

The ARAGON OUTLOOK

Thursday | October 29, 2020 | Volume 61, Issue 1

900 Alameda de las Pulgas, San Mateo, CA 94402

Aragon High School

Vinyl Record Sales



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Coach Sell leads football warm ups; junior Daniel Voyles has his temperature checked. MICHAEL SIPES

Athletics conditions in cohorts

Pratham Valluri
SPORTS WRITER

Aragon sports have started up again in the form of conditioning, leading to both excitement and concern from student-athletes, parents and coaches. During a normal school year, many sports such as cross country would engage in preseason conditioning prior to the start of school, but restrictions due to COVID-19 have pushed back season start dates and effectively changed how athletes train.

In order to participate in sports, many different safety precautions must be taken. According to Athletic Direc-

tor Steve Sell, a maximum of three cohorts are allowed onto a specific facility at a time. Each cohort is made up of a maximum of 14 players and two coaches. Once on the field, students have to stand six feet apart. With the exception of practicing their sport, athletes are required to wear a mask when entering, exiting and standing in the facility. These guidelines, set by the state, are to be followed by every school.

To lower the risk of a coronavirus outbreak, students have their temperature scanned and are asked a series of questions which assess their risk level, such as whether they've been in contact with anyone who has

tested positive for COVID-19.

"We have to read a questionnaire like 'Have there been any symptoms the past 14 days?' [and use] hand sanitizer," said junior track and field athlete Jack Hickey. "We always try to stay six feet apart no matter what we are doing."

Multiple teams have been conditioning for the past few weeks including boys and girls volleyball, football, track and field, cross country, baseball, softball and girls and boys water polo. Not every team practices every day due to the sheer amount of teams conditioning; there is a

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District navigates standardized testing amidst pandemic

Kamron Ramelmeier
NEWS WRITER

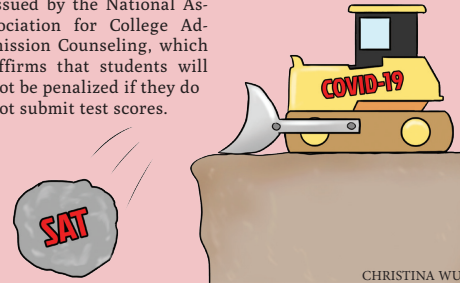
This year, the College Board has reduced the number of SAT testing sites to maintain safety during the COVID-19 pandemic. For the Aug. 29 SAT, only 54% of the usual number of testing centers were open nationwide.

In response to limited testing availability, the majority of four-year colleges and universities nationwide have waived standardized examination requirements. Additionally, more than 400 colleges have agreed to a statement issued by the National Association for College Admission Counseling, which affirms that students will not be penalized if they do not submit test scores.

Senior Alben Goulisheva thinks test-optional policies benefit all students, regardless of whether or not they decide to submit their scores. "I feel like when they made it optional, it accommodated those who weren't able to take it and also those who were because people who studied very hard paid all of this money to get it done and did really well," Goulisheva said. "It would be really disappointing to not submit their scores and get recognized for their hard work."

Although many colleges have implemented test-

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CHRISTINA WU

Increased screen time during distance learning raises health concerns

Alexandra Ding
NEWS WRITER

A recent Outlook survey, which received 378 responses from Aragon students and staff, found that 93% of respondents face physical health problems and 84% experience mental health issues related to screen time. Although most rated their issues as mild to moderate, the effects add up.

For freshman Luke Phillips, whose screen time has quadrupled to over eight hours since distance learning began, migraines and eye strain have become a common occurrence.

"It's not necessarily how bad they are, it's just that

consistently I'm having headaches more than usual," Phillips said. "It used to be once or twice a month but now I've noticed [migraines] popping up more and more."

Despite these issues, screens do have benefits; they have given students a way to interact with their friends while remaining socially distanced, mitigating pandemic-induced isolation.

"I feel disconnected from friends, but I use social platforms like Discord, and I play video games with friends," Phillips said. "If I didn't have those features [I would] probably be more disconnected."

Now that many students spend time online in Zoom classes or interact with their

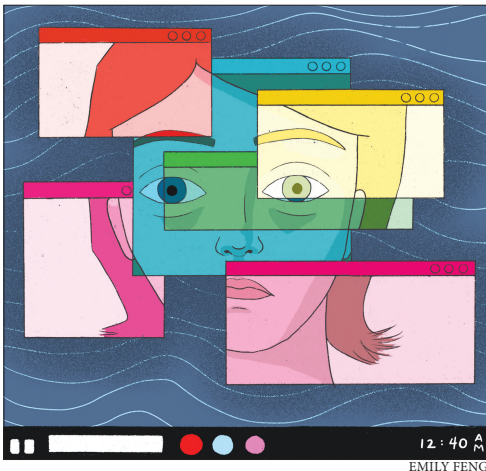
friends online, they find less chances to go out together and exercise. Most Aragon students spend under 1 1/2 hours outdoors each day, which can lead to some health issues.

Freshman Roshi Khilani shares this concern: he is physically isolated from his friends and has a hard time finding the motivation to exercise in addition his physical education class.

"It's not very fun to go on the treadmill or go outside," Khilani said. "I just do PE. ... I used to go out or play with my friends sometimes."

Lack of exercise has consequences such as a heightened risk for heart disease,

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EMILY FENG

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT Halloween movies

Audrey Smietana reviews Netflix's "Hubie Halloween," starring Adam Sandler.



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FEATURES

Dreamers in America

Read about new social science teacher Erick Silva's experience as a DACA recipient.

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KAITLYN HA

Aragon holds 2020 Student Mock Election

Cameron Leung
NEWS WRITER

In the week leading up to Oct. 6, Aragon students partook in the California Student Mock Election sponsored by the California Secretary of State. American Government teachers Kevin Nelson and Scott Silton organized the Mock Election as a schoolwide event.

The Mock Election has been organized by various Aragon government teachers since 2008. In recent years, students would go to the Multi-Purpose Room during social science classes to complete a virtual ballot on Chromebooks. This year, due to distance learning, students participated in the election through a Canvas quiz instead.

Results of the Mock Election mostly favored the Democratic Party. In the presidential vote, Joe Biden won by a landslide, acquiring 83% of the votes, while 12% voted for Donald Trump and 5% of participants voted for other parties. However, Prop 16, which allows for race to be considered in public employment, education and contracting, was almost split evenly with 54% voting “yes” and 46% voting “no.”

“[Having a Student Mock Election] shows our community that it’s a misconception that teenagers are uninterested and selfish,” said Senior Class President Daniela Virgen. “If we’re willing to participate in this Mock Election and we have great results ... [we can show that] students are educated and engaged in politics.”

The Mock Election intends

to promote civic engagement among students and to familiarize them with voting so they can cast a ballot when they are of age to do so.

“Students don’t realize the power [voting] can have, especially since they don’t have that right yet,” said sophomore Harvard Model Congress Club member Zoe Neil. “Now is the best time to learn about the impact that a vote has and how to be a good voter.”

Some believe that encouraging students to become regular voters could stimulate future political involvement.

“Maybe our parents or our friends aren’t voting or they’re not learning about the differ-

in real life, they also collect [demographic] information and report that information,” Virgen said.

In previous years, Felder reported having a participation rate of 95%, compared to this year’s 60%. Despite the low turnout, Aragon may continue using Canvas as a platform for future Mock Elections.

“Canvas is a very efficient system to deliver info and collect data, so it’s going to be something we’ll continue using in Mock Elections,” Nelson said. “It’s also a place where, as a government teacher, I can link information and articles.”

Aragon’s Mock Election poll data is not representative

“Students don’t realize the power [voting] can have, especially since they don’t have that right yet”

ent props and candidates, so I think that this is also a good way for us to feel comfortable sharing what we’ve learned,” said junior Current Events Club President Yossi Moff. “I read about props and measures. ... I had been telling my parents about them.”

After voting ends, the Secretary of State’s office compiles the statistics from each participating high school. Although not required by the Secretary of State’s Student Mock Election, Nelson and Silton decided to include the new demographic section this year because they believed it could inform how accurate the results were in representing Aragon’s entire student body and simulate an exit poll.

“When you register to vote

SMUHSD tests asynchronous Wednesdays

Marlee Cherkas
NEWS WRITER

On Sept. 24, the San Mateo Union High School District Board of Trustees examined a proposal for Wednesday classes to be asynchronous. Asynchronous Wednesdays would mean that classes are offline, and students are expected to complete assigned work during school hours away from synchronous Zoom classes. SMUHSD students signed a petition, created by the Unified Associated Student Body in September, proposing that all Wednesday classes be asynchronous, which garnered over 2,300 signatures. Some students feel that this should be implemented because Wednesday class periods are too short for meaningful instruction and online learning has proven fatiguing.

During the board meeting, UASB student board

Skelly explained that on Oct. 14 and 28 teachers will have the choice to conduct virtual classes or go through with asynchronous classes. If classes are to be offline, students will be assigned work, and teachers will be available if help is needed.

Senior Janelle Soriano supports this proposal.

“I have college things that take up a lot of my time, so my schedule is packed with unfinished classwork as well as homework,” Soriano said. “Having that independence and power to make my own schedule is great.”

Dance and Health Teacher Elke Calvert-Rios appreciates the synchronous Wednesday schedule because it gives her the option to teach.

“They’re really short classes, but I still have time to review content ... that you might not be able to do on your block days,” Calvert-Rios said.



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members shared their perspectives. Capuchino High School senior and UASB representative Jessica Sharma outlined common issues students face in the wake of online learning.

“Students throughout the district reported suffering from constant headaches, sluggishness and a sense of dread from the rigorous hours they spend in front of computers,” Sharma said.

One factor the board considered in the two weeks following the initial meeting was the required number of weekly instructional hours. Having asynchronous days would decrease the current number of instructional hours per week. The board expressed that there is no perfect substitute for instructional hours.

The week of Oct. 4, teachers across the district voted on the Wednesday schedule. In a districtwide message on Oct. 6, Superintendent Kevin

Calvert-Rios also believes asynchronous Wednesdays may be advantageous to students’ mental health.

“I think it’ll help them feel less stressed because they will have a day for catch-up,” Calvert-Rios said. “However, I don’t know if all students will use it for that purpose.”

For freshman Adele Hsu, asynchronous days would give her time off of technology.

“It’s really good to have a break from the screen,” Hsu said. “We’re on the computer about seven hours a day.”

At the Oct. 8 board meeting, the results of a recent Panorama survey were shared. Half of the survey participants reported preferring online classes. The board will wait until they receive feedback from teachers on how engaged and productive their students were to decide whether asynchronous classes will become permanent.

Editorial: Election Day should be a national holiday

This editorial represents the unanimous opinion of all 14 Outlook editors.

On Nov. 3, U.S. citizens will have a final opportunity to cast their ballots to determine America's course for the next four years. As the relationship between political parties has grown increasingly tense, citizens are now more eager to engage in democracy.

which is always the first Tuesday of November, could discourage many from casting their ballots.

To address low voter turnout, the editors of the Outlook believe that Election Day should become a national holiday. Eliminating the interference of work and school would create more opportunities for people to vote on Election Day. This phenomenon can be seen in

France, as its general election day is held on a Sunday. According to a study by the Sigma Journal of Political and International Studies, between 2002 to 2012 an average of 81% of registered voters in France voted, while only an average of 75% of registered voters used their power at the ballot box in the U.S. during the same time period.

