

El Gato

THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF LOS GATOS HIGH SCHOOL

A. Evans

ASB plans Junior and Senior Proms

by Sonali Muthukrishnan
National/World Editor

After months of uncertainty, the ASB announced that both Junior and Senior Prom will occur at the beginning of May. The LGHS leadership team is working hard to make the events as magical as they normally are, despite the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing hybrid school.

The first event of the two is Junior Prom, which will take place on May 1 on Helm Field from 6:00PM to 9:00PM. Senior Prom will then take place on May 15 on LGHS's front lawn from 5:30PM to 9:00PM. While Junior Prom will stick to a color theme due to the football field's size, Senior Prom's theme, "A Starry Night," is a little more elaborate. For both events, students cannot bring dates from other schools or grades at LGHS. Only students in the junior and senior class may attend their respective proms, as each dance has a limited capacity to make sure that the events stay within Santa Clara County's guidelines.



HOLD THE HEELS: Due to the Junior Prom setting, attendees will not wear heels.

Tickets for Senior Prom are currently 55 dollars, but they will increase by ten dollars weekly. Junior Prom tickets began at 25 dollars from Apr. 9 through Apr. 15. Up until Apr. 23, students could have purchased tickets at 30 dollars.

For Senior Prom, students must enter the event prior to 7:30PM and cannot leave until 8:30PM. Junior Prom attendees must enter the event before 8:30PM and once present cannot leave until 8:00PM. Attendees for both proms cannot re-enter once they leave. Without photo identification, students cannot enter either dance. Administration will be present at both events, and leadership will use marathon barriers to conduct traffic flow.

As usual, volunteers and teachers may administer the breathalyzer to students at random as they enter the dance and during it if they suspect those students of drinking alcohol. Leadership will not issue event refunds to students removed from the dance.

The school dress code will apply to the event. Attire for both nights should be formal, but because Junior Prom is on the field, students should not wear heels.

At the event, students will sit in table groups based on the order in which they arrive, so students who would like to sit together should plan accordingly. For the rest of the evening, the seats that volunteers and administration direct students to are the only ones where they can sit; they may not use any other tables. The seating will assist in any necessary contact tracing. Students will scan a QR code to check into the event. Once seated, students will fill out Screener19.

Throughout the event, students must wear their face mask at all times, with the exception being if students are sitting at their table and actively eating or drinking. Prom attendees must follow all COVID-19 specific protocols in terms of sanitizing materials, using facilities, and socially distancing.

LGHS will provide students with meals at their prom. Junior Prom options include a turkey sandwich, ham sandwich, roast beef sandwich, veggie sandwich, or a gluten-free veggie wrap, catered from Los Gatos Meats. At Senior Prom, attendees get to choose from steak balsamica, chicken sienna, vegetarian stuffed portobello, or vegan stuffed bell peppers. Students will also get dessert. Leadership plans to create photo opportunities, games, and possibly a dance — if COVID-19 restrictions permit — for attendees to enjoy.

Prom dress code collects complaints

by Sophie Sullivan
Opinion Editor

The LGHS administration reworded and apologized for a previous prom dress code guideline after multiple students complained that the code was discriminatory and sexist.

In the prom "Rules and Expectations" linked to each junior prom and senior prom ticket, administration had stated that, "Any students whose attire is too revealing or suggestive (bare-midriiffs, mini skirts, or excessive cleavage) will not be allowed to enter the dance." Subsequent backlash over the code's wording resulted in the creation of a change.org petition titled, "Change LGHS Misogynistic Dress Code" on Apr. 13; the petition has 722 signatures as of Apr. 19. Junior Calyx King, the petition's creator, condemned the "extremely problematic" code for "regulating what women wear." She underscored the code's use of the term, "excessive cleavage" as a "direct attack on people with larger breasts," stating, "We cannot control what our bodies look like. Our bodies are not inherently sexual."



TO THE FIELD: Junior's will have prom on Helm Field to remain socially distanced.

Elaborating in an interview, King also highlighted a lack of policy towards men's clothing. She explained, "under pretty much any dress code that I've ever read, genitals are never within the first few things listed... it's always midriff, bare back, bare shoulders: things that are not sexual in the slightest, but our society has made them sexual through systemic misogyny."

Junior Charles Tuckfield also took to social media to speak out against the original dress code by attempting to convince junior boys to wear crop tops to the dance in protest. In an interview, Tuckfield

explained that he got the idea from a viral protest at a private school in which "hundreds of boys all wore skirts [to school], and enough kids did it and they didn't get in trouble... If a bunch of guys went to the JProm, we couldn't get in trouble because it would just be too many kids to send home." Tuckfield also said in a comment on the original dress code petition that "not a single policy targets [men], only the women. These policies make no sense."



FRONT LAWN FANATICS: Seniors will gather on the front lawn for their prom.

Other petition comments highlighted the lack of zero-tolerance policy for those accused of sexual assault in attending school dances.

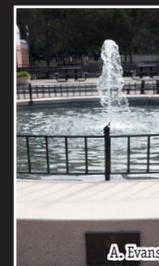
In an email statement, Principal Paul Robinson said that, after "a student complained about the wording of the dress code in the dance rules and expectations," administration "discovered [the text] was something lifted from an old dress code" and apologized. The dress code now displayed on the LGHS webstore simply states that "any students whose attire is inappropriate will not be allowed to enter the dance."

When asked about her views on the new prom guidelines, King stated she believes "it's definitely an improvement," but "because the dress code is worded so vaguely, it's still left to a lot of interpretation for a staff member that might not be educated on the dress code." She suggested a dress code that is "more concrete... and is worded very specifically so that it states, no primary sex organs can be shown." Ultimately, though, she hopes the code will altogether avoid "inherently sexualizing non-sexual body parts."

In this Issue..

Local News

- LGHS pursues plans to re-open in phases 3B and 4A
- Local restaurant faces fines for COVID-19 violations



A. Evans

National

- Knoxville police shoot student in school bathroom

World

- Volcano erupts following 40 year dormant period

Opinion

- Sullivan addresses silent non-Asian peers in letter
- Evans emphasizes accountability in confrontation

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- LGHS students, teachers, & staff address the return to school



S. Sullivan

Culture

- King recaps the 63rd annual Grammy Awards
- El Gato staffers review new music from Olivia Rodrigo, JayInTheCut, and more

Humor

- Sanders decides what someone's vaccine says about their character

People

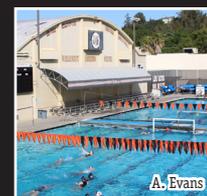
- Model UN elects Freshman Elena Rexach to its leadership board
- Senior Emily Nedom commits to play D1 soccer at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo

Editorial

- El Gato staffers analyze recent rise in AAPI hate and call for reform in education

Sports

- Swim team finishes successful and record-breaking season



A. Evans

Law firm starts investigating the culture at LGSUHSD

by Alex Evans
News Editor

The Los Gatos Saratoga Union High School District (LGSUHSD) is holding individual interviews with students and faculty through an external law firm to better understand sexual violence and harassment within the school environment, as well as to investigate allegations of a rape culture throughout the district. Many people in the community attested to such a culture, which they claim enables inappropriate behavior and promotes fear and silence surrounding topics like sexual violence.



CAMPUS CULTURE: The district wants to understand the environment at LGHS.

To conduct these interviews, LGSUHSD has partnered with a San Francisco law firm called Hirshfeld Kramer. Students received an email with a link to sign up on Mar. 16, and the individual remote meetings commenced the week of Mar. 22. The school predicts that the interviews will last about twenty minutes, and the nature of the meetings themselves will be, according to the email, "relaxed and informal."

All meetings will be conducted via Zoom, but participants will have their cameras off, and no audio or video recordings are allowed for privacy protection purposes. Information disclosed will not prompt a Title IX investigation or complaint, and data collected will not be shared with the district Title IX and Equity Coordinator **Megan Farrell**; however, the interviewers will be able to take notes on the responses. Parents need to approve their students' interviews and have the option to attend the meeting alongside their child.

LGSUHSD says that the goal of these interviews is for administrators and the law firm to further their knowledge of the behaviors at both Los Gatos High School and Saratoga High School. More specifically, they hope to understand the alleged culture that provokes survivors and witnesses to remain silent out of fear and that enables inappropriate behaviors to persist without repercussions. As a preliminary collection of data, the LGSUHSD sent students a form in December 2020 titled the "California Healthy Kids Survey" to gauge the amount of students who witness or experience sexual assault. The information collected in the survey became available in February, two months after the initial collection of data.

Once these meetings supply information surrounding the school and culture, LGSUHSD would like to devise "its plan for institutional change." Essentially, this means the data collected through the interviews will allow the district to understand the severity of the alleged rape culture and take necessary action when appropriate.

Survivors of sexual assault and members of the community called for this change following a movement that began in summer of 2020, as many came forward with their stories of sexual assault and first hand accounts of rape culture while attending a school within the LGSUHSD. To do so, they submitted testimonies to the Instagram accounts @metoolghs and @metooshs.



SISTER SCHOOL: Investigators will also look at Saratoga High School's culture.

Town Council discusses Poet Laureate & inclusivity

by Emily Duvall and Brynn Gibson
Culture Editor and Graphics Designer

On Apr. 6, the Town Council of Los Gatos congregated for its monthly meeting. Over the five hours the meeting was in session, the council discussed about a dozen pressing matters and approved multiple actions and proposals.

The first seven consent items outlined on the agenda passed unanimously in one motion. While the majority of these first few actions were routine, among this wave of approvals was also the appointment of a new Town Poet Laureate. Since the town established the honorary position in 2010, Los Gatos has seen four people occupy the role. The most recent Poet Laureate, Micheal Haley McCullough, concluded his term last year. After a four-month application process,

which began last December, the Town Poet Laureate Selection committee chose Jen Siraganian to serve from 2021 to 2023. During the Apr. 6 meeting, Siraganian officially assumed the role.

A significant portion of the meeting focused on discussions regarding race relations in Los Gatos. Over the past few months, numerous hate crimes towards certain ethnic groups such as AAPI, BIPOC, and more have taken place within Los Gatos and across the country. The Town Council condemned these hate crimes, and one major item on the agenda for this meeting was to adopt a resolution denouncing the hatred and violence toward diverse Los Gatos communities.

The proposal states that the town as a whole should make sure that Los Gatos is a safe and inclusive place for all communities such as BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, AAPI, and many more to feel safe without worry about acts of hatred or violence. This move from the council comes just one week after an attack on a Filipino woman in downtown Los Gatos who was told to "go back to China." Additionally, the council discussed a similar proposal for the Town Manager to hire a consultant to aid the town's justice, equity, inclusion, and diversity work plan. From the citizens of Los Gatos who attended the meeting, five spoke about their concerns regarding the recent hate crimes and incidents.

Similarly, a discussion took place with DA Jeff Rosen for citizens to speak on these issues involving hate speech, violence, and attacks on diverse groups in Los Gatos. Rosen mainly touched on the need to stand in solidarity with others, to be aware of these hate crimes and to immediately report them, and to encourage the town as a whole to speak up about these recent acts.



CONGRATS JEN: New Town Poet Laureate Siraganian smiles for the camera.



CHECK IT OUT: Scan this QR code to read Siraganian's piece Post-Op published in the Catamaran Literary Reader in Winter 2014. Siraganian has published works in a number of other literary journals and has forthcoming work for the Best New Poets of 2016.

Windsor mayor steps back

by Georgia Kaufman and Michaela Thimot
Humor Editor and National/World Editor

After initially refusing to step down from office amid several sexual assault allegations, Windsor Mayor Dominic Foppoli announced on Apr. 16 that he will take a step back from his duties. Nonetheless, he continues to ignore numerous demands to quit his job. He did not provide any insight into what changed his mind and continues to deny the allegations.

The allegations came to light on Apr. 15, when four women accused Foppoli of sexual assault over the span of the past 16 years. The following day, a fifth woman shared that she was also sexually assaulted by the mayor. Soon after, the Santa Rosa Press Democrat shared the allegations of a sixth woman, Councilwoman Esther Lemus. Lemus accused the mayor of drugging and raping her twice. Regarding his break from office, Foppoli wrote, "Though I maintain full innocence under the law, I have decided to step back from an active role as Mayor until the formal investigation is complete."

Sonoma County Sheriff Mark Essick shared that an investigation has been opened regarding the sexual assault allegations. The investigation efforts are calling for any women who have been harassed or assaulted by Foppoli to reach out to law enforcement officials.



ROAD OF REFLECTION: Foppoli will "sit quietly" right now.



DOMINIC'S DECISION: Foppoli, pictured, will step back.

Residents of Windsor and colleagues of Foppoli believe that his recent step back from his position shows a lack of respect and falls short of what should be mandatory. Town Council member Debora Fudge said in a statement to the SF Chronicle, "Any presence that Dominic Foppoli has in Windsor as a mayor... is extremely distracting, and I don't think the people of Windsor will stand for it." Lemus released a statement saying Foppoli, "has not listened to the unequivocal demands of our community to resign."

Foppoli's brother Joe also agrees with the Town Council members of Windsor that he should resign with the allegations. In a statement, J. Foppoli wrote, "I believe our elected officials should be held to higher moral standards, for that reason I feel that my brother Dominic should step down as mayor of Windsor."

In a message released by D. Foppoli after the allegations began to surface, he explained, "It has become clear to me that the Town Council will not function at the level expected by its citizens if I remain actively involved [with the Town Council]... I will take this time to sit quietly, and reflect on my life."

Sources: (SF Chronicle, ThePressDemocrat, KTVU, CBS)

CDC still insists on masks

by Angela Sheu
Media Production Editor

Even though more than half of the adults in California have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) still recommends that everybody continue to take safety precautions in order to prevent disease spread. Clinical trials show that vaccines are effective at preventing disease, severe illness, and death, but it is unclear how well they keep people from spreading the disease, which further enforces the importance of everybody continuing to take preventive measures.

Specifically, The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) mandates that people wear masks when they are outside of their homes, as they help contain respiratory droplets and aerosols that can transmit COVID-19 to others. They also prevent germs from another person's respiratory droplets from entering the nose or mouth. In order to function properly, masks must cover the nose and be secured under the chin.



PROTECT LOS GATOS: Signs in LG still recommend masks.



TRANSIT OR TRANSMIT: Masking in trains prevents spread.

The CDC recommends the use of either medical procedure masks (surgical masks) or multi-layered cloth masks. Trials show that cloth masks are equally as effective as medical procedure masks, blocking around 80 percent of all respiratory droplets. However, proper cloth masks should be made with breathable, tightly woven fabric and have two or three layers and inner filter pockets. Masks with nose wires or bridges increase effectiveness by reducing gaps around the nose. Wearing a close-fitting cloth mask over a surgical mask can improve the mask's fit and filtration; however, layering more than two masks could hinder breathing.

The CDC discourages use of masks with exhalation vents, which allow respiratory droplets to reach others, as well as N-95 masks approved by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), which should be reserved for healthcare workers and medical first responders. Face shields and goggles can be used to protect the eyes of the wearer, but are not a replacement for masks.

Masks are not a substitute for social distancing and should be worn in addition to staying six feet apart from others. Even those fully vaccinated should avoid medium or large-sized gatherings by staying 6 feet apart from others when in public or around people who are not vaccinated. (Sources: CDC, CDPH, CA, LA Times)

LGHS's Climate and Culture Advisory Committee meets

by **Alexandra Evans**

News Editor

The new Climate and Culture Advisory Committee met for the first time in January to discuss topics surrounding Title IX with 20 representatives from the Los Gatos Saratoga Unified High School District (LGSUHS) administration, the student body, and parents from the community. At their monthly meetings, they discuss various topics spearheaded by different on- and off-campus groups encompassing a diverse range of Title IX related issues. LGSUHS intends to use these meets to analyze multiple aspects of the Title IX policy and the effectiveness of the current sex and consent education at district schools.

The initial meeting hosted in January reviewed policies, the first of the five topics, which correspond to subsequent meetings.

Title IX and Equity Coordinator **Megan Farrell** spearheaded the January meeting, ensuring the group went through all board policies and revised them if necessary. Resulting from this meeting was the revision of the district website to follow a more organized and comprehensible structure.

The following monthly meeting in February addressed the second point on the Committee's agenda: student education. During the session, they investigated the effectiveness of the advisory

modules assigned to students each Wednesday. To do this, they focused on the module creators' intentions with designing the modules and the student body's reaction to the content presented.



ON THE JOB: Title IX coordinator Farrell smiles for a headshot.

The next meeting happened Mar. 30, where the third topic, communication, was the main focus. Communication within the Committee itself and with the community is a vital part of the progress and investigations, as the Committee hopes to make their discoveries and plans for change as understandable as possible. More specifically, Farrell explained that "we send it in a way people will hear it."

The May meeting will address the fourth topic: the conclusions drawn by data analysts from the California Healthy Kids Survey and any other information the board has access to. Students took the Survey in December 2020 and answered questions surrounding the Committee's topics of interest, including sexual assault and harassment.

Finally, the last item on the agenda will address the relationship the LGSUHS schools have with their feeder schools. Specifically, they will look at the sex education leading up to high school and the need to revise and introduce it earlier. Farrell prefaced this meeting by saying, "When students come into high school, it is a little late. We want to make sure our education programs start before that time."

This topic caught the attention of the public as survivors of sexual assault and harassment shared their stories throughout summer 2020 and into the current school year. Furthermore, the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors addressed the issue. In



LISTEN UP: Activists protest the SCC Board of Supervisors.

doing so, they approved an audit to investigate the enforcement of Title IX with one million dollars in funding in October 2020. This audit has no connection to the creation Climate and Culture Advisory Committee; as Farrell explained, "we started this process more in reaction to what was happening in the community." (Sources: LGSUHS, San Jose Spotlight)

Students return to campus

by **Cara Davidson**

Public Relations Manager

On Apr. 10, students began returning to school for longer school days. Following one year of fully remote learning, students went back for one hour a week at the end of March. Since then, they have progressed to attending three in-person periods a day, two days a week.



BACK TO SCHOOL: Students and teachers return to campus.

Phase 3B, which started on Apr. 12, consists of two cohorts of students to minimize COVID exposure between students. About half of the students returning for 3B are in cohort A. Cohort A goes to school in person on Mondays and Tuesdays from 8:30 A.M. to 12:35 P.M., unless students have a seventh period, in which case their day ends at 2:30 P.M. Cohort B goes to school on Thursdays and Fridays with the same bell schedule. While one cohort goes to school in person, the other cohort signs in online via Google Meet or Zoom.

One of the greatest concerns students and teachers face as they go back is their health and safety. Students and staff members must wear masks at all times during class; the only time people can remove their masks is to eat or drink while outside and following social distancing guidelines. Students must take a short survey at the beginning of each in-person school day through Screener19, which checks that students have not been in contact with someone who had COVID-19, ensures they do not have the virus themselves, and verifies that students will follow all county and state guidelines on COVID-19. Students check into each classroom with Screener19 and must have a green checkmark proving their completion of the survey before entrance.

Between class periods, students and teachers wipe down desks. Students and staff members must not share supplies, and everyone must follow COVID health guidelines. LGHS staff created a map that shows students which directions they can walk to clear up traffic in the hallways. To minimize exposure, students and adults must only walk in one direction as shown by the map.

In 3B, Wednesday is a day to deep clean the classrooms and remains a workday for students; however, in phase 4A, that will change. LGHS plans to begin phase 4A on Mon., May 3. Phase 4A includes a full five-day week and the return of all students at once. Different cohorts will no longer exist; students will either go back completely, or not go back at all. The bell schedule will remain nearly the same, ending before 1:00 P.M., and containing three 75 minute periods per day instead of 80 minute periods. Students with a seventh period will have a lunch break and end with their seventh period on odd period days. Guidelines and safety measures in phase 3B will remain the same in 4A to ensure safety of the staff and students. LGHS plans to keep phase 4A for the remainder of the 2020-2021 year, so students can finally regain a sense of pattern.

SHS and LGHS offer ASR

by **Jordan Chan and Angela Sheu**

News Editor and Media Production Editor

LGHS Advanced Science Research (ASR) and AP Biology teacher **Cathy Messenger** held a meeting on Apr. 16 for Los Gatos Saratoga Unified School District (LGSUHS) students interested in taking ASR during the 2021-2022 school year. After ten years of development at LGHS, the ASR class will also be available for Saratoga High School students. In the past, Messenger has taught the ASR program alone, but she looks forward to running the program alongside instructor **Jennifer Lee** next year.

ASR is a hands-on STEM elective in which students design and execute individual projects to enter in the Synopsys Championship, a prestigious science fair, in mid-March. The course teaches students STEM skills like documentation and statistical analysis, as well as soft skills like communication and collaboration. Throughout the year, students make short oral presentations to their classmates to showcase their progress up until the point where they present to real judges.

Kids in the program start in ASR-1, then progress to ASR-2 or AP Research, and finally finish up with ASR-3 Honors. ASR-3 Honors students play a "very active mentor role" for new students entering the ASR program.

During the meeting, veteran ASR students shared their experiences and advice for the course. LGHS senior **Adrina Tang** expressed that her "most important takeaway" from her experience as an ASR-1 student is that, "it has given [her] a lot of confidence to be able to work in research labs in the future and [in] college."

Veterans took the informational meeting as an opportunity to talk about the time and effort they put into their projects. LGHS junior **Eileen Chen** stated that it was, "a challenge to manage [her] time," and ASR-2 student and LGHS senior **Anjali Vaidya** echoed this, saying the class was

sometimes, "hard to manage." However, Chen added that "doing a project in ASR isn't really working on it for a lot in a short period of time; it's working on it consistently over a long period of time."

Vaidya continued, "the lessons that you get from ASR are incredibly invaluable. It's 100 percent worth your time because the lessons you learn from it aren't just how to measure something or how to use a microscope. . . [it's also] time management and being able to work independently."

LGSUHS ASR applicants will complete a course on Canvas over the summer to prepare for their projects during the next school year. Messenger and Lee cannot wait for students to "get excited about doing [their] own STEM project!"



LEARNING LAB: Students conduct an experiment in ASR.

SCC fines The Cats for providing adult entertainment

by **Sophie Sullivan and Georgia Kaufman**

Opinion Editor and Humor Editor

Santa Clara County (SCC) fined longtime roadhouse and barbecue restaurant The Cats over 77 thousand dollars for allegedly offering "adult entertainment" after the restaurant-bar closed its kitchen. County officials also cited the restaurant for breaking multiple COVID-19 guidelines, including hosting indoor dining after 10 P.M. and live entertainment without a permit.

Residents of the county had previously complained about the restaurant breaking guidelines, but officials did not host an inspection until a Jan. 9 visit. An enforcement officer issued to The Cats owner and property owners a notice explaining: "During the inspection, you confirmed to me that your business facility allowed indoor operation and live entertainment (you claimed it was live-streamed and that individuals were not watching it in person) at the Violation Address after 10:00 P.M."

Further questioning from The Mercury News clarified that the "live entertainment" in question was classified as "adult entertainment," which the

county defines as "topless or bottomless dancers, strippers, or any entertainers regularly displaying specified anatomical areas for observation by patrons or customers." Such adult entertainment is prohibited in the zoning code in which The Cats lies.



SMALL-TOWN SCANDAL: The Cats temporarily closes its gates.

