing on a recreational team. After quickly advancing, he made the choice to move to De Anza Force, at the age of nine and has competed with the team ever since. The overlap between club season and the high school's forced Bohane to decide between the two as a freshman; he cited the high-caliber competition of club soccer as a deciding factor in his choice and stayed with Force for his high school years.

Soccer is the only sport Bohane has ever played, noting "[my dad] didn't sign me up for any others — maybe because he just wanted me to be a soccer player — but I enjoyed it." Bohane named his brother and fellow soccer player, LGHS alumnus **Noah Bohane**, as his biggest inspiration in the world of soccer. With Noah playing on the Saint Mary's College of California Men's Soccer Team, Zach described his

brother as "my role model...I can follow his footsteps and base my gameplay off of his, and learn from him." Although Noah played a role in inspiring the senior to pursue recruitment, Zach also mentioned De Anza Force club alumni's influence in his through yearly college meetings, which he's attended since joining the club nine years ago. "All the older guys who were committing to colleges would talk about the process and why they want to play college soccer," Zach explained, cementing college soccer as a childhood dream.

He achieved this dream last September after committing to Stanford, but only after a lengthy recruitment process. With the pandemic beginning just months before the commitment process typically starts, Bohane missed out on nearly nine months of exploring recruitment options; in any normal year, coaches could have traveled to Bohane's games and he could have visited schools across the country. The commit initially felt as if he was steps behind East Coast players because they "went back to soccer near the start of junior year, and were pretty much never "out" because of COVID." Bohane affirmed that Stanford's locality made it easier for Cardinal recruiters to notice him, recalling that the staff first reached out to him after a local game — at which Bohane played well against the Stanford Assistant Coach's club team.

Bohane's decision to sport cardinal red in college came down to Stanford's "balance of academics and athletics, and that they've won three national championships in the past five years." Other than bringing yet another national title home to Stanford, Bohane hopes to solidify his position as a starter and "someone who gets a lot of minutes and brings a big contribution to the team" throughout his four years on the squad. Mostly, though, he's excited to join "the brotherhood" of the team and make lifelong friends. Be sure to watch out for his name, as he is sure to make his mark both on and off the field over the next four years.



STANFORD STAR: Bohane poses for photo in Stanford merch on signing day.

Soccer plays Firebird Classic | Wrestlers get ready to rumble

by Kate Gruetter
Culture Editor

Each weekend from Dec. 4 to Dec. 18, the Los Gatos JV girls' soccer team participated in the Firebird Classic Showcase. In this preseason tournament, each team played three games and the final scores determined points for every team. The two teams with the highest number of points played each other in the final. In their first match against Cupertino High School, the Wildcats won 3-0, and soon after grabbed another victory when their second game got canceled after the opposing team forfeited. Their next game was played against Westmont High School, with LG pulling out a win, 5-2.

Making it to the final, LG's JV team worked hard and played their best against Carmont High School, winning the showcase. Carlmont pressed the Los Gatos defense and took a multitude of shots. However, the opponents were no match for LG's talented defense, and the skills of goalie **Sama Bashiti**. The Wildcats offense, led by forward **Alice Anckarman**, made many breakaways and capitalized on offensive opportunities. Sophomore **Ellie White** scored in the first half, putting Los Gatos ahead for good.

White hit the ball in the goal after a corner kick. Describing the goal, she said, "It was pretty cool. It was my first goal and our whole entire team really wanted to win and it was cool to be competitive...everyone had their spirits high." Team captain **Siena Mockler** was equally impressed with the team's accomplishments and competitiveness, stating, "We played till we dropped and worked together as a team to come out with a win... It was so much fun. I loved getting to know my teammates throughout those weeks. I'm proud of our team for winning." Center defender **McKenzie Powell** knew that this win would mark a turning point in



GOAL ORIENTED: JV player Powell kicks from the corner.

the season, reflecting that, "We had won all of our games throughout the showcase, so we knew we at least had some skill, but I think winning that last game and just the moment when the whistle blew and we knew we had won was when we all realized that this season would be truly amazing."

After the team's win, coaches **Richy Licon** and **Andres Garcia** named three tournament players, girls who had shown tremendous skill and perseverance throughout the showcase, and an MVP. Freshmen **Kenedy Carlson**, **Rose Colgan**, and **Anckarman** were awarded all tournament awards, with **Anckarman** also earning the title of MVP. Lincoln remembered the showcase fondly, stating "it was a great tournament. We played as a team and it was great to bring the trophy home." Based on the showcase, Licon thinks that going into the season, "we need to work on building out of the back and playing from the back. Instead of rushing and playing as individuals we need to pass more and communicate." The team clearly carried this energy into their first league game of the season, winning 5-0.

by Brynn Gibson
News Editor

Despite being only a month into the season, the LGHS wrestling team has already proved to be a powerhouse. The season opened with six competitive tournaments which ended on Jan. 8. The team's position jumped to 17th in California following the tournaments.