A Pew Research Center survey revealed that 14% of registered American voters did not vote in the 2016 presidential election because they were too busy or had sched-

uling conflicts. For most people who work from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., there is barely enough time to stand in line to cast their vote and then travel back to work as polling booths in California are open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. For some rural Americans, the nearest polling place is more than an hour drive away. States, such as Texas, have closed as much as one in 10 polling locations, and seven counties in Georgia now only have one polling place, adding to the inconvenience. If work institutions, including sports arenas, stadiums and schools were to close on Election Day, these buildings could transform into voting centers, making voting more accessible.

Many NBA arenas and facilities, for example, will be used as polling centers for the 2020 election.

Long lines that occur early in the morning before work and late in the evening after work can be eliminated, as people would no longer be limited by their work schedule.

Bipartisan Policy Center reported that at times, casting a vote can exceed 30 minutes. For the upcoming election, wait times have further increased as many polling centers have closed due to COVID-19 restrictions. Because of the added precautions, some citizens must wait hours to cast their vote. Voters in Texas have experienced wait times over five hours. Having a work-free day would allow voters to choose the time of the day that is best for them to cast their ballot, preventing long lines at specific times of day and thus limiting voters' time spent at the polls.

Making Election Day a national holiday would also

raise awareness of this important date, encouraging people to pre-register to vote and consider who they will cast their vote for. It is an opportunity for the community to gather and celebrate democracy together, creating a patriotic atmosphere among citizens. Thus, many would be encouraged to participate in Election Day, increasing voter turnout.

Democracy is a foundation of the U.S. and equality is a major pillar of democracy. Making Election Day a national holiday would promote equality in the voting system, creating a future where all citizens can use their voices to effect positive change.

"There is barely enough time to stand in line to cast their vote and then travel back to work"

According to a Pew Research Center survey, 83% of polled registered voters this year agree that the outcome of the presidency is crucial, up 9% from 2016. However, the amount of people invested in politics does not align with voter turnout, which has always been low in America. According to a study by the University of California of Santa Barbara, an average of 55.36% of eligible voters participated in the presidential election process in the past 20 years. The date marked as Election Day,

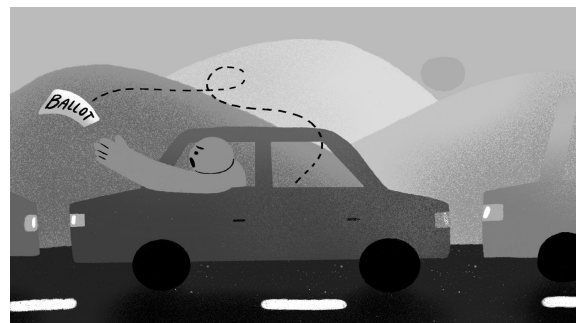
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Note from the editors: A new Outlook

Aragon community, treacherous.

The Aragon Outlook is our school's independent, award-winning student newspaper, which has traditionally been published online and in print most months of the year. Due to campus closures, we will be publishing online on the same schedule as any normal year, and printing a limited number of editions. Our website, aragonoutlook.org, has a full online edition of articles from September in addition to everything you see in this print edition. You can read our staff's stories about school reopening and local news; we published articles on topics ranging from Zoombombing, ethnic studies and wildfires to economic inequality in the Bay Area.

Journalism, on any scale, plays a large role in our society. As student journalists in this age, we are taking our responsibility to inform the community seriously. We are dedicated to reporting on the mental and physical wellbeing of students and staff and growing inequities that are being exacerbated by the ongoing coronavirus pandemic to provide any clarity we can in a year that is at best murky and at worst

Now, more than ever, we are doing our best to deliver a paper copy of the newspaper to the Aragon community and our subscribers as frequently as possible to keep our school connected while separated. We hope that our reporting on good news stories and other lighthearted topics can bring some joy to readers, and appreciate everyone's continued support of independent student journalism.

Our ability to print and publish the paper, now including an added cost of mailing to the community, depends on both time and financial restraints. We love featuring small and local businesses and appreciate any business advertisements, community sponsorships and subscriptions to outside addresses. Information about all of these opportunities are listed on our website, or can be solicited by sending us an email.

If you have any comments about our coverage please email us at aragonoutlook@gmail.com.

Thank you,
Josette Thornhill and
Kayla Shiao
Co-editors-in-chief

The ARAGON OUTLOOK

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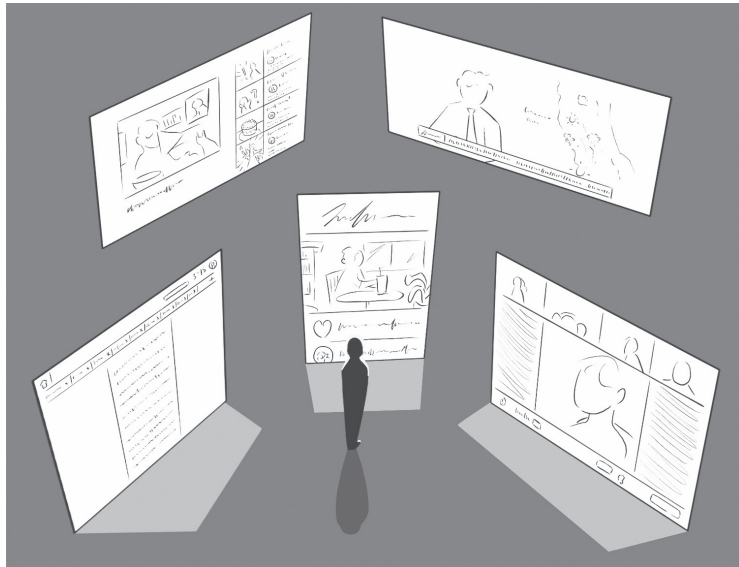
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If you would like to write a letter to the editor, please go to bit.ly/outlooklettertoeditor.



JESSICA FU

Health issues attributed to increased screen time during distance learning

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soreness, cramps and posture problems. PE isn't always enough to keep students active, and half the student body doesn't take PE. Khilani tried learning tennis, and freshman Owen Browne, who experiences shoulder pain, plays basketball between classes.

Dry eyes, felt by 40% of Aragon students polled, can be caused by extended screen use, which discourages blinking making the glands that lubricate and moisten the eye less effective.

Optometrist Dr. Thomas Aller, who wrote a paper on the pandemic's effects on vi-

sion, recommends conscious blinking as a remedy — five times every half hour or hour, with a squeeze on the last blink.

Myopia, also known as nearsightedness, can be caused by high screen use. With it comes an increased risk for impaired vision or blindness. One-third of students reported that their vision has worsened because of the extra screen time.

"I think the best advice would be: if there is a break, go do something completely different with your eyes," Aller wrote. "Just go outside."

No specific break pattern has been proven to stop or slow myopia, but following the 20-20-20 rule — to look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds every 20 minutes — does encourage eye rest. 46% of respondents supported short breaks during class to help them rest their eyes and refocus.

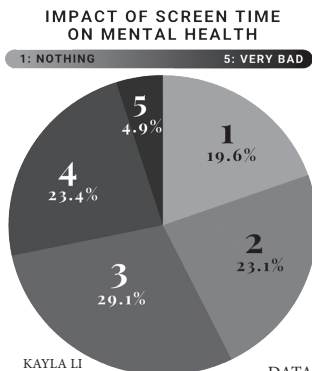
"[About] Halfway through class my English teacher [gives] me a three minute break," Phil-

lips said. "[The break] allows me to just go get some food and then I can come back, and I'm focused again. I think they should do that in every class."

Some students have turned to blue light glasses or their device's night mode to ease strained eyes. Blue light is not proven to cause eye strain or long-term eye damage, but it does disrupt the circadian rhythm, the body's internal clock, altering sleep patterns, which can be detrimental to overall health.

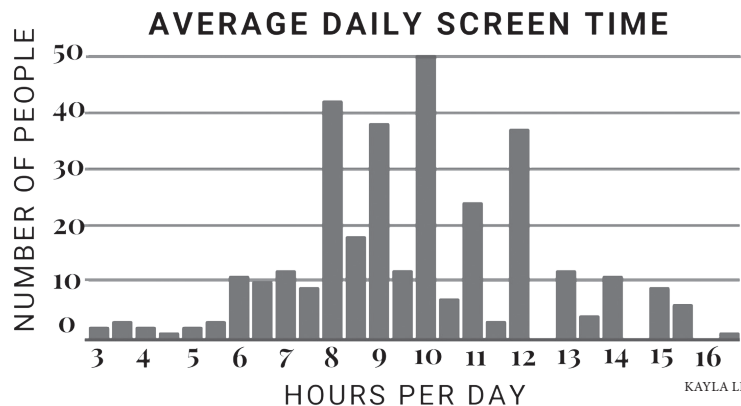
"The suggestion is that for [the] late afternoon and evening, there is some value to filtering some of the blue," Aller said.

For those dealing with the effects of prolonged screen time, it is clear that COVID-19 has harmed more than just those infected with the virus. Aragon students must grapple with a series of challenges as a result of online learning, many with long-term effects that will only increase with prolonged screen use. The struggles of online learning will continue, and changes in screen time must be made in order to prioritize students' physical and mental health and well-being.



KAYLA LI

DATA BASED OFF OF 378 ARAGON STUDENTS AND STAFF



KAYLA LI

Exam while masked: students taking the SAT during pandemic

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optional policies, some students still feel pressured to take the SAT.

We've been notified [by the College Board] that SATs would be cancelled [only] 12 hours before, and it was dis-

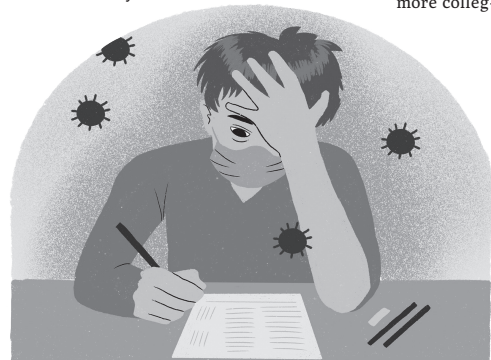
stories of students going to other states and staying overnight in hotel rooms to take the SAT."

Although colleges made standardized testing optional due to COVID-19, Ho thinks that this system may

"I think seniors [feel] pressured and [are] thinking that [taking the SAT] will help their chances"

appointing because we spent a lot of time studying," said senior Ryan Chan. "Even though a lot of colleges have said that it's optional, there are schools that have explicitly stated that they'd still like test scores if you have them, so I think lots of seniors [feel] pressured and [are] thinking that will help their chances more. We just

fade away permanently. "There have been decades of focus on GPA and test scores," Ho said. "Just one year is really difficult to undo this thinking that [they] are the end-all be-all for you to get into college. Prior to COVID-19, there were a lot of conversations and many more colleg-



EMILY FENG

scheduled for a later date not knowing when the next was going to be."

To address student concerns, the SMUHSD provided a districtwide survey for seniors to gauge their interest in districtwide test administration. Approximately 350 students requested an addi-

es jumping on the same idea that students could showcase their strengths beyond [standardized testing]. COVID-19 has expedited that conversation, and it has opened up colleges to take that step forward and make good changes for students [applying]."

"[There were] stories of students going to other states and staying overnight ... to take the SAT"

tional testing opportunity. As a result, the district organized test administration on school campuses for Oct. 14 and 28.

Director of Curriculum and Assessment Brian Simmons explains what brought the district to administer this test.

"We were getting inquiries from families whose tests kept getting cancelled by the College Board," Simmons said. "[They] asked if it's possible for the district to organize an internal date because time was evaporating for seniors. We also felt sympathetic to the fact that all seniors didn't have grades in the spring and [there were]

College and Career Adviser Laurie Tezak agrees with Ho's sentiment.