According to the restaurant's website, The Cats was originally established in 1896 as an "old stage line;" in 1967, its then-owners converted it into a restaurant and tavern. Located within SCC premises, the restaurant is subject to the county's stringent guidelines. In recent months, SCC has fined businesses over 4.9 million in civil penalties, according to a Mar. 28 report published by the Mercury News.

Despite the hefty fine of 77 thousand dollars, the County has issued larger penalties against various SCC businesses for failing to adhere to COVID-19 reopening guidelines, including two million against San Jose's Calvary Chapel and nearly one million against California Ripped Fitness gym.

Junior **Ian Moore**, who has played several shows at The Cats with his band, stated that, although the restaurant served as somewhat of a hotspot for live musicians in town, "There will be other places where we can do bigger and better performances and projects for our community."

Owners Aaron Crites and Mark Edwards have yet to pay the fines mandated by the SCC. The Cats' web-

site still displays a large "reopening soon" notice; it is unclear what the restaurant's future holds. (Sources: The Cats, The Mercury News)



FELINE FINES: SCC fines The Cats \$77k for offering "good times."

- States propose and pass anti-trans bills
- Biden introduces infrastructure deal

Jury finds Chauvin guilty for the death of George Floyd

by Jordan Chan

News Editor

On May 25, 2020, George Floyd told Derek Chauvin, a then-Minneapolis police officer, that he “could not breathe” as Chauvin knelt on Floyd’s neck during an arrest. That same day, Floyd died, sparking a mass Black Lives Matter movement against police brutality across the United States. Over ten months later, on Mar. 29, 2021, Chauvin’s murder trial began.



CALLS FOR JUSTICE: Thousands march in Minneapolis before the jury selection.

Chauvin pleaded not guilty to charges of second and third degree murder, as well as manslaughter. On Apr. 20, the jury found him guilty on all three counts, which means Chauvin may spend up to 40 years in prison. The judge stated that Chauvin’s sentencing would begin in eight weeks.

Jury selection for the trial took two weeks, a longer period of time than usual likely due to the public nature and high-profile nature of the case. After narrowing down a pool of over 300 jurors, just 14 remained: eight White-identifying, four Black-identifying, and two mixed race-identifying. The rest of the jurors’ identities were mostly private besides their ages and respective jobs, and throughout the trial, security escorts brought them into the building for protection and anonymity.

The prosecution’s two weeks of testimony largely centered around videos that captured the nine minutes and 29 seconds during which Chauvin immobilized Floyd. Prosecutors also brought medical experts to testify that Floyd’s cause of death was a lack of oxygen.

Concerning Chauvin’s use of force, the prosecution called on the chief of the Minneapolis Police Department Medaria Arradondo, who stated that the Minneapolis police department’s policies did not condone Chauvin’s actions, and other use-of-force experts testified that Chauvin’s actions were not reasonable for the situation.

Over just two days of testimony, the defense told a different story. Regarding the cause of Floyd’s death, defense attorney Eric Nelson brought in David Fowler, a former Maryland chief medical examiner, to claim that, rather than because of a knee on his neck, Floyd died because of his underlying heart conditions and drug use. Nelson brought up Floyd’s alleged drug abuse multiple times throughout the trial, mentioning Floyd’s opioid addiction and overdose in May 2019. He also pointed to toxicology reports from after Floyd’s death that detected fentanyl and methamphetamine in Floyd’s system.

During the trial, Nelson called on an expert on the use of force, Barry Brodd, who started by denying Arradondo’s statement, saying Chauvin’s restraint was not a use of force. He later acknowledged that the Minneapolis Police Department policies proved this to be untrue, but he called Chauvin’s actions “justified” and claimed Chauvin acted “with objective reasonableness.” Nelson and the defense team also argued that George Floyd’s cry, “I can’t breathe” was a form of resisting arrest.

The defense rested its case after Chauvin declined to testify in the trial, invoking his Fifth Amendment right. Closing arguments for the Chauvin trial began on Monday, Apr. 19, and the jury, isolated from the public eye, deliberated for less than one day.

(Sources: NPR, Washington Post, NY Times, CNN, AP)

Anti-transgender bills pass

by Maddie Dewhirst and Sasha Ryu

National/World Editor and Editor-in-Chief

This year, conservative politicians from over 30 different states proposed an unprecedented number of bills moving to restrict transgender children’s ability to access gender-affirming healthcare as well as their ability to participate in school athletics. According to the Human Rights Campaign there are, “[m]ore than 240 anti-LGBTQ bills under consideration in state legislatures across the country. Of those, more than 115 directly target transgender people.”

With a total of six bills from members of the state House and Senate, Texas officials have now proposed more anti-trans legislation than any other state legislature in the country. One bill from Senate Republican Charles Perry, SB 1646, would criminalize the act of a parent providing their child access to gender-affirming medical treatment. If Texas Governor Greg Abbott signs the bill into law, it would classify providing such medical treatment as “child abuse.”

On Apr. 14, the Florida House voted 77-40 to pass the Fairness in Women’s Sports Act. While it has yet to pass the state Senate or Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, the bill has shot to national attention because of language in the bill that states: “A dispute regarding a student’s sex shall be resolved by the student’s school or institution by requesting that the student provide a health examination and consent form or other statement signed by the student’s personal health care provider which must verify the student’s biological sex.”

In response, the NCAA released a statement, condemning the bills, announcing that it “firmly and unequivocally supports the opportunity for transgender student-athletes to compete in college sports,” and will only hold championships in places “free of discrimination.”

In North Carolina, one bill would require school employees to inform parents of children who fail

to “conform with their gender.” Another bill in Alabama would make it a felony, punishable by up to ten years in prison, for a healthcare worker to provide a transgender child with hormone/puberty blockers.

On Apr. 6, Arkansas signed a similar bill into law, effectively banning trans children from medically transitioning. In response, American Medical Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics recently came forward to publicly oppose the bill.



PRIDE: Activists unilaterally oppose the new legislation.

“The AAP recommends that youth who identify as transgender have access to comprehensive gender-affirming and developmentally appropriate health care provided in a safe and inclusive clinical space,” said Dr. Lee Savio Beers, president of the American Academy of Pediatrics. “The bill advancing through Arkansas legislature not only ignores this recommendation but undermines it.”

In addition to Arkansas, anti-trans bills in Missouri, and Tennessee have already passed into law. Many civil rights advocacy agencies are currently challenging them in court.

(Sources: HRC, Texas Tribune, NowThis, NBC News)

U.S. to leave Afghanistan

by Esther Sun

Editor-in-Chief

After 20 years of military involvement in Afghanistan, marking the longest war in US history, President Biden announced an official withdrawal of all American troops from the conflict-ravaged nation by Sept. 11.

Biden and other top US officials cited a lack of any existing threat from Al Qaeda as justification for the withdrawal, defending the decision as necessary now that America has fulfilled its original intention from when it joined the war.

“War in Afghanistan was never meant to be a multigenerational undertaking,” Biden stated. “We were attacked. We went to war with clear goals. We achieved those objectives.”

Beginning in 2001 with the US invasion of Afghanistan after 9/11, the war that started with targeting Osama Bin Laden and jihadist terrorism has been prolonged by American efforts to permanently defeat the Taliban and establish a stable democracy. While those hopes have never been fully realized, the conflict has cost the lives of over 100,000 Afghan civilians and 2,400 American service members, as well as more than two trillion dollars for the US.

The US’s withdrawal of its roughly 2,500 troops also led to the planned withdrawal of many NATO troops, of which there are about 7,000 currently in Afghanistan. Germany announced plans to withdraw its 1,000 troops from Afghanistan following Biden’s statement on the same day — Apr. 14.

Many experts predict that the US military departure from Afghanistan will likely lead to a Taliban takeover of the current Afghan government in Kabul, which has retained a level of control until now with American military support. Many Afghans have long viewed President Ashraf Ghani’s administration as a puppet government of the US, and civil war is not out of the picture

once foreign troops leave. Even the US intelligence assessment presented to Congress the week before Biden’s announcement supported this possibility, stating, “The Afghan government will struggle to hold the Taliban at bay if the coalition withdraws support.”

The prospect of Taliban control and the potential reestablishment of its Islamic Emirate from the 1990s sets an uncertain stage for the future of Afghanistan. Most notably, a return to hardline religious rule would threaten the freedom of women in the country to pursue education.

In regards to the impact of US military withdrawal on women’s lives in Afghanistan, Basireh Heydari, a student at Herat University, told The Guardian: “We have terrible days ahead with the Taliban. I’m worried they won’t let me leave the house, let alone what I’m doing now [with school].”

“The Americans are responsible for the troubles, hardships that we are going through,” Haji Abdul Samad, a pomegranate farmer from the Kandahar province, told the New York Times. “Now they are going to leave with their troops, with no peace, no progress. They just want to leave their war behind.”

(Sources: Washington Post, NY Times, The Guardian)



TAKEOFF: Troops begin a 2012 mission to disrupt the Taliban.

Minnesota Supreme Court overturns rape sentence

by Jenna Roselli

Center Editor

On Mar. 24, 2021, the Minnesota Supreme Court ruled that Minnesota’s legal definition of “mentally incapacitated” does not apply if the victim voluntarily consumed alcohol and drugs. This ruling overturned Francois Kahlil’s conviction from his original trial in 2019 and ordered a new trial for him. A Minnesota court sentenced Francois Kahlil to five years at the Faribault state prison after a jury in Hennepin County in 2019 convicted him of third-degree criminal sexual conduct involving an impaired victim. As a result of the Minnesota SC’s ruling, Kahlil’s attorney, Will Walker, believes Kahlil will be released from prison soon.

In May 2017, a 20-year-old woman only identified by her initials drank five shots of vodka and took a prescription pill before heading to a bar in the Dinkytown district of Minneapolis. According to court records, the security guard at the door prohibited her from entering, due to her drunken state. Shortly after, three men allegedly approached her and her friend, inviting them to a party. The woman later testified that they accepted, but when they arrived at a house in Northern Minneapolis, they soon found out there was no gathering. Her friend testified that the woman immediately fell asleep on the couch. The woman later woke up to find one of the three men, Francois Kahlil, raping her. According

to court records, she told Kahlil she did not want to have sex, to which he responded, “But you’re so hot and you turn me on.” She then lost consciousness.

The day after the alleged rape, between 7 AM and 8 AM, the woman woke up and saw her shorts around her ankles. She testified that she and her friend left the house in a Lyft, and the woman went to the hospital to undergo a rape kit examination later that day. Four days later, the woman reported the case to Minneapolis police.



SLIPPERY SLOPE: The court ruled Francois Kahlil is innocent of the rape charge.

Justice Paul Thissen wrote for the unanimous court decision and explained because the state’s statute regarding the legal definition of “mentally incapacitated” is specifically worded, “we apply that meaning and not what we may wish the law was or what we think the law should be.” Survivor advocates view the ruling as a big loophole in state law and are actively advocating for Minnesota lawmakers to close that gap. Kelly Moller, a Democratic-Farmer-Labor Representative from Shoreview is campaigning for legislation that would re-evaluate the legal definition of “mentally incapacitated.” This change would include language that states any intoxicated person is incapable of giving consent, regardless of whether they consumed alcohol or drugs of their own free will. In addition to clarifying the statute’s language, Moller’s bill would introduce a new sexual extortion crime, where courts can charge individuals for making threats that do not involve physical harm. The bill would also raise the maximum age for juveniles from 13 to 14 for certain offenses.

A sexual assault survivor and advocate, Abby Honold recounted how many of the people who report their cases are referred to prosecutors who inform them that their sexual assault was essentially legal. “It’s always so heartbreaking to have to hear that from yet another survivor who came forward and reported,” Honold said. (Sources: Minneapolis Public Radio News, Washington Post, NY Times)

Knoxville Police shoot a student in school bathroom

by Sophie Sullivan

Opinion Editor

Police killed one student while responding to reports of a possible gunman at Austin-East Magnet High School in Knoxville, TN, on Apr. 12.

The Knoxville Police Department reported that officers arrived at the high school late Monday afternoon after receiving an initial report of an "individual possibly armed with a gun." According to an updated Apr. 14 statement by the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, police discovered the student — identified as 17-year-old Anthony J. Thompson, Jr. — in a school restroom. After reportedly refusing to comply with officer orders, the Bureau reported that "during a subsequent struggle, the student's gun was fired," and a bullet struck school resource officer Adam Wilson. Police returned fire, killing Thompson. Preliminary examinations by the Bureau later found that "the bullet that struck the KPD officer was not fired from the student's handgun;" therefore, it is unclear whether the bullet injuring Wilson came from his own gun or another respondent's gun.

Additional responders pronounced Thompson dead at the scene, later identifying him as a student of Austin-East; they also brought Wilson to a local hospital for treatment. Authorities noted that



ARMED AND READY: Knoxville police don riot gear to protect themselves.

it was still unclear why the student had a gun or why he refused to comply. Police have not yet released video footage of the shooting.

Thompson is the fifth Black student at Austin-East this year to die from gun violence at the school. In January, 15-year-old Justin Taylor died after a 17-year-old peer accidentally shot him in a car. In February, 16-year-old Stanley Freeman Jr. died after two teenage boys shot him while Freeman was driving home. Police have not yet identified the killers of 15-year-old Janaria Muhammad, who was shot outside her home in February, or 15-year-old Jamarion Gillette, who was found shot on Cherokee Trail in early March. Knoxville City Council approved a one million dollars towards anti-violence in the community after the first four deaths.

The Knoxville shooting is the most recent of a series of gun violence incidents across the country. On Mar. 16, a gunman killed eight people in Atlanta, GA, including six women of Asian descent; a shooter killed 10 in a Boulder, CO, supermarket just over a week later. Nine days later, a gunman killed four in Orange, CA; former NFL player Phillip Adams shot six people in Rock Hill, SC one week after the Orange shooting. Nine died in a shooting at a FedEx in Indianapolis on Apr. 15; three days later, a gunman killed three people near an Austin shopping center.

(Sources: AP, Knoxville News Sentinel, NY Times, Tennessee BI)

Attack kills Capitol police

by Jordan Chan

News Editor

An attack near the U.S. Capitol on Apr. 2 left one Capitol police officer dead and another injured. The attacker crashed his dark blue Nissan sedan into the two officers on Constitution Avenue, shortly after 1:00 PM. After the suspect lunged out of the car with a knife, a police officer shot and killed him. The Capitol went into lockdown after the incident, but since both chambers were in recess, many lawmakers were off campus. Several staffers, however, were still present.



STORM THE STEPS: Trump supporters mobbed the Capitol.

William Evans, a father of two children, is the sixth Capitol Police officer to die in the line of duty this year. Three months prior to this incident, a riot at the Capitol took five officers' lives. The Capitol insurrection raised questions about security, and this new attack brings new ones. Recently, the Capitol Police installed a razor wire perimeter fence around the building to prevent follow-up attacks after the insurrection. On Apr. 2, the D.C. National Guard deployed a new "immediate response force" for additional security. In the past, many Republicans pushed for relaxed security procedures, but now Democrats cite this recent incident as reason for bulking up security measures.

Officials identified the perpetrator as Noah Green, a 25-year-old former football player, whose deteriorating mental state had worried friends and family in recent years. Fellow football players at Christopher Newport University (CNU) described Green as a "stand-up guy." Some family and friends blame Green's former teammates for drugging him in 2019, but a teammate dismissed this idea. Green's brother, with whom Green moved in a couple weeks prior to the incident, reports that he had dealt with hallucinations, suicidal thoughts, heart palpitations, and headaches. These symptoms could be connected to drug abuse or mental illness.



PICTURESQUE VIEWS: Noah Green played football at CNU.

Following his time at CNU, Green became increasingly religious, listing himself as a "Follower of Farrahkan," the leader of Nation of Islam, on his Facebook page, which Facebook has since taken down. Green's last post discusses a video from the founder of the Nation of Islam that Green called a "divine warning to us all during these last days of our world as we know it." Investigators focused on Green's mental state as a potential motive for the attack.

President Biden and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi sent out orders to fly flags at half-staff at the Capitol and the White House. Biden and the first lady made a statement that they were "heartbroken" by what happened on Apr. 2, and Pelosi referred to Evans as "a martyr for our democracy." (Sources: AP, Washington Post, NY Times)

Biden promotes proposal

by Esther Sun

Editor-in-Chief

Now in his third month as the nation's chief executive, President Joe Biden announced on Mar. 31 a two trillion dollar spending plan for infrastructure improvement and a transition to green energy.



VP ON TOUR: Kamala Harris shares plan with workers.

The proposal, officially named the American Jobs Plan, targets critical public services including transportation, home care services, manufacturing, housing, water access, schools, digital infrastructure, and more. Through investment in these areas and the subsequent creation of jobs to carry out these new improvements, Biden aims to bolster the nation's economy in order to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Beyond purely financial considerations, the plan also notes racial justice and investment in disadvantaged communities as priorities among its overall goals.

Funding for this infrastructure spending will come from reforms in the corporate tax code. Biden plans to raise the corporate income rate from 21 to 28 percent, which still falls shy of the 35 percent rate before Trump took office; increase the global minimum tax; and create a 15 percent tax on book income, which is the figure large corporations report to investors, as opposed to the Internal Revenue Service.

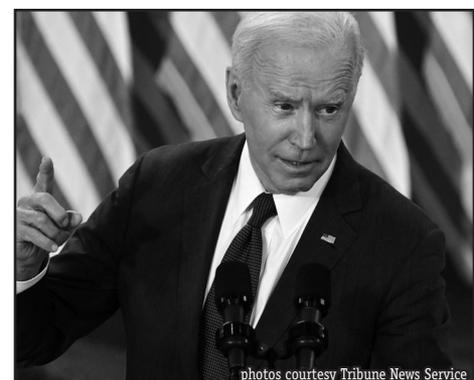
The White House's language in the plan's official fact sheet noticeably positions competition with China as a key motivator for the plan's creation and implementation. Biden has also

framed his focus on multinational companies in the corporate tax increase as efforts to push those companies to produce more in the US.

"It's time to build our country from the bottom up and from the middle up, not the top down," Biden said regarding the plan. "This is not to target those who've made it, not to seek retribution. This is about opening opportunities for everyone."

Moving forward, the next major step for Biden and Democrats is to negotiate with Republican legislators and win congressional approval for the plan's passage. Among general qualms with any major government spending, Republicans have raised issues with the corporate tax hikes as the method of funding.

However, though Biden has expressed hopes to reach a bipartisan agreement, Democrats will still be able to pass the plan without Republican support using the legislative process known as budget reconciliation. Critics of this potential path forward expressed worries about further entrenching the partisan gridlock in Congress, but most signs point toward a determination from Democrats to pass the plan with or without support from across the aisle. (Sources: CNN, White House, NY Times, Wall Street Journal, Politico)



PRESS CONFERENCE TIME: Biden showcases his proposal.

Biden administration provides abortion pills by mail

by Lexi Kupor

Public Relations Manager

Under the Biden administration, women seeking abortions at 10 weeks pregnant or less will now be able to receive abortion-inducing medication by mail throughout the pandemic, as of Apr. 12.

The decision — communicated by a letter from acting FDA commissioner Dr. Janet Woodcock to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) and the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine — overrides a January 2021 Supreme Court decision made under the Trump Administration.



ON THE STAND: Woodcock testifies in front of a congressional committee.

The case struck down a lower judge's decision to suspend the requirement that the first of two necessary abortion pills — mifepristone — be dispensed in-person at a medical facility by a certified doctor during the public health crisis. Following the decision, the American Civil Liberties Union filed a lawsuit on ACOG's behalf, citing the contradictory nature of requiring in-person mifepristone dispensaries throughout the pandemic while not doing the same for other medications.

The previous requirement placed a burden on women in low-income communities or those for whom access to abortion clinics and services is limited. Additionally, conditions prompted by the pandemic instituted an added safety hazard involved with traveling to a certified facility, only to then arbitrarily not face the same in-person obligation for the second pill.

Now, abortion patients will be able to receive the first drug via remote telemedicine appointments and mail. Woodcock's announcement did not clarify whether the in-person requirement would be reinstated after the pandemic.

Woodcock's letter explained that studies omitting the in-person mifepristone guidelines "do not appear to show increases in various safety concerns (such as hemorrhage, ectopic pregnancy, or surgical interventions) occurring with medical abortion." Such evidence supports the decision to allow mifepristone distribution by mail.

The decision, while possibly temporary, marks a significant point in the continuing debate over abortion rights in the post-Roe v. Wade era, and abortion advocates celebrated the announcement as a positive change. Many individuals, including Congress members Carolyn Maloney

and Ayanna Pressley, who advocated for this FDA move since February, believe that it is a small improvement that calls attention to further necessary abortion access reforms. "It is imperative the federal government make every effort to protect and expand access to safe, legal abortion in the United States — including by permanently eliminating outdated, ideological restrictions on medication abortion care," they remarked in a joint statement. (Sources: NY Times, The Hill, Philadelphia Inquirer)



PROTESTING: Pro-choice activists peacefully support legal abortion access.

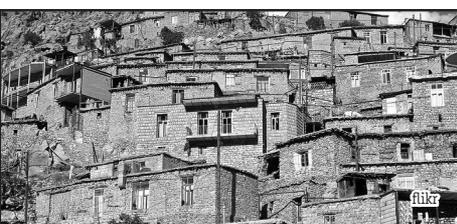
- Vaccination rollout shows inequality
- France restricts wearing Hijabs

Iran peace deal talks continue

by **Sonali Muthukrishnan**

National/World Editor

The Iran nuclear peace talks resumed on Apr. 15, following an alleged Israeli attack on an Iranian uranium enrichment site. Early this month, six countries, including the U.S., began preparatory talks in Vienna, Austria, to revive the Iran nuclear deal. Under President Donald Trump, the deal was abandoned in 2018; however, President Joe Biden is working to reenter the deal in hopes of remedying the threat of a nuclear Iran.



STONE CITY: An Iranian town sits on a rocky hillside.

In these discussions, the United States and Iran are not negotiating directly. The countries are in gridlock, both refusing to make the first move. Biden refuses to rejoin the deal if Iran does not pair back its nuclear development, but Iran refuses to talk directly without the removal of U.S. sanctions on its economy, stopping major oil sales. As a result, officials from the UK, France, and Germany agreed to act as intermediaries, moving between two different hotels. Both Russia and China have diplomats attending the talks as well. The first round of talks seemed to be productive, with two expert groups given the task of finding measures to move forward in terms of sanction-lifting and nuclear issues.

The Iran nuclear crisis is a polarizing issue. Many countries believe that Iran hopes to create nuclear bombs through its rapidly developing nuclear program; however, Iran strongly denies this assumption, stating that the program is strictly

peaceful. The program's development, which President Biden cited as the main reason he agreed to these talks, concerns the newly elected U.S. President, especially factoring in Iran's quick-approaching election which may put the government in the hands of hardliners.

In 2015, Iran, China, Russia, the U.S., Germany, and France decided that Iran must stop some of its nuclear program's development in exchange for the removal of sanctions from the Iranian economy.

The deal's official name is Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action or JCPOA. Under the Trump administration, the United States left the Iran nuclear deal and re-imposed sanction on Iran's government. Trump's move put the deal in jeopardy, pushing Iran to roll back on some of the deal's key commitments. Some of the prominent violations are that Iran has operated advanced centrifuges to enrich uranium, resuming enrichment to 20 percent concentration, and building a stockpile of the material. The deal states that Iran can only store and enrich limited quantities of uranium enriched up to 3.67 concentration, which can be used to make fuel for commercial nuclear power plants.

