



The ARAGON OUTLOOK

Thursday | December 10, 2020 | Volume 61, Issue 2

900 Alameda de las Pulgas, San Mateo, CA 94402

Aragon High School

Job profile:
medicinal chemist
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The SMUHSD evaluates reopening plan amid case increases



The Aragon campus remains largely empty as school closures continue.

AIDAN GERBER AND RAHUL VISHWA

Kiara Lopez
NEWS WRITER

Members of the San Mateo Union High School District board and staff have been meeting in the past month to discuss the possibility of returning to in-person learning for the 2021 spring semester. On Nov. 28, San Mateo County was pushed into the state's purple tier, the most restrictive, indicating widespread infections and new regulations. Before reopening high schools, the county must be back in the red tier for at least 14 days. After hours of presentation, public comment and trustee conversation, a general consensus was made in favor of adopting the AB Streaming model once health conditions allow for in-person learning again.

AB Streaming, a favored

choice because of its instructional minute retention, consists of a hybrid of both in-person and virtual classes depending on students' cohort days. Students will attend face-to-face classes two days a week and virtually classes via Zoom for the other two, depending on their cohort, A or B. The remaining days would be asynchronous, allowing students greater flexibility to continue their studies off Zoom. To account for social distancing, classrooms will be limited to 12 students and two teachers, similar to athletic conditioning pods over the summer.

Though this would have the least amount of schedule

changes, screen time would remain very high, and teachers would have to manage both a class in-person and online. Consideration of student and teacher safety is of the utmost importance when adopting any model, and board members and staff are working diligently to form a solution that will improve the current learning conditions while keeping everyone safe.

"I think we'll continue to have opportunities for a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



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Shooting for spring: COVID-19 vaccine developments

Alexandra Ding
NEWS WRITER

With over 13 million COVID-19 cases reported in the U.S., more than 60 vaccines are currently in clinical trials. Operation Warp Speed aims to deliver 300 million vaccines free to the American public at an estimated

cost of \$10 billion, with the first doses arriving as early as December 2020 for health care workers and high-risk populations. The race is on to immunize America.

The world's population must be immunized, either by infection or by vaccination, to end surging COVID-19 cases.

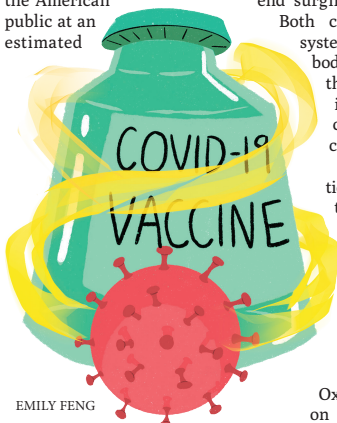
Both cause the immune system to produce antibodies which prevent the virus from infecting cells, but vaccines do so without causing the disease. "Without a vaccination, we do not have the ability to open up in the ways that we are hoping to open up," said Katherine Ward, Advanced Placement Biology and Biotechnology teacher.

AstraZeneca and Oxford collaborated on a viral vector vac-

cine that is 62% effective when given in two full doses, and 90% effective when given in a half dose followed by a full dose, according to early data. The vaccine can be stored in conventional refrigerators, and AstraZeneca has pledged to sell them at \$2.50 per dose until at least July 2021 for developed countries and forever for developing countries.

Two mRNA vaccines have released efficacy data: Pfizer, BioNTech and Fosun Pharma's vaccine is 95% effective, while Moderna's vaccine is 94.5% effective. Distribution for both may begin in December, though they have drawbacks. Each requires two administrations: about \$20 per dose for Pfizer's and \$15 to \$25 per dose for Moderna's. Additionally, Moderna's vaccine must be stored at minus 4 degrees Fahrenheit, and Pfizer's must be kept at minus 94 degrees Fahrenheit, near

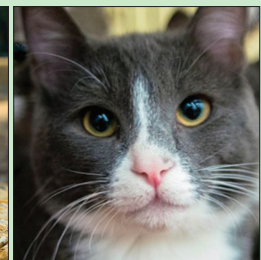
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EMILY FENG



Pet adoptions have increased since March.



COURTESY OF ANGELO BOUNTHAPANYA AND THE NINE LIVES FOUNDATION

Finding a forever home: pet adoptions during pandemic

Aakanksha Sinha
FEATURES WRITER

In a local animal shelter, a puppy awaits companionship and love.

As COVID-19 forced many doors shut, the seclusion from the rest of the world has left many yearning for companionship. Besides human socialization, pets — especially cats and dogs — are the next

best bet for some interaction.

Sophomore Angelo Bounthapanya adopted a French bulldog named Ghost two months ago from the website adoptapet.com. The adoption took place during stay at home orders, making the journey of adjustment even rockier for both Bounthapanya and Ghost.

"[Ghost] was definitely very

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A & E Christmas albums

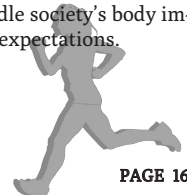
Check out Carole Darve's analysis of the hype around holiday music.



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SPORTS Body image in athletics

Read about how athletes handle society's body image expectations.