"I think we were seeing optional testing coming," Tezak said. "There are a number of schools that have been saying for the last two years that students should submit the test if they took it but in all honesty, they want to see their grades and classes as well as what they've been doing in and out of their community. I think that it was starting to come, but COVID [-19] pushed it over the edge. Several years down, we were going to see this, and the UC's are looking at creating their own testing."

A look into Trump's potential TikTok ban

Carolyn Mish
NEWS WRITER

Threats of a ban on the popular social media application TikTok became reality in August when President Donald Trump issued an executive order that stated the app would be banned 45 days later on Sept. 20, unless an American firm could be recruited to buy out TikTok's U.S. operations, out of concern that the People's Republic of China might be able to use TikTok to spy. Currently, business negotiations around TikTok are set to end on Nov. 12, after which TikTok would be banned if it is not bought by an American company, which leaves the content and users who rely on the platform unsure of the future of the app.

An upcoming ban could creators with large followings. Senior Jessica Chen amassed over 46,000 followers by posting her daily routines.

"When the first ban rumor came I was skeptical because a lot of news sources were incorrect, but when creators went live and said goodbye to their followers it made me really emotional," Chen said. "By gaining this platform I'm super thankful to have this position to post what I like and have people enjoy it."

TikTok is used by a young demographic; 41% of the app's users are between the ages of 16 and 24. Senior Rumi Loghmani maintains more than 170,000 followers on the app by posting art content. He cites the algorithm for his success.

"TikTok is really good at making people blow up with the For You page," Loghmani said. "That's how you find videos. The For You page is your main source of new content, so it blows you up by forcing the users to see stuff to keep consuming content."

The reasons cited for the potential ban stemmed from the company's ownership. TikTok is owned by ByteDance, a parent company that is based in China. Concerns arose due to the company's possible connection to the Chinese Communist Party, and the fact that user data

teacher William Colglazier.

TikTok is prohibited on government-owned phones, specifically by the Department of Homeland Security, Transportation Security Administration and the U.S. Armed Forces. Both the House of Representatives and the Senate voted in favor of prohibiting downloads on government phones. These precautions point to the data concerns laid out in the executive order. Issues with TikTok are not unfamiliar to global governments. India recently banned the app altogether due to the same fears. This issue of national security is within the President's control, since he is also Commander in Chief and he commands the umbrella of national security.

The main concept that drives national security concerns with TikTok is the fact that it's not an American company.

"The main fix would be that user data would be stored in the U.S. [after an acquisition]," Colglazier said. "That would be sufficient to make the U.S. government feel confident that the American companies wouldn't give the data away to a foreign government, and the American company CEOs are beholden to subpoenas from Congress or a grand jury, so that level of jurisdiction by putting the company in the U.S. gives our government some leverage in the issue of national security."

After the initial executive order was released, three companies emerged in attempts to work with TikTok. Microsoft, Oracle and Walmart all made offers to buy the company or make a deal. ByteDance rejected Microsoft's offer, leaving Oracle and Walmart as potential business partners. The U.S. Department of Commerce extended the upcoming ban for a week on Sept. 20, giving the companies time to work out a deal.

However, the current details of the business deal are unknown. Oracle and Walmart are poised to share 20% of a newly formed company called TikTok Global that would be American owned. However, ByteDance has

been the only driving force at play with a potential ban. On June 17, the Trump campaign's Tulsa rally was the victim of a mass trolling driven by TikTok and Twitter users. The users mass reserved tickets to the rally to impact turnout, and their intended effect took place.

"It creates a community because we were all able to band together to accomplish this one thing," said Hillsdale junior Sophia Heath. Heath is president of the San Mateo chapter of Coalition Z, a youth-led activism group that works against injustices in the community and aims to increase youth voter turnout. "Even I reserved a seat, and we all had a common goal so it made it a bonding experience. The Tulsa rally also really helped create political TikTok and that platform for activism."

Brad Parscale, a senior adviser for President Trump, tweeted that over one million tickets had been reserved. The auditorium for the event could only hold 19,000 people, and turnout was estimated to be much lower than the reserved number of tickets. Shortly after the rally in July of 2020, U.S. Sens. Chuck Schumer, D-New York, and Tom Cotton, R-Ark, voiced their concerns about TikTok's security, and this led into the executive orders in August.

"I think Trump is being

app is censorship, the answer is unclear. The government reserves the right to regulate speech, such as threats. The right to freedom of speech and freedom of expression are inalienable, but not absolute. There isn't a precedent for situations involving the consti-

have national security implications. We're in this whole action based on a possible fear of data breach. There was already that happening by the Russian government. There has to be some political issues because you're not seeing a consistent policy."

"All social media collect data and it wasn't a super big concern that was about TikTok specifically"

tutional right to social media. The internet and subsequently these types of media are so relatively new there isn't legal precedent of foreign ownership of social media.

"I read 'The Handmaid's Tale' by Margaret Atwood and this quote really resonated with me and I think it's relevant; 'Nothing changes instantaneously: in a gradually heating bathtub, you'd be boiled to death before you knew it,' and I feel like that describes the situation," Heath said. "We don't know we're in authoritarianism. We can't tell, but this is only the beginning. If we let him get away with this, what are we going to let him get away with next."

Because a federal judge blocked the 45 day ban that would have banned TikTok on Sept. 20, there is a degree of hesitation around the legality of the ban.

"There is an argument to be made that it is a violation

The outcome of the business deal between Oracle, Walmart and TikTok will solidify the fate of the beloved by many app will become clear as time goes on. In the meantime, creators and users of the app will weigh their options when considering how to proceed with creating and viewing content.

"The platform I built was super special, and it was hard to let that go," Chen said. "If something happens a lot less people will be on the app, and it'll decrease views. There are bigger issues in the world, but it's hard to give up stuff you care about."

With the American user base of TikTok at risk, the communities built on the app may face consequences from the ban. The platform's differences from other social media, such as altered comment sections and easy interaction with creators, added to connections made through TikTok.



EMILY FENG

"The platform I built was super special, and it was hard to let that go"

may be collected and stored outside of the U.S. TikTok denies that user data isn't secure, stating that their data is stored in the U.S. with a backup in Singapore.

"The GOP and Congress and the Democratic minority leader of the Senate expressed that this is an issue and one that needs to be looked into, and [that] there are security risks there," said history

claimed that they would own 80% of TikTok Global. The deal wouldn't work if a foreign company owned a majority of the new company, and Oracle and Walmart claim that ByteDance will have no ownership of a new company. As of now, Federal Judge Carl Nichols blocked the delayed Sept. 27 ban and thus the businesses have a Nov. 12 deadline.

National security may not

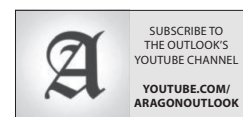
absurd for focusing on banning an app for entertainment while we're in the middle of a pandemic that he's handled really poorly; he can't mandate masks or support Black Lives Matter, but he can ban an app, which seems irrelevant and not a super big deal," Heath said. "There are concerns with the Chinese government having our info, but everyone has their information regardless of a singular app. All social media collect data and it wasn't a super big concern that was about TikTok specifically."

As for whether banning an

of free speech, but there's also national security aspects at risk, so it becomes a fuzzy area of constitutionality," Colglazier said. "The outward claim of national security seems to have some validity, so we ask, 'What is Trump not saying?' We're not saying that criticizing China is good for him politically—going after this company, but not going after Russia's influence in our elections. The evidence says that Russia meddled in our election, and he's saying that a Chinese company's ownership of TikTok has the potential to

"TikTok brings a lot of people together," Loghmani said. "It's given me the opportunity to meet a lot of new people. Some people I've met on TikTok are huge now, and it really builds community."

The Nov. 12 deadline for business negotiations with TikTok remains. Until then, American users can use the app as normal.



🎵 Vinyl records surpass CD sales 🎵

Kiara Lopez
NEWS WRITER

Accounting for nearly \$232.1 million in music sales, vinyl record sales have surpassed CD sales for the first time since the 1980s. According to CNN, for over a decade, vinyl revenue has consecutively increased, whereas CD sales have declined rapidly.

Introduced in the 1940s, vinyl records have been around for almost a century and were the most popular way of listening to music for many years. Eventually, with newer technology, CDs quickly took over and were successful up until the end of the 20th century. Following the trend of CDs, streaming services were introduced in the early 2000s with the intention to provide listeners with an endless sup-

pliment of music accessible to them by their own devices. Since then, most people have grown accustomed to this quick form of entertainment. Recently, vinyls have re-

emerged in popularity among younger generations. There are many possible explanations for the increase in vinyl record sales over the years from technical sound, eye appeal and nostalgia. For senior Kyle Canton, owning vinyl records is a both physical and musical experience.

"My favorite part is [admiring] how personal [the vinyl record] is," Canton said. "Every time you open up a record, there's always a bunch of pictures or a letter to thank the listener of the album. Sometimes it's just the artwork on the inside, [and] it just looks cool."

These special features add to the average \$20 price of vinyl records, but the personal connection makes the cost worth it. While visuals may initially attract

more valuable throughout the succeeding years.

"Some records are just more rare because artists put their music that hasn't been released on Spotify or Apple Music," said senior Ella Tarara. "[People] would go chase after these records. My whole life, we've had a crazy amount of records, and my hallways are just filled with them now. It's just something that we've always appreciated."

The appeal of vinyls transcends generations, starting with older generations who grew up with vinyl records to others who have discovered a newfound appreciation for them. Predovich has seen the generational gap in his store where the custom-

ers from 12 to 70-year-olds will flock to the store, influenced by their shared love for music.

"Kids [come] in with their parents or parents [come] in with their teenagers ... and [shop] for records and [talk] about music," Predovich said.

up until around 2003, when digital music began to take over. The music industry shifted again with the digital era, leaving less than 20 vinyl record pressing plants remaining in the U.S. today. Due to the scarcity of vinyl records, they have grown

"My whole life, we've had a crazy amount of records. It's just something that we've always appreciated"

more valuable throughout the succeeding years.

"It's just a lot more different from digital," said senior Jonah Diolula. "Those little imperfections in the sound ... [vinyls are] a lot better in my opinion."

Mass manufacturing of vinyl records persisted up until the 1980s. After this point, the production of records gradually petered out. When the companies transitioned to making CDs widely available to the public, CDs became the most efficient way to store music

As for the future of vinyls, it is still unknown. Due to economic implications related to the COVID-19 pandemic in addition to the changing trends in buyers preferences, vinyls remain in the hands of the customers' interests. Despite other speculative uncertainties, one thing remains certain: the personal appeal and original sound continues to ensure that vinyl records are not going anywhere for years to come.

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"Vinyls are not going away because there's too many people that love [them]"

plify music accessible to them by their own devices. Since then, most people have grown accustomed to this quick form of entertainment. Recently, vinyls have re-

emerged in popularity among younger generations. There are many possible explanations for the increase in vinyl record sales over the years from technical sound, eye appeal and nostalgia. For senior Kyle Canton, owning vinyl records is a both physical and musical experience.

Thomas Predovich, owner of Vinyl Solutions Records



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Free consultation for Aragon students

Margot Bellon, Valedictorian
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COURTESY OF RYAN MCNAMARA

Ryan McNamara's "Ghosts on the Roof"

Peyton De Winter
FEATURES WRITER

When shelter-in-place orders began in March, many students were struck by a strong sense of loneliness brought on by isolation, an experience no different for senior Ryan McNamara. He used this time to create "Ghosts on the Roof," his album which was released on Aug. 20.

"It was just really lonely, so I started writing around the beginning of March and finished [writing] around the end of June," McNamara said, explaining the album's inspiration. "It was really a harsh adjustment, because I had two people keeping me stable, so no social interaction."

Isolation was not the only inspiration for McNamara.