The attack on Iran's underground site Natanz created a blackout allegedly due to a cyber attack on its electrical grid, but all of the details are not known. On Apr. 12, the United States made it clear that they were not involved in the attack. Experts point to Israel as the perpetrator, with many Israeli media outlets reporting the blackout as an Israeli attack. Iran's retaliation, deciding to increase uranium enrichment to 60 percent, was condemned by many of the countries negotiating in Vienna, but did not stop the talks from resuming last Thursday. All the countries involved seem to be committed to getting the landmark deal back on track, making nuclear proliferation a closer possibility.

(Sources: NY Times, BBC, ABC)

Malaysia boasts wide diversity

by **Brynn Gibson**

Graphics Designer

Resting just north of the Equator in Southeast Asia, Malaysia is an environmental, cultural, and geographical marvel. The country, the 47th most populous worldwide, is home to over 37 million people. Kuala Lumpur is both the country's capital and largest city.

After about 300 years of British colonial rule, Malaysia declared itself an independent republic in 1965. Prior to independence, Malaysia was a part of a federation of territories including Singapore and the Bornean colonies of Sarawak and Sabah.

While Malaysia is a parliamentary democracy, the country is also a constitutional monarchy with the current king Abdullah of Pahang, who has served since 2019.

However, the monarch's roles are largely religious and ceremonial. To this day the nation remains a part of the British Commonwealth.

The Southeast Asian country is split up into two parts — Peninsular Malaysia and East Malaysia — with the former bordering Thailand and the latter sharing an island with Brunei. The vast majority of the population resides in Peninsular Malaysia, where the nation's capital is located.

Lush rainforest covers most of the country, providing the nation with both a beautiful landscape and a diverse array of animal species. One of just 17 countries worldwide deemed a "megadiverse," Malaysia is home to a high number of endemic species or species native specifically to the tropical nation.

With approximately 361 species of mammals, 250 species of reptiles, 694 species of birds, and 150 different species of frogs, Malaysia is one of the most biodiverse nations in the world. In fact, experts estimate Malaysia contains about 20 percent of Earth's total animal species. The diversity of Malaysia is not unique to its fauna. Multi-ethnic and multicultural, the country boasts great diversity. The majority of the population is ethnically

Malay, with minority populations of Indian, Chinese, and Indigenous peoples. While the official language is Malay, English is widely recognized as a non-official second language. Tamil and Cantonese are also commonly used. Islam is celebrated as the national religion, but non-Muslims enjoy religious freedom. However, despite religious toleration, members of the LGBTQ+ community face great persecution within the country, threatened with up to 20-year prison sentences for sodomy and a total ban on gay marriage.

Behind manufacturing and commodities, tourism is the third-largest contributor to Malaysia's economy. In a normal year unaffected by a global pandemic, Malaysia welcomes around 26 million tourists annually. Popular attractions and destinations include the Petronas Twin Towers, the tallest twin towers worldwide, the Batu Caves, a series of beautifully decorated caves holding Hindu shrines, and Mount Kinabalu, the third-highest island peak in the world.



CITY OF STARS: Kuala Lumpur's night skyline stands tall.

While Malaysia's beauty and diversity may seem tempting, both the CDC and Malaysia's government discourage international travel to the country until a larger percentage of the nation's population receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

(Sources: Britannica, CDC)

Vaccination progress sheds light on national inequality issues

by **Sidney Bricker**

Media Production Editor

As vaccination drives pick up speed across the world, distribution inequality is becoming an evident problem. Inequality exists in both cities and states in which parts of the population, especially racial minorities, have less access to vaccines, and on a worldwide scale. Experts expect that in many poorer countries it will take multiple years before everyone has access to a vaccine.

In America, racial inequality in vaccine distribution is rampant. According to information published by the Kaiser Family Foundation, in 83.7 percent of the 43 states from which data was available, white people had proportionally higher numbers of vaccinated people than other racial groups. In some states the difference in percentages was lower, but in many it was very pronounced. The racial groups currently experiencing the most pronounced disparity in the distribution of vaccines are the Hispanic and Black communities. For example, California's population is 40 percent Hispanic and 5 percent Black, but California's vaccinated population is only 24 percent Hispanic and 3 percent Black. Many find these numbers

especially problematic considering the well-documented fact that in America, racial minorities have experienced proportionately higher infection and death tolls in comparison with the white population.

Worldwide vaccine inequality between high and low-income countries is also incredibly high. According to the New York Times, high and upper-middle-income nations have injected 83 percent of all shots given globally. Low-income nations have only managed to administer 0.2 percent of doses. Africa, the continent with the lowest gross domestic product per capita, according to National Geographic, holds 17 percent of the world's population but, according to the New York Times, "it has administered roughly 2 percent of the vaccine doses given globally." This tremendous gap is due to distribution infrastructure and purchasing power available to countries, and lower-income nations simply cannot afford to purchase vaccines, let alone set up vaccination programs. What this means for the citizens is that while the majority of higher-income countries will be protected and able to continue their lives without fear of disease very soon, the majority of the citizens of low-income counties will wait for multiple years. Not only will these delays be bad for their countries' economies, making distribution ever more difficult,

a lack of access to vaccines will also mean that daily life continues to be dangerous. A lack of a balanced global effort does not just spell danger for those who can not access the vaccine. Delayed vaccinations could allow for the virus to mutate, and in a worst-case scenario, a mutation that current vaccines are ineffective against could cause another global crisis.

(Sources: NY Times, CNN, CDC, KFF, National Geographic)



VALUABLE VAX: A woman receives a COVID-19 vaccination from a nurse.

French hijab restriction amendment sparks international outrage

by **Alia Arafah**

Editorial Editor

On Mar. 30, the French Senate approved proposals for amendments to a law originally introduced to prevent "Islamic separatism." These amendments, which have yet to be voted into law, prohibit women under the age of 18 from wearing hijabs in public, all women from wearing burkinis, or modest swimwear, in public pools, and Muslim



LOOKING ON: A young woman wears her headscarf outside on a sunny day.

women wearing headscarves from attending their children's school field trips. The amendments received severe backlash from people across the globe who criticized these laws as Islamophobic and infringements on freedom.

This new "anti-separatism" bill follows recent attempts by French President Emmanuel Macron to stop terrorism in France. After a student beheaded his teacher for showing an image of the Prophet Muhammad, French legislatures are focusing their attention on stopping what they deem Islamic separatism, a term used by Macron to describe the self-isolation of radical Muslims, which they believe plays a role in terrorist attacks. Before the Senate proposed the latest amendments, Macron proposed a law that would force those who want to homeschool their children to first obtain permission from the government. Macron believes the homeschooling of Muslim children contributes to Islamic separatism. This law also received great backlash, as many believe the President's attempts to prevent radicalism are actually causing more divisions within France.

Lawmakers shared beliefs that the proposed amendments regarding women's clothing will "liberate" Muslim women who are forced to wear headscarves. However, Muslim women speaking out against the laws explain that most women who wear a hijab do so willingly to demonstrate modesty and devotion to God. Those in opposition to the law also argue that such laws would deter younger kids from

practicing Islam and further increase the anti-Islamic sentiments that run rampant in France.

Protestors took to the streets and to social media, using the hashtag #HandsOffMyHijab. Muslim women flocked to Twitter, Instagram, and other online platforms to raise awareness of a law they believe is unjust and discriminatory. Ibtihaj Muhammed, an American Olympic fencer and hijab-wearing Muslim woman, posted on Instagram to speak out against the proposed law, stating, "It's painful to see how far France has digressed and how normal virulent xenophobia has become. . . Every woman should have the choice to wear what she wants and the opportunity to play sport, regardless of her faith."

(Sources: UNILAD, NPR, Al Bawaba, Instagram)



PERFECT PARIS: The famous Eiffel Tower stretches toward a cloudy blue sky.

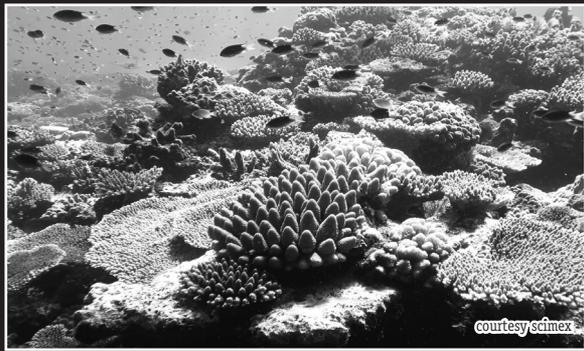
NASA scientists turn a game into a useful ocean tool

by Jackie King

Humor Editor

Silicon Valley NASA scientists have transformed NeMO-Net, a game for mobile phones that classifies corals, into a new tool for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Although only one percent of the ocean floor consists of coral reefs, more than 25 percent of all marine animals live in them. As reefs around the world continue to die off due to rising water temperatures, tracking a reef's health is more important than ever. Due to the pollution causing this rise in temperatures, the island of Guam saw a third of their coral reefs die between 2013 and 2017. In 2020, the Great Barrier Reef also lost over 1,000 reefs



DOWN UNDER: Thousands of animals swim around the Great Barrier Reef.

to bleaching, second only to 2016 bleaching where 30 percent of the reef's coral died. Before this game's new implementation, scientists used very low quality photos and large amounts of data to map and identify corals, a very slow and inefficient process.

Ved Chirayath, the lead NASA earth scientist on the project, has spent the past three years designing the game which was released last year. They used drones to get images of the coral reefs through a fluid lensing model. Attracting more than 100,000 users in the first month and working with the UN, they have mapped eight percent of the ocean at the same photo resolution as terrestrial land within the first year of release. Using the data from the app, the NASA team created an algorithm. "It sounds trivial, but using a neural network to map corals is not easy at all," Chirayath said.

Chirayath stated that, "there's no margin for error. It has to be incredibly precise for us to have confidence in the results and tell people with 95 percent accuracy what is happening to your reef." As many expert scientists as the team has, they rely on citizens to classify coral; the highest scoring player in the game is an 11-year-old, beating out even Chirayath.

Not only is the game much more efficient than the previous mapping methods, the accuracy is also significantly higher than traditional practices. Usually the accuracy rate with identifying corals is around 60 percent, whereas game users have increased that accuracy to around 90 percent, and the scientists use that information to create 3D interactive images of the reefs. To get that level of accuracy, the game links images classified by one gamer to others so NASA computers can form the coral image.

The gamers not only benefit the researchers by helping them design the coral interactives, but the game teaches users about harmful actions done by any humans and how to prevent them. Heather Howard, co-founder of the Coral Reef Education Institute in Hawaii, stated that the majority of people doing harm the coral are simply uneducated. "They wear chemical sunscreens, they walk on it, they kick on it," Howard said. "They think it's a rock, or they just don't know what it is." The app is a great way for this information to spread across the world and although it will not solve coral bleaching, the lower the human effect, the higher the chance of recovery. Howard is hoping that after using the game, "people would look under an ocean surface and not know what they were looking at. The game puts them into a different category." (Sources: NASA, The Guardian)



NEW DISCOVERIES: A scientist dives down to study the coral reefs in Perth.

Peru awaits a new election

by Revanth Rao

Sports Editor

Peru held the first round of its presidential election on Apr. 11 to select its fifth president in the past three years. The country, which has been beset with corruption and other illegal activity among high level government officials, saw no candidate win a simple majority of the votes in the election, as top vote recipient Pedro Castillo received around 19 percent of the votes. In two months, he will face Keiko Fujimori, who received about 13 percent of the vote, in a runoff election.

Peru has faced a multitude of problems over the past few years, with issues due to the COVID-19 pandemic and political corruption chief among them. The pandemic has greatly affected the country, as over 1.6 million people contracted COVID-19 and over 55 thousand died from the virus. Peru has also seen an economic decline during the pandemic, as 4 million citizens lost their jobs and another 5 million became impoverished during 2020. In regards to corruption, nearly all of Peru's recent



HATS OFF: Pedro Castillo waves as he passes by a crowd.

presidents have been investigated for corruption, as have many of the members of Peru's Congress. In Nov. 2020, President Martín Vizcarra was impeached and removed from office for "moral incapacity" after allegations that he accepted kickbacks. This led to Manuel Merino, the president of Congress and one of Vizcarra's political opponents, assuming the role of president on an interim basis. However, after widespread protests sparked by Peruvians who supported Vizcarra, Merino resigned, leaving Francisco Sagasti, a Congressman who did not vote to impeach Vizcarra, as president.

The runoff election will feature the two leading vote recipients from the first round of the election: Castillo and Fujimori. Castillo, a member of the Free Peru Party, is most famous for leading a lengthy teacher's union strike in 2017. While relatively unknown early on, he gained support in the weeks leading up to the election. Castillo ran on a platform of nationalizing natural resources for education and health purposes and writing a new constitution that would be favorable to citizens. Fujimori, a member of the Popular Force Party, is running for president for a third time on an extremely conservative platform. She is viewed unfavorably by many in Peru due to corrupt behavior and human rights violations. Many voters fear that she would bring back the far-right policies of her father and former president Alberto Fujimori if elected.

The run-off election is currently scheduled to take place on Jun. 6. Regardless of who wins the election, the new president will step into an extremely divided political environment and will face a difficult task in helping solve Peru's problems. (Sources: NY Times, Washington Post, France 24)

UK lifts quarantine rules

by Michaela Thimot

National/World Editor

After one of the longest and most strenuous lockdowns, Britain began slowly lifting its quarantine regulations on Apr. 12. The moment midnight arrived, select pubs served drinks to their first customers in over a year. These openings were very soon followed by thousands of stores, restaurants, and gyms opening their doors to the public. Citizens were overjoyed at the chance to socialize once again after being shut out from their normal routines for so long.

As long as they remain outside, UK citizens are allowed to eat and drink in groups no larger than six people total. Zoos and theme parks reopened as well, along with public buildings — such as libraries and community centers — and private businesses like salons. International travel is still restricted, with the exception of essential travel, but with the mass vaccination efforts across the UK, airline representatives are hopeful that will

soon change. British Airways chief executive Sean Doyle insisted, "There is an immediate opportunity to open up to the US. With the progress in Europe on vaccination in the second quarter, then that could be a template others follow."

Throughout the pandemic, Britain has suffered over 4.38 million cases and 127 thousand deaths. The first of the three lockdowns began Mar. 26, 2020, and was followed by two more after the lift of each lockdown led to a vast increase in cases and deaths. Shortly after Christmas, the UK's daily death tolls were some of the worst in the world. Experts believe that the surge in case numbers was due to the lifting of restrictions, thereby allowing millions of people to travel during the holiday season.

The UK is currently in the second step of the four-step plan to fully open the country. On Mar. 8, the first step began with all schools opening to allow outdoor sports and activities. On Mar. 29, the government allowed outdoor gatherings of six people or two households, as well as allowing outdoor sports facilities to reopen. The UK received its first taste of real normalcy on Apr. 12 when the second step of the plan was initiated allowing for the opening of all non-essential retail stores and outdoor dining.

Barring any changes, step three will include the lifting of most outdoor social contact rules, indoor meetings of six people or two households, and the opening of indoor hotels. Jun. 21 is the day every Brit is counting down to, as it allows for the removal of all limits on social contact and reopening the final parts of the country. (Sources: BBC, NBC, NY Times)



OUT AGAIN: UK citizens with masks shop at a market.

St. Vincent volcano erupts after 40 years of inactivity

by Brynn Gibson

Graphics Designer

On the morning of Apr. 9, the largest volcano on the Caribbean island of St. Vincent, La Soufrière, erupted after 40 years of dormancy. The blast, whose magnitude is widely likened to the volcano's devastating 1902 eruption that killed over 1,000 people, sent clouds of ash stretching six miles into the air and blanketed the island with heavy ashfall. St. Vincent is part of an island chain that includes the Grenadines and is home to over 100,000 people.

Scientists noticed increased volcanic activity on the island starting in December 2020. This early recognition allowed government officials to review evacuation plans and educate residents living in areas near the volcano. On Apr. 8, one day before the blast, officials released a "red alert," prompting an evacuation for over 16,000 residents living on the northern region of the island where La Soufrière is located.

However, an unknown but sizable number of residents refused to heed the government evacuation order and remained in mortal danger. The concern for these residents heightened after the volcano erupted again on Apr. 12, in a blast even larger than the first. Erouscilla Joseph, the director of the University of the West Indies's Seismic Research Center said that "anybody who would have not heeded the evacuation, they need to get out immediately."

Experts say that the pyroclastic flows of tremendously hot ash, lava, and gases released in the eruption are destroying everything in their path. "Anything that was there, man, animal,



DIG DEEP: One of the many craters on La Soufrière prior to the huge eruption. anything...they are gone," said Richard Robertson, a scientist at the seismic research center.

While so far officials have not reported any casualties, the island is struggling to combat the expanding crisis. The pyroclastic flows incinerated many farms, livestock, and homes as they carved a path of destruction, razing livelihoods along with the landscape. In some areas, water and food are entirely cut off and relief is hindered by the thick smoke which makes the transportation of aid difficult.

Residents displaced by evacuations sought relief in makeshift shelters, some of which are located within hotels and resorts. However, due to concerns regarding COVID-19, some shelters are only accepting those

who are vaccinated. At government-run shelters, COVID-19 tests are being distributed, with any person who tests positive being sent to isolation centers.

In the wake of the eruption, neighboring countries have rushed to assist in disaster relief via providing money and supplies. Empty cruise ships that happened to be in the vicinity offered to evacuate citizens, but it is unlikely that this offer will be fully utilized as most of the damage is isolated to the northern regions of St. Vincent. Government officials and experts predict it could take four months for life on the island to return to normal. (Sources: CNN, AP, NY Times)



HOT IN HERE: A huge explosion fills the sky after La Soufrière erupts.

- Stop using religion as pro-life defense
- Justice album is performative

OPINION

EL GATO • FRIDAY, APRIL 23, 2021 • LOS GATOS HIGH SCHOOL • WWW.ELGATONNEWS.COM

Sullivan writes open letter to silent non-Asian peers

by Sophie Sullivan
Opinion Editor



To my silent non-Asian peers:

3,795. This is the reported number of hate incidents against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) in 346 days (Mar. 19, 2020 to Feb. 28, 2021). In Stop AAPI Hate's Mar. 16 report, the organization further noted that for every AAPI male victim who reports anti-Asian violence, more than two women experience it as well. Nearly 70 percent of all hate incidents involve verbal harassment, and more than a tenth involve physical assault. Almost 45 percent (1,691) of all incidents took place in our home state of California.

3,795. Can you imagine that many individuals all together? Can you visualize nearly 4,000 hate crimes taking place in less than one year? Can you picture 1,691 of your AAPI peers in your own state? And still, if you're surprised, you haven't been paying attention. As far as data take us in hinting at the magnitude of anti-Asian sentiment, the numbers

3.795

S. Sullivan

fail to reflect how much violence goes unreported, how integrated racism and oppression are into our society, and how normalized these incidents feel. Yet — as I've learned from personal experiences, as well as conversations with my AAPI peers — ironically, it often isn't the physical, verbal, or emotional violence we feel that cuts the deepest. It's the silence of our non-Asian peers: those who are watching, waiting, wondering, as we plead for help.

Silence is compliance. Silence is choosing the side of the oppressor. Silence is the most deafening cry you could make while our 婆婆们, our 公公们, our 阿姨们, and our uncles hit the ground — beautiful people abused and murdered and silenced while you shrink back in indifference.

In choosing not to use your voice — whether you're afraid, you believe you don't have the capacity, or you don't care — you are not pushing the issue aside. You are pushing it onto those who are hurting the most. In silence, you feel untouched; in silence, you deflect the punches onto us.



C. Wagner

I want to ask my silent non-Asian peers a series of questions to help you understand that which you do not understand:

In the past months, how many victims of explicit hate crimes have you seen in the media who look like your grandma?

Have you thought through what you and your family will do if someone is attacked in a racist hate crime?

Have you considered the area you're traveling to, and if it's been the sight of recent anti-Asian assaults?

And my final question: What will it take?

Will it take my mother's bruised face on the media for you to speak your first word of defiance against anti-Asian hate? Will it take videos of my elderly grandfather fighting back for his life? Will this be enough?

Please — listen, advocate, fight, protect, donate, support, love. Hear our cries. Take action.

"Sometimes I wonder if the Asian-American experience is what it's like when you're thinking about everyone else, but nobody else is thinking about you." -Steven Yeun (Source: Stop AAPI Hate)

"Not all men" is ignorant

by Emily Duvall
Culture Editor



On the evening of Mar. 3, 33-year old Sarah Everard was walking home to her apartment in London; she did not make it home. Her path took her along paths of well-lit streets and she

spoke with her boyfriend, tactics many women use to feel safer at night. After further investigation in the last few weeks, authorities reported that the victim was kidnapped and killed by 48 year-old Wayne Couzens.

Everard's heart-wrenching story sparked even more crucial conversations on how many women are sexually harassed in their everyday lives. As a woman, I know not to walk alone. To always carry pepper spray. To hold my keys in between my fingers to defend myself. I could go on and on.

Some may question the significance of these safety measures. If you are one of these people, I urge you to think harder about why this is so important. Both men and women, but primarily women, are sexually harassed constantly on the streets, at work, or anywhere. In January, a non-profit organization called Stop Street Harassment conducted a survey which came out with concrete evidence backing this statement. The survey found that in the US, 81 percent of women and 43 percent of men experience some form of

sexual harassment in their lifetime. Additionally, a survey in the UK conducted by UN Women UK stated that 97 percent on women in the UK aged 18-24 had experienced some form of sexual harassment. Ninety-seven percent.

All of this data has reached social media, and many people are sharing this information across platforms to spread awareness. But, in the midst of everyone sharing resources and ways for women to stay safe, to stop sexual violence, harassment, and assault, I have seen numerous men try to disprove the data with the phrase, "not all men," which invalidates survivors, and downplays the severity and extent of this issue.

While it is true that not all men directly participate in sexual harassment and assault, this statement is extremely problematic and detrimental to survivors. It should not be "not all men" when what it really is, is too many women. The usage of "not all men" is ignorant because it fails to recognize all of these women who actually do feel unsafe daily in many different walks of life. "Not all men" doesn't make you look better; what does make you look better is educating yourself on why this is happening and how this data is affecting people. Instead of using this phrase, the step in the right direction is to learn about what you can do to help, and also research what you can do to help women feel safer.

Stop saying "not all men." (Sources: Wall Street Journal, NPR, UN Women UK)



B. Gibson

Stop normalizing trauma

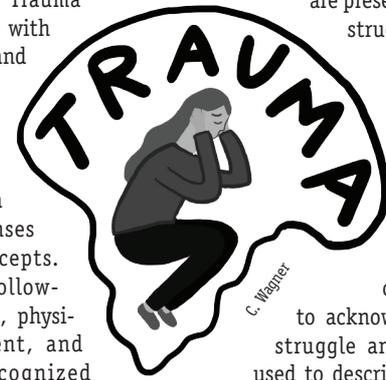
by Emmy Morley
National/World Editor



In the age of TikTok, I've seen a lot of people posting "relatable" content where creators outline their experiences with "trauma" for viewers.