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The SMUHSD reelects Land and welcomes Zúñiga to the board

Marlee Cherkas
NEWS WRITER

In November, Ligia Andrade Zúñiga and Greg Land were elected and reelected respectively to the San Mateo Union High School District board of trustees. The remaining three board members are Vice President Robert H. Griffin, Trustee Linda Lees Dwyer and Clerk Peter Hanley. Zúñiga will attend her first meeting on Dec. 17.

Board elections occur every November of even years and if



Land (left) and Zúñiga (right)

Land (left) and Zúñiga (right) elected, public officials serve four year terms. This year, voters were able to vote for two candidates of the three on the ballot, and the two contenders with the most votes were elected.

Zúñiga and Land both received over 56 thousand votes, defeating Candidate Neal Kaufman, who received about 40 thousand. Trustees oversee the district administration, resolve district-wide issues and serve their constituents.

Newly elected Trustee Zúñiga will join the board this December. Zúñiga grew up in Redwood City and has two sons who graduated from the SMUHSD, where they participated in the bilingual immersion program. She started the Latino Parent Group



SMUHSD AND COURTESY OF ZÚÑIGA

at Burlingame High School and worked in advocating for those whose voices needed to be heard. After suffering a tragic car accident in 2009 that led her to become quadraplegic, Zúñiga

worked on empowering young and disabled children through nonprofit organizations.

"My biggest forte [is] making sure that we empower young kids with disabilities, kids of color and also all kids, because it's important for the future of our communities," Zúñiga said. "[Students] are eventually going to vote, and [they're] going to be making decisions for us."

Reelected Trustee Land will return to the board this December alongside Zúñiga. Land has been on the board since December of 2015 and has experience advocating for youth from being a teacher, assistant principal and currently, principal of Santa Rita Elementary School in Los Altos. Land's main goals include equity and advocacy for all students, empowering the youth in the community, and improving and innovating the way distance learning is conducted.

With her most recent term beginning in 2018, Dwyer was first elected to the SMUHSD board in December of 2005. Dwyer has had many of her own students graduate from the district and is a foster parent as well as an attorney. In the past, she worked on the Burlingame School District board before coming to the SMUHSD. Her main goal is to ensure a smooth transition from

middle school to high school.

"I [am] very interested in articulation between the feeder districts and high school," Dwyer said. "How does a middle school best prepare their students to come to high school? So coming in on the high school board, I'm

ber, has served on the board since 2001. Hanley has served his community by teaching and working in charter schools. With this background, Hanley joined the board wanting to advocate for change in the district such as providing everyone with ac-

"My biggest forte [is] making sure that we empower ... all kids"

looking at it from all directions."

Trustee Griffin will become board president next term. As president, he will oversee meetings and provide closing remarks. Griffin has been on it since 1996 and graduated from the SMUHSD before returning as a board member. After witnessing his nephew's low-quality education experience in high school, Griffin strived to improve the climate of the schools and equity.

"One of the things that I wanted was equity, I've always said that the key to education is equality and equity," Griffin said. "And so I worked on that the whole time. On some things like inclusion and making sure people have access to AP classes, and it would be nice to see people getting information, getting help they can't get otherwise."

Hanley, the fifth board mem-

ber, has served on the board since 2001. Hanley has served his community by teaching and working in charter schools. With this background, Hanley joined the board wanting to advocate for change in the district such as providing everyone with ac-

cess to AP classes and advocating for an A-G curriculum. In addition, Hanley hopes to close the achievement gap.

"Increasing the engagement of students is another area that we really need to continue to work very hard on and there's a lot being done," Hanley said. "I think we need to look at where we're being successful and where we're not and figure out which approaches are working and really maximize those worlds."

In December, the school board will make a decision on whether second semester will involve in-person learning. Proposals to go back to school for the second semester were presented and debated at board meetings for months. Their decision will be based on the evaluation of health professionals, student and parent voices and what they deem best for the community.

Robotics virtually trains for upcoming season

Wreetom Dutta
NEWS WRITER

Many organizations at Aragon had to adapt to distance learning protocols, and Aragon Robotics is not exempt. Robotics has altered their yearly training program so all activities take place virtually.

Every year, team leads teach newcomers how to design, construct and operate robots. After creating their bot, team members use it to compete at regional tournaments.

"I think one of our biggest challenges was figuring out how to make virtual training

"One of our biggest challenges was figuring out how to make virtual training a valuable experience"

a valuable experience, especially since it's so different from our typical format," said senior Robotics Director Shelby Cherkas.

The team spent all summer creating the plan for the 2020-21 school year and found that two components of robotics — computer-aided design and programming — could be taught online. These became the main focus for the technical team, which designs and builds the robots.

"I'm really hopeful that the fundamental skills of design will help with the team's ability

to pick up and do great things when we do get the chance to go back," Cherkas said.

Robotics' marketing team found ways to adapt to socially distanced requirements as well. The team was able to secure many sponsorships and grants this year.

"My approach to teaching newcomers was to make presentations in the beginning of the year to show them what the marketing team has worked on in the past," said senior Marketing Captain Taylor Rokala. "For marketing, it is pretty easy to get the hang of working on merch and writing newsletters, so once

I introduced the new members to what we typically work on, it was easy for them to get used to working on marketing."

While online training has been relatively smooth for the beginner technical and marketing teams, the FIRST Tech Challenge team encountered more difficulties.