"Musically, I was really inspired by bands like Fugazi and Bomb the Music Industry," McNamara said. "They really wanted music to reach the common person by selling their CDs for \$5 [and] putting their music online for free when that wasn't really a thing."

McNamara's motivation often came to him in bursts.

"One of the more consistent [processes] was just being awake at 4 a.m., and then forcing myself to sit with a guitar for some reason," McNamara

"People will shame [you] for using the basic stuff, but if that's what you can make work ... put it out"

said. "That was the only time I could get anything out. Sometimes, it would all just come to me at once. I call it a lightning bolt moment, where everything just hits you within 30 minutes."

A significant part of the album was the instrumentals behind it. Because of public safety regulations, McNamara had to do the instrumentals completely alone.

"The only thing that was contributed by other people was the [album] art, which a couple of my friends graciously contributed," McNamara said.

McNamara used his music playing experience to write his songs.

"I'm mainly a drummer," McNamara said. "My percus-

sion friends were like, 'Okay, someone has to play a non-drum instrument.' So I'm like, 'Okay, I'll pick up guitar.' Then, just off the small bits and pieces of music theory I had, I started writing."

Most of the music was written while shelter-in-place orders were in effect, but its foundation was laid prior.

"I wrote one of the songs in November, two weeks after I got a guitar, and the rest of them are written [after]" McNamara said. "I recorded all of it on my phone. The best compliment I ever get is when I tell people that and they're like, 'Really?' That's how I know I did a good job."

McNamara feels that releasing music on Spotify is a process that is not as daunting as one might think.

"You just pay DistroKid like 20 bucks to put it up," McNamara said. "It does take two to three weeks usually. You have to have a game plan going in."

Although getting the album onto Spotify itself might not be difficult, that doesn't mean making music is without hardship.

"There are two songs on the album that I really just do not like," McNamara said. "I had to say, 'I can't add any more to this, because it doesn't fit the structure.' At some point, you just have to [say] 'Okay, I'm done with this.'"

At the end of the day, there was one piece of advice that he held above all.

"Do stuff with what you can. You can't figure out how to make stuff work on a computer? Use your phone. People will shame [you] for using the basic stuff, but if that's what you can make work ... put it out. ... You're gonna keep going, I guarantee you," McNamara said. "Same thing with instruments. If you just have a garbage guitar lying around that your family's had around for 80 years and half the strings aren't working, pick that up, learn [it]. Just start doing something."

You can listen to "Ghosts on the Roof" on all major streaming platforms.

Students with jobs confront the impacts of the pandemic

Carole Darve
FEATURES WRITER

Eight months ago, the Kumon center buzzed with activity. Students flooded through open doors, eager for the day's lesson. One by one, they took papers from the stack of worksheets being passed around while instructions were read aloud to them. Junior Victoria Ly, an employee at Kumon, helps confused students solve problems in a collaborative manner.

Today, there is a sign on the door of the Kumon center reading "CLOSED." A place once flooded with noise and activity is now dark and silent. Ly is in her bedroom in front of a glowing computer screen. She logs into her computer, clicks on a link and is greeted by a class of students with their cameras turned off.

Due to COVID-19, several Aragon students have experienced this shift to the virtual environment at their job. After the doors of non-essential businesses closed, the role of employees has changed in the workplace.

"You have to make more of an effort to communicate. When you're in person, ... you don't have to deliberately text or email"

"We're having the kids do their own corrections, so it's more on the kids now rather than on the people who work there," Ly said. "I feel like the instructors are less essential to the [learning] process [We] don't have to have as many people [anymore]."

Students now have access to the classroom and homework worksheets virtually and do their own corrections. Student-teacher interactions are limited to short meetings over Zoom.

"You have to make more of an effort to communicate," Ly said. "When you're in person, ... you don't have to deliberately text or email [students]."

Other students have experienced different changes in their jobs. Senior Aaron Kang is a lifeguard at Highlands Recreation Center, and his job has remained in-person throughout the pandemic. Although not much has changed at his job, there have been some changes while working.

"There's more hours to fill [now]. They have a lower volume of people," Kang said. "They need to run the pool for longer hours, so I

do have a longer shift now. But other than that, my work hasn't been too much affected by it, other than the extra duties that I have to do and the slightly longer hours."

Sanitization has become increasingly important in the wake of COVID-19.

"We also have to be a lot more careful about dealing with pool patients, because we can't be close to them. We have to make sure that everyone is wearing a mask,"

"Find opportunities that you'd like to pursue after quarantine. Develop your skills right now"

Kang said. "Because the inherent nature of the pool is that you can't wear a mask in, it's sometimes hard to control when people need a mask and when people don't need to because they need to wear it up until the water, and some people don't wear the mask all the time because they think, they're at the pool, they're in open area, they don't need to. But it's county health laws

increased sanitization in businesses that operate in person. He was an employee at Gold Medal Martial Arts, a taekwondo studio.

"All the equipment needed to be disinfected more often," Surkov said. "[There was] more extra work [to do] than what I already had."

The fear of falling sick to COVID-19 puts greater responsibility on employees to ensure the workspace's cleanliness. Increased regulations often came with

businesses, especially those deemed non-essential, needing to shut down due to COVID-19 regulations.

"[Gold Medal] closed down as a non-essential business and took my job," Surkov said.

From March to April, COVID-19 restrictions peaked. New cases began to overwhelm hospitals, and COVID-19 was officially declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization. During this time, the unemployment rate in the U.S. shot up from 4.4% to 14.7%.

From showing a student how to tie their white belt to teaching them the form required to be a black belt, eight years of experience were put to an end. Taekwondo is no longer a part of Surkov's life. The spacious floor of Gold Medal is left untouched behind closed doors.

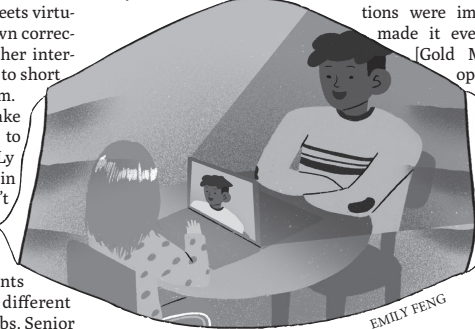
Surkov closed his position back, not wanting to give up on the job. Despite his efforts, he was not able to.

"More COVID[19] restrictions were imposed, which made it even harder for [Gold Medal] to re-

open," Surkov said. "They limited the staff to the adult instructors that were there."

As a former teen employee, Surkov recommends waiting until after stay-at-home orders to start working.

"Find opportunities that you'd like to pursue after quarantine. Develop your skills right now," Surkov said. "Right now, it is very difficult to move into a field, especially when we have so many unemployed adults and career opportunities missing."



EMILY FENG

cleaning all the surfaces when people leave. It includes cleaning the bathrooms, dealing with people's questions about pool procedures or the whole rec center as a whole. Just kind of general maintenance, anything that happens at the pool kind of defers to us lifeguards."

Junior Anthony Surkov, like Kang, experienced the

Behind the ballot: Aragon students work at poll booths



Students train to run poll booths.

COURTESY OF NATALIE GRAHAM

Aakanksha Sinha
FEATURES WRITER

Poll workers dedicate themselves to preserving a foundation of democracy — the election process. The county's elections officials depend on reliable and driven poll workers in order to make Election Day run as smoothly as possible, and the election this year is especially important given the tumultuous state of global affairs.

Youth today remain involved in democracy as poll workers. The California Elections Code

ballots and voting equipment. However, due to COVID-19, things will operate differently this year.

"Most counties ... are trying to get most people to vote by some kind of absentee ballot voting so that not as many people are coming to the polls," said senior Natalie Graham, who plans to work at the poll booth on Nov. 3.

With fewer people entering polling stations, enough room is allowed for everyone to follow health restrictions. Senior Albena Goulisheva re-

to be in a private space; you shouldn't have any outside influence. You shouldn't see what the person next to you is doing. You have to be in a secluded area. You have to make sure [the voters are] filling out the right thing."

Safety regulations are in place to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 as polling stations can become crowded.

"We are trying to be open so that every voting citizen gets a chance to cast their vote," Graham said. "We will be wearing masks and face shields to help everyone to make sure that we're protected, and we're also protecting them."

The engagement of youth is critical in order to remain knowledgeable as to what is happening in the country. Later as adults, they can look back at what they've learned working at the poll booths and use that knowledge to help them vote.

"It's really important for the youth of America to learn about politics [and] be engaged in politics," Goulisheva said. "Just because you can't vote, doesn't mean you should be completely oblivious to what's going on in your country."

The Chief Elections Officer of San Mateo, Mark Church, explains the benefits of serving as a student poll worker.

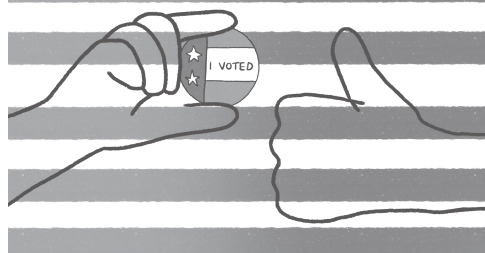
"There are several benefits to joining the Student Democracy Program," Church said.

"For one thing, volunteers receive \$280 in compensation. But the real benefit is an up-close look at how American democracy works. Our election system is by design highly decentralized and rooted at the county level. You will see how a remarkably large and complex process moves forward, largely through the work of citizen volunteers like you. Less tangibly, there is simply nothing else like working at the polls

that I can help some people that might be a little more confused or not quite sure how to vote and give them a positive experience. I want to make sure that everyone knows that their vote does count."

Church emphasizes the importance of remaining aware in politics.

"Even those who can't vote or volunteer ... you can still take part," Church said. "Talk to your family and friends, ask



EMILY FENG

"Be the person who hands a 'Future Voter' sticker to a child and inspires them to follow in your footsteps"

section 12302, allows eligible high school students to serve as poll workers on Election Day.

Poll workers are in charge of setting up and closing a polling place as well as protecting

counts some of the rules and qualifications regarding the poll stations.

"You have to be registered," Goulisheva said. "When you're voting you have

on Election Day. There is a constant high energy, and it is very satisfying to watch hundreds of people come to do their part in making our democracy work. Be the person who hands a 'Future Voter' sticker to a child and inspires them to follow in your footsteps."

Graham looks forward to spreading awareness about the importance of voting.

"I'm excited to see how it works," Graham said. "I hope

if they're registered. Stay informed about the candidates and issues. Our democracy is not a goal that can ever be considered complete, it is a process that requires the participation of people just like you. As the Constitution states, this country is created to form a 'more perfect union.' It is up to all of us to continue the process of making a fairer, more accessible, more perfect democratic system for all citizens."

The shaky future for DACA and undocumented immigrants

Vedant Gaur
FEATURES WRITER

Aragon's new Advanced Standing Modern World History teacher Erick Silva came to the U.S. from Mexico as an undocumented immigrant. He immigrated as a child and holds Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals status, allowing him to stay in the country without the threat of deportation.

supposed to provide evidence that you had been in the U.S. continuously. I have this fat binder of every bank account statement I've ever had, every card that was delivered to me."

As the 2020 election grows closer, the fate of undocumented communities stands in question. With the Trump administration repeatedly expressing disapproval for DACA and attempting to repeal it in 2017,

mental health. ... It's a never-ending game."

In June, the Supreme Court ultimately opened up the program similar to what it was in 2012. However, the hearing process wasn't smooth.

"The date of the hearing was constantly changing," Silva said. "It'd be like, 'they're gonna make a decision next week.' So then you live that week in fear and with a bunch of anxiety, and it [gets] pushed further and further. I think for me, I had to learn to disassociate."