Even more common are users who lack medical degrees posting about "signs you have childhood trauma." In interpersonal situations, I've seen peers of mine reference trauma, but not understand the nuances of that idea. "Trauma" has become synonymous with experiencing adversity and the natural side effects of stressors, but this is not the case.

It is important to note that trauma and its various responses are very complex concepts. Trauma can present following a disturbing mental, physical, or emotional event, and oftentimes is not recognized until a later date with the help of a mental health professional. Like many mental illnesses, society has often normalized, popularized, used it explain everyday occurrences. It feels like modern society has a habit of using self-diagnoses to justify and explain away uncomfortable emotions, which is understandable. It makes a struggle less scary if we can put a name to it, but there are harmful side effects to normalizing 'trauma.'



C. Wagner

When someone who has experienced personal trauma opens up to another individual, and is greeted with 'yeah, I have trauma too,' it often has the opposite effect of what the individual intended. While relating is a powerful tool to help another person, it's important that we don't overshadow someone who is trying to share something personal. Beyond that, when someone with genuine trauma is greeted with possibly exaggerated, or self-interpreted trauma, demonstrates that the self-diagnoser might not be someone who can be trusted. If someone cannot grasp the depth of true trauma, how can they be expected to understand when they are presented with someone who is truly struggling with trauma?

Further, normalizing trauma makes it harder to understand what trauma truly is. If trauma is everything from a difficult class to a death, it takes away from the validity of trauma. While any emotionally difficult event is completely valid, it's important to acknowledge the difference between struggle and trauma. Trauma is a term used to describe the psychological and emotional effects of a deeply disturbing event in one's past that can result in any number of day-to-day responses.

While difficult events are difficult events, the severity to which they affect an individual is where trauma and adversity differ. By accepting that trauma isn't necessarily an explanation for things that are hard for us, we can make room for people who truly struggle with the difficulties of trauma.

Religion is not a valid argument in defense of pro-life

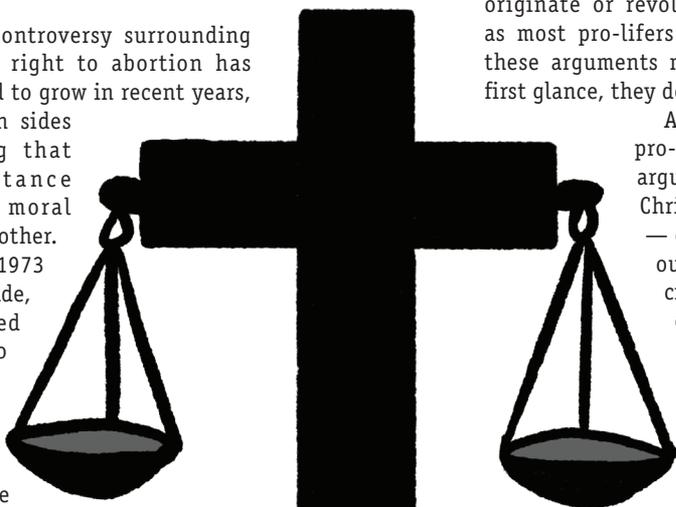
by Sonali Muthukrishnan
National/World Editor



The controversy surrounding women's right to abortion has continued to grow in recent years, with both sides believing that their stance is more moral than the other.

Since the U.S. Supreme Court's 1973 ruling in the case of Roe v. Wade, pregnant women in the United States have had the right to choose whether they want an abortion. This historical decision has not stopped a majority of the Republican Party from trying to make abortion illegal.

As a woman, I feel strongly that all women deserve the choice to have an abortion. Regardless of my feelings, and regardless of whether I would get one myself, all women should be able to choose what happens to their bodies. In the past few years,



B. Gibson

I have noticed that most pro-life arguments originate or revolve around Christianity, as most pro-lifers are evangelicals. While these arguments may seem convincing at first glance, they do not hold up to scrutiny.

A critical point that the pro-life side of the abortion argument depends on is the Christian belief that all life — even life that cannot live outside the womb — is precious and only God should get to choose what lives and dies. I have an issue with this argument because not everyone in America practices the same religion. Our country is wildly diverse, with people from every walk of life and religion.

My family is Hindu; we have many gods, not just one. Why should someone else's religion define what I have the right to do with my own body?

This also brings up another issue: separation of church and state. The U.S. Constitution clearly outlines freedom of religion in the First Amendment, and as a country we uphold the values of the Constitution by ensuring a separation of church and state.

Making abortion illegal, for the majority of pro-lifers, is a decision made primarily based on religious thinking, specifically centered around Christianity. Blurring the lines between church and state is unacceptable; that separation is part of what makes us America: one of the world's most diverse countries.

The religious aspect of the pro-life argument is invasive to those of us who do not subscribe to the same religion, but even more than that, the Bible is interpreted differently by everyone. Not all Christians believe that the Bible states women should not be allowed to have abortions. For those who do feel that the Bible says abortion should not be allowed, there are so many things that the Bible says that many Christians choose not to apply to their lives, like wearing a blended fabric, getting tattooed, gossiping, and so much more. Why should they follow what the Bible says about abortion so strictly when they do not follow all of the rules it lays out?

Women should have the right to control their bodies, regardless of religious ideas surrounding the idea of abortion. America should not take the power of choice away from women. Religion is not a valid pro-life argument.

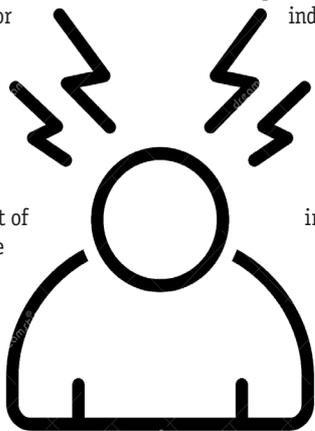
Fox advocates for student well being in new schedule

by **Alaina Fox**
Editor-in-Chief



Recently, the LGSUHSD Board announced a new bell schedule for Phase 4A, the next stage in reopening the school. This schedule would make Wednesdays — which are currently asynchronous days for independent study — short days of live classes. I understand the intent in doing whatever possible to guarantee a thorough education, but preserving our Wednesdays is vital for students' academic success and mental well-being.

First, it's important to address the educational element of this schedule. Asynchronous Wednesdays are not a waste of potential academic time. On these days, teachers offer office hours, providing students with one-on-one guidance. Especially for students who still do not feel comfortable returning to in-person instruction, the opportunity to receive individualized help is invaluable. We don't always have the time or confidence to ask our questions during hectic classes, but on Wednesdays, we get to work through problems step by step, which essentially gives us the equivalent of the tutorial periods we had pre-COVID. Also, having the freedom to choose how to spend the day allows students to work



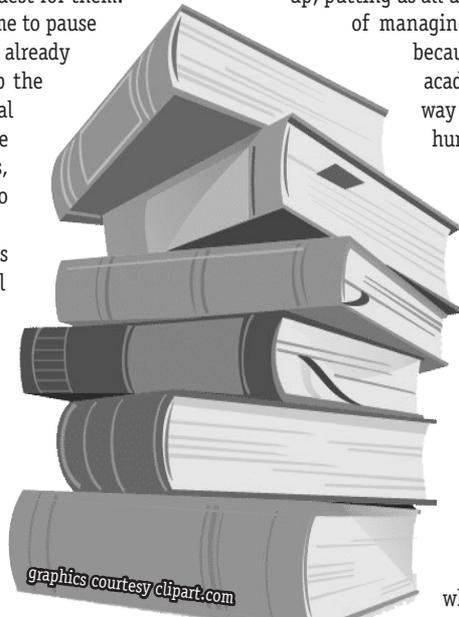
at their own pace and focus on the areas that are hardest for them. When we watch pre-recorded lectures, we have the time to pause or rewatch segments whenever necessary; or, if we already have a solid grasp of the material, we can speed up the video and learn at the pace that best suits our personal preferences and abilities. Because of the independent structure of these days, we can also allocate more time to the subjects we struggle with.

Additionally, Wednesdays are crucial for students' mental health. Having a mid-week break allows students to check in with themselves to gauge how they're doing. Are they struggling with concepts? Do they need to schedule an appointment to check in with their teachers? Or are they feeling overwhelmed? Do they need to take a nap, set time aside

for a walk, or engage in other activities that restore a sense of balance and tranquility? When our schedules are go-go-go and we don't have the time for rest or introspection, anxiety builds

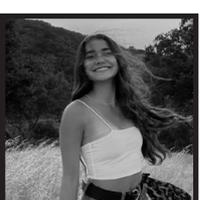
up, putting us all under duress. It's not a sustainable way of managing a work-life balance. Furthermore, because mental health indisputably affects academic performance, this is yet another way that taking away our Wednesdays will hurt, not help, our education.

Finally, going from four days a week of live, synchronous learning to five days when we have just a few weeks left feels ridiculous. In the last stretch of the school year, as students are preparing for and taking AP exams and finals, the pressure is already mounting. Students in all grades are enduring extreme stress. This may be the worst possible time to implement such a drastic, stressful schedule alteration. Reflecting on this abrupt and extreme change, an anonymous senior complained, "You know how when you want to introduce a goldfish to a new tank, you have to do it slowly, or they'll die of shock? Yeah, I'm the fish. Someone get the defibrillator."



Don't oversaturate love

by **Cara Davidson**
Public Relations Manager



The other day I was having a conversation with my sister about how we hate people when they do things that annoy us. My grandmother was listening in on the conversation

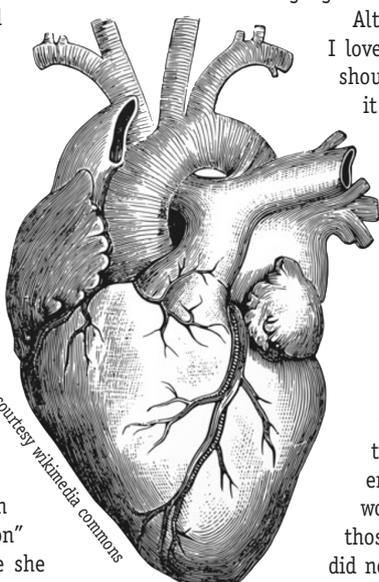
and she got upset that we joked so casually about hating people. We laugh in the same sentence we confess hatred for someone. My sister and I explained to our grandmother that the words hate and love simply do not mean what they used to mean — or at least, not at the same intensity.

I say "I love you" to a random girl on Instagram after she tells me I look pretty. Every time I hang up the phone on one of my friends, I say, "Okay bye, I love you!" While I do love my friends, I've begun to wonder if I should stop confessing such strong feelings on a daily basis. I do not have "an intense feeling of deep affection" for a girl because she told me she likes my shirt, so I shouldn't tell her that.

However, I feel as though we have diminished these words' meanings so much that if I were to stop using them, it would feel like I do not care as much. Love is now the equivalent of like or thanks. For example, it almost feels odd to me to say "I like your shirt," or "OMG girl I like you!" To confess a liking for someone is almost more significant than

saying you love someone because the word love is so normalized.

If I see a shirt I think is ugly, I'll say, "Oh I hate that top." If someone causes one of my friends any slight inconvenience I'll express that I "hate them so much." I do not. Hatred is a fiery resentment we should use only for things that boil our blood — not shirts that we dislike. I'm sorry to everyone I have apparently "hated," for I did not understand what the genuine definition of that word was after growing up with incorrectly defined language during my childhood.



Although it's hard to not say I love you back to someone, we should only say it if we mean it. While it may cause some awkwardness, I'm going to try to only use the words 'love' and 'hate' when I truly feel inflicted by these emotions of such intensity. We must take back the words love and hate and add back their genuine meanings and connotations. The words "I love you" and "I hate you" used to hold such meaning and emotion. We used to use these words only if a person truly felt those deep feelings, and people did not toss them around. I miss when it used to be a big deal to tell your significant other that you loved them, or if you wanted a friend to know just how much you cared about them, you could tell them that you loved them. Our culture devalues the definitions of everything; but, I think it is important that we take back emotions and words to convey our lives with honesty.

Hold yourself liable

by **Alexandra Evans**
News Editor



To anyone who has been "called out," it is crucial you recognize that there are many different factors that can hinder your ability to settle a conflict, or do so peacefully. Therefore, when addressing a conflict, there are a few key things you can do to reach a resolution:

constantly stay aware of the sensitivity surrounding the conflict, keep an open mind, step away from your ego, admit your faults, and apologize.

Calling someone out on their faults in any area can be incredibly difficult, so awareness of the emotional baggage of those involved can aid in reaching resolution. Topics that require a call out are oftentimes touchy subjects, and either party may not react well to the responses they receive. Furthermore, there is either the burden of being emotionally hurt or accused as the perpetrator. Sensitivity to each other, regardless of anger, is quintessential to working out the issue, as fits of anger or emotion will only make things more complicated.

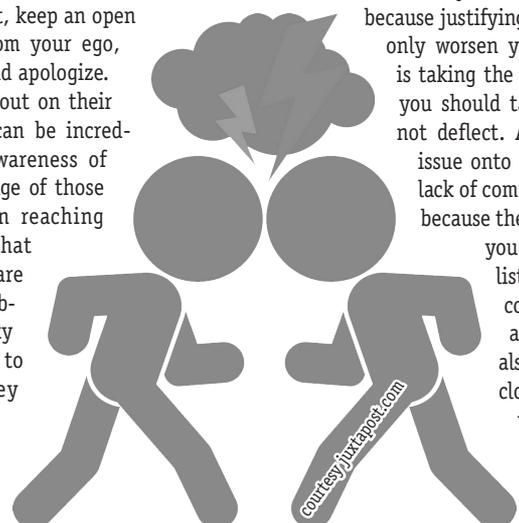
In the unfolding of a confrontation, keeping an open mind is essential. Regardless of whether or not you agree with the other's interpretation of the situation, it is absolutely imperative that

you move forward with an open mind. Each side of the altercation sees their story through rose-tinted glasses, but reaching a common ground and agreeing to meet some place in the middle is only possible when one party acknowledges that their side is in the wrong.

This goes along with my next point: when facing your faults, it is key to step away from your ego. Nobody is exempt from messing up or having flaws, because everyone makes mistakes. As a result, it is never totally out of the question that you could have messed up.

From here, you need to admit your faults, because justifying or deflecting them will only worsen your situation. Someone is taking the time to call you out, so you should take the time to reflect, not deflect. Attempting to turn the issue onto someone else displays a lack of common sense and empathy, because they are upset with you, so you should take the time to listen. Moreover, trying to convince them that they are the one in the wrong also will not aid in earning closure. In some situations this could be considered victim blaming, and is not proactive to the situation in any nature.

Apologizing can be such a difficult yet simple thing, because it requires you to be genuine and vulnerable. However, it is the best way to settle your conflict with the person accusing you of being in the wrong and offers the best possible chance to rekindle your pre-conflict relationship. Getting an apology is the end goal of making a callout in the first place, so making it is absolutely essential to this entire process.



Justin Bieber's album is performative activism

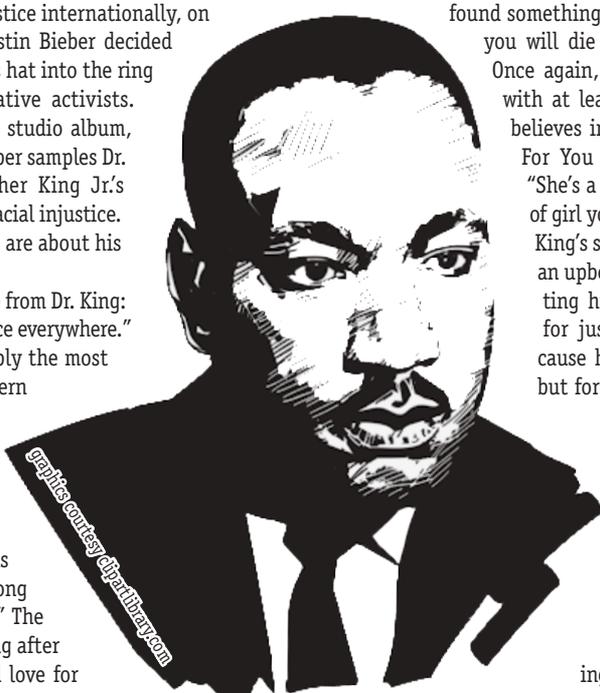
by **Lucy Holland**
Culture Editor



After a year of historic protests and calls for racial justice internationally, on Mar. 19, Justin Bieber decided to throw his hat into the ring of performative activists. In his sixth studio album, Justice, Bieber samples Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s

powerful words, but fails to mention racial injustice. In his 16-track album, 14 of the songs are about his love for his wife, Hailey Bieber.

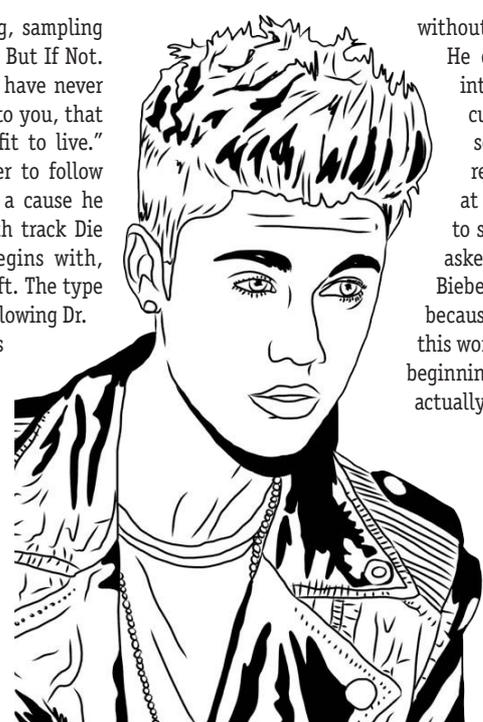
Bieber's album opens with a sample from Dr. King: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." After a powerful opening from arguably the most influential civil rights leader in modern United States history, you might expect Bieber to make at least a partial attempt at connecting his song to some sort of call for equality or justice. Instead, the song 2 Much transitions into Bieber's soft vocals "Maybe I stare too much, maybe not long enough. Funny how I forget to blink." The rest of the album follows suit with song after song about his relationship with and love for his wife.



Track 7, MLK Interlude, is devoted solely to Dr. King, sampling one minute and 44 seconds of King's 1967 sermon titled But If Not. After King's rousing speech in which he states, "If you have never found something so dear and so precious to you, that you will die for it, then you aren't fit to live."

Once again, you might expect Bieber to follow with at least some call to support a cause he believes in. Instead, Bieber's eighth track Die For You (Feat. Dominic Fike) begins with, "She's a stranger to the night shift. The type of girl you only dream about." Following Dr. King's statement, Bieber includes an upbeat pop song about putting his life on the line, not for justice, equality, or any cause he is passionate about, but for his wife.

As Brittany Spanos from Rolling Stone put it, "Bieber's positioning of our most iconic civil rights leader in the middle of an album about loving his wife is well-meaning but empty." He benefits from the timeliness of the topic of social justice



without ever advocating for the cause. He quite literally inserts himself into Dr. King's monologue when he cuts off the word "justice" in the sentence, "You died when you refused to stand up for justice" at the end of the MLK interlude to sound more like "Justin." When asked about the title of the record, Bieber told Vogue "I named it Justice because there's so much injustice in this world and there has been since the beginning of time [...] My name [Justin] actually means justice, so there's that."

Bieber defended his action of placing the MLK samples in his album by stating that he was trying to "amplify [MLK's] incredibly touching speech." But his statement leaves a bitter taste in the mouths of many, implying that in order to have a platform, one of the greatest speakers and social justice activists in history needs a

young white man. (Sources: Rolling Stone, Insider, Billboard, Vogue)



WELCOME BACK wildcats



we asked students, staff, & teachers: How do you feel about returning to in-person school?



"I'm actually really happy to start back in-person. It feels like finally we are ending this super long period where the world just stopped for a whole year because of COVID. I think the hybrid portion is going to be pretty challenging with three different groups to teach simultaneously. For each day there's the in-person group, another in-person group that is remote that day, and the cohort that is fully remote. They might all need some sort of different or modified lesson plan. I think as a teacher, trying to balance all those three groups [while keeping] them engaged with meaningful work will be challenging, especially with hands-on type classes like engineering. Regardless, I'm really happy hybrid classes are starting and glad we are progressing back to some normality!"
- **Rodrigo Coppelli**, Robotics & Engineering Teacher



"I think it is great we are returning to school in some form; however, I wish the transition was more gradual. It has been nice seeing teachers in-person, but I know for myself and many other students going from not having in-person school at all to five days a week is a lot.
In terms of leadership it has been extremely beneficial being back on campus, especially with upcoming events like junior prom. In a class like leadership, we rely heavily on collaboration and communication, and while these can be mimicked through a screen, the most benefit comes from brainstorming event plans and creating things in an in-person environment.
I think the transition back to school will affect everyone differently, as each student has had their own unique experience with remote learning. But regardless, it will be a major adjustment."
- **Tatum Thomas**, Vice President of the class of 2022



"I'm really excited to return to school and see my friends and teachers. Although my senior year is pretty much over, I still want one last month to live out all of the experiences I missed out on, like Senior Sunrise, Prom, and in general, the feeling of being a second semester senior."
- **Bella Valentine**, Class of 2021



"I feel great about returning to school. I love getting to experience the social interaction with my peers again and it is making me excited as we transition to a more normal life again.
Leadership has been pretty hard to do online. It has been a struggle trying to redo activities as something we can all enjoy while being safe. Although, our leadership class has been working very hard to put on some games and have some fundraisers here and there to ensure that we keep the school spirit alive in this past year.
I see a lot of people very excited to go back to school right now and, from what I have heard in my classes, people are enjoying in-person classes. The schedule isn't going to please everyone, so I have heard some critiques on that, but I have a feeling the LGHS administration will take all the feedback in consideration and, hopefully, give us a schedule that we will all enjoy for these last couple of weeks!"
- **Addie Payne**, Class of 2022



"For me, I am excited to return to school to see my friends and teachers; but at the same time, I feel a little stressed about returning. It will be hard to juggle sports, school, activities, and implement this new sort of lifestyle into our everyday lives, but I'm excited to go back for the last couple months."
- **Lara Çetin**, Class of 2023



"I've never not enjoyed school, but it's hard to look forward to remote learning since it's become such a monotonous daily task. I hope that with hybrid, classes can go back to being a more enjoyable part of my day. However, I am concerned about the interaction between the remote and in-person people because in ASR, we've already gotten a preview of what it'll be like since we've been coming into school for a while. It's hard to keep a conversation with both the people next to you and the people on a screen, and it's going to be more difficult to make sure that people who are remote aren't excluded."
- **Rodrigo Cantu Valadez**, Class of 2023



"I am excited to return to school because it is awesome to be actually on campus and see people! Leadership is all about doing things for the student body and it can be tough online. Moving back to in-person gives us lots of hope for the in-person events that we all miss. I think the transition has been mostly positive for my peers. Most people are happy to be going somewhat back to 'normal!'"
- **Katherine Brezoczky**, President of the class of 2022



"I am excited to have the staff and students back on campus interacting with each other. It is great to see people helping each other out and being able to connect with others again. Most of us have spent the last several months in solitude and it feels great to be interacting with each other again.
As part of the Tech Team I have been very busy helping the staff and all the students getting ready for this new way of doing things. The Tech Team has had to adapt to the rapid state of change we are experiencing and it can get a little overwhelming. It helps to be part of a great team where everyone is helping each other out from our LGHS administration and staff to each of the students."
- **Tim Nielson**, Tech Director



"It doesn't really change anything. It kind of just feels like we've picked up where we left off, except I'm not used to waking up this early anymore. It sucks that my water polo season is so short, but it's still fun to play and be with the team!"
- **Lindsey Adams**, Class of 2021

- Lana Del Rey releases COTCC
- Vinyls and CDs make a return

CULTURE

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Joshua Bassett releases first self-titled EP

by Sonali Muthukrishnan
National/World Editor

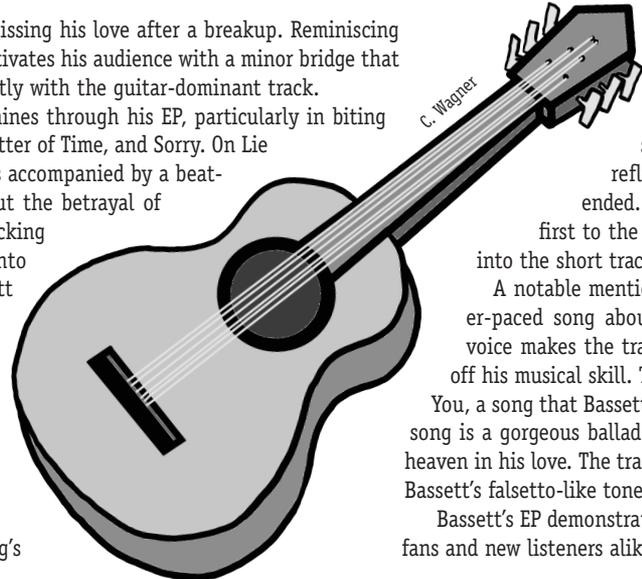
Joshua Bassett released his self-titled debut EP on Mar. 12, featuring six stunning pop songs: Sorry, Do It All Again, Lie Lie Lie, Only a Matter of Time, Telling Myself, and Heaven is You.