"Unfortunately, because of the situation, we weren't able to meet in person, nor were we able to go to the shop at Aragon," said senior FTC team captain Aaren Wong. "We actually lost a lot of our manufacturing capability."

Wong let trainees explore more options online to make up for the absence of a physical workshop by taking spare parts before school closed and rotating them between team members.

"I really want people who haven't started robotics and really gotten to know a lot about robotics to really feel what building is like," Wong said. "I've been able to give the freshmen building materials and actually have them be able to build even if they're not in person."

Tournaments, a key element of the robotics season, will take place virtually. However, FIRST organizers heavily modified competitions in order to make them pandemic-friendly. Aragon's FTC team is currently building their robot to compete in this year's challenge, "Ultimate Goal."

"Their competition is going to run with video, like remote matches, where they'll videotape their robot and submit two minute rounds for points to actually compete in the tournaments," Cherkas said.

After the challenges are over, the teams present their robots over Zoom, explaining their process for planning out and building the robot. As for the FIRST Robotics Competition team, tournaments are more involved. There are three different challenges, but the details of each have not yet been finalized. The robotics team will be split into smaller teams of vet-

eran members and trainees starting in January.

Even though Robotics was able to transfer fairly well into an online-only format, the team needed to eliminate many activities.

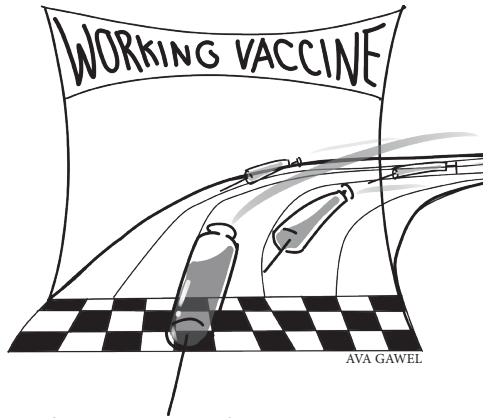
"I always look forward to participating in our outreach events, because we have a workshop we do with young kids that is really fun," Rokala said. "However with everything being virtual, our outreach is going to look a lot different this year."

The marketing team is currently working to design workshop events that are completely virtual. Wong misses the environment of the kickoff events that mark the beginning of each competition season as well.

"[They] allow us to get introduced into the year's game as well as what really FIRST is," Wong said. "[It] allows them to see what the organization is and has a very communal vibe."



Trainees engage in a robotics webinar. COURTESY OF SHELBY CHERKAS



AVA GAWEL

The complex creation of COVID-19 vaccines

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the temperature of dry ice, a hurdle for doctor's offices, nursing homes and pharmacies without ultra low temperature storage.

"The Pfizer vaccine is going to be much more difficult in rural areas and developing countries, ... because you've got to have the ultra low temperature freezer to keep it for a good amount of time," said freshman Benjamin Ricket. "I think in general ... any vaccine that works should start being [distributed]."

"I think in general ... any vaccine that works should start being [distributed]"

Pfizer applied for emergency use authorization from the Food and Drug Administration on Nov. 20, and on Nov. 30 Moderna followed suit. If approved, vaccines will be shipped to states within 24 hours. However, the logistics are complex. States must establish cold chains and acquire supplies such as syringes and alcohol pads. Hundreds of vaccines could be unusable if improperly stored.

California, as part of a vaccine distribution pilot program, will follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's three phase approach to vaccine allocation; health care workers in contact with SARS-CoV-2 will be vaccinated first, then essential workers and those at high risk and finally, likely in April 2021, everyone else. Most support the prioritization of these groups.

"I can't imagine what it's like to be a medical professional right now and know that the only safety I have is this personal protective equipment," Ward said. "Our first responders and our ... hospital staff [including] nurses, doctors, ... people that are emptying the garbage cans and dealing with the food service ... [and] anyone who has to be there has to be first in line for that vaccination."

However, global equity remains a concern. The U.S., like other wealthy countries, has entered contracts with companies to buy vaccines and distribute them to the American public for free. In total, wealthy countries bought over 2 billion doses of vaccines. Poorer countries don't expect to be vaccinated until 2024.

"I ... think that everybody should have a fair chance of getting the vaccine," said freshman Kate Young. "One country shouldn't get more

vaccines than the other. ... I think [it's] a little unfair [that the U.S. government has bought vaccines]. I know other countries have been making contracts too with different companies. ... It's just a race to get the vaccine first."

The majority of Americans will need to be vaccinated to end the pandemic, but according to a Pew Research Center poll, only 51% of adults say they will get the vaccine. Still, any level of immunity helps, and many believe that the quest for a vaccine is worthwhile.

"[Vaccine funding is] a great investment to get the economy up and running quicker and lose less lives at the same time," said sophomore Justin Huskins. "Because research is like an investment: you pour a ton of money [in], and results really don't come out until ... months to years later."

The journey to create a coronavirus vaccine holds America's future at stake. An effective vaccine has the potential of ending the ongoing pandemic and recession, but there are challenges that occur at every step of the way. Hurdles must be overcome in the hopes that America will be immunized and life will finally return to normal soon.