With eight wrestlers ranking in the top 10 for the section, and two ranking in the top 10 for the state, it's no surprise LG is doing so well. The Wildcat's first competition, the Chukchansi Invitational, spanned from Dec. 3 to Dec. 4. and was a huge success for LG, who placed 4th overall with 142.5 points. Senior **Daniil Gorshkov** secured first place in the 172lbs category, while sophomore **Ethan Parco** placed second at 140lbs. Junior **Anthony Rameriez** and senior **Sergiy Nyzhnyk** both placed third in 147lbs and 184lbs respectively; Junior **Om Shastri** placed fifth at 222lbs, and junior **Peter Bowan** placed sixth at 128lbs.

On Jan 8., Los Gatos competed with 29 other teams at Watsonville High School in the Apple Cider Classic. The Wildcats once again pulled through: sophomore **Timothy Murabito** at 136lbs, juniors **Shastri** at 224lbs, and **Ramirez** at 149lbs, all won titles for LGHS. Returning for his fourth year, **Greg Varella** coaches both the girls' and boys' teams. With 20 years of coaching experience under his belt, Varella has great respect for wrestling. "[It's] a very challenging sport. But you learn about life, about yourself. In life, you are going to lose. But you can't be afraid to take chances and you have to get up. Nothing teaches you about that more than wrestling." Senior **Veloria Pannell** leads the girls'

team, ranking third in Central Coast Section (CCS) for her weight category. As a multi-sport athlete, mentality is key for Pannell: "Going into a match, I think about leaving everything on the mat and giving it all I've got. If you do your best and still lose, rather than be discouraged, you have now learned more and have nothing to be ashamed of." Competing in the 131lb category this season, Pannell aspires to win CCS to cap off her high school wrestling career.

Freshman **Stuart Cornelius** started wrestling in his middle school days. Competing in the 149lb weight category for varsity, the 14-year-old regularly wrestles kids two and three years older than him. As a younger athlete, Cornelius acknowledges his disadvantage, but doesn't back away from the challenge, admitting that, "it's one of the hardest sports out there, you have to be prepared mentally and physically for anything." The most recent competition, held at LGHS on Jan. 15, was a resounding success; the Wildcats placed second overall, with Salinas High School taking first. League matches started this past week, with Los Gatos competing in the DeAnza bracket alongside Cupertino, Fremont, Homestead, Lynbrook, Palo Alto, and Wilcox. In the first duel of the season on Jan.18, the Wildcats took down Cupertino High School, winning with a score of 57-6. The first home duel takes place on Jan. 27 against Wilcox High School.

(Sources: Los Gatos, CalGrappler, Trackwrestling)



ON THE MAT: LG athlete comes face-to-face with opponent.

LGHS soccer star Niko Tsakiris signs to SJ Earthquakes

by Maya Gomez
Sports Editor

The San Jose Earthquakes have officially signed LGHS student **Niko Tsakiris** to their team. Preparing to play through the 2025 season, this midfielder is excited to begin his journey with the Earthquakes. At only 16 years old, Tsakiris is reportedly the "fifth youngest player in club history," and is bound to make his mark on the field.

When a three-year-old Tsakiris first stepped onto the soccer field, he never could have imagined that he would sign to play professionally only 13 years later. However, it was no surprise to those in the local community that Tsakiris would grow up to be a soccer star: his father Shaun Tsakiris, served as both the head coach of the United States U15 and 16 boys' National Teams, and the assistant of the U20s.

Tsakiris revealed that his father has been one of his biggest inspirations. He explained, "Watching and hearing about my dad playing at UCLA really helped spark my interest in soccer. [He's] definitely one of the people that has influenced me." Tsakiris added, "My dad has kind of always been that person for me. He's been great throughout all of this."

Growing up, Tsakiris learned how to play soccer locally with De Anza Force, where he developed the fundamental skill set that his

career is now built upon. "I think that, because I was so young, I really learned a lot more about the technical things when I was with De Anza." His journey with the club halted when he moved to Florida with his family. There, he attended the IMG Academy, a boarding and sports training school in Bradenton, FL.

Tsakiris spent two years on the IMG Academy's soccer team as a midfielder. In that position, Tsakiris focuses on being innovative and strategic while playing. "I really try to be a creative player for the team. Even more, a creative mind on the field." The soccer star moved back to California in 2017 and began playing with the Quakes Academy.

Tsakiris disclosed that this past semester was when the idea of signing to finally came to fruition. "Around late October, early November was when it really became a possibility. It wasn't something that we were just talking about any more. It was actually going to happen." The athlete added, "The process of it happened fairly quickly. They sent the contract, and we looked over it. There were, of course, some things that we wanted to change or twist a little. It was almost like nailing down specifics."

Today, Tsakiri has moved online for his courses and works day and night on his soccer skills. Looking back, the star expressed his

gratitude for the athletes whom he has formally played with, saying, "With my teammates from San Jose, you don't have too many youngsters there. So they have all been very supportive. And with the [IMG] Academy guys, they were super excited for me, and I'm excited for them. I remember watching guys sign and thinking like 'wow, that's so cool.' The Academy players can look forward to signing. It's not so far away from them now." (Sources: IMG Academy, San Jose Earthquakes, MLS Soccer)



ON THE FIELD: Tsakiris celebrates Earthquakes signing with family members.