Bassett — who stars in High School Musical: The Musical: The Series (HSMTMTS) on Disney+ as Ricky Bowen — learned to love music at a young age. His father, who is also a musician, inspired Bassett to delve further into the creative scene. As a kid, Bassett took to the stage, participating in musical theatre. He also writes his own music; the HSMTMTS soundtrack featured some of Bassett's songwriting expertise on the song Just a Moment, which he penned with his co-star Olivia Rodrigo. The triple threat also plays the piano, ukulele, guitar, and drums.

The songs on Bassett's EP vary in tone and messaging; however, they still create a cohesive piece of music. Bassett's style is unique; his songs, while pop, are very authentic. The music is relatable to any teenager. His music is raw and emotional, as he bears his soul to his listeners in the softer songs like Do It All Again. In the song, Bassett

croons a sweet melody about missing his love after a breakup. Reminiscing about his mistakes, Bassett captivates his audience with a minor bridge that feels bittersweet, mixing perfectly with the guitar-dominant track.

Bassett's musical prowess shines through his EP, particularly in biting songs like Lie Lie Lie, Only a Matter of Time, and Sorry. On Lie Lie Lie, Bassett's skilled voice is accompanied by a beat-heavy track. Bassett sings about the betrayal of a close friend with a lively backing track, channeling his anger into the song's cutting lyrics. Bassett slows down in Only a Matter of Time, a track with a similar subject matter as Lie Lie Lie, but a very different feel. In Matter of Time, Bassett calls out to the one who deceived him. The singer's voice and the accompaniment are deceptively mellow and slow, but the song's



lyrics dig deep into the person who hurt Bassett. Sorry, one of the best tracks on the EP, is the only song that Bassett wrote from second-hand experience. The song reflects on a relationship that abruptly ended. In crafting Sorry, Bassett switches from first to the third person, weaving an entire story into the short track.

A notable mention on the EP is Telling Myself, a faster-paced song about young love. Bassett's strong tenor voice makes the track a pleasure to listen to, and shows off his musical skill. The EP closes with the track Heaven is You, a song that Bassett co-wrote with Sabrina Carpenter. The song is a gorgeous ballad in which Bassett sings about finding heaven in his love. The track has a gospel feel, complemented by Bassett's falsetto-like tone.

Bassett's EP demonstrates his incredible music talent, leaving fans and new listeners alike waiting for his next project.

ALL TIED UP: SUBURBAMORE'S NEWEST EP

by Georgia Kaufman
Humor Editor

On Mar. 19, Los Gatos' very own Suburbamore pleasantly surprised their listeners once again by releasing an EP entitled All Tied Up. Los Gatos High seniors and Suburbamore members **Soren Wilde** and **Trevor Ross** (stage name: "Ugene Stacks") partnered with fellow band member and LGHS alum **Mitch Ross** to create the EP.

The EP features four songs written by Suburbamore for last year's LG Got Talent. The four songs include All Tied Up, Pollen Drone, Just A Little Bit, and Space Mountain (their band favorite). Wilde recounted, "The writing process was a little unconventional in that we wrote each song over Discord rather than doing it in person. Usually, I would send

Trevor a [riff or chord progression] I had and we would add onto that idea for a few days, while chatting, until we had a song." This process over Discord, although inconvenient, helped the two work on their music in a safe and socially distanced way. Reflecting on the time each song took, Wilde added, "Usually we would spend about eight hours a day for two days writing and discussing song structure until we had a finished song." Wilde continued, "[We] wrote a song a week for LG Got Talent... tried writing [a couple more songs] for a couple of months, gave up, and then released this," remarking that writing the EP took "four weeks unless you wanna count a bunch of failed attempts."

Inspiration for the EP came from a few recognizable places and feelings. The two agreed, "[There was] some Steve Lacy inspiration for Soren's guitar parts. Rex Orange County's Corduroy Dreams inspired Trevor's guitar bit on Just a Little Bit." T. Ross spoke of his inspiration in terms of lyrical content for their favorite song, Space Mountain. "It's about longing for some kind of escape to a different experience which was probably inspired by the quarantine we've experienced this last year." He went on, "And then All



S. Sullivan

Tied Up, the song that follows, is all about being held back by not only your environment, but also your own beliefs and goals. I believe that concept came from my struggle to make much needed changes to my lifestyle as COVID set in for the long run."

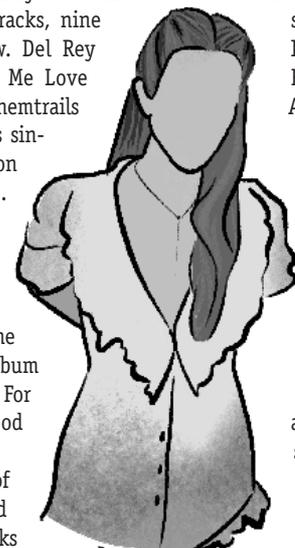
The response for the EP has been, "quiet. [The band] didn't do much promotion. But it's dope to have it finally out." Los Gatos is looking forward to more of Suburbamore and its many successes. The EP is available on all music streaming services.

Evans reviews Chemtrails Over the Country Club

by Alexandra Evans
News Editor

Singer-songwriter Lana Del Rey released her seventh studio album on Mar. 19, titled Chemtrails Over The Country Club. The album features eleven tracks, nine of which are brand new. Del Rey previously released Let Me Love You Like A Woman and Chemtrails Over The Country Club as singles with music videos on Oct. 16, 2020, and Jan. 11, 2021, respectively. On the day of the album's release, Del Rey put out a music video for White Dress, the first track on the album. One song on the album has other featured artists: For Free, featuring Weyes Blood and Zella Day.

With the exceptions of Breaking Up Slowly and White Dress, Del Rey sticks to the slow and angelic sounds of her previous album, Norman F**king Rockwell. Fans stormed the internet following the album's release, criticizing the album as "pitchy" and the worst of Del Rey's discography. Personally, I disagree. Those who are making these empty claims obviously have not listened to Wild At Heart or Dark But Just A Game, which are musical masterpieces. To me, Dark But Just A Game offers the same effect as the song Happiness is a Butterfly, which fans had loved from Norman F**king Rockwell, as it embodies the longing Del Rey feels while



B. Gibson

keeping the notes of the song itself felt dramatic and empowering.

Fans specifically took a disliking to the song White Dress, complaining about the tone of her voice and the song's nearly six-minute run time. I find that the song shows off Del Rey's range and versatility well. Although I do love the song, it is lower on my ranking when compared to songs like Chemtrails Over The Country Club or Not All Those Who Wander Are Lost. Del Rey could have easily utilized this tone of voice in a different manner or incorporated it into a different song and fans would have appreciated it more.

While writing and producing the album, Del Rey collaborated with singer songwriter Jack Antonoff. Although Antonoff does not sing with Del Rey on the album, he aided with production and songwriting. Antonoff elevates the musicality and quality of any project; he has previously worked with Taylor Swift, Lorde, Sia, Fifth Harmony, Kevin Abstract, and more.

The day following the release of Chemtrails Over The Country Club, Del Rey set the release date of Jun. 1 for her eighth studio: Rock Candy Sweet. Fans are already expressing their excitement and predictions for the upcoming album, some speculating the "Rock" indicates it will be a rock album.

King gives a rundown of this year's Grammy Awards

by Jackie King
Humor Editor

The 63rd annual Grammy Awards took place with social distancing on Mar. 14, in and around the Los Angeles Convention Center.

Although the award show was live on television, the performances were a mix of live and pre-recorded to adhere to COVID-19 protocols. Harry Styles, Billie Eilish, Taylor Swift, HAIM, and Silk Sonic were just some of the entertainers, and people praised most of the performances, except for a controversial set from Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion. Three-time Grammy Nominee Jhené Aiko hosted The Premiere Ceremony. Dua Lipa in Versace and Megan in Dolce & Gabbana won best-dressed. Though many said Harry Styles fell short on his red carpet look, he took the internet by storm moments later, showing up for his performance in a shirtless leather suit and a green boa.

The boa may have been good luck, as Styles took home his first Grammy that day for Pop Solo Performance for his summer hit Watermelon Sugar. Styles was not the only one to receive a first Grammy, with Best New Artist Megan Thee Stallion picking up her first Grammy along with two more. Megan was just

one of the women who dominated the night, becoming the first female artist to win in the Best Rap Performance Category with her Savage remix featuring Beyonce Knowles.

Knowles also set a new standard for singers by becoming the most Grammy awarded vocalist in history, as well as earning the title of most Grammy awards won by a female artist with her win for Best Music Video. Talent clearly runs in the family, as Knowles's daughter Blue Ivy Carter became the youngest indi-

vidually-credited winner at the Grammy Awards at the age of nine years old for her performance in the Brown Skinned Girl music video.

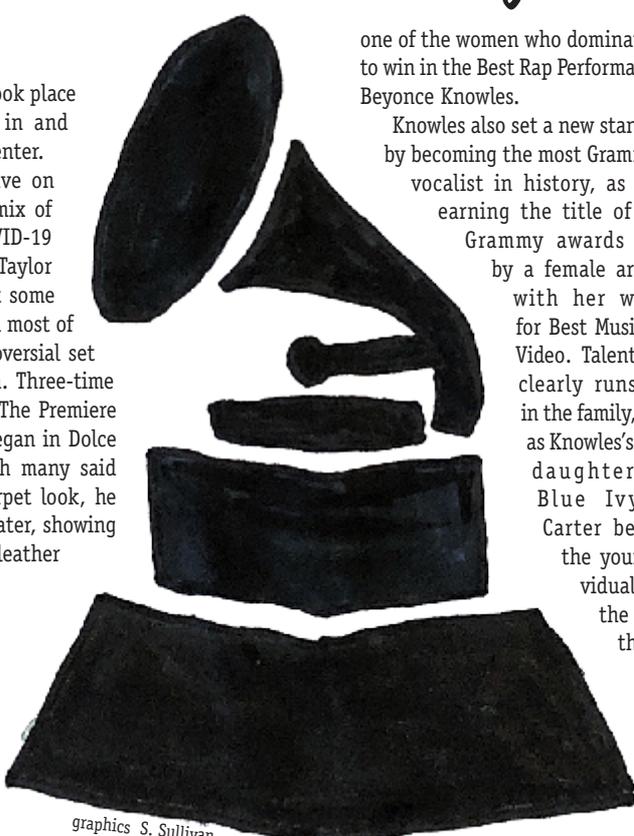
Despite losing out the rest of the night, Grammy veteran Taylor Swift earned the most prestigious award of the night, Album of the Year, for her spontaneous quarantine album folklore. Swift now shares the spotlight with Frank Sinatra, Stevie Wonder, and Paul Simon for the most AOTY awards

with three each, becoming the first woman to earn this spot. Fans have high hopes for Swift to break this record in the coming years, as she is only 31.

Although Megan had an immensely successful night winning in three of four categories in which she was nominated, people who simply watched the broadcast would have had no idea she won two more categories in addition to her Best New Artist award. Her wins in Best Rap Song and Best Rap Performance were not tele-

vised, sparking some controversy. Although people recognized that not all 83 categories can get air time, many believe that denying Hip-Hop or Rap categories press is harmful to Black communities especially, as they have dominated this genre for years. This is only one of the many reasons the Grammy's received backlash in recent months, with artists like Zayn Malik, The Weeknd, and more, calling them out for their bias.

Despite recent controversies, the 63rd Grammy Awards is one that will be remembered for empowering female record-breakers certainly made history.



graphics S. Sullivan



Duvall examines Vinyls and other re-emerging retro trends

by Emily Duvall

Culture Editor

With all of the different technologies and new inventions that Generation Z has grown up surrounded by, one would think that this generation in particular, if not everyone else, would not want to regress to the old ways we used to listen to music or take pictures. But, in these last few years, commodities like CDs, DVDs, vinyl albums, disposable cameras, and many more have made a huge comeback, and they are here to stay.

Last year, vinyl surpassed CD sales for the first time in 34 years. Vinyl LPs are much more expensive than CDs, but many people recently have

been purchasing albums and putting the covers up as wall art, or hanging the vinyl itself up on their walls for room decor. Stores like Urban Outfitters sell tons of vinyl of current artists' albums, along with record players that are incredibly popular.

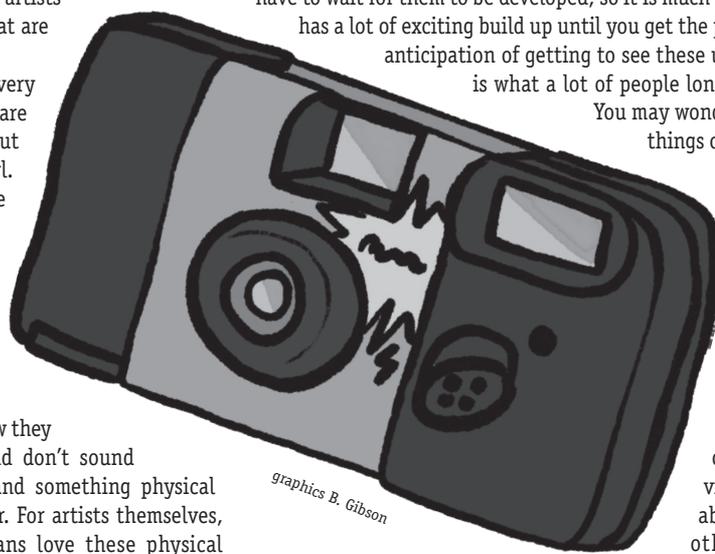
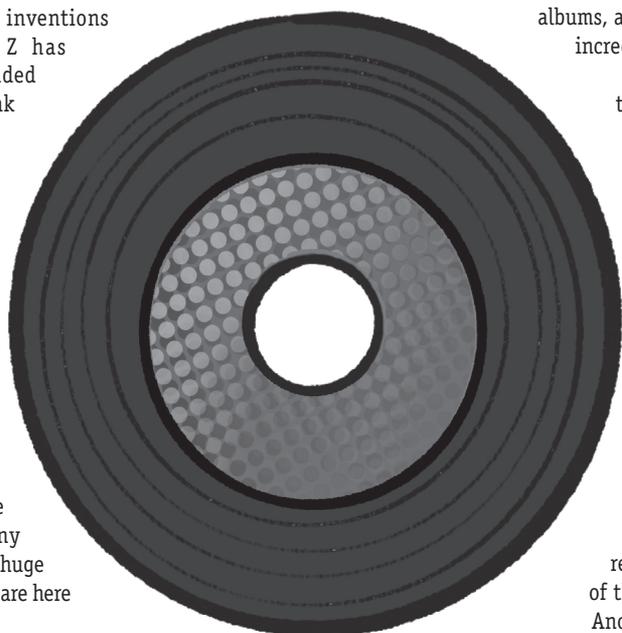
For teens especially, it is very trendy to have vinyl. CDs are also making a comeback, but not as prominently as vinyl. The analog albums have a raw sound quality unlike the flattened out MP3s found on either Spotify or Apple Music, for example. The appeal of this format definitely relates to how they are more authentic and don't sound perfect; they are real and something physical that you can keep forever. For artists themselves, they are realizing that fans love these physical records and CDs and they are now making money off of the physical piece of music, like they used to before. Another huge resurfacing older trend is disposable cameras. I cannot count how many people I know who have one or have used one in the past few months; I have one as well. Recently, if you have gone to the drugstore or looked on Amazon, disposable

cameras are either sold out or are super expensive. I think the true appeal of these is that these pictures cannot be retaken and that you have to wait for them to be developed, so it is much more real and also has a lot of exciting build up until you get the pictures back. The anticipation of getting to see these untouched photos is what a lot of people long for and enjoy.

You may wonder, why are these things of the past coming back? Although these trends started resurfacing prior to the pandemic, people are looking for something that provides a break from online spheres; vinyl, CDs, disposable cameras, and other things from the past do just that.

These objects incorporate interactive elements and are possessions that we can touch and hold. In the near future, we will definitely be seeing even more "retro" trends start to resurface, just as these things have.

(Source: The Rolling Stone)



graphics B. Gibson

EGR: the staff's favorite new music

To Begin Again: Teaming up for the first time, Ingrid Michaelson and ZAYN released an angelic duet titled *To Begin Again* on Mar. 17. The two singers' vocal ranges mix together marvelously to form a captivating harmony. The night Joe Biden won the election, Michaelson wrote the ballad about the hope she felt for the future. She thought the song was missing something, and luckily ZAYN had reached out earlier, hoping to work on music together. Their combined voices blend together beautifully, making you want to listen to the song on repeat.

-Michaela Thimot, *National/World Editor*

Off of 14: Grab your phone, take a seat, and make sure there aren't any young children or religious grandparents in earshot. Once that's done, get ready to listen to the same song on replay for the next five to six hours. On Mar. 25, senior Ajay Natarajan, more popularly known as JayInTheCut, released his latest title track, *off of 14*. An instant milestone in Natarajan's prolific five-year rap career, *off of 14* is a stylistic masterpiece with the best bridge in modern musical history. Natarajan's masterful vocals blend seamlessly with the song's low melodies and relaxed rhythm. *Off of 14* is the perfect song for every occasion. One listen and you'll be addicted.

-Sasha Ryu, *Editor-In-Chief*

Deja Vu: Now that she has her driver's license, she's currently getting *deja vu*! Eighteen-year-old Olivia Rodrigo is topping the charts yet again with her new single, *deja vu*, released on Apr. 1. This single is another song off of her upcoming album titled *SOUR*, set to be released on May 21. The upbeat tune features Rodrigo's impressive vocal range, as well as her ability to write songs with varying tones since this song is completely different from her debut single, *drivers license*. The new song captures the feeling of seeing a past partner doing the same things with a new person that they did with the singer in a previous relationship. Rodrigo builds into the bridge with synth-like sounds in the background that complement her powerful voice. *Deja vu* will definitely make you crave some "strawberry ice cream in Malibu," and roll your car windows down and scream along with the lyrics.

-Emily Duvall, *Culture Editor*

Till Forever Falls Apart: Released on Mar. 12, the duet *Till Forever Falls Apart* by Ashe and FINNEAS is a masterpiece. Ashe and FINNEAS reunited to write the duet after collaborating on Ashe's 2019 EPs. Timeless in its beauty, *Till Forever Falls Apart* is a romantic ballad that speaks about acceptance and the chance to love someone special. The song carries a tranquil and honest tone, with well-crafted lyrics. Their voices weave in and out: FINNEAS' deeper bass blends flawlessly with Ashe's smooth soprano to create a stunning harmony that carries the song.

-Sonali Muthukrishnan, *National/World Editor*

C. Wagner

B. Gibson



Operation Varsity Blues documentary makes headlines

by Lexi Kupor

Public Relations Manager

The image of some of America's wealthiest families in district courts and handcuffs is one that left the nation in awe as news of the largest college admissions conspiracy broke in 2019. Directed by Chris Smith, *Operation Varsity Blues: The College Admissions Scandal*, now streaming on Netflix, exposes a deeper investigation into the saga and its mastermind, Rick Singer.

While Singer himself was not interviewed for the documentary, Matthew Modine acts out the part of this eccentric former basketball coach turned felon. Modine reenacts phone conversations with clients — obtained through FBI wiretaps — with Singer's characteristic nonchalance, monotone voice, and monk-like haircut.

Additionally, interviews with college admissions officers and counselors provide insight into the ultra-competitive nature of today's applications processes. Dotted between interview segments and reenactments are legitimate clips of students undergoing the anxiety-inducing moment of opening their college admissions decisions; collages of students in tears, some joyful and others somber, underscore the intense emotional experience entangled within the process and make palpable the impact of Singer's fraud.



B. Gibson

The documentary presents important questions concerning the stakes and ethics of college admissions, especially for local communities. Parents from towns including Palo Alto, Atherton, and Menlo Park allegedly participated in the scandal, and it is unclear whether Stanford University accepted donations to their athletic programs in exchange for acceptance letters.

Singer assisted various students in gaining admission to some of the nation's most selective, prestigious universities through what he deemed "the side door" approach. Applicants who earned a spot through their own merit entered through "the front door," while the ultra wealthy could take "the back door" via a signature on a prodigious check. Conversely, Singer's pathway mixed bribes, — disguised as donations — falsified test scores, and often athletic profiles for mostly nonathletic adolescents.

While risky and unequivocally immoral, each of Singer's endeavors followed a meticulous procedure. He often hired individuals to change students' standardized test scores or Photoshop the face of a client onto the body of an athlete, for example, to secure a spot for the student on a sports team — one on which they would not eventually play.

Singer attended Trinity University during the 1980s and declared to the student newspaper: "I don't like to lose." Clearly, as Smith's film affirms, this characteristic remained a driving force as Singer approached his greatest downfall of all. (Sources: New York Times, the Stanford Daily, Mountain View Voice, USA Today)

Davidson reviews new movie Moxie

by Cara Davidson

Public Relations Manager

Netflix released *Moxie*, an original film, on Mar. 3, leaving feminists feeling empowered. Directed by Amy Poehler, *Moxie* is about teenage girls standing up against sexism and rape culture at their school. The movie adapts Jennifer Mathieu's 2017 novel and features many groups of minorities while criticizing oppression seen in our modern society.