The SMUHSD considers in-person learning again

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1
small number of students to come back on campus," said Superintendent Kevin Skelly.

slipped, but my work ethic has definitely gone down."
In a message sent to students and families on Dec.

datory for students and teachers. Schools will have on-site testing available, at no cost to uninsured students according to district plans. To ensure students understand the seriousness of abiding by health guidelines, presentations on following safety measures and consequences for those who break these measures are being considered if students return to in-person learning. The board will continue evaluating the possible return to campus while regarding the safety and well-being of students.

"My grades haven't slipped, but my work ethic has definitely gone down"

"Not all in huge numbers, but I think there are possibilities there. ... I'm watching kids, and they're not nearly as engaged as they are when we're [at school] in person."

Virtual learning and excessive screen time are taking a serious toll on the physical and emotional well-being of students, demonstrating a need for change for more effective learning. Students are also experiencing a lack of motivation to complete schoolwork to the same standards as in person.

"I've definitely stopped doing assignments on time," said sophomore Anna Sofia Abelas. "Teachers are just more lenient on due dates and even if they have a due date, they may allow late assignments and will grade them. My grades haven't

6, Principal Valerie Arbizu detailed some measures the district and Aragon were taking to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

"As of ... Dec. 7, all athletic pods and on-campus learning pods will be closed for the remainder of the semester [and through winter vacation]," Arbizu wrote. "We anticipate additional guidance from the California Interscholastic Federation regarding athletics in early January."

Face masks and six-foot distancing in and out of class will be man-



CHRISTINA WU

The ARAGON OUTLOOK

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Q&A with college counselors and advisers

Many colleges are having to adjust their admissions process to accommodate for unprecedented changes. Here is what college counselors and advisers have to say about the college admissions process this year.

Kamron Ramelmeier
NEWS WRITER

How are admissions changing?
“Colleges are deferring students and also using waitlists more than ever before because of the challenges associated with COVID-19 and also due to the sense that students are applying to many more colleges. They know that statistically if a student is only going to choose

weight than they have had in the past.”
– Dr. Elizabeth Stone, executive director of Campanile College Counseling

What do you think is most important that seniors remain aware of as they go through the application process?
“Students need to be really aware that essays and letters of recommendation count. What

“Students need to be really aware that essays and letters of recommendation count”

one school, they may want to go someplace else, so the admissions team decides that they’ll put them on a waitlist.”
– Barbara Shore, private college counselor

Apart from making tests optional and campus visits, what would you say were the most major changes that colleges are making to the application process?

“For most students, their summer plans were cancelled. Jobs were lost, internships were lost and camps were closed. The ability for colleges to evaluate students on their extracurricular activities the summer before senior year has [been limited], and most students didn’t have much to afford because they were in quarantine. They just have less data to go on and that’s the significance of applications as they already have fewer grades and no test scores for the most part. The parts of the application that they do [submit] are going to have a greater

also will be attractive to college admissions teams is how a particular student handled the pandemic. It’s okay to say that you struggled a bit in your essays. But it is important that students can focus on the positives and explain what they did during the pandemic like raising money to give to COVID-19 relief efforts or doing online concerts.”
– Barbara Shore, private college counselor

How do you think COVID-19 is impacting the way that seniors make decisions about colleges and their future as a whole?

“From the students that went into college this year during this pandemic, what I’ve heard statistically is that 20% of them have decided to take a gap year. They decided that they don’t want to do their distance learning in their bedroom while they’re supposed to be off at [their campus]. They don’t feel that missing out on that opportunity is the best choice right now. Some families are being hit really hard [economically], so students really have to take a look at their

Source: Forbes

20%

of admitted Harvard students opted to take a gap year in 2020

PENELOPE KING



KAITLYN HA

family situation as a whole and see if it’s still feasible for them to go off to college and live on campus somewhere.”
– Lea Sanguinetti, junior class counselor

Are colleges planning on staying test-optional next year? What measures do you think juniors should take on behalf of this?

“It’s going to have to be a very individualized process at each school. That being said, many schools will continue to not require SATs or ACTs, but if a student was able to take the test and has a good score, I say, when you can, submit it because it will help. At least a good number of colleges will go back to using the SAT and ACT. My suggestion to my students is to sign up for tests in the spring, register, start prepping a few months out and then see what happens, given that there are vaccines on the horizon and that we may be looking at flattening the curve that way. Students also need to be aware that there are both opportunities and challenges without test scores. There are a bunch of students who don’t do well on standardized tests yet have really impressive portfolios or school records or essays. For those students, there are new opportunities to apply to schools that they’ve never considered before.”
– Barbara Shore, private college counselor

colleges offer. Students need to think about what happens when they’re sick and what happens when school shuts down. In terms of residency, a lot of freshmen have to pay for a dorm for a year, and if they back out, they lose their spot, so students need to think about where they’re going to live [especially since] we’re in a pandemic. [Pre-

spring when virtual learning was not carrying through the day like it is now, we wanted to have something that students could do and still have that opportunity to schools. If we are still virtual in the spring, that is something we will offer to the current juniors.”
– Steven Hanson, San Mateo High School college and career adviser

“[S]tudents [should] focus on the positives and explain what they did during the pandemic ”

paring] is a lot harder, and [since] you’re not at school anymore you can’t just walk into a counseling office and ask us things like before, so I think the process [feels] a lot longer than it used to be.”
– Angela Castillo, senior class academic adviser

In what new ways are the district and college counselors trying to help seniors amid changes to the admissions process?