One reason people are against DACA is the belief that jobs are being stolen from American citizens. Some believe border control and immigrant admittance are too loose.

"If [one] doesn't do the research, and just goes with what they're told, it's easy to point fingers," Silva said. "A lot of times, people who are struggling need to blame someone else, and the undocumented community



COURTESY OF ERICK SILVA

"[I] would not just be losing DACA, but losing my income and everything that came with that"

DACA was created by President Barack Obama in June 2012. As of 2018, the program provides DACA status for around 800,000 people out of an estimated 10 million undocumented immigrants currently residing in the U.S. It allows immigrants to work in the U.S. and provides them with resources such as social security numbers in order to manage finances, and in some states, a driver's license. To maintain DACA status, there is a two-year renewable process that costs around \$400.

"I've [probably] been fingerprinted more times than your average person, not only because I'm a teacher, but also because of DACA," Silva said. "When it first started, you were

it is unclear whether the program will continue if President Trump serves a second term.

With the recent passing of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, a 6-3 conservative majority in the Supreme Court now exists because Amy Coney Barrett was approved on Oct. 26. Since DACA is traditionally backed by Democrats, both situations seem to threaten the program.

"[I] would not just be losing DACA, but losing my income and everything that came with that," Silva said. "Not being able to meet my car payments, not meeting my insurance payments. I was one of the people that kind of blocked [the news] out, and I didn't give [the debate] much attention, because I knew a big aspect of this is

"The undocumented community is constantly the scapegoat"

is constantly the scapegoat. I think it's [mainly] just prejudice [and] xenophobia."

Some remain skeptical of undocumented immigrants. The topic is significant in politics as an increasingly partisan issue. Many argue that litigation of the action would

result in huge impediments in DACA holders' lives.

"Just like everyone else in America, we've formed our own identities, we've grown in a country that [despite how it] has alienated us," Silva said. "Depending on your background, [we] might have been able to assimilate. Nobody knows [if] who they're working with is undocumented."

One reason to continue DACA is because many with DACA status arrived at a young

fications from the U.S., like my teacher credentials will transfer. I think I have a home to go to, because we [have] a house in Oaxaca, but it's a restart. Thankfully, I've learned to [work hard], and I can [provide] my university and my work experience and find my way, but that's not necessarily the case for everyone."

Even if things do go downhill, Silva still has faith in those in a similar situation.

"Learn to love yourself and fight for yourself, reach out, give yourself love, let yourself heal and continue to grow," Silva said. "Because, at the end of the day, the person that you answer to is yourself. How do you measure life? You don't measure it in the amount of money you make, or the jobs you held, but rather the connections that [you] made, what you contributed, and you don't need citizenship to do that."

age, meaning they lack ties to the country they were born in.

"I was [in Mexico] for five years, from birth to five, so [although] I know [Spanish], at this point, English is my predominant language," Silva said. "I don't have connections. I don't know if any of my quali-

New clubs at Aragon

Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Art, Illustration & Digital Media Caring for America Medicine of the World Middle Eastern Nanoseed Virology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baking Choir Council Eco Action Finance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business Street Activist Art 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design Tech Grassroots Law Project Let's Talk Social Issues Star Wars

KAYLA SHIAO

An introduction to new clubs at Aragon

Lipika Goel
FEATURES WRITER

With health mandates and online schooling planned through the fall semester, many are feeling isolated at home. With 57 unique clubs, Aragon students now have a way to interact with their peers virtually.

Junior Amber Yeh is the president of Nanoseed Club, an initiative to raise awareness about life in rural China and to raise funds for impoverished people living there.

"[Nanoseed Club] mainly... cover[s] how daily life is in rural China and ... connect[s us] with the Nanoseed organization for raising funds," Yeh said. "These funds ... will go towards people in rural China [with] low interest student [loans] and business loans."

For the students who planned on starting a new club during online school, the process was lengthy and the officers faced some challenges. Aragon clubs must have a staff advisor for their clubs, but in a virtual world, this has become an even harder challenge with the new one teacher to one club policy. Yeh faced difficulties finding a teacher to advise her club.

"It took ... around a week or so to be able to get a set Zoom [and] date for our club," Yeh said.

Senior Anali Ghasemina is president of Let's Talk Social Issues Club, which aims to discuss and educate about social issues around the globe.

"[Social issues] are more important right now than ever ... [since] current sophomores, juniors and seniors, [have not taken Ethnic Studies], [and] it's important for us to all be a little bit more socially aware, [especially with what happened] over the summer," Ghasemina said. "[In] the past few months, I feel like a lot more people are interested [in social issues] and want to know more, so I feel this is a good club ... to start."

Like Yeh, Ghasemina expressed similar concerns with finding a club advisor when starting her club.

"Every person either turned us down or didn't respond to emails, which is obviously understandable, because everybody is so busy," Ghasemina

said. "Eventually, we got Ms. Clothier, which we're really grateful for."

Many clubs also faced the difficulty of figuring out how they would hold club meetings remotely. Freshman Samantha Crellin is the vice president of Art, Illustration and Digital Media Club, which has planned various lessons and activities to help people refine their art skills, primarily focusing on digital art. However, her club struggled with distributing materials to members.

"If we were at school, we'd get everyone drawing tablets, but you can't exactly distribute material like that when it's online," Crellin said. "[We can't just say, 'Hey, I'm going to send you a \$40 drawing tablet through the mail, take good care of it.'"

Creating a friendly atmosphere online was another objective when clubs planned out their meetings.

"I already know it [will] be really hard trying to become really close to people in the club," Yeh said. "I plan on doing a lot of games and interactive activities with everybody so that people get to know each other a lot more, and [we'll] just try to make it as close to how we would do it in person."

Creating a suitable club atmosphere was also a major focus for Ghasemina.

"We definitely want to leave it a little open-ended, so [we] want to ask ... people for their opinions," Ghasemina said. "We don't want it to be just us four [officers] talking. We want [club members] to have a bigger role."

Despite the initial struggles, the officers have a hopeful outlook on their new clubs and are looking forward to connecting with people at school beyond those in their classes.

"Through [the] club fair and through talking to people about joining my club, I saw people from different grade levels coming in," Ghasemina said. "Those are people that I would have never really had the chance to talk to."

As the possibility of reopening schools changes, clubs are doing their best to create a welcoming and inspiring environment that will benefit all students during distance learning.

Opinion: Affirmative action should account for income in addition to race



Sarah Yu
FEATURES WRITER

"If they pass Prop 16, there will be far fewer Asians getting into UCs. They may not even accept you."

My mother has reiterated this sentiment countless times, and it's likely that many other Asian students have heard the same. It's easy to quickly form a negative opinion about affirmative action with thousands of posts online against it, but the issue is too nuanced to just gloss over.

Proposition 16 will appear on ballots this November. If it passes, it will repeal Proposition 209, which banned preferential race or sex-based treatment in public employment and public education in 1996. A common misconception is that it will

and often don't have access to the same education that wealthier families do, due to underfunded schools. The Atlantic reports that in about 50 out of the 100 largest cities in the country, most Latino and African American students go to schools where 75% or more students are classified as low-income. This is no accident; it's the result of systemic racism, and it is a prime example of redlining.

In the 1930s, appraisers from the government-sponsored Home Owners' Loan Corporation rated the quality of neighborhoods based on the number of white versus non-white people. Communities with more people of color received lower ratings and some neighborhoods were deemed "hazardous" and "declining" because of the people living there, according to the New York Times.

As a result, these neighborhoods received less government aid and deteriorated the way the original ratings suggested. D-rated neighborhoods consisted of nearly 45% Black residents at its highest in 1980 and only around 11% in A-rated neighborhoods, directly impacting the educational opportunities provided. Thus, from a young age, minorities face adversities that others do not

Proposition 16 could also help increase diversity on college campuses. Authors of "Campus Diversity: The Hidden Consensus" conducted a survey through various colleges, such as Dartmouth and UC San Diego, where over 8,000 students and faculty members acted as admissions officers. Respondents consistently favored underrepresented groups and economically disadvantaged applicants. Students seemed to believe that school should be a place where one can be exposed to different cultures and viewpoints. That's not to suggest that schools in California intentionally accept people of the same background, but there is certainly room for improvement. Minority groups are underrepresented in UC schools - Hispanics make up 36.6% of California's population, according to the 2018 U.S. Census Bureau, but only 22% of the UC population.

Even with its benefits, affirmative action is nowhere near perfect. It may still harm the people it is designed to help, as it's possible that the opportunities will only be given to the most economically privileged. After all, students who attend better-funded schools have more resources, making it impossible to truly level the playing field.

Discontinuing the use of the SAT in UC admissions was a step in the right direction. Many who supported removing it argued that the SAT only tested students' ability to master the test, giving families who could afford tutors an unfair advantage. Thus, economic background should also be considered in college admissions as a whole. Considering only race is detrimental for those who are considered privileged based on their race but who cannot afford tutoring or homes in wealthier districts. Still, it's undeniable that poverty and race are strongly correlated; it would be unreasonable to solely take into account economic background. In California, the poverty rate of black citizens is 20% compared to white citizens with 9%, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation. Poverty rates of Hispanics and Native Americans are similarly high at 17% and 16%, respectively. I would be in full support of affirmative action if it took into account economic background, a crucial factor in education. Affirmative action based solely on household income has been considered in the past, but just like affirmative action based solely on race, it is incomplete. This more than a socioeconomic issue, not just social and not just economic. To implement a more comprehensive solution, we need to address both aspects.

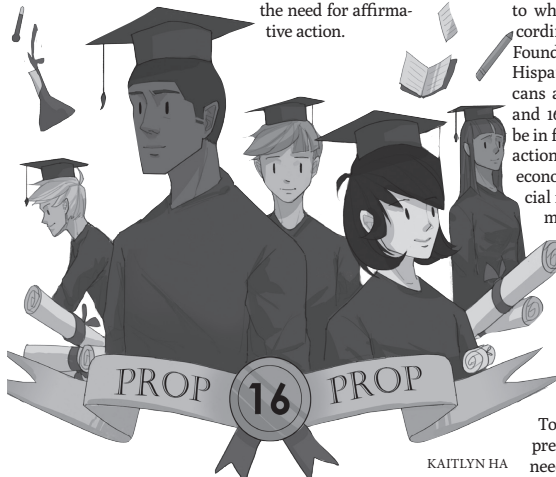
"[A]ffirmative action may just be a bandaid on a bullet hole, failing to address fundamental inequities"

mandate affirmative action, but this is not true: Proposition 16 only lifts the ban and legalizes affirmative action, allowing public entities to opt in. Many fear that reinstating affirmative action will create racial quotas, but it is important to remember that racial quotas will still be illegal as the Supreme Court ruled in Regents of University of California v. Bakke.

Those in favor of affirmative action argue that it benefits minorities that have been historically given fewer opportunities. A large portion of lower income families are minorities

putting them at a disadvantage in college admissions and even job opportunities. Ideally, these issues would be addressed before college as affirmative action may just be a bandaid on a bullet hole, failing to address fundamental inequities.

The root of the issue should be addressed through increasing funding for underfunded schools at the primary and secondary levels to promote educational equity for students from a young age. This could help combat the negative effects of redlining and, over time, reduce the need for affirmative action.

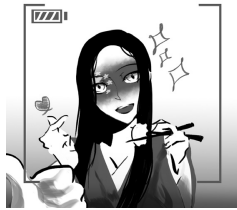


KAITLYN HA

Opinion: Disney's live-action *Mulan* is a dishonor to us all

Catherine Wang
FEATURES WRITER

I remember when I watched the 1998 "Mulan" movie for the first time. It was easy to be charmed by its simple yet playful animation style combined with an iconic soundtrack and unforgettable characters. The references to Chinese culture in the film were a bonus, as I am Chinese myself. So, naturally, when I heard that Disney was releasing a live-action version of the movie this year, I was ecstatic.