Vivian, a timid teen, starts an anonymous paper around her school entitled *Moxie* after she finds her mother's old revolutionary feminist papers, songs, and clothes. Vivian's paper features information such as instructions for how to show feminist solidarity, direct callouts of sexism at the school, and students' stories regarding their experiences as women. A small group of young women congregate to talk about *Moxie* and raise awareness of the sexism at their school via their shared Instagram account. The voices of females echo throughout the school thanks to Vivian and the support of her growing group of friends.

Moxie includes diversity and a break from Eurocentric norms by featuring BIPOC and the LGBTQIA+ community. Vivian's best friend, Claudia, is Chinese and comes from a strict and traditional Chinese household. Her struggle with conservative parents and living up to their norms highlights some of the struggles that the AAPI community faces. Other members of *Moxie* include Lucy

an Afro-Latinx woman played by Alycia Pascual; and CJ, a transgender woman played by Josie Totah. Other strong voices that stand out in the *moxie* club are two Black women: Kiera, played by Sydney Park; and her best friend Amaya, played by Anjelika Washington.

Moxie not only features diverse, powerful women, but also touches on rape culture and speaking out against sexual assault. Many women and some men around school listen to the stories of their classmates and story and begin share their experiences with sexual assault, toxic masculinity, and misogyny.

While *Moxie* is undoubtedly a powerful feminist movie that condemns oppression and the hate we experience today, some controversy arose from *Moxie*'s seemingly perfect diverse world. While the movie has representation from many groups including Latinx, BIPOC, AAPI, LGBTQIA+, and the female community, the majority of the struggle and power stems from the only white girl in the group. Each side character has an interesting background and story, yet *Moxie* mostly focuses in on Vivian's fight for equality, and a the popular white

girl's story about rape. Every female has a struggle, but the white women's struggles are amplified. *Moxie* features many different ethnicities and gives power and strong voices to people of color, but perhaps the writers should have gone further with it. I would have liked to see more about the background of the women of color in the movie. While I did love this movie, I think the writers could have tried harder to highlight the importance of everyone's background and give more power to people of color.

C. Wagner



- Beware of shrimp-filled cereal
- Sanders explains your vaccine

HUMOR

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Discover what your comfort emo band says about you

by Sophie Sullivan and Lucy Holland

Opinion Editor and Culture Editor

Whether or not you want to admit it, we're willing to bet at least a third of our audience survived (debatable) some kind of emo phase during middle school. As two emo kids in remission, who may or may not have religiously listened (listen) to these bands, we feel qualified to make a snap judgment about you based on your comfort/escapism band of choice.

5 Seconds of Summer

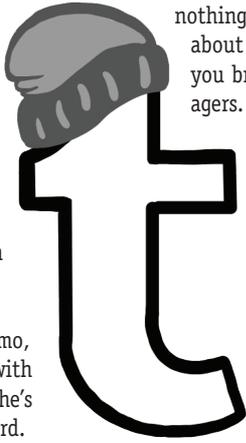
You put on eyeliner one time, called yourself emo, and wanted a lip piercing because you were in love with Luke. You're probably a feminist, but still listen to She's Kinda Hot Though because that song just goes so hard.

All Time Low

You started off as a 5SOS fan, but faced some kind of traumatic event and graduated to All Time Low. You absolutely believe you're "not like other girls" and have a massive superiority complex.

My Chemical Romance

You are definitely a burnt-out theater kid. If you hear the first note of Welcome to the Black Parade, you will start crying and there's



nothing you can do about it. You consistently get into arguments about how no other song will ever go as hard as Na Na Na, and you break your vocal chords at least once a week singing Teenagers. Middle school MCR fans are either way too proud of their emo roots or secretly listen to a five-hour emo playlist on a fake Spotify account so no one can see their listening history. I am genuinely scared of what your Tumblr looked (or looks) like.

Twenty-One Pilots

Tear in My Heart elicits a guttural response from you. You can't look at a red beanie anymore. In the personal experience of one of this publication's Editors-in-Chief, you probably took angst photos of yourself while riding the school bus (especially if it

was raining).

Green Day

You either became a communist during quarantine or you have a "socially liberal, economically conservative" parent and are now a

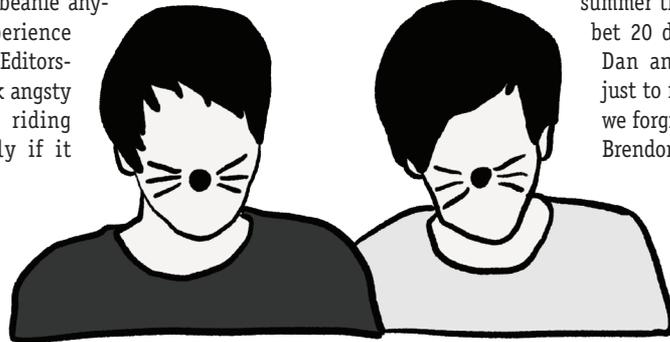
leftist. You might not be as emotionally scarred as some emo kids, but you've definitely got some kind of anger complex that you refuse to work through right now.

Panic! At The Disco

You're either one of two former P!ATD fans: you genuinely believe I Write Sins Not Tragedies was the biggest cultural reset of this century (it was), or you religiously watched the Girls/Girls/Boys music video and now you blur the lines of the gender binary every day. Either way, you probably wanted knee-high Converse as a tween, but your parents had a little bit of rationale and just enrolled you in summer theater camp. I'm willing to bet 20 dollars that you revisit old Dan and Phil videos from 2016 just to feel something again. Also, we forgive you for still listening to Brendon Urie.

Fall Out Boy

You probably started listening to Fall Out Boy as a way to bond with a father figure and now you have daddy issues.



Wagner finds college secrets

by Caroline Wagner

Graphics Designer

Hey rising seniors, do you want to know how to get into those top elite colleges? The ones that only admitted your great-great-grandpa when the acceptance rate was 40 percent, or your friend Olivia who recommended you "a really good college counselor who goes by the name Rick?" Forget about the side door, here's how to guarantee admission into any college you want. How do I know these techniques all work? Because Joey King, Tom Cruise, and Reese Witherspoon are all living proof.

First off, you need to make sure you have great extracurricular activities. In The Kissing Booth 2, Joey King

meets with her college counselor. There, she unveils the holy grail of extracurriculars: a video game podcast with 37 (thirty-seven) subscribers. To put this number into perspective, 20 is the maximum occupancy of Chuck E. Cheese during COVID. Joey King's subscribers would need TWO Chuck E. Cheeses to all fit. No wonder she got into both Harvard and Berkeley. Between that and school soccer, I don't know how she did it.

Arguably, one of the most important parts of your application is your essays. Following in Joey King's footsteps, immediately restate the question to begin your introduction. You may have twenty words fewer to tell your entire life

story after this, but this signals to the admissions officers that you can read. Showing that you are literate is very important for getting into college.

Additionally, sending a video essay rather than typing it allows the admissions committee to really get to know you. Elle Woods in Legally Blonde landed a spot at Harvard Law School by floating around a pool and talking about herself. Disclaimer: she had a 4.0 at UCLA, a 179/180 on her LSAT, and impressive extracurriculars, so do not attempt unless you can match her energy.



B. Gibson

CHUCK E CHEESE'S

So you submitted your application. What now? College interviews. Here's a pro tip: invite your interviewer over to your house while you're in the middle of running a brothel, and he will be sure to write an excellent recommendation

for you. It worked for Tom Cruise in Risky Business, so I'm sure it will work for you as well! You don't really need a permit or anything, all you need to do is wait for your parents to go on vacation and get to work. Once your interviewer sees you're running a successful business, he will be rushing to write that glowing recommendation letter.

Okay, so maybe it doesn't work like the movies. If you've tried all of the above and now you're looking at federal charges, I'm sorry. But, you should know that the movies aren't realistic. E.G.: there is no Monsters University. Life isn't fair. But, if you work hard and dream big, anything is possible.

Beware of shrimp cereal

by Lexi Kupor

Public Relations Manager

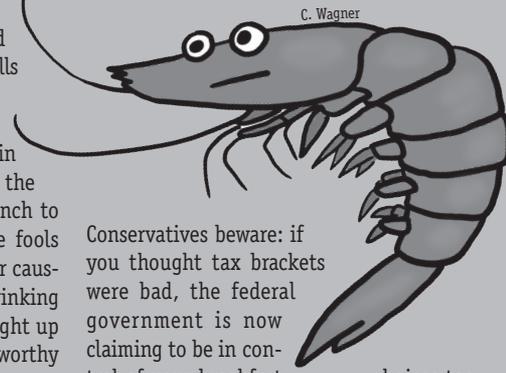
Going viral on Twitter for being exposed as an anime fan is one thing; getting Twitter clout for finding crustaceans in your morning munchies is a whole new level of idiot. That's right; Jensen Karp recently found his claim to fame for cancelling General Mills over the literal shrimp tails he found in his Cinnamon Toast Crunch.

I first want to address the elephant in the room (or should I say the shrimp in the box?): who allowed Cinnamon Toast Crunch to have their own Twitter account? Those fools already have enough on their hands after causing an entire generation to think that drinking the leftover milk in the cereal bowl straight up like a Pepto Bismol shot is not a crime worthy of capital punishment.

Now, not that I'm an influencer by training, but I feel like the proper thing to do in this situation would be to apologize and recall a few cereal boxes before the shrimp start slithering into unsuspecting childrens' esophaguses. Instead, General Mills claimed that these shrimp tails were just clumps of cinnamon sugar and that this dude was lying the whole time. Dang, General Mills is really bringing a new spin to the whole gaslight, gatekeep, girl boss lifestyle. Performative activists, this is your cue; all I'm saying is that I haven't seen a single Instagram story graphic with clipart shrimp on it, and this is a big missed opportunity.

Anyways, the saga continues. This Jensen guy then went on to find a string and a pistachio in the same box! This

is like a whole do-it-yourself craft kit for no added charge! It was all fun and games until he found a few black dots on some innocent toast squares. The actual government reached out to tell him to get it tested for rat poop remains.



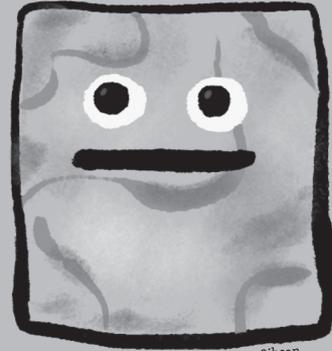
C. Wagner

Conservatives beware: if you thought tax brackets were bad, the federal government is now claiming to be in control of your breakfast

choices too. The fishy part (pun intended) is that General Mills is no stranger to shrimp in the first place. Back in 2011, their blueberry scone mix had — you guessed it — little pieces of shrimp in it. I would like to place a quick call to the person in charge of cleaning this breakfast food equipment after it's apparently laden with a bunch of decapitated crustaceans.

Now, maybe this was all an intentional social media scheme to get diabetes-causing mini toast things back in business. In that case, props to you, General Mills. Maybe the El Gato Instagram follower count could take some of your advice.

You've heard of Cinnamon Toast Shrimp. Now, get ready for Honey Bunches of Plastic, Cap'n Cockroach Feces, and Metal Razor Bran. Watch out, cereal connoisseurs.



B. Gibson

Just like the chance of you moshing at prom, nothing on this page is real.

courtesy flickr

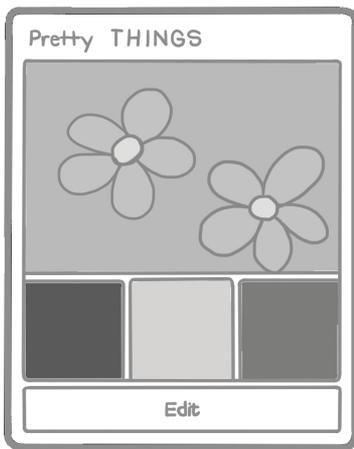
Duvall discovers new love for Pinterest over quarantine

by Emily Duvall

Culture Editor

Everyone had their "quarantine to-do list" in early March 2020. I can assure you that everyone's list was full of all these awesome workouts, so many baking recipes, and movies to watch. I, for one, did the exact same, but I also put something obscure on my list that I was so determined to do. With my lavender felt pen, I vowed to clean up Pinterest and make it pretty. March 2020 Emily was really thinking outside the box with this one. Present Emily speaking now: I am obsessed — I mean OBSESSED — with Pinterest.

Before the spring cleaning of my profile last year, it was full of boards called "Pretty THINGS" and "Life Hacks!" that were full of, you guessed it, things I thought were very PRETTY! I still to this day have no idea what went through my head when I thought a minion cake and chandeliers belonged on the same board.



After this spontaneous cleaning happened — which sadly had to include deleting my Pretty Things board — my Pinterest account has since looked much more appealing to the eye, and it also brings me absurd amounts of joy. I now have my whole life planned out on there, and I am quite excited. I'm kind of vibing with the Southern France or Italian Cottage type of idea with some cottage core tied in there. But, I am also totally romanticizing the idea of living on the east coast with floor to ceiling windows and a modern apartment.

One crucial board that I will forever cherish is my board dedicated to the color green. Why, you ask? Because I can. I love making all these boards filled with the prettiest of things — I really hope you understand this reference.

In addition to planning out my future on the east coast while simultaneously living it up in my cottage in Southern France, I made the important decision that I needed to revamp my whole style. I pinned so many different outfits and thought to myself, "Yeah! I have stuff that's similar to that! I can definitely recreate that outfit!" Funny joke, I



graphics C. Wagner

actually cannot do that! I say with a heavy heart that sadly, my Brandy Melville sweater from sixth grade cannot be magically transformed into a fire blazer. :(

I cannot even begin to explain the serotonin boost I get from pressing that little red button, choosing a board, and then it showing the "Saved" icon. Pure happiness right there (maybe I need to get out more). I spend more time paying attention to whether my Pinterest home all matches, than if my actual room matches.

I am truly forever grateful for March 2020 me who wanted to step up her Pinterest game. I am proud of my Pinterest's character development and how far they've come. I am quite literally filled with happiness every time I open the app or the website. Thank you, Pinterest, you've really outdone yourself.

Sanders dictates vaccine : Evans ridicules AP Euro

by **Ethan Sanders**
People Editor

So you just got vaccinated against COVID-19 — that’s awesome! Now, not only does Bill Gates know exactly how long you sit on the toilet, you will also get great 5G reception wherever you go thanks to that little microchip in your shoulder. All jokes aside, getting the vaccine is important because you can now tell someone’s exact personality based on which vaccine they received. “But Ethan, we don’t get to pick what kind of vaccine we get!” Yeah, and you don’t get to pick your zodiac sign either, but you still let it dictate your every move. So, here’s what the brand of vaccine you received says about you.

Moderna: You’re a wee bit pretentious... but in a good way. You got the Moderna shot because your mom’s a doctor or because you’re simply not like other girls (or boys). You’re unique, fetch, flashy, and most definitely on Team Jacob. While the Moderna Mafia can be a little overbearing, you Modernas are no doubt smarter than your average vaccine-getter, but will constantly remind those around you of it every chance you get thanks to your newfound superiority complex.

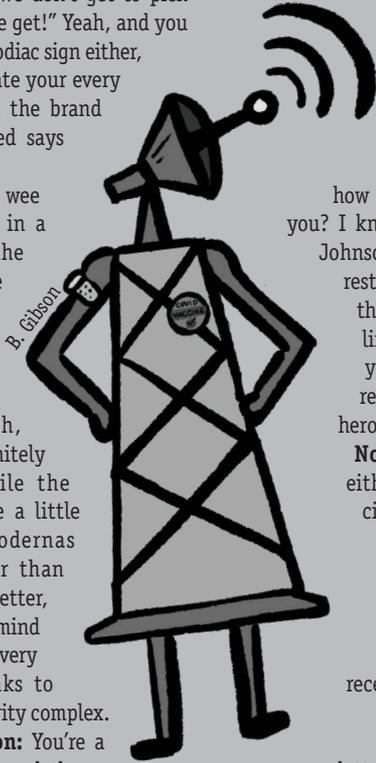
Johnson & Johnson: You’re a contrarian. You don’t need those fancy-schmancy two-dose vaccines; you’re perfectly fine getting only one microchip injected in you and complaining about how you now have a 104°F fever. Although you’re probably proud you got the J&J, the rest of us would like to sincerely thank you for taking one for the team. You’re truly a brave soul, but keep us updated on

the lizard tail you’re supposed to grow in the next six to nine months.

Pfizer: You’re a normal person. This is the go-to shot for soccer and wine moms and Silicon Valley tech dads. As a part of Pfizer Gang, you’re probably Team Edward. And just because Pfizer is the most basic company to get your vaccine from, doesn’t mean you’re basic, so don’t worry, you are still definitely #quirkyandrelatable. One request to all you Pfizers out there: please shut up about how your vaccine does not have any side effects. We heard you the first time; we don’t care anymore.

AstraZeneca: Oh, you’re European? Sorry, I didn’t hear you the first four times you told me. Anyway, how are those blood clots treating you? I know I thanked the Johnson & Johnsons for taking a bullet for the rest of us, but you Astrazenecas are the real heroes out on the front lines. After all this is over, all you who got the AZ vax should receive a Medal of Honor for your heroism on the battlefield.

No vaccine: Oh gosh, you’re either a respectful, rule-abiding citizen waiting for your turn or you’re terrified of being transformed into a walking 5G cell tower. If you identify as the former, thanks for so politely waiting in line to receive the vaccine. Your time to get vaxxed will come and all will be well soon. If you’re the latter, you are probably not reading this newspaper anyway because you’re too busy standing on your soapbox, telling me I’ll go to Hell for my sins, so have fun doing that. The only middle ground here is that you’re a little wary of the vaccine, so you’re seeing how many extra nipples the rest of us grow before getting it, and that’s okay. Take your time king, queen, or non-gender-conforming monarch.



by **Alex Evans**
News Editor

I say this all the time, but I genuinely wonder what I would do with myself if I was not taking AP European History this year. Such a simple prompt, but the class genuinely consumes my life. This could be a result of my incompetence in history, but either way, I cannot wrap my head around not being in that class. Honestly, I would have been content with someone telling me they vested power in the girl bosses of Great Britain and called it a day.



To humor both myself and you reading this article, let’s say I wasn’t in the class. What is the first thing I would do? Honestly, I would live a normal life. I would begin with fixing my sleep schedule and getting my gray hairs dyed from hyper focusing on the factors leading up to the French Revolution... I suddenly would have hours of time added to my day — no more spending six hours on a 16 point assignment. I will never forgive a certain someone whose name rhymes with Bom Bughes for that one.

Also, now I can spend so much more time writing this article! Because the second I finish, I don’t have to frantically do the late notes before my chapter test... which is (or I guess would be) tomorrow morning. But if that test doesn’t exist, maybe I will like, go outside??? I mean,

I don’t have to study, or sit on the infamous Zoom call with all the Euro students taking the exam tomorrow.

I now realize it is no wonder world history sophomores are holding up better! They do not have to spend hours of their day reading about the Treaty of Versailles. Like, they settled their disputes, but I am settling for a 70 percent on the next chapter test by not doing these notes.

I wouldn’t know what it is like to enjoy a regular life, since my abilities to move away from my desk for more than 45 minutes have

been revoked since the first chapter test. I achieved a perfect score of 63 percent, which then served as my rude awakening that I was in for the long haul and needed to spend every waking moment devoted to the rise of the printing press.

Genuine thought: how would Louis XIV feel knowing that I have spent numerous hours slaving over his existence? Likely he would not care, but still, how awkward is it that I exhibit such fan behavior?

Assuming I hadn’t taken the class all year, maybe I would have some remaining brain space at this point and I could actually care a little bit about chemistry. Like, I am sorry I cannot retain one piece of information. When I was told to put a balloon in the freezer, my mind could only recall facts about the Little Ice Age.

Davidson obsesses over children’s TV show Miraculous

by **Cara Davidson**
Public Relations Manager

Please, for the love of chunky crayola markers, no one cute read this. I really don’t want your perception of me to change. It’s an issue I’m trying to solve. I promise.

Recently I’ve become obsessed with the (children’s) show Miraculous Ladybug and Cat Noir. Perhaps a little too much. I don’t know what it is about that show. Are there drugs in it? But it is so addicting and consuming that I have begun to ONLY think about fictional teenage superheroes and a love square that I am not a part of. Does it make me feel like I’m a child again? Maybe. Have I never really grown up and I hold onto



every shred of childhood I can get? What, no, definitely not. That is so not true. Honestly, I don’t know what it is about this show, but I LOVE IT SO MUCH. Getting back to the point, I am so angry that

I actually cannot like something casually. No matter how hard I try, I just HAVE to invest every ounce of energy into my current obsession until it hurts.

My friends are starting to worry about me. I genuinely only feel for Ladybug and Cat Noir; nothing else matters to me.

It’s the way this show brings out the emotions that I have been suppressing for months that really does it for me. Did I cry (or show any emotion for that matter) when an actual traumatic experience happened to me that would have made a normal human cry? No. Did I cry when (SPOILER) Marinette kissed Adrien on the CHEEK? YES! I DID. I have literally started learning FRENCH so I could watch this show in its native language. This is seriously getting out of hand.

This isn’t the first time this has happened too. If you knew me during my Stranger Things phase, no you didn’t. Did my

friend buy me a blanket with the letters Joyce wrote on the wall and the Christmas lights? Maybe. Do I still own it? Maybe. The amount of nerdiness I had for Stranger Things is not cool whatsoever. I condemn myself. If you ask me if I had a fan account for Noah Schnapp, I won’t answer. So don’t.

I just can’t like something casually. It’s either all or nothing. And for this show I guess it’s all. The way this show makes me feel... IT HURTS me that Cat Noir isn’t real and that I do not live in a fantasy world where

I’m a superhero fighting crime with the LOML. But we all do hard things. Am I using this article to let out the deep emotions this

show inflicts upon to me? Maybe. Definitely yes. Try to stop me.

If anyone knows how to stop crying at kids tv shows, let’s TALK. ALSO DO NOT CLICK ON ANY LINKS THAT SAYS “MIRACULOUS LADYBUG SPOILERS.” IT DOWNLOADS A HACK THAT MAKES YOU TYPE IN ALL CAPS.

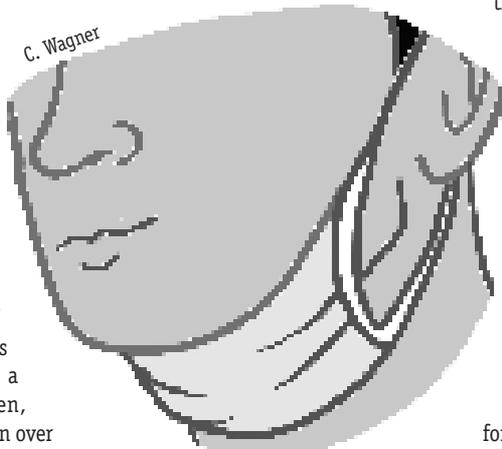
P.S. If you watch Miraculous Ladybug and Cat Noir, hmu because I’m in desperate need to talk to someone about it. Which is why I wrote this article.