“Since we’re in this virtual environment, we’re doing a lot more planning of events together so we can make it more accessible to seniors. Rather than having each school run their own college application workshop or financial info night, we’re running events that are open to the whole district. Something we did for the seniors last spring was have our districtwide virtual college visits. Historically, for in-person schooling, colleges will come visit us a lot in the fall, not so much in person in the spring, but knowing that there would be this gap in the

How is there an effect on students that want to attend a school away from California?

“There are some additional opportunities for students because a greater percentage of them are attending a school in a state closer to home in case school closes as a matter of having a safety net. Therefore, there may be some new and better opportunities for other California students out of state. The scholarships may not be greater, but they may have a better chance at getting in.”
– Barbara Shore, private college counselor

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A look into COVID-19 and environmental issues: collective action problems

Carolyn Mish
NEWS WRITER

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, it has had observable impacts on the environment. As leaders of countries around the globe urge citizens to socially isolate, air and road traffic have decreased resulting in the lowest carbon emissions since the 2008 recession.

In April, when heavy lockdowns were still in effect, carbon emissions were down by 17%. However, in June, this percentage shrunk to 5%.

“These issues shouldn’t be political issues, because they’re human issues”

Now, scientists predict that emissions will surpass what they were before the pandemic in an attempt to reconcile the economic losses suffered during stay-at-home orders.

The use of disposable personal protective equipment itself is creating pollution issues. Masks, gloves and bottles of hand sanitizer are appearing on beaches so frequently that experts are classifying them as a new type of environmental hazard. The longer the pandemic goes on,

the more plastic ends up in oceans that are already struggling to deal with decades of plastic pollution.

On both the COVID-19 and climate crisis fronts, the U.S. is dragging down global progress. In 2017, President Donald Trump withdrew the U.S. from the Paris Agreement, a global convention created to address the climate crisis. More recently, Trump was criticized for his slow response to the COVID-19 pandemic. These government decisions point to a larger issue within American society: collective action prob-

lems, an issue where there is discrepancy between individual and collective interests.

“Because COVID-19 is an urgent issue ... the responses to it may be accelerated and new compared to responses to other collective action issues,” said Advanced Placement Environmental Science teacher Greg Moretti. “The difference is the disease impacts our daily lives. ... We could catch it, get really sick and die from it. ... [C]limate change [is] too far in the future for us to really realize [its danger].”

While large corporations are responsible for the rapid rates of air pollution, if all individuals make an effort, such seen in wearing masks, to reduce their carbon footprints, the planet may have a chance at preservation.

“Everyone has to cooperate or it doesn’t work,” said Eco-Action Club President Roisin McElarney. “That’s how climate change ... is. [E]very entity has to cooperate to minimize emissions.”

At its core, COVID-19 and climate change are debated topics that have partisan perspectives surrounding them. Both impact people regardless of their political party or nationality,



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yet barriers to solving these issues exist due to the polarized viewpoints on each.

“COVID turned into a political piece where we ... have people across the country dying, because they thought it was a hoax and that they didn’t ... [have] to do anything,” said government and economics teacher Kevin Nelson. “Other places that are educated in the collective will have stopped COVID dead in its tracks.”

Due to the recent election and current transition of power in the U.S., division on pressing issues such as COVID-19 and climate change remain a tense topic.

“I hope that we can come together on the issue of COVID and [do] what we need to do to end the problem,” Moretti said. “I hope that we can come

together on the issue of climate change. ... These issues shouldn’t be political issues, because they’re human issues. Once we have a politicized environment, [it’s] really hard to work for solutions.”

Although international public health agencies lack the ability to place international laws restricting the spread of COVID-19, the prospect of education is promising in terms of ensuring that the public is informed of how their decisions impact others.

To minimize a carbon footprint, one can reduce, reuse and recycle. To help benefit public health and protect communities, one can wear a face mask and practice the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s recommended social distancing guidelines.

The SMUHSD’s hate incident and crime policy

Kayla Shiao and Penelope King
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF AND FEATURES
EDITOR

On Dec. 3, the San Mateo Union High School District board of trustees unanimously voted to approve the district’s response to the 2019-2020 grand jury report titled “Hate@Schools — Opportunities Lost,” with the inclusion of a clause about collaboration with partner districts. The grand jury report covered recent history of the SMUHSD’s responses to hate crimes and incidents and existing infrastructure to

handle such occurrences. Prior, the SMUHSD board held a special meeting on Nov. 19 regarding the response and hosted a study session on equity learning facilitated by the National Equity Project. In a general consensus, the board agreed to revisit the response at a later board meeting after the proposal had been updated with a specific way to measure progress and a plan to pilot programs.

“The district has already begun finding alternative measures to curate an inclusive environment”

largely above the reading proficiency level of seventh to ninth graders to only providing the policy in English. The majority of the policy, which is intended to be used by teenage students, exceeds the general audience’s reading ability, preventing individuals seeking to address incidents from comprehending the necessary steps to resolve conflict. Furthermore, the grand jury report noted the policy was only available

in English, which could prevent access for non-native speakers comprehending and accessing the information outlined in the policy. The former policy covers appropriate responses to crimes and incidents motivated, among other things, by race, religion and gender.