YUE YU

And I wasn't alone. Many of my friends and family have been anticipating its release ever since it was announced as early as 2015. However, the hype surrounding the upcoming movie quickly turned sour. The movie's Google profile boasts an alarming 2.7-star review and \$43.8 million box office, contrary to the expectations of a popular Disney remake. What happened?

There was skepticism about the film from the beginning. Disney has a history of making culturally inaccurate movies, and many speculated that "Mulan" was going to fall under the same pattern. Once the movie premiered, those doubts became a reality. Critics have been quick to point out details about scenes that were confusing and cringeworthy for Chinese audiences. After having watched quite a few Chinese historical dramas, I was taken aback when a soldier cut off the chancellor and the emperor during a discussion, as no one ever interrupts the emperor.

In addition to its cultural flaws, an incident in August 2019 sparked outrage across the Internet. Liu Yifei, the actress who played Mulan, was posted on a Chinese newspaper influenced by the Chinese Communist Party. The words were translated into: "I support the Hong Kong police. You guys can beat me up now." People immediately criticized Yifei for supporting the Hong Kong police brutality. Soon enough, #BoycottMulan rose as an internationally trending hashtag on Twitter.

Media outlets have called out "Mulan" for its controversial filming location in Xinjiang, China, where the government is accused of holding over a million Uyghur Muslims in prison

campus. To add fuel to the fire, the ending credits include a message that thanks the Xinjiang government agency involved in the camps for helping with the filming process. Watching would be equivalent to turning a blind eye to human rights abuse.

The credits also revealed another skeleton in the closet: an overwhelmingly white crew. The lack of diversity behind the camera is a serious and recurring issue. The movie is supposed to celebrate culture, yet Asian actors have no control over how they are told or depicted. For example, while a white costume designer travelled to China to educate herself on the culture before working on pieces, Disney could have hired a Chinese costume designer who already identified with the culture.

Nonetheless, even with all of these arguments, some say that the controversies surrounding a movie should not affect the quality of the movie itself. After all, "Mulan" has been a costly Disney project with a budget of \$200 million. With all of its special effects, battle sequences and renowned actors like Donnie Yen and Jet Li, the film must be thrilling to watch. Unfortunately, that is not the case.

Although the cinematography is impressive, there were many alterations to the original plot that made the film lose its shine. One example would be the new villain, Xian Lang, who is an ostracized "witch," a Western term that does not fit Chinese beliefs. Instead, those with magical powers would be highly respected.

The message behind "Mulan" has become nonexistent. In this version of the story, Mulan has been gifted with a lot of Qi, a powerful and vital life force in Chinese philosophy. This new addition sounds a lot like any other superhero story, where the main character must find themselves and have the courage to unleash their full power they have kept hidden inside themselves. Meanwhile, in the original movie, she had to train hard for her skills in order to prove herself. The movie is essentially telling young boys and girls that the only way to be successful is to be born with special privileges and gifts.

"Mulan" is the definition of a box office bomb. After the closure of its theme parks as a result of COVID-19 regulations, Disney had high hopes for the film to make up for the loss of income. Yet, poor choices only perpetuated its downfall. From its controversies to its pitiful attempts to recapture the spirit of the beloved legend, the movie's neglect by the public is unsurprising.



Local pumpkin patches and decorations keep up the Halloween spirit.

PURVI SINGHANIA

A look into celebrating Halloween amidst the pandemic

Caitlin Kaliski
FEATURES WRITER

As the orange and red leaves begin to fall, and autumn commences with cozy indicators of the changing season like sweaters, pumpkin spice lattes, warm apple cider, fall decorations around the house, cloudy days, pumpkin patches and costume planning, the year starts to transition into holiday central.

"We are going to spread the Halloween vibe into every aspect of Aragon"

Halloween candy and yard decorations as well as Spirit Halloween stores have begun to appear in the San Mateo area in preparation for the spooky holiday on Oct. 31.

However, in California, where the weather still reaches 80 degrees in early October, wildfire smoke is congesting the air, a global pandemic has forced people to stay home and schools to go online. It's safe to say Halloween definitely will not be the same as in past years.

Popular Halloween activities such as trick-or-treating with friends or get-togethers are no longer allowed. According to San Mateo County Health's Halloween Safety Guidance, events or parties should only include household members or a household social bubble that is no more than 12 people. That means many friends and families will not be able to celebrate Halloween together in-person and will have to find other safe alternatives.

Math teacher Alice Hu normally enjoys Halloween with her kids and her brother's family by going trick-or-treating together. This year, Hu is still planning for a substitute activity to celebrate Halloween, while still abiding by health and safety protocols in place.

"I don't want to completely skip it," Hu said. "I want to still try to do things that are normal as much as we can."

At Aragon, Hu would normally participate in the Halloween Rally staffy costume contest. Rally Commission Head senior Claire Phillips has confirmed it will

still occur, but now in a virtual format. Additionally, the student costume contest will also occur as the Leadership class Rally Commission has been working to convert the Halloween Rally that would've taken place on Friday, Oct. 30, into virtual events throughout the month of October.

"We are turning the entire month of October into 'Don't stop,'" Phillips said. "We are going to spread the Hal-

loween vibe into every aspect of Aragon, from classes to social media. There are going to be a ton of different challenges that the student body can look forward to both participating in and watching peers compete in."

While the rally among other Halloween festivities at Aragon will be missed by many students, the highlight for sophomore Eteni Georgievski is the costumes.

"At school, I look forward to showing off my costume. Usually I get with my friends, and we do a group costume," Georgievski said. "Usually it's fictional characters, and I take my fictional character and make it look demonic. I am going to take advantage of [dressing up] every year before I turn 18, until I'm officially too old."

Georgievski's Halloween traditions include going trick-or-treating with friends, and then dividing the candy equally among themselves. Due to COVID-19 regulations, Georgievski has altered his plans for Halloween and is inviting a few friends over to watch a

movie in his backyard, dressing up, eating candy and having a good time.

The City of San Mateo Parks and Recreation department is hosting a Halloween event called the Halloween CAR-nival. San Mateo Community Services Coordinator Brandon Parra oversees city-wide special events and the Halloween CAR-nival is one that is modified to comply with COVID-19 regulations.

"The theme of the Halloween CAR-nival event will allow participants to have some interaction and play carnival style games," Parra said. "Participants will drive up to each booth and play the games from their car, [while] keeping them safe and socially distanced."

This event will be the first city-wide special event in 2020 since all previous ones have been cancelled. Usually city-wide special events attract thousands of residents per year, so the Halloween CAR-nival is still expecting over 850 residents, with tickets sold out in advance.

"We are planning to be able to accommodate up to 72 cars during the 1-4 p.m. event time on both Saturday, Oct. 24 and Sunday, Oct. 25," Parra said. "That is a total of 144 cars over the entire event, and if each car has a family of three to six people in each car, we are potentially able to provide this event for over 850 residents."

This year, Halloween will be celebrated in a socially distanced manner, but that doesn't mean you can't have a fun Saturday night on Oct. 31. You can still watch a scary or a not scary movie, tell spooky stories, dress up in your costume, carve pumpkins with your family in person or virtually with friends and overall have a spooktacular time.



People still enjoy fall traditions in a safe manner. THOMAS JADALLAH



“Hubie Halloween”: Trash or treat?



Audrey Smetiana
FEATURES WRITER

There is perhaps no modern-day comedian who walks the delicate line between obnoxiously entertaining and obnoxiously awful quite as often as Adam Sandler. While toeing the line occasionally pays off with gems of sweet, albeit mindless, hilarity (note his movies “Happy Gilmore” and “The Waterboy”), Sandler more often than not dives headfirst into the realm of obnoxiously awful — culminating in results that are painful to watch. His latest Netflix original released on Oct. 7, “Hubie Halloween,” undoubtedly has its clever moments. But much like the rest of Sandler’s corpus, it miscalculates just how much over the top slapstick and juvenile humor a movie can take before it becomes annoying.

The movie follows the story of Hubie Dubois (Adam

Sandler), a kindhearted but simpleminded manchild who still lives with his mother in the notoriously spooky city of Salem, Massachusetts. Against the wishes of practically the entire town, the oblivious Hubie persists in his self-proclaimed “purpose in life”: to keep Salem safe on Halloween. But Hubie is an easy target. Relentlessly bullied by most of the town and unable to bike down the street without projectiles being thrown at his head, Hubie is Salem’s laughing stock.

The movie begins on Halloween with several people in town getting kidnapped by a mysterious villain. Curiously, all of the kidnapping victims happen to be the cruelest bullies of Hubie. Hubie spends the night trying to identify Salem’s kidnapper.

The prime suspect, Hubie’s new mysterious neighbor Walter Lambert (Steve Buscemi), displays symptoms of being a werewolf. Then, the movie hints that the kidnapper is a lunatic wearing a pig mask who escaped the insane asylum at the very beginning of the movie. But with an absolute randomness that borders on genius, it is revealed that Lambert is actually just delusional, and the escaped lunatic is really Lambert’s roommate at the asylum trying to convince Lambert to return. The last suspect is Violet Valentine (Julie Bow-

en), Hubie’s childhood crush who, despite being miles out of Hubie’s league, is also inexplicably in love with him. But alas, Violet only confesses her love to Hubie, and the kidnapper’s identity remains a mystery. Finally, it is revealed that Hubie’s mother actually kidnapped all of his worst bullies to burn them at the stake, giving the audience a satisfying revenge fantasy.

Hubie’s character should be easy to sympathize with: a bullied underdog is ubiquitously relatable. But Sandler voices Hubie with a mumbling, garbled, incoherent mess of a voice that gets old quite quickly, despite its clear intentions to be funny. This unfortunately makes Hubie a rather difficult character to like. By a certain point in the movie, Hubie’s stupidity is a one-note punchline — more draining than it is humorous. Ironically, the mumbling ju-

Sandler’s trademark style of comedy is becoming tiring.

The movie is at least self-aware of its flaws. After all, Sandler had promised that if his previous movie *Uncut Gems* (a dark crime film with critical acclaim) was snubbed at the Oscars, he would retaliate with a movie that was “so bad on purpose.” *Uncut Gems* got zero nominations at the 2020 Oscars, and, making good of Sandler’s promise, *Hubie Halloween* is bad. It’s more of a mediocre bad than a horrendous bad: not quite terrible enough to reach the sacred territory of so-bad-it’s-good à la “The Room,” but then again, also not very good. And while self-awareness can be a powerful tool in comedy, the mere presence of it doesn’t inherently make a movie better, especially if nothing is done with it — as was the case in “*Hubie Halloween*.”

from Maya Rudolph, who plays the hilariously sardonic Mrs. Hennessy alongside Tim Meadow’s desperate-to-please Mr. Hennessy. The assortment of up-and-coming

OUR OUTLOOK



child actors, many of whom were plucked fresh off of Disney Channel, is refreshingly talented, including the likes of Noah Schnapp from “Stranger Things” and Karan Brar from “Jessie.” Nonetheless, the entertaining performances given by the rest of the cast only seem to make Sandler’s portrayal of Hubie all the more wearisome, painting in sharp contrast the movie itself with its potential, if only Sandler had played Hubie with a bit more tact.

Still, “*Hubie Halloween*” does what it’s supposed to do: entertain. The sheer wackiness of the movie will likely be off-putting for more mature audiences, but for younger children or those seeking some mindless entertainment this Halloween, it does the trick. And at the end of the day, it is nothing less and nothing more than a classic Sandler movie: obnoxious, a little heartwarming, and funny in all the stupidest possible ways.