Morley paints picture of back to school during spring

by **Emerson Morley**
National/World Editor

When I first read that we would be returning to school, I had a small heart attack. I desperately needed to get it together. The preparations began, starting with digging for my jeans along with my self confidence that was also hiding in the back of my closet. As a fake ginger, I had to dye my eyebrows and prepare myself to be perceived by my classmates again. I packed my bag with a single piece of paper and a pen. I hopped in my whip, and zoomed on over to school.



I found a space and attempted to park four times before finally giving up and leaving my car at a solid 40 degree angle away from the curb. El Gato staffer and fellow ginger lass **Brynn Gibson** parked behind me and brought her stinky self over to where I was posted. She agreed to walk into school with me, as I was afraid to go alone for fear of freshmen boys. We strutted down the hill toward the school, discussing our year off. We stopped by El Gato’s father figure and only source of validation, **Mr. Garrett**, to say hello and make him regret coming back in person. I’m sure he missed our shrill voices.

Unfortunately for me and my insecurity, smelly staffer Brynn had to head in the opposite direction of my class when the bell rang, and I was forced to cross the dreaded quad alone. Some freshmen judged me as I passed, and I felt that was a lot of sass

for some fetuses whose entire high school experience to date was dependent on WiFi. I gave them my cold, dead stare and entered my classroom, which is conveniently located in the dungeon of the English building. Scanning the QR code was rough considering the building is a WiFi-proof bunker that would likely survive a nuclear blast.

I sat down in an open seat, then enjoyed a riveting video explaining the directional flow of students in different sections of campus. As someone who struggles with their left and right and can barely follow Waze to the nearest Goodwill, this was rocket science to me. Luckily, some great folks put chalk arrows on the ground that will be very helpful until the next gentle rain.

It was wonderful to see my lovely peers again, especially the ones who pull down their masks so they can “show” you who they are. The mask is there for a reason, kiddos.

I’m currently praying to the COVID gods that everyone makes the wise decision to stay in town for spring break, so I can keep unapologetically judging my classmates.

- Richiuso excels at LGHS baseball
- Nedom leads the Varsity soccer team

PEOPLE

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Dennon spends sophomore year on the lacrosse field

by Alexandra Evans
News Editor

With a multitude of talents, LGHS sophomore **Tessa Dennon** does it all. She plays a quintessential part of the leadership class, backs up her school and club lacrosse teams as a defender, and commits countless hours of her life to volunteering at shelters and dedicates her time to community service.



Although Dennon joined leadership this year, she has plans to renew her position in the class next year by assuming the role of spirit leader. She earned this role through the Class of 2023 ASB elections. When looking into the future, Dennon hopes to “revive the spirit that was lost in quarantine.” She expands on her experience in the leadership class, commenting that the best part is that “everyone has the same goal and wants to bring our class together.” On campus, Dennon furthers her community presence through clubs, as she is a part of the Beach Cleanup Club and American Cancer Society Club.

Dennon also excels in athletics, adapting and overcoming even through the coronavirus pandemic. She first picked up a lacrosse stick in the fourth grade, and still participates in the sport six years later. Reflecting on her years with the sport, Dennon says she has continued because, “I get to be with my friends and there is lots of good competition to help me improve my skills.” Dennon is on the highest team for the club team she plays with in the summer and fall seasons. With her fierce demeanor and defensive skills, Dennon earned a spot on the Varsity lacrosse team her freshman year.

You can catch Dennon indulging in a boat ride any day in the summer. Upon learning to wakeboard, Dennon has fallen in love with the rush of learning new skills; she says that, “I love that I can just pop up and do anything.” On the flip side of the year, you can find Dennon cruising the slopes, as she is a seasoned snowboarder.



With both sports Dennon professes that “There is either snow or water to catch you, so I can just feel free.”

On top of the endless hobbies, sports, and school activities, Dennon makes sure to support her community through volunteering. Pre-COVID, Dennon participated in bike builds annually, where investors donated so that she could build bikes and donate them to kids. Similarly, her compassionate nature feeds into her love for animals, as she takes time to volunteer at animal shelters. No matter where she is or what she is doing, Dennon does the most for her community and her passions.

ANDERSON SHINES ON STAGE

by Maya Gomez
People Editor

Junior **Julius Anderson** can be found singing, dancing, and acting out scenes this spring season. Influenced by his older brother and former LGHS student Max, he discovered his love for the world of theater and acting. “I started performing at a really young age, but then I kind of put a hold on it in middle school,” Anderson explained. “But then, at the start of my freshman year I took drama class and I got back into performing and acting.”



Anderson has been involved in both plays and musicals at Los Gatos High School, including the 2018 spring musical *Les Miserables* and the 2019 fall play *Ax of Murder*, the latter of which he holds close to his heart as one of his favorite theater experiences thus far. As of right now, Anderson is participating in the student-run musicals at Los Gatos High School. He explained that “for the school play [they] had to practice from home on zoom calls. There were separate time slots where [students] were to come in and film on a green screen.” With the COVID-19 restrictions beginning to lessen, students have the opportunity to actually run rehearsals in person, and will eventually film the performances.

While Anderson enjoys taking part in plays and musicals put on by Los Gatos High School, he had planned to venture into the world of different youth theaters pre-pandemic. However, his plans were inevitably put on hold by the coronavirus outbreak. Anderson hopes to participate in other shows once COVID-19 guidelines open up more, namely those run by the Children’s Musical Theater San Jose and Los Gatos Youth Theater.

Aside from growing his acting skills and developing friendships with the cast and crew, Anderson specifically enjoys “being a part of something, like a process.” He added, “I like seeing something evolve out of [the show], and turning into a character, every day becoming someone new.” Anderson hopes to take his passion for theater into the world outside of high school, and hopes to pursue a career revolving around the performing arts.

When he’s not rehearsing his lines or socializing with the rest of the cast, Anderson may be found doing his class work. As a Los Gatos High School junior, Anderson specifically enjoys his English and History classes, as well as taking part in both the drama club and debate at LGHS.

A kind hearted and determined young man, Anderson’s dedication and fortitude is bound to lead him far in the world of theater.



Richiuso slides into April

by Georgia Kaufman
Humor Editor

A sophomore at Los Gatos High School, **Masimo Richiuso** has found himself with a great amount of swag this year during distance learning. The student has enjoyed practicing sports, playing video games, and spending time with friends and family throughout the pandemic.

Distance learning has proven difficult for many students at Los Gatos, but Richiuso has had confidence with online school since the end of his freshman year. He explained, “My experience with distance learning is a love-hate relationship.” He went on to explain, “At the beginning of the year, the late start and shortened periods gave me a big advantage in the classroom. [However], towards the beginning of the second semester everything just started to become a chore.” The sophomore has reflected upon the online curriculum, saying “overall [he has] loved it, but [he] is ready for it to be over.”

Richiuso is looking forward to all in-person learning and eventually going back to school full time. “I inevitably decided that I would like to go back to an environment with my friends and teachers.”

While being a stellar student, Richiuso is also a star athlete on the school’s baseball team. The sophomore has been playing for eight years, starting at age four. The work he has put in for nearly a decade has led him to play on Los Gatos’ Junior Varsity team this year. His position varies, as he “primarily pitch[es] and play[s] infield, but [he is] very versatile and can play anywhere.”

Richiuso spoke about how he is hoping to get recruited for the efforts he puts into the sport. “I’m playing for the CCB (California Club Baseball) national team this summer and am hoping to get a chance to be looked at

there.” CCB national team gives student athletes the opportunity to be viewed by colleges and recruitment coaches.

Throughout quarantine, the sophomore has struggled a little bit with staying on top of his work. “The hardest thing through quarantine has been either keeping a good sleep schedule or not being able to see friends... With distance learning, it’s been hard to keep focus and manage my time.”

When asked what lessons he has learned throughout quarantine, Richiuso responded, “What I’ve learned is some people get an unfair amount of special treatment... instead of getting upset, you just have to turn the other cheek and work your butt off to get where you need to be.”

Richiuso’s can-do attitude and spunky personality allow him to adapt to situations like distance learning with ease. This easy-going sophomore is an absolute joy to be around.



Rexach prepares to lead in Model United Nations

by Maya Gomez
People Editor

Whether she is editing videos, spinning her flag, or contributing in a Model UN conference, freshman and future El Gatan **Elena Rexach** always goes above and beyond. As a mountain kid, Rexach has spent a majority of her life here in Los Gatos and attended C.T. English Middle School.

She mentioned that completing the end of her eighth grade year virtually was “bizarre”; however, Rexach explained “C.T. [English] online school was incredibly easy compared to Los Gatos. Because the shutdown was so sudden, we really only had one class a day for like an hour at the beginning of quarantine.” Luckily, the freshman has found virtual learning with Los Gatos High School not too overwhelming, but is excited to have begun the new hybrid model.

Aside from school, Rexach has found herself with much more free time due to COVID-19. “It’s definitely allowed me to somewhat switch up my schedule.” She added, “I started exercising, which makes me feel really good. I got into strength training and have been taking long walks and hikes.” As a self-proclaimed introvert, Rexach doesn’t seem to mind being by herself much, but has “learned to entertain [herself] during these times,” including joining



the school’s color guard team. During the fall and winter seasons, Rexach had the opportunity to learn to spin, toss, and dance with flags and rifles and is awaiting the next season, planned to begin in August.

Having spent a majority of her freshman year online, Rexach hasn’t yet had the opportunity to explore many clubs and activities at Los Gatos High School, aside from one: Model UN. At only 14 years old, Rexach has already been elected to serve a leadership role in Model UN, and describes the hobby as “a political Dungeons and Dragons.”

While looking for potential clubs and activities to join at the beginning of the year, Rexach took special interest in the LGHS Speech and Debate team. Through doing further research, she discovered Model UN and was instantly intrigued. “I had this whole nerd, girlboss, feminist power thing going on at the time. I was like, let me find the geekiest thing I can think of, and somehow, along the lines I came across Model UN.” Rexach asserted, “I no longer had that sort of need, or goal to fit into that specific category. I decided it was what I wanted to do from then on.”

A true academic, her tenacity and unwavering intellect is bound to take her to great places. Catch Rexach in person at her journalism class, on the football field, strolling between isles at Trader Joes, or helping lead the LGHS Model UN team.

SULLIVAN SHOOT AND SCORES

by **Ethan Sanders**

People Editor

Whether he's tearing down the mountain on his snowboard or putting goals away for his water polo team, freshman **Connor Sullivan** excels in all of his endeavors.

With nearly seven years of competitive water polo experience under his belt, Sullivan is a force to be reckoned with. The athlete's aquatic aptitude was sparked when he did swim team as a wee lad, but after some time, Sullivan realized that swimming lacked "a certain excitement" that he felt he needed, so he decided to try his hand at water polo. Since that fateful switch, Sullivan has not looked back and his life now revolves around the sport.

Although he is a newcomer to LGHS, Sullivan strove for greatness and earned a spot on the varsity water polo team, and rightfully so; he may be a freshman, but Sullivan is no benchwarmer. Being ambidextrous allows this water polo stud to bring an element of versatility to the team that any coach would be impressed by. As he has always competed with kids his age, Sullivan declared that he is "stoked to be able to play at a higher level so [he] can continually learn and improve from those around [him]." The water polo season has only just started for Los Gatos, but with Sullivan on their side, it's looking up for the Wildcats.

When he's not wearing black and orange and competing for LGHS, Sullivan plays club water polo for San Jose Aquatics (SJA). Since he's a newer member to SJA and given the pandemic's restrictions on travel water polo tournaments, Sullivan has not had the chance to represent SJA in the Junior Olympics, but he has played in the renowned, nationwide competition under the banner of his past club teams. Stemming from his clear love for and dedication to the sport, the goal-

scorer is entertaining the idea of trying to play at the collegiate level four years from now, but that "is too far in the future to say for sure."

Outside of the water, Sullivan enjoys spending time on the slopes, shredding on his snowboard. The freshman has been snowboarding for nearly as long as he's played water polo, but does not get to carve the snow up as often as he is in the pool, so he sees it as "more of a hobby than a serious competition." Sullivan typically snowboards up at Lake Tahoe, but has traveled to Colorado and Japan to fly down more exciting, unique landscapes.

As a reliable teammate and adventure-seeking chap, don't be surprised when you hear Connor Sullivan's name being cheered out at the pool deck or see him zoom past you on the ski slopes.



courtesy C. Sullivan

Robinson digs up the past

by **Delaney Brown**

Opinion Editor

Sophisticated senior Gabriel Robinson possesses one of the most eloquent and refined minds that you can find on the LGHS campus. The well-rounded 17-year-old dabbles in a variety of unique interests including archeology, geoscience, and philosophy, all of which contribute to his distinctive and individualistic personality.

Robinson first found a passion for the vast subject that is archeology as a young boy who "was amazed by all things that had to do with the past." As a child, he originally wanted to pursue paleontology, but chose archeology after learning about ancient civilizations in his elementary school history classes. He became extremely "fascinated by what came before us and how the decisions of the past still affect us today." Throughout his experience with the historical significance of different archeological discoveries, he adopted the mindset that he "acts as a vessel for all of these forgotten things to once again see the light and regain their own importance."

A few years ago, Robinson attended a summer program at the University of Chicago called Stones and Bones, in which he and a group of select high school students had the opportunity to dig for fossils. Their main digging site was "located in this 60 million year old lake in Wyoming and we got to spend every day for a few weeks just pounding away at the rock under the sun." When describing the process of digging for fossils, Robinson recounts how he had to adopt a sense of gentle determination and remain diligent when handling the delicate fossils he unearthed. Despite the incredibly taxing and extensive amount of work that is required to find fossils, Robinson believes "that finding something so old and delicate that rep-



courtesy G. Robinson

resents so much of the earth's history is one of the most exhilarating feelings I could ever imagine."

As well as Robinson's fixation on archeology, he has also dedicated a lot of his mind to learning about different philosophical ideas and how he chooses to integrate these ideas into his everyday life. Robinson is a self-identified secular existentialist, meaning he believes "that if there is no purpose [in life], there's nothing to hold ourselves back except for ourselves." Although this way of thinking may seem unorthodox or radical, Robinson chooses to use the idea that "life is meaningless" as a means to liberate himself from oppressive forces throughout his life. This philosophy provides "a sense of motivation and incredible responsibility to keep myself on track," Robinson explained. "It gives me the freedom to create my own purpose."

Caplener swims her way to success

by **Sophie Sullivan**

Opinion Editor

What do you get when you combine hot pink, a lifelong athlete, and a future anesthesiologist? None other than junior **Taylor Caplener**, fresh off a nearly undefeated swim season and headed back into club practices.

Despite having great success in her meets over the past seven weeks, Caplener describes this year's abridged season — and high school swimming in general — as "team-based," adding that she believes this season was the best one yet.

"The coaches make an effort on team bonding, cheering on, and supporting each other. Making an individual sport a team sport, which I've never really experienced before high school, is a really cool way to treat a swim team," she commented. In club, Caplener continued, swimming is far more "individual-based; you're racing to try and do your best instead of asking, 'What can the team do?'"

Now that the high school season is over, Caplener is back to club practices with San Jose-based team Quicksilver Swimming (QSS). She notes the differences between school and club practices as "a big change — practices are shorter and we have dryland. It's a different kind of workout."

Caplener continued, "Quicksilver is more of high-intensity, shorter-interval workouts... we also do dryland three times a week. I've been getting stronger on land, which then helps me in the water."

In high school seasons, she's primarily a butterfly swimmer



courtesy T. Caplener

with the 100 Butterfly as her signature event. With QSS, Caplener participates in more events, adding the 200 Butterfly and 200 Backstroke to her meet sheets.

An 11-year veteran to swimming, she jokes that she stumbled off the soccer field and into the pool. "Every time I had a game, I would ask my mom when soccer was over... After my first summer season at Los Gatos Swim and Racquet Club, I would ask my mom when I could go back. All I wanted was to swim again," she reflected.

Caplener also found inspiration to pursue swimming and a future medical career in Jenny Thompson, an Olympic swimmer and anesthesiologist, whom she wrote a report on in the third grade. She explained that "without my mom, I came up with the idea to do my wax museum project on her... Ever since then, I've fallen in love with her and her path in swimming, the Olympics, and being a doctor."

With so many years dedicated to her sport, Caplener has found a fine balance enduring inside of the pool and out. "Something funny about swimming is you're a different person outside of the water than in," she stated, and found that journaling helps her to "work through my emotions while dealing with a hard practice, or a meet where I didn't do as well as I was asked."

Practicing this mindset and separating swim from her personal life helps Caplener "realize that I can put it in the past and move forward... and that I can go up from here, I'll work through it, and I'll get better because I went through it."

NEDOM IS A SOCCER STAR

by **Quincy Marks**

Public Relations Manager

You catch a glimpse of a bright and charismatic smile in one of your Zoom calls.

It can only be one person: senior

Emily Nedom. From leading the girls' Varsity soccer team to excelling in school, Nedom keeps herself busy.

Nedom's love for soccer started at a young age. At just two years old, she embarked on her soccer career when her family introduced her to the sport. Coming from an athletic family, sports have always been a major focus for Nedom and her older sister.

Although as a child she did not yet realize where the sport would take her, Nedom always knew that soccer would be a meaningful aspect of her life. "I decided to continue playing because I love the sport and it keeps me motivated," Nedom noted. Her ambitious spirit allowed her to flourish in the sport



As a captain of the girls' Varsity soccer team at Los Gatos High School, Nedom describes herself as "competitive, energetic, and optimistic." Nedom explained that her role as captain is "to help push girls to be the best they can be and put in effort to make [the] team succeed." She added that "being a captain is a great experience because [she] loves being a leader and helping to motivate the other girls." This season marks Nedom's second year as a captain, and she acknowledged that the new COVID-19 sports restrictions definitely make this season one to remember. Even though their season will be cut short, Nedom is still appreciative that she gets to play for her final season as a Wildcat.

Outside of soccer, Nedom works diligently to keep up with her vigorous school schedule. When she needs a break from her Zoom classes, Nedom can be found enjoying time with her friends or hanging out with her family. She also confessed that she is "super excited to go back to school" because she misses the social

aspect of in-person learning. Next year, Nedom will continue to pursue her passion by playing Division I soccer at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. That announcement culminates the 16 years of work she has dedicated to the sport. Nedom is excited to face the new challenges that accompany playing at the collegiate level and is more than ready to dominate her future opponents. As for now, you can catch Nedom showing off her immense talent and skill on the LGHS field.

as she went on to play at a highly competitive level in middle and high school with the West Valley Vision Academy Soccer Club. Besides winning countless games and championships, her competitive club team provided Nedom with long lasting friendships and a sense of community.

- LG should come together to combat increased AAPI violence

EDITORIAL

EL GATO • FRIDAY, APRIL 23, 2021 • LOS GATOS HIGH SCHOOL • WWW.ELGATONNEWS.COM

LG community has to battle AAPI hate together

by Jordan Chan, Cara Davidson, and Sonali Muthukrishnan

News Editor, Public Relations Manager and National/World Editor

In the last year, anti-Asian hate crimes in the United States have increased 149 percent. According to a national report published by Stop Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) Hate, there were 3,795 reported attacks targeting members of the Asian American community in 2020 alone. However, these numbers may be even higher as many incidents go unreported. The study also found that these violent acts disproportionately affected Asian women. This rise in hate crimes directly connects to people who place blame on China for the COVID-19 pandemic. Asians across the country feel the impact of anti-Asian sentiment in all facets of their lives, even in more diverse parts of the country, like the Bay Area. In fact, anti-Asian hate crimes in the Bay Area make up a significant number of incidents reported within the last year and even more shockingly, every 1 in 3 reported anti-Asian hate crimes in the United States were in California.

Los Gatos has experienced a similar increase in anti-Asian hate crimes, leaving the town's Asian community shaken. In order for the Los Gatos community to eradicate anti-Asian sentiment, we must come together as a whole to better our knowledge and understanding of our AAPI peers. To that end, on Apr. 1, Peter Decena, the Los Gatos-Monte Sereno Police Department's (LGMSPD) Chief of Police, stated in a video that the LGMSPD needed assistance identifying a suspect who committed an anti-Asian hate crime on Mar. 30.

"Without provocation," the suspect, described as a "white male with tanned skin or light skinned Hispanic" riding a bike, shoved a Filipino woman onto the concrete, while shouting "Go back to [expletive] China."

Decena remarked, "I have been watching [anti-AAPI violence] with shock and dismay."

Following the rising rates of hate crimes across the country, the Asian community has rallied together to spread awareness of anti-Asian rhetoric and its detrimental impacts. Infographics and videos about stopping the targeted abuse and checking in on Asian peers circulated around social media sites like Instagram and TikTok. Many people reposted graphic photos and videos of people assaulting, and in some cases even killing, members of the Asian community, which evoked strong responses from

non-Asian and Asian communities alike. It is important to acknowledge that these pictures can negatively impact the community they are supposed to aid. Seeing graphics images that look like one's own family members is traumatizing and easily has the opposite effect on Asians that many people think they are creating. However, LGHS Japanese teacher **Yukiko Hara** feels that they are an important tool to help educate those unaware of anti-Asian violence, forcing Americans to face "the truth."

Despite social media activism, many Los Gatos residents took note of how some of the responses to anti-Asian violence failed to go beyond performatism. Los Gatos Mayor Marico Sayoc stated that "[these images and videos] call attention to the problem, which is a good thing," but also "we have to move beyond the infographics and see if there really is change that can be sustained." While attacks against the AAPI community have drastically increased, Asian Americans faced hatred long before the pandemic began, and it seems that without community action, this hate and violence will persist after the pandemic concludes.

In order to truly "move beyond," community members first need to be willing to learn. Sayoc stated that the best way to help is "engaging in conversation" and that she appreciates when friends who "don't have the tools [and] don't know how to support" ask more questions about what they can do.

LGHS guidance counselor **Farah Manganello** echoed a similar sentiment, explaining, "I think that people may get a little bit nervous about doing that, and they don't want to be offensive or intrusive, but [it would be good to have] more tools about how you can learn about someone else's experience by even just asking more specific questions." However, non-Asian peers should always support AAPI peers first, as AAPI are not obligated to educate others on the oppression they experience. Non-Asian peers can inform themselves on their own by reading news articles on what the AAPI community faces, following groups like Stop AAPI Hate, and checking out both books and documentaries that talk about anti-AAPI history. The Sympathizer by Viet Thanh Nguyen and Pachinko by Min Jin Lee are excellent books that discuss Asian experiences.

The rest of the community must also recognize that there is more to being Asian than the media and general public seems to believe. There are over 30 different ethnic groups and nationalities that

sit under the umbrella term "Asian," yet the rise in hate crimes has made it clear that many fail to notice this. In Los Gatos, the perpetrator of the aforementioned crime told a Filipino woman to go back to a country that could not have been her own in the first place. Not all Asian people are the same. Not all Asian people look the same. Failing to recognize this is dehumanizing and disgusting. LGHS Physics teacher **Sharilyn Anheier** pointed out, "American society likes to categorize Asians as the 'Model Minority,' which perpetuates an assumption that AAPI individuals "don't experience racism." She emphasized, "Now it is apparent that we do and have been." Manganello talked about this racial "lumping" together and stated that it was about "making it easier for others" rather than "actually trying to understand."

Sayoc suggested that our community should "[disaggregate] Asians as a whole, so that people understand the cultures of each separate community... the struggles and the contributions, someone from the Filipino community is different from the Vietnamese... we're not just to run under one large umbrella."