The former policy was dated July 28, 2015 and written by Director of Student Services Don Scatena; then Associate Superintendent, Student Services KindyLee Mackamul and Black, who at the time was Deputy Superintendent, Human Resources and Instruction. The policy lived in the Student Services section of the website, categorized under Policies and Bulletins.

In response to these issues, the grand jury report proposed five suggestions for school districts to incorporate into their own policies and actions next school year. The first recommendation was a more clear anti-bias policy to protect students on school campuses. The report lists specific examples such as training administrators to efficiently handle such situations as well as having clear definitions on what constitutes hate speech, hate-motivated incidents and hate crimes. The second sugges-

tion was for the district to adjust their policy reading level and lack of language diversity. Another recommendation calls for the district to be more proactive in teaching students about hate crimes and anonymous reporting opportunities. The SMUHSD was specifically recommended to also perform a trial run of the Anti-Defamation League’s program, “No Place for Hate.”

The grand jury report also set a specific recommendation for district superintendents and the San Mateo County Office of Education to incorporate or continue specific programs such as Coalition for Safe Schools and Communities, Respect! 24/7 and Camp LEAD.

As outlined in the response, the district has already begun finding alternative measures to curate an inclusive environment. This fall, over 15 district staff members attended the SMCOE’s

“Respect! 24/7” conference, and over 25 staff members participated in a restorative practices training program. For the spring semester, the district intends to create an intervention program for those who were a part of a hate incident off or on campus. Such students will attend four sessions on bullying, hate and biases taught by a mental health training professional.

Additional reporting by Rosella Graham, Kayla Li and Amanda Hao



EMILY FENG

Advanced Drama winter showcase

Cameron Leung
NEWS WRITER

The Aragon Advanced Drama class is producing an Original Works performance that is scheduled to be posted at the end of the semester on Aragon's drama department website. The students will each write, direct and cast their pieces which will be compiled in a virtual performance.

Other district drama classes have worked hard to provide students with alternative performance opportunities during distance learning. Hillsdale is working on a play, "Almost, Maine," and Burlingame is creating a series of one-acts:

"Some monologues ... were extremely personal and emotional, ... and it's super brave"

five to ten minute plays. Creativity is key as all schools seek to produce entertaining performances while adjusting to the differences of acting through a computer screen.

"To [stage a performance] online, it's almost half as effective, and I didn't want it to be half as effective," said drama teacher Shane Smuin. "We have to make the best of a bad situation. ... I felt the best way to get people's attention for a show online was to open up [students'] teenage brains and put them in a performance."

To best showcase the students' talents, they will be creating four monologues and scenes, which include two to four characters, for different prompts that range from addressing current civic issues to personal experiences. The students' pieces could be any genre of drama, but they were each influenced by the writers' personal experiences.

"I don't really like writing personal things, but there were some monologues in my class that people wrote that were extremely personal and emotional and just hearing them makes you really think," said junior Nicole Hahn. "Those are the ones I'm looking forward [to seeing] the most, because, in my opinion, it's super brave that they're able to share that with people."

For this project, students will brainstorm, write, edit, practice and record their scenes. This concept of creating original pieces may sound familiar since the advanced drama class has also written their own plays for the Young Playwrights Project.

"[Original Works] is similar only in that they're writing their own stuff," Smuin said. "When the Silicon Valley Theater Works Company comes together with Aragon, the students write the plays, but we hire professional actors to perform them, so this is a very different thing."

What differentiates these two projects further is the medium through which they are presented. While the Young Playwrights Project was performed on stage, the Original Works performance will be presented virtually through a screen.

"Performing in person is a lot less awkward," said sophomore Kamaile Zimmerman. "On Zoom, you have to stay seated and look in a certain direction and act like someone's there. Sometimes, with the internet, a lot of people can't really see what you're doing, so we have to be a lot more expressive on camera than we would in the the-

ater."

While some students chose to film their performances via Zoom, others may choose to videotape themselves individually and edit the recording with other students' parts. Though Zoom or a camera lens may seem like similar mediums, students have to act completely differently for them.

"You have to show a bit more restraint in your acting," said sophomore Seth Weinfield. "If you're performing on stage, you have to project quite a bit, and you have to be a lot more dramatic with facial movements. While, in recording, a camera is going to pick up a lot more than what the audience sees."

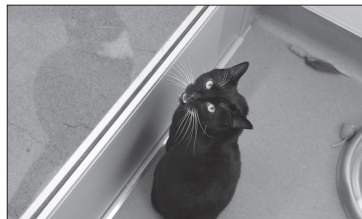
Some Advanced Drama students perceived stage acting as more effective than film acting because of the.

"[Acting on screen] does take off a little bit of the pressure, but it's also not as immersive and I can't really get the feel of playing the character when I'm talking to the computer," Hahn said.

The purpose of showcasing student work is to allow them the opportunity to express themselves creatively while entertaining others.

"I hope they get a chance to have some sort of therapeutic release from writing and performing these subjects," Smuin said. "For the parents, in their heads, I think they'll be watching and going 'Wow, that's how they feel about this. I understand.'"

The Original Works showcase provides enrolled students with an outlet to exhibit their opinions and experiences in an accessible manner. Although the performance will be free for anyone to view, the showing will be paired with an option to donate to the Aragon Drama Boosters. The monologues are expected to be released online on Dec. 11, and the group



Local Peninsula Humane Society animals up for adoption.