“Funnily enough, ‘Hubie Halloween’ shines most where Sandler is absent”

venile and idiotic character of Hubie, the character that makes the movie unenjoyable to watch, is a quintessential trope of Sandler’s personal brand. Perhaps then, the annoyingness of Hubie is less a critique of this specific movie than it is an indication that

Funnily enough, *Hubie Halloween* shines most where Sandler is absent. The all-star cast features both rising child actors and acclaimed comedians, and they mesh together surprisingly well. Some of the best moments in the movie come

“I’m Thinking of Ending Things” keeps viewers at the edge of their seats

Sophia Zhou
FEATURES WRITER

Netflix’s “*I’m Thinking of Ending Things*,” released on Sept. 4, is a haunting rendition of a typical movie plot: a boy and a girl meet and form a romantic relationship clouded with conflict. The psychological thriller leaves viewers in sheer shock. Director Charlie Kaufman, whose notable works include “*Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*” and “*Being John Malkovich*,” adapted “*I’m Thinking of Ending Things*” from Iain Reid’s 2016 novel. The film received a score of 82% on Rotten Tomatoes, and critics describe it as a film that “will mess you up” and “inspire you to think about it again.” Initially, the rating

much more complicated than anticipated. The movie revolves around a janitor in his old age, Jake (Jesse Plemons), who suffers from mental illness and bouts of loneliness. He fabricated a false reality of a perfect life including an unnamed woman (Jessie Buckley).

While Kaufman worked off Reif’s story at its very core, his on-screen adaptation doesn’t state the obvious like the novel does. He heavily relies on the use of visual symbolism to convey the film’s small nuances. Shots of Jake getting ready for his job as a janitor are intertwined with an idealized version of him, both peering out the car window at a swing set, contrasting his real-life versus his elaborate fantasy and connecting



METAFILIX

age and time is prevalent throughout the film, and it can be seen when Jake’s parents (Toni Morrison and David Thewlis), who are dead in reality, seesaw between signs of life and death.

Despite the film being set in the 21st century, components such as the set, prop choices, classical music, costumes and coloring and lack of saturation, all veer towards a nostalgic feeling in comparison to the futuristic style of most modern films. The camerawork effectively nudges viewers towards the importance of the symbols letting the viewer dive into the character’s internal dialogue and outwards body language bril-

liantly. Balancing a sense of raw emotional vulnerability without coming across as cliché, the acting allows the audience to be a fly on the wall as the plot plays out. Both Buckley and Plemons embody their characters with grace. Buckley’s acting reflects the duality of her character: innocent but complicated by doubt. The film’s buildup towards the climax was intended to be subtle but fails to signal the viewer. Jake and the unnamed woman are seen hugging in a school hallway before the what can be interpreted as the crescendo, and their body language the is an obvious indication of parting. However, the ending has no clear segway.

film’s ending concludes in a vague manner, meant to be open to interpretation.

The horror movie genre as a whole relies on action and drama throughout, giving a simple and straightforward viewing experience where the audience already knows what to expect. Kaufman elevates a traditional horror film, offering a fresh take on the repetitive nature of this genre. The communication of the film does not represent a cookie-cutter scary movie because the fear factor lies in the play on the viewer’s psychology through the nuances of the deceptively simple plot.

Kaufman doesn’t hold back with his creative decisions and use of themes. He takes viewers through an emotionally intense journey not meant for casual viewing. At times, the film feels particularly laborious to watch, as the viewer needs their undivided attention to begin to comprehend the full weight of the symbolism. Whether intentional or not, the audience is left feeling conflicted about who to with, or if they should even sympathize with any character.

“He takes viewers through an emotionally intense journey not meant for casual viewing”

seemed unreasonably high, but after watching, why viewers gave the film such high praise is clear.

The film’s plot, although deceptively simple at first glance, plays out to be

them as the same person. The woman’s disconnect in her own identity is communicated through the phone calls she receives under various monikers: Lucy, Lucia, Louisa. The theme of

OUR OUTLOOK



In Reif’s novel, the ending is blunt and violent — Jake ends his and Lucy’s life with a hanger. Kaufman deliberately chooses to avoid the obvious, still exemplifying death, rather inserting himself into Jake’s imagination to produce an artistic spectacle. The

Lack of sports affecting athletes' mental health

Colin Johnson
SPORTS WRITER

For many student-athletes, sports have been a way to escape the pressures of life and release their pent-up energy. However, due to the shelter-in-place orders, many athletes have lost the ability to play with their team.

"I think that sports played a very important role in terms of stress relief," said Aragon's Lead Mental Health Therapist Jillian Ma. "The physical activity of athletics can be very good for our bodies and for our mental health ... just to be able to release all the energy and everything that we have."

Sports also offer a way to talk and socialize with friends and work as a team.

"Being a part of a team and having a community is a really important part of being on a sports team," Ma said. "It is important for our well-being generally just being a part of something."

Without sports, athletes have found it harder to focus at school as they have no way to let out their energy. A 2012 study from the University of Kansas found that athletes outperformed non-athletes in most academic areas including grade point average, state assessments and the ACT.

Practicing sports regularly increases blood flow to the brain leading to better concentration and boosted memory. When athletes lack a way to get out and move, their academic success and attentiveness in class suffers.

"I feel like sports are a really big break from school," said senior basketball power-forward Murphy Caffo. "It made me feel relaxed after I go to practice to be able to come home and do my homework easily because I got my energy out. I feel like it's my senior season, so I'm kind of sad that it's gone. It's made me a little bit more antsy during school."

Freshman football quarterback Max Thronson is in a similar situation. Without an outlet to relieve stress, he hasn't been in the best mindset to concentrate.

"I've been slacking off a lot more than [I used to]," Thronson said. "I'll find myself not paying atten-

tion sometimes, and I nudge myself back in the right direction. I think that is definitely related to there being a lack of ways for me to let out a little bit of anxiety [or] stress."

Even though some students can work out or practice solo, the level of concentration required to play alone doesn't compare to playing the sport with a team. Working out can quickly get boring once a routine is established. However, playing sports with other people keeps athletes on their toes which improves focus in other areas of life.

"When you're working out you can have music," Thronson said. "You can even work out while you're watching a sports game. You don't need to be locked in when you're working out all the time, especially if you memorize the routine. It gets kind of mundane, and there's not really many variables that you got to pay attention to. I definitely would say during the game you have to be more on edge, and it's also just way more fun."

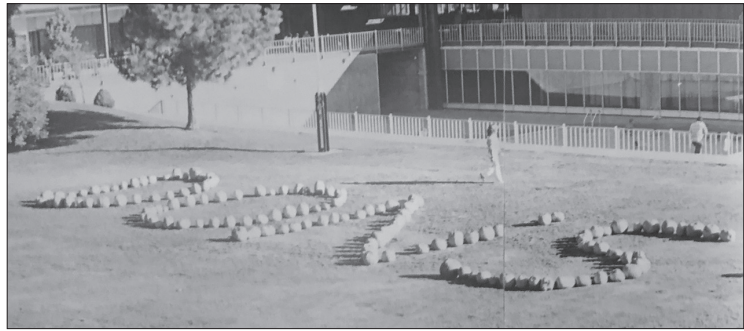
The lack of sports has affected senior athletes the most severely. Before the shelter-in-place order in March, they were either finished or in the middle of the season, looking forward to their final year of high school sports.

"It's a lot. I've been playing basketball my whole life, and my senior year has gotten robbed from me," Caffo said. "I at least want to have basketball. If there's no fans I'd still be fine with that."

The Central Coast Section recently announced a two season plan, as of Sept. 17, that would make sports split into two seasons. The first season starts on Dec. 28 and the second starts on Feb. 22, Mar. 8 or Mar. 15, depending on the sport.

The lack of sports has given athletes more drive and determination after the stay-at-home order. As teams and facilities reopen, athletes are able to make the best of their upcoming seasons and outwork their opponents.

For now, athletes should make sure to work out and go outside, as air quality and social distancing measures permit, and do their best to keep in contact with their teammates.



Pumpkins collected from Half Moon Bay arranged to spell out "Dons No. 1" the day of the football game against Half Moon Bay High School.

COURTESY OF KEVIN NELSON

A look into Aragon's past athletic traditions

Stephanie Lin
SPORTS WRITER

Aragon has a rich history of athletic traditions. More well-known traditions include senior nights at the end of seasons, homecoming games, rallies and basketball quad games. But there is also a history of traditions that are often untalked about because they no longer exist, such as competing in powder puff football games and stealing pumpkins from Half Moon Bay.

group of girls organized the powder puff game with the help of several mothers and former Aragon football coach Steve Henderson.

"[My senior year] we started the powder puff game for breast cancer awareness. We were able to play a game and we did cheerleaders versus any students that wanted to participate," Rosselli said. "The football players were coaches for the powder puff game, and we all donated like shirts. I think ... we raised around a thousand dollars which we donated to

"I remember when I was a kid in sixth grade, [in] 1977 ... going to an Aragon versus Hillsdale game playing at Burlingame High School, and I had to sit on the steps because every seat in the entire stadium was taken," Sell said. "There was a lot of excitement revolving around those games."

Before games against Hillsdale, students used to put black roses around the pool.

"Whenever we were playing Hillsdale ... during spirit week, they would actually bring black roses and put them on the diving boards," said physical education teacher and Aragon alumni Annette Trimble-Gennaro. "It didn't matter what sport it was, we just went all out whenever we played Hillsdale."

Some of these traditions were cherished by Aragon students and athletes. However, the rivalry has also caused some tension between the two schools. With growing awareness about the values of sportsmanship and integrity, many of these traditions have disappeared.

"For some people it was really hard because they were used to being able to do all these things that they had done for years and were traditions, but [these traditions] were starting to be seen as expressions of poor sportsmanship," Sell said. "There was definitely a time where people were disappointed that you couldn't do the same things you could al-

"Each class would pick a theme and decorate their float and drive around the track at around halftime of the game"

Before the eight-lane all-weather track was constructed in 2002, Aragon had a dirt track. At the time, they drove floats around the track during football games.

"Each class would pick a theme and decorate their float and drive around the track at around halftime of the game," said Athletic Director Steve Sell. "They put the floats on ... a big flat bed truck."

Many of Aragon's traditions are centered around rivalries with other high schools. One of these was a prank that occurred when the Dons played against Half Moon Bay High School.

"In the late '70s, ... every pre-season we played Half Moon Bay in football and what the players would do the night before the game was drive over to Half Moon Bay and take a bunch of pumpkins from the pumpkin patches and set them out on the center court lawn, and they spelled out Dons No. 1," Sell said. "It was a tradition that was kind of fun, but the Half Moon Bay police told them that it wasn't really legal and that it was theft."

Powder puff was a fundraiser football game that was played exclusively by girls at Aragon. Junior Varsity Cheer Coach Brianna Rosselli and a

breast cancer awareness."

When Rosselli was an Aragon cheerleader, there was a tradition where cheerleaders would be paired up with a football or basketball player. It helped team members build stronger bonds and created a welcoming environment.

"The cheerleaders would make posters for the football players or bring them a favorite snack or favorite drink," Rosselli said. "It helped the cheerleaders and the football players kind of get to know each other, just encouraging more spirit. ... Everyone got a poster and ev-

"We started the powder puff game for breast cancer awareness, donating to breast cancer"

everyone felt encouraged."

Over the years, traditions like these have adapted to the changing times. Cheerleaders at Aragon continue to create posters for football players, but are no longer specifically paired.

The Aragon versus Hillsdale rivalry also helps fuel school spirit and energize students. It creates anticipation and excitement leading up to the game night.

ways do. Now it's been so long that people are surprised we've ever done those things in the first place."