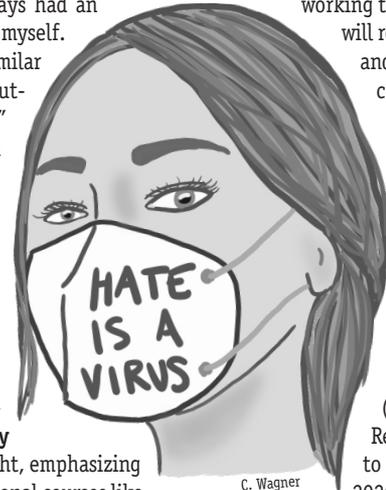
The lack of cultural confidence that many younger Asian Americans have is a direct result of the racism that permeates American society. There is no right way to be an Asian, and the idea that there is is part of the larger issue. A prompt about cultural identity caused **Max Ito**, a half white, half Japanese student at LGHS, to "feel like if [he] was more Asian, maybe [he] would have a better response." Junior **Riya Narain** agrees, sharing that "growing up as an Asian-American, especially in predominantly white neighborhoods...has always had an impact on the way I see myself. I would describe it as similar to being stuck on the outside of two communities." She noted, "I would kind of repress my culture to seem more Americanized because others around me liked that better."

Sayoc hopes that education on the Asian American experience can start in Los Gatos schools, and LGHS guidance counselor **Rory McKee** echoed this thought, emphasizing the importance of educational courses like

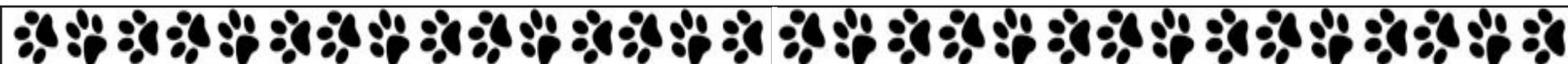
the new Ethnic Studies class at LGHS. The course, set to start next year, will cover a wide range of topics, primarily looking to expose students to different cultures, backgrounds, and ethnicities. He recognized that the class is an example of "[our school doing their due diligence to offer a strong curriculum." Although this Ethnic Studies class will be an elective, the LGHS freshman curriculum already includes a unit on Japanese internment that centers around a book titled Farewell To Manzanar by Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston and James D. Houston. Freshman English teacher **Kathleen Wehr** explained that it's important because it's "probably not... a book that [students] would pick up on their own outside of school." Educating students on the history of anti-Asian discrimination at LGHS will assist them in calling out this racism in their everyday lives.

While prospects of more education on Asian history and issues continue to grow, it's also imperative that non-Asian community members take initiative to acknowledge the complexity of what it means to be Asian American. Non-Asian peers should listen to stories about Asian Americans' experiences in America and reflect on what has shaped these experiences, even though non-Asian people cannot achieve a complete understanding of what it is like to be an Asian American person. This will allow members of the Asian American community to freely explore and embrace their identities.

The Los Gatos community must come together as a whole to better the knowledge and understanding of our AAPI peers. This improvement begins with working to eradicate anti-Asian sentiment, and will require the involvement of all members and a genuine desire to help the AAPI community fight against anti-Asian hate. In order for Los Gatos to heal, we must try to empathize with one another. While it's impossible to live someone else's life for a day, our community must strive to understand as best we can. We must continue trying to recognize what it's like growing up without the privilege many have become accustomed to. We must stop AAPI hate. (Sources: Stop AAPI Hate National Report, Anti-Asian Hate Crime Reported to Police in America's Largest Cities: 2020, AAPI Data)



C. Wagner



April/May

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
25	26 Seniors cap and gown pick-up	27 Seniors cap and gown pick-up	28	29 Seniors cap and gown pick-up	30 Seniors cap and gown pick-up	1 Junior Prom
2	3 First day of Phase 4A	4	5 Cinco de Mayo	6	7	8
9	10	11 Board Meeting	12	13 STEM Awards	14	15 Senior Prom
16	17 Sports Information Night webinar Tax Day	18	19	20	21	22

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- Rao provides MLB update
- High school sports start up again

SPORTS

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Matsuyama wins the Masters after a competitive weekend

by Trent Bartlett
Sports Editor

One sport that has maintained some sense of normalcy during the COVID-19 pandemic is golf, and the first major of the year, the Masters, has officially inaugurated up the 2021 season. This year's Masters took place at the same Augusta grounds in Georgia, but unlike 2020, it took place during the scheduled date of Apr. 7-10, 2021.



The Masters 2010

courtesy/wikimedia/commons

BEAUTIFUL SCENERY: The amazing course at Augusta National during 2010.

Unfortunately, one face we didn't see was five-time Masters winner Tiger Woods due to injuries he sustained during a car crash in February 2021. But coming into the weekend, the expected front runners were Dustin Johnson, number one in the world ranks, Justin Thomas, who

came in at number two, and John Rahm who took the third spot on the rankings. However, after the first day Justin Rose took the lead after shooting an incredible 65 to go seven under.

Day two saw the 2020 Masters winner and number one ranked player in the world, Dustin Johnson, fall behind and shoot a 76. This poor performance put him below the cut, which meant his tournament was over on Friday, along with half of the participants. Friday also saw a steady performance from Jordan Speith, a previous winner at Augusta; Justin Thomas; and Hideki Matsuyama, while Justin Rose stayed in the lead at seven under.

The start of the weekend saw a quick rise from Thomas to come within two of the lead but fell to one under on the day. Matsuyama took the lead after Saturday standing alone at 11 under with a lead of four shots while heading into the final day.

Sunday saw Xander Schauffele rise quickly and even have a chance to take the shared lead with Matsuyama; however, he quickly fell short after a triple bogey on 13th. This gave Matsuyama a three point lead and gave him control of his own destiny, and that he did. Matsuyama finished the tournament on top with a final score of 10 under and one ahead of the second place finisher, Will Zalatoris.

This is the first major win for Matsuyama, and also the first time a professional Japanese golfer has won a major tournament on the PGA tour. His win also came exactly a decade after his first appearance at the Masters, as an amateur. Many people have expressed their con-

gratulations for Matsuyama over social media, including Tiger Woods tweeting, "Making Japan proud Hideki. Congratulations on such a huge accomplishment for you and your country. This historical [Masters] win will impact the entire golf world." Previous Masters winners also congratulated him at the Green jacket presentation on Sunday afternoon.

The 2021 Masters certainly didn't disappoint and many people are already expecting an amazing 2022 Masters, with many hopeful that Tiger can return and make his mark among the current competitive groups.

(Sources: Yahoo Sports, ABC News, CNN, USA Today)



courtesy/flickr

WALKING TOGETHER: Matsuyama walks with Shinzo Abe and Donald Trump.

Cross country season starts

by Jenna Roselli
Center Editor

Since Santa Clara County began reopening in late February as the county moved from the purple tier into the red tier, the LGHS cross country team has had a busy season. As LG athletes were finally able to participate more fully in sports again, the team made its debut emergence from quarantine at Los Altos High School for its first meet back on Feb. 20. Runners followed a 2.1 mile course while each school competed over a span of separate heats. During one of their heats, the Girls Varsity team placed third overall with an average time of 13 minutes and 31.6 seconds. Sophomore **Sophie Tau** placed sixth, junior **Fiona Herron** placed fifteenth, and sophomore **Erica Weinstein** followed right behind, placing sixteenth. All three outstanding runners finished with a time under 13 minutes and 38.7 seconds. Freshman **Abigail Zolla** started off her first season with the team especially strong as she placed eleventh and was the fastest runner in her age division, with a time of 13 minutes and 22.7 seconds.



RACE READY: Fiona Herron participates in a tough race.

The Varsity boys were up against some tough competition at their first meet, placing sixth overall with an average time of 11 minutes and 55.3 seconds. LG's top Varsity boy runner, sophomore **Jack Fan**, placed sixteenth with a time of 11 minutes and 23.7 seconds. In the second Varsity Boys heat, junior **Micah Hoang** placed eleventh with a time of 12 minutes and 36.8 seconds. The JV boys'

team placed sixth overall as well with an average time of 13 minutes and 46.7 seconds. Sophomore **William Jenkins** was the fastest among LG's JV boys' team placing fifth with a time of 12 minutes and 44.1 seconds.

Due to COVID-19 still being a presence, the team has had to adjust as races are now held in heats to limit the number of runners in each race, so not all schools run head-to-head with each other in the same race. Runners are required to start the race with their masks on until they separate from the crowd, then are allowed to take them off for the remainder of the race.

For the LG cross country team's fifth meet, the team competed on their home turf on Mar. 25. The 3.1 mile run was spread out over a Los Gatos area known as Baylands Park. The girls' Varsity team triumphed during the meet, coming in second place overall with an average time of 20 minutes and 47.1 seconds. Herron, Tau, and Weinstein continued to impress as some of the girls' Varsity's top contenders. They all placed in the top ten and ran under a time of 20 minutes and 28.6 seconds. The boys' Varsity team placed second overall as well, with an average time of 17 minutes and 40.1 seconds. Senior **Justin Peck** and Fan also placed in the top ten, both finishing under a time of 16 minutes and 57 seconds.

(Sources: Lynbrook Sports)



photos/J. Roselli

FINAL SPRINT: Fan sprints to the finish line at the end.

Arslan wins Tekken 7 LAN

by Raphael Pelayo
Media Production Editor

On Apr. 12, Pakistani player Arslan "Arslan Ash" Siddique of FATE eSports and Red Bull eSports won the International WePlay Ultimate Fighting League (WUFL) Tekken 7 tournament after defeating Awais Honey five to two in the grand final. The 25-year-old won the grand final prize of 15 thousand dollars, winning his eighth tournament since he first surfaced in the competitive scene in Mar. 2019. In a tweet commemorating his win, Siddique wrote, "I feel so lucky and happy to win this amazing event for Tekken 7 in 2021! Thank you to my friends, family and supporters around the world. Thank you to my friends, family and supporters around the world."



PACKED CROWD: Esports fans watch a tough tournament.

Siddique was previously unheard of before his appearance at the Evolution Championship Series (EVO) 2019, the largest and most prestigious fighting tournament in the world, after sweeping the EVO Japan 2019 series by defeating top players such as Knee, Channel, and Book (the previous EVO champion). He was the only player to ever win an EVO title in both the American and Japanese league in the same year, even winning the ESPN Esports Best Player of the Year award for 2019.

Siddique travels from Pakistan to compete in his tournaments, a country with one of the most difficult borders to travel from. Originally a student in dentistry, Siddique had to choose between his studies and one of his greatest passions, gaming. "My family said I had wasted their money... But I thought to myself I'll show everyone that I picked the right path," Siddique said following an interview with Red Bull. After deciding to pursue his gaming career, Siddique has been detained at several border crossings caused by issues involving travel visas, sometimes being released from a several day detainment on the morning of the tournament.

With the COVID-19 pandemic stalling many LAN tournaments in every competitive esports environment, Tekken 7 is one of several games returning from online tourneys. In the following month, games such as Valorant and League of Legends plan on returning to in-person play within countries with looser lockdown restrictions, with the WUFL tournament taking place in Ukraine and the Mid-Season Invitational taking place in Iceland. Regarding the return to in-person tournaments, Siddique commented, "It was great to play against international players once again. I was really excited about WePlay Ultimate Fighting League and it was a wonderfully managed and high-stakes competition." (Sources: Tribune, Bol News, Red Bull, ESPN, Liquipedia)



photos/courtesy/wikimedia/commons

BIG TIME: The Tekken 7 logo shows two different characters.

MLB returns to normal after the chaotic 2020 season

by Revanth Rao
Sports Editor

The 2021 Major League Baseball (MLB) season began on Apr. 1, with Opening Day featuring a slate of 13 games. Due to the continued threat of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was discussion of postponing the start of the season by about a month to allow more players and coaches to receive vaccinations. However, those discussions did not result in a schedule change and the season began as planned.

Early on, the team with the best record in MLB is the defending champion Los Angeles Dodgers. After winning the World Series in 2020, the Dodgers were able to retain many of their key players and signed top free agent pitcher Trevor Bauer to make their team a formidable threat to win back-to-back championships. They have faced stiff competition from division rival San Diego Padres, who acquired players Blake Snell, Yu Darvish, Joe Musgrove, and others in

the offseason to build upon an already strong team that qualified for the playoffs a year ago. Musgrove in particular has paid dividends for the Padres, as he threw the first no-hitter in franchise history on Apr. 9 by pitching all nine innings without giving up a hit.



HIGH FIVES: Chicago Cubs celebrate after a great win.

While MLB played a season in 2020, the season was compressed to 60 games and teams only travelled within certain regions of the country.

In 2021, the season returned to the usual length of 162 games and teams are again travelling around the country. Because of the increase in travel, MLB commissioner Rob Manfred has been encouraging players and coaches to receive a vaccine for COVID-19 to reduce the risk of positive tests and outbreaks within teams. MLB has even offered incentives to teams who have at least 85 percent of players and staff vaccinated. Among the incentives are that teams can have indoor meetings and workouts without face masks, players can dine outdoors, and families can accompany the team and stay at teams' hotels regardless of vaccination status. Thus far, four of the thirty teams have reached the 85 percent threshold.

MLB also made headlines early in the season by moving its All Star Game from Atlanta to Denver. The move was announced shortly after Georgia passed a more restrictive voting rights act. In a statement, Manfred wrote that the decision to move the game was, "the best way to demonstrate our values as a sport" and "Major League Baseball fundamentally supports

voting rights for all Americans and opposes restrictions to the ballot box."

MLB was both criticized and applauded for the move. A group of Republican Senators disagreed with the decision, and have subsequently tried to draft legislation to remove MLB's anti-trust exemption. On the other hand, President Joe Biden and many players and coaches in MLB supported the decision to move. (Sources: NY Times, CBS Sports, NBC News)



photos/courtesy/wikimedia/commons

COME TOGETHER: Players and fans after the first pitch.



LG dance team performs at first home football game

by Lexi Kupor
Public Relations Manager

As the first session of school sports comes to a close, the LGHS varsity dance team continues to galvanize Wildcat pride and spirit at a myriad of community and athletic performances.

The team kicked off its first public event with the start of the football season, where dancers dotted Helm Field with kicks, turns, and pom-poms galore under Friday night lights. In addition to a full-length halftime performance at both junior varsity and varsity contests, team members also surveyed the entirety of the game from the sidelines, where they led cheers for parents, teachers, and other community attendees. Reflecting on the high energy environment of each performance, sophomore **Bayley Roberts** described that “when people are cheering...I feel like our hard work has paid off.”

Despite a year unlike any other, the night of Mar. 20 brought a sense of normalcy as graduating dancers, cheerleaders, and football players alike sauntered down Helm Field with their families to celebrate Senior Night. Graduating senior **Christina Carter** attended the event with her parents, and she remarked how meaningful it was that the team was “able to dance on the field again, even though the audience was smaller” due to spectator limits. Fellow dance team members on the

sidelines helped make up for the lack of student attendees through raucous cheers and applause for their graduating seniors. Likewise, sophomore **Samantha Schmidt** reflected on how “it makes me happy to see friends and family have the chance to come together in person at the games.”

Dance team members spend each practice perfecting student-choreographed routines and strengthening technical skills. Sophomore **Sarah Gouldrup** recently assisted in choreographing a football game performance for the season, and she described how the process of formulating, teaching, and cleaning her routine paid off, as “it was awesome being able to see it performed on the field in front of a crowd.”

Looking forward, the team hopes to attend LGHS basketball games to put on halftime performances and provide pride and support for fellow Wildcats. Currently, spectator guidelines for indoor sports prohibit most attendees, but rapidly changing conditions may provide an opportunity for dancers and cheerleaders.

Additionally, the prospect of a spring spirit rally keeps the dance team busy practicing, choreographing, and building excitement for an end-of-year event with fellow students. “I’m really hopeful for the rally we are set to have,” Carter stated, as this performance is one of the team’s most memorable and intensive of the year.

No matter what the ensuing months throw at them, the LGHS dance team remains prepared, enthusiastic, and confident in its ability to make the best of an unpredictable season.



WELL-CHOREOGRAPHED: The dance team works on their routine on the field.

Swim and dive finishes a successful and historic season

by Sophie Sullivan
Opinion Editor

Wildcat swimmers and divers finished a historic season on Mar. 26 with their first away meet at Saratoga. Over the course of the season, the team broke a total of five school records over seven weeks.

At their first meet versus Monta Vista, three of four teams swam victorious against the Matadors; only the JV boys lost to the Cupertino team. JV boys quickly recuperated from their loss, with all four teams and diving winning their meet against Los Altos on Mar. 5. Varsity girls, JV boys, and diving came first against Gunn on Mar. 12; Varsity boys and JV girls lost to the Eagles. Again, the team came back from the loss the week after, with all five teams beating Homestead. In the



RECORD HOLDERS: Driscoll and Frangieh pose in front of the pool record board.

of competition; he swam at 20.64 50 freestyle against Palo Alto, and a 1:36.11 200 free, 4:22.49 500 free, and 44.73 100 free three days later at Saratoga. Technically, Driscoll broke the 100 freestyle record twice in one week, explaining that he, “got [the record] at the Paly meet, and then did better at Toga... so they kept the second as the official record.”

Reflecting on his swims, Driscoll remembers “feeling fantastic” in the 500 free race — breaking a 25-year-old record — and having the 200 free feel “exactly like every other time.” Going down as LG’s most decorated swimmer yet, he recalls how “freshman year, my goal was to get maybe two or three [records]... now, I have a lot of confidence that my times are going to be up there for a while.” When asked about where his inspiration and motivation for swimming comes from, Driscoll is quick to cite his mom and Wildcat coach **Heather Driscoll**, as well as Varsity boys’ coaches **Kurt Kroesche** and **Jim Deming**.

Also making history this season is junior **Zoe Frangieh**, who broke the Varsity women’s 50 freestyle record in her race against Palo Alto. Describing her 23.85 swim, which shaved 0.23 seconds off the previous record, Frangieh remembers feeling “super pumped up on adrenaline... especially right off the blocks when the buzzer sounded, I just shot off and was on an adrenaline rush. It was really cool.”

Frangieh’s time as a Wildcat isn’t over yet, though, and she hopes to make a state automatic time for the 50 free next year. She’ll need to swim a 23.82 to be immediately qualified for the Clovis competition, something Frangieh describes would be, “totally awesome.”



LEADER OF THE PACK: Driscoll enjoys a considerable lead in his freestyle race.

season’s final week, every Wildcat team lost to Palo Alto on Mar. 23; Varsity girls took another loss against Saratoga the Friday after, but Varsity boys and both the JV teams outswam the Falcons.

Despite a rocky record, the 2021 season will go down as one of the Wildcats’ most record breaking. Standout senior and UCSB swim commit **Matt Driscoll** now holds every freestyle record for Varsity men; he also holds the 200 Individual Medley (IM) record at 1:50.05 from the 2020 season and the 100 backstroke record at 49.08 from 2019. This season, Driscoll broke four freestyle records in the final week

LG football beats Milpitas

by Sydney Bricker
Media Production Editor

On Sat., Mar. 20, Los Gatos High School’s Varsity football team beat Milpitas 45-0. The game, which took place on Wildcat home turf, is the team’s first in over a year and marks a promising start to the season.

According to **Mark Krail**, LGHS football’s head coach, the team owes their victory to both the talent and hard work of the players, who faced many obstacles in the past year due to the pandemic.

“Our guys kept practicing the whole time. Even when I couldn’t be there because we were told ‘no,’ our players were still getting together and throwing the ball around,” said Krail. “I think two big parts of [our victory] were our guys were in pretty good shape and their level of preparation was pretty high given the circumstances.”

Among the star players were junior **Quinn Merritt** who played both offense and defense and made some noteworthy catches, and senior **Adam Garwood**, the team’s unofficial captain. Garwood

plays both running back and outside linebacker and had an impressive 115 yard rushing game. Other players who stood out while playing Milpitas were junior **Jake Ripp**, junior **Lucas White**, and the only sophomore on the Varsity team, **Colin Dooley**.

As a precautionary measure, the team only permitted players’ immediate family members to attend the game, but fans who couldn’t attend in person could still watch the games remotely through the NFHS network online. The athletics department uses an automated camera that follows the action and streams the game in real time.

The team worked hard to stay motivated and focused ever since the pandemic canceled practices, from meeting via Zoom to watch and discuss recorded games and plays, to organizing practices even when playing against other schools wasn’t yet possible. After all the anticipation, the players’ excitement for their first real game since lockdown number one was palpable.

According to Krail, “they were just champing at the bit to get out there. To turn the lights on at the stadium and play a game was pretty cool, even though the stands weren’t full of students and there was no band.”

This week, the coaches plan to work on improving the team’s skills. Next week, the team will learn and practice new skills before its home game against Mountain View on Apr. 2. “We’ve got really a good group of guys,” said Krail.

Despite setbacks like missing last fall and skilled senior **Will Schweitzer** leaving for Notre Dame on a scholarship, Krail is confident in his players. “This could be the best team that I’ve had since I’ve been at Los Gatos,” he said.



READY TO RUN: Players wait for Wilcox to snap the ball.

LGRC begins team rowing

by Georgia Kaufman
Humor Editor

Recently, the Los Gatos Rowing Club (LGRC) has readmitted its junior rowers to row in team boats. Members of the club are permitted to row in groups of four or five, allowing high school team members to row in a variety of boats including singles, doubles, quads, and fours.

LGRC officially has two weeks left of its regular season, but some athletes will be invited back to practice for six to eight weeks before attending the National Championships in Florida this June. Although there are few real practices left in the season, the rowing club is attempting to get their rowers out in COVID-safe scrimmages on the Lexington Reservoir.

Senior **Tatum Heyl**, who committed to row at Gonzaga University this past fall, spoke on the topic of getting back in team boats and how it’s affecting her practices with so little time left in the spring season.

“Practices have been a lot more collaborative now that we can row with other people,” said Heyl. “It also has opened up a lot more doors for rowing in the future as it makes us able to be able to compete at regattas over the summer, like the National Championship in June.”

Heyl is hoping to compete with fellow teammates at Nationals this year. However, the excitement of being able to row in groups larger than one person has seemed to spark much joy as well within the rowing community. Heyl mentioned, “I am super excited to be back in team boats! It’s so much fun to get back to rowing with people and finally seeing how our hard work has paid off.”

LGHS sophomore, **Brandon Boehme** looked back on his past season with LGRC, when a majority of his time was spent far away from his teammates in a single on the water.

“It feels good to be in team boats,” he commented. “It gives rowing a sense of teamwork where that [sense of community] was missing in the singles.” Regarding racing, Boehme stated, “I feel [everyone’s] motivation for races in team boats is higher than [it is] in singles. [It’s clear] it motivates everybody to try harder so we can make nationals.”

Both Varsity Men and Varsity Women team members are hoping to be chosen to compete in Nationals this year. It’s a tedious process that includes a large amount of thought and effort. Boehme reflected on his time in the single and how it allowed him to become better in team boats: “Rowing in singles has made it easier to get back into bigger boats because [the team’s] blade technique has increased.” He then thought about how it’s made things a little more difficult, saying, “However, it also makes it harder... to match up in team boats... since everyone has been working on their own in singles.”



TEAM TIME: The rowing team rows together in team boats.