ALESSANDRO RIEDEL

Increase in pet adoption during the COVID-19 pandemic

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1
shaky when we first got him," Bounthapanya said. "He was very scared, but he's definitely warmed up and is always running around. He has a ton of energy."

Having the companionship of a pet is proven to increase peoples' happiness. According to The Independent, the close bond between the pet and owner can boost a person's "feel-good" biochemicals, such as oxytocin and endorphins, reduce anxiety and depression and lower blood pressure — putting pet owners in a much happier and calmer state.

Aragon's Green Team, a subsection of Aragon Leadership's Renaissance class that works to lessen the environmental impact of the community, hosted an event aimed towards promoting pet adoptions while simultaneously boosting students' overall mental health.

"We decided to plan our November Friendsgiving event around pets in order to boost people's mental health during these times being in quarantine, as well as to bring joy to them during the holidays," said freshman Green Team Commissioner Pia Cho. "Another reason [was] to show gratitude for our furry friends and also encourage people to adopt."

Bounthapanya explains his viewpoint on the topic of buying and adopting pets.

"I think it's important to adopt," Bounthapanya said. "It's definitely worth helping those who are in need first. [Adopted pets] can give you the same [amount] if not more love, as a pet [you] shopped [for]."

7.6 million animals enter shelters annually. Due to an increase in workload in the fall and winter, more animals are found in shelters as people are unable to properly look after them. However, the

adoption process at the Nine Lives Foundation — like several other places — has changed. Before the pandemic, the shelter was lenient and created a safe space for anyone to come in and socialize with the cats.

"When COVID began, we started making appointments and we would allow one group who knew each other, like a family, ... to come in for one hour [to] get an appointment," said Carol Scola, board member of Nine Lives Foundation, who is also in charge of fundrais-

"It's important to help those in need first, [adopted pets] can give you the same [amount] of love"

isolation and extra time during stay-at-home orders have led to an overall increase in pet adoptions.

The Nine Lives Foundation is an adoption center which rescues and shelters cats. It has rescued several ill and injured cats and facilitated numerous adoptions with them. In comparison to the adoptions at Nine Lives Foundation in 2019, there have been approximately 500 more cat adoptions this year.

In response to the pandem-

ing, pet adoptions and fostering stay-at-home orders have led to an overall increase in pet adoptions.

As shelter-in-place orders began to blanket the country, people found themselves sequestered in their homes, longing for companionship, allowing them to open their hearts to pets awaiting the same love in adoption shelters. Animal adoptions allow humans to have someone to care and love while providing their pets with a safe home.

Academic dishonesty in the wake of online learning



Vedant Gaur
FEATURES WRITER

KAITLYN HA

Though schools have faced many challenges in switching to an online platform, the matter of academic integrity stands out.

The ability to monitor students has drastically decreased with teachers unable to maintain the watchful gaze they once had in the classroom. On top of that, assessing facial language through a grainy or sometimes turned off camera is difficult.

Sophomore Benjamin Wen explained why monitoring students is so hard.

"The ability to cheat has skyrocketed ... with a teacher only being able to monitor through a muted mic and a camera [with] half a person's face," Wen said.

"You can ... talk to your friends while taking a test. ... You can search everything up on the Internet and get away with it."

Various schools and colleges have begun implementing online proctoring during tests, in which one gives the proctor access to their camera, microphone and ID. Proctors try to catch moments in which the test-taker may be cheating, such as looking off-screen for too long.

"There would be issues with efficiency of tasks and also an [issue] of quality," Wen said. "Not everyone takes a test in a private area, which they can show or want to show. I know people who have to share their learning area with others. ... It allows those [more] privileged to take the test, while it brings

up restrictions for those who don't have the space."

Aragon's academic integrity policy, updated in 2019, contains consequences for academic dishonesty. The policy ranges from a zero on an assignment to suspension, depending on the violation. The switch to an online platform, however, brings the aptitude of the "anti-cheating" blueprint into question.

"[The academic dishonesty policy] should still be ... enforced," said physics teacher Steve Ratto. "Some people are getting away with cheating while other people aren't, but ... students need to learn that there are consequences."

The decrease in instructional minutes forces students to learn material in less time.

"Teachers are ... trying to pump in as much content as possible," Wen said. "Because of [this] reduced time frame ... and ... the inefficiencies of teaching online, [it] often takes away time from one to one student to teacher help."

Math teacher Alice Hu believes that the limited teaching time impacts her class plans.

"I wish I could ... do ... fun things," Hu said. "In my current math [class], we're already losing so much actual teaching time. ... I have to explain slower or even multiple times, because who knows [whether] people are really listening."

Some students may cheat to maintain high grades. Greater accessibility to resources may factor into the urge to cheat.

Ratto feels that even if students do cheat, they can learn from their mistake.

"I understood that for some people that temptation [to cheat] would be too great," Ratto said. "When I wrote my tests, I wrote them to check to see if people were falling prey to that temptation. I hope it means

that [if] they make a mistake, they learn from it. ... My goal is not to set them up to fail. If you do get caught [cheating] and that's the choice you make, can you learn from that choice?"

computers, ... a headset on ... [and] could easily have Discord up talking to someone else," Ratto said. "Most of the time, you're on mute during a test, because I can't keep everyone on a mic because there [are] noises all over the place."