Even though some of these traditions are not happening today, spirit and enthusiasm still play a big part within the Aragon sports community and culture. These traditions were a memorable part of Aragon sports history, and the traditions that occur today will become a part of this history.



JESSICA FU

Rise in popularity of esports due to COVID-19

Cooper Wong
SPORTS WRITER

With the postponement of athletic competitions due to the coronavirus pandemic, esports and gaming have seen a tremendous uptick in popularity. Athletes who are unable to compete have been turning to sports video games while waiting for the pandemic to end.

Auto racing league Formula 1 has their own video game and hosted a virtual Grand Prix on March 22. The in-person tournaments were planned to start in July before they were postponed by the pandemic. The professional racers get to practice in a lower-risk virtual environment, offering fans an alternative way to watch their favorite drivers.

With no end to COVID-19 restrictions in the foreseeable future, people of all different backgrounds, including professional athletes, are jumping on the gaming scene.

Le'Veon Bell, a three time Pro Bowl Champion and NFL

superstar, is a serious "Super Smash Bros" competitor. In May this year, he competed in an 8,000 participant "Super Smash Bros" tournament. Competing under the gamertag "Juic326," Bell was eliminated right before the round of 256 participants. While he did not win, he held his ground, placing as high as some of the game's top players.

Earlier this year in March, "Animal Crossing: New Horizons" was released in the midst of shelter-in-place orders nationwide. Upon release, the game instantly tore down previous records for the Nintendo Switch. The game immediately became the best selling game in March,

topping games such as "Call of

War" and "Fortnite." "The best part about the game for me is playing with my friends," said freshman Talal Ayoub. "We'll be laughing and making jokes. We

won't always be taking the game seriously, and it's just fun to hang out." Gaming is an effective way of keeping in touch with friends while staying safe during the pandemic. It can replace some of the social aspects missing from people's current lives such as being able to talk to friends and connect through a common goal.

"Without being able to see my friends in real life, we needed something we could do together, and video games are fun," Ayoub said. "During the game we can talk about things and make jokes and just hang out like we normally would without COVID-19."

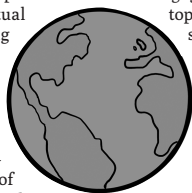
Video games are also used to bring people together. No

matter who you are, you can play video games with others that are different from you. You do not need to be the high school football star;

"Without being able to see my friends in real life, we needed something we could do together and video games are fun"

you can be an average person with a knack for gaming. For example, Twitch streamer Tyler "Ninja" Blevins, streamed himself playing "Fortnite" and ended up playing squads with rappers Travis Scott and Drake as well as NFL wide receiver JuJu Smith-Schuster. Ninja also played with Lil Yachty, Chance the Rapper and NBA player Josh Hart.

The gaming community is growing rapidly, gaining more respect and attention as time goes on. With all the collaborations and crossovers with gamers to professional athletes, more and more people are being introduced to the world of esports and gaming.



wait it's all esports?



Duty: Modern Warfare," which is available on multiple platforms. The

always has been.



CHRISTINA WU

Opinion: Reopening sports is crucial for student-athletes



Emma Quanbeck
SPORTS WRITER

Sports are undeniably ingrained in high school spirit and culture. Traditionally, athletes devote themselves to hours of physically draining practice every week, along with a rigorous game schedule. However, COVID-19 regulations have postponed the thrill of sports seasons. As

training have been held since June in accordance with the San Mateo Union High School District's safety guidelines. As a result, there have not been any reported COVID-19 outbreaks in training cohorts. Under the guidelines, all coaches and athletes are required to wear masks and undergo temperature checks while entering and leaving the training session.

Sports leagues across the country have also been making adjustments to continue their seasons in a safe way. Professional sports operate on a larger scale and pose a greater safety threat, however many are still planning to continue their seasons. In order to lower the risk of transmission, games could follow strict safety guidelines such as having frequent COVID-19 tests and no spectators, in addition to what the district already has in place.

because of a more localized travel routine and less frequent games planned. Therefore, modifications can still be easily made to decrease the likelihood of infection during training and games. For students, the benefits of practicing regularly with their teams outweighs any risk, after safety precautions.

Many Aragon students, myself included, have used sports as a way to maintain physical health and interact with peers. As an athlete participating in water polo and swimming, practices were a way for me to have fun and interact with the Aragon community. Starting swim team as a freshman, I was able to connect with other students and felt a strong sense of school pride and unity.

However, the absence of sports seasons would make students feel isolated. With most schools online across the state, sports act as an escape from being in front of screens all day. Participation in sports offers students the opportunity to connect with others in their community face-to-face.

Taking away sports would ultimately take away the opportunities of students dedicated to their craft and potentially remove an important season crucial for college recruit-

ment. For students reliant on sports scholarships, they face extra burdens in their pursuit of higher education and a career in college.

"For students reliant on sports scholarships, they face burdens in their pursuit of higher education"

Cancelling sports seasons would eliminate scouting opportunities for student-athletes during the height of their high school careers, especially for senior

athletes. In the beginning of the recruitment process, officials usually use websites to check statistics and rankings. If competitions were

not held, the lack of data would undoubtedly make their recruitment process more complicated.

The NCAA has decided to delay all of their in-person recruiting until early January in response to many schools pushing back their athletic seasons. The NCAA's actions would only further complicate our return to sports seasons and high school athletics as we know it.

Without sports seasons and regular practice, Aragon athletes would suffer both mentally and physically, coupled up with the difficulties of online learning. Cancelling

something so important to students is completely unnecessary, given the many options available to keep sports and conditioning safe amid the pandemic.



ALEXANDER LO

"Starting swim team as a freshman, I was able to connect with other students and felt a sense of unity"

athletes have been locked up inside their homes for months during stay-at-home orders, they are being torn away from something often used as a way to socialize and maintain their physical health.

Despite the risk sports pose during the pandemic, practices can be handled in a way that protects both the students and faculty. Summer and fall

Other high schools across the nation are holding classes in person for their students and offering extracurricular activities safely, including sports. As of now, the California Interscholastic Federation has stated that all sports seasons will be delayed until Dec. 14. High school sports pose a much lower safety risk than professional sports



Athletes train while socially distanced.

ALESSANDRO RIEDEL, MICHAEL SIPES, PURVI SINGHANIA AND COURTESY OF DANIELLE SIPES

Training continues amidst the pandemic

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1
 schedule for each sport which shows their specific days when they come to the field.

“Football is four days a week, some sports are three days a week, some are two,” Sell said. “Some of the swim-

ing teams may only swim once a week, but they may do some online Zoom workouts.”
 There is a limit of 50 people allowed in a facility at a time, meaning few practices have two different teams on the field simultaneously. No matter the amount of players in the facilities, athletes must ensure they are six feet away from each other as a result of the increased number of people.

to December was discussed throughout the summer. The school decided to use the extra time in the fall to give athletes the opportunity to get back in shape before the official seasons start again. Discussion regarding athletes playing safely

“We just need to get the okay from the county and state to determine if we can play”

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 There is a limit of 50 people allowed in a facility at a time, meaning few practices have two different teams on the field simultaneously. No matter the amount of players in the facilities, athletes must ensure they are six feet away from each other as a result of the increased number of people.

Due to the large number of athletes on each team, they were not allowed to use equipment until the first week of October. Sports such as baseball, softball, football and water polo are now able to use equipment such as balls, bats, gloves and helmets.

in tournaments is still ongoing. Coaches constantly update their athletes with any changes and required precautions.
 Although there were a few people who conditioned over the summer, the majority of athletes who participated in Aragon sports last year did not. The conditioning rules over the summer were slightly stricter than the rules in place now. A maximum of 12 athletes were allowed into a facility at a time, and they were all required to take the same safety precautions as now.

Even though the idea of reopening athletics during a pandemic may seem confusing, the actual practices and conditioning are very similar to the practices held before the pandemic, with minor adjustments such as no high fives or

fist bumps. Aside from athletes who participate in activities which require athletes to be close together, such as running or swimming, everybody conditions apart from each other — the coaches still continue to mentor the same way as before in order to prepare everyone for the upcoming season.

Although athletes are conditioning, there is still no guarantee that tournaments will be played. There hasn't been any confirmation if any competitions will be held this school year, even if students are preparing like they will be. For most of the teams conditioning right now, official practices start on Dec. 14 and the season starts two weeks later on Dec. 28. Depending on team rankings, the fall season will finish sometime in March.

“Nothing has been finalized yet, but we are certainly hoping,” Sell said. “We just need to get the okay from the county and state to determine if we can play.”

Conditioning is a crucial component of getting ready for the season and is proceeding quite normally despite the many safety precautions required. The hope is that this continues for the rest of the year and games can be played safely.

Careers in sports: brand strategist



COURTESY OF LANDER EICHOLZER

Julia Renner
 SPORTS WRITER

Most people with a passion for sports first think of becoming a professional athlete, coach or announcer as possible future career paths. But, there are many other options to consider. Lander Eicholzer is a 23-year-old from Syracuse, New York who works as a brand strategist for the NCAA.

When Eicholzer was younger, his grandfather would take him to all types of sporting events, which sparked his passion for his career today.

“I will watch literally any

and player notes and other information about a college or university's sports teams to the news, media and general public.

Though he was transitioning towards the business aspect of sports, he continued his career in swimming throughout college.

Eicholzer graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in communications, a Bachelor of Sciences in political science and a minor in ethnic studies. After college, Eicholzer spent two summers working in the Syracuse athletics department and interning at Swim World Magazine. He regards his former boss from the Syracuse athletics department, Sue Edson, as being one of the most influential figures in his career.

“She pushed me to be the best I can be, and I am very grateful for that,” Eicholzer said.

Eicholzer also worked for the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee. He was a digital media content intern who helped manage the TeamUSA.org website, planned content

“I got a sense for what working in these fields in the real world was like”

sports game or event,” Eicholzer said. “Track and field, badminton, lacrosse, any sport that's on TV, I get invested in.”

Eicholzer started swimming when he was 16 years old. He went to a public high school in Syracuse, where his journey in swimming started. Despite having cerebral palsy, a motor disability, Eicholzer was not deterred from competing. He is now a nationally and internationally ranked Paralympic swimmer.

When attending a swim meet in San Francisco, he visited Santa Clara University and soon realized that's where he wanted to go in the future.

He attended SCU and continued to pursue his passion for sports outside of just participating in them. Eicholzer doubled as an editorial intern for the Santa Clara magazine in addition to being a communication intern for the school's athletics department. His experiences in

for the Olympic games and assisted with digital media strategy. Initially, he did not think he would get the job because he had not been through graduate school which was suggested for the application. However, his aunt pushed him to apply.

“She told me to never discredit myself for a job because you never know what they're really looking for,” Eicholzer said. “Yes, there's a description, but you could have something completely unique that [employers] didn't consider.”

As a brand strategist, he handles marketing, social media and event organization. One notable event he organized was the “NCAA Woman of the Year,” which honored the academic achievement, athletic excellence, community service and leadership of graduating female college athletes who competed and earned a varsity letter in an

“You could have something completely unique that [employers] didn't consider”

these positions pushed him to pursue a career that combined communications and sports.

“I got a sense for what working in these fields in the real world was like,” Eicholzer said. “I was hooked.”

Initially, Eicholzer wanted to be a sports information director, working in public relations by providing statistics, team

NCAA sponsored sport. Nominees are first selected by their respective colleges. Then, Eicholzer selected some of the nominees to be finalists.

Eicholzer has come to appreciate the marketing and event planning side of the sports industry and believes he will continue to pursue it in the future.