With the ever-growing concerns transpiring because of distance learning comes a whole new way in which teachers teach. Whether Aragon goes back to in-person school during the second half of the year or during the 2021-2022 school year, it's clear that the conventional methods of testing and teaching once used will require modification to further prevent cases of academic dishonesty.

Hu feels that cheating poses long-term harm.

"It's really important that the students hold [on to] integrity," Hu said. "If you don't know how to do something, you don't know how to do it. ... If you cheat your way through [this year], if we go back to school, you may not be able to do well, because you didn't learn [the] previous year's topics."

Teachers have been taking measures to prevent cheating.

"I made three different tests, one for each [AP Phys-

How the pandemic has transformed religious gatherings

Caitlin Kaliski
FEATURES WRITER

Instead of going to church at 9:30 a.m., finding a seat in the aisles of chairs and greeting friends, sophomore Susannah Tsai, who is Christian, joins her family at home to watch a livestreamed sermon. After the main Sunday service, Tsai then logs into a Zoom meeting for her Sunday school class where she learns more about her religion and beliefs with others around

a social aspect, but I'm pretty engaged in the online activities," Tsai said. "I have phone calls with one of my leaders at church. At a spiritual level, it's not too different."

Junior Vivienne Scott, who is Jewish, also experienced digital substitutes for in-person worship services. Instead of going to her synagogue for Shabbat services, where many families usually gather, Scott attends a Zoom session. Virtual meetings are also hosted on holidays like Yom Kippur,



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"You lose a sense of community when you can't sit next to people and talk to them"

her age. On Fridays, Tsai attends her youth group fellowship meetings through Zoom, another gathering she would usually attend in person with her church community.

Like many others, Tsai has transitioned from practicing religion in her church to using digital devices due to the social distancing guidelines. A large part of religion is its social aspect, but with COVID-19 health regulations, many Aragon community members and people around the world have had to accommodate for this obstacle.

"The majority of effects that I feel in quarantine are from

Rosh Hashanah and other celebrations like bat and bar mitzvahs, all of which are typically celebrated with large gatherings.

"It was a big shift to do it online, but most synagogues are doing a good job of transitioning to online [services], and the fact that they're recording and editing [them] a lot makes it feel like a communal holiday when we're all at home," Scott said. "They're doing the best that they can, and it's a really good effort. It's turning out well."

Scott finds that due to the conditions set by COVID-19 health regulations, religious

practices from home embody the sense of losing community, which is challenging but not impossible to substitute.

"My mom always taught us that the gods are in our hearts and not where we're praying"

"I don't think it's changed my beliefs at all, but you lose a sense of community when you can't sit next to people and talk to them," Scott said. "They've done a good job on Zoom though, at least for me."

Because of the transition to socially distanced religious practices and gatherings, junior Diya Rohatgi, a believer

in Hinduism, continues to celebrate holidays and worship with her family in the comforts of her home. Before

COVID-19, Rohatgi would go to temple for worshiping and praying. Now, Rohatgi's family has adapted by setting up their own temple at home.

"My mom always taught us that the gods are in our hearts and not where we're praying," Rohatgi said. "But it's a little sad to not be able to see people and celebrate holidays

together, especially if they're big ones in our culture."

Rohatgi's family celebrates Hindu holidays like Diwali, Karva Chauth and Holi. Many holidays are concentrated in November. In the past, Rohatgi's family attended many parties as a way of celebrating, but now they stay at home and celebrate by calling friends.

While Rohatgi can't go to temple, her family has established a dynamic for worshipping and praying from home.

"Before we used to do things at home and at the temple, but now that we can only do it at home, my family is focused on doing it the proper way and acting formal about it," Rohatgi said. "[We] act as if we're going to the temple and do things really on point. ... If [the] coronavirus continues next year ... it's definitely something we can keep up, and it's not ... unattainable."

In the past nine months, COVID-19 has affected all aspects of life, including how one practices their religion. However, even though the pandemic has caused a disruption, it doesn't hinder one's beliefs. Looking forward and considering the resilience that faith inspires, there will most likely be large celebrations when people can once again worship together.

Cabin fever permeates community amidst pandemic

Sophia Zhou
FEATURES WRITER

About nine months ago, the mundane routine of waking up early in the morning to a deafening alarm and going to school in person turned into online learning. Social interaction with friends became limited to video calls and text messages. In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19, staying home became mandatory. For many Aragon students, the norm of school, sports and jobs became distant memories. As a result, side effects of isolation or cabin fever emerging are common. Characterized by symptoms of restlessness

friends while staying six feet apart.”

Other students, however, have family members at home who are at high risk for contracting COVID-19, further confining them to their homes and forcing them away from their peers. Many students, including junior Ethan Lee, have to be even more diligent about staying at home whenever possible.

“Both of my parents are considered high risk, so I have to be responsible about where I’m going and what I’m doing,” Lee said.

Among the biggest negative changes brought upon by cabin fever are the impacts

about, physical symptoms can also arise due to being indoors and glued to a screen for the majority of the day.

“I’ve been getting headaches more frequently

“I feel a lack of motivation to get schoolwork done.”

Being indoors for most of the day can lead to excess energy, and without physical activity to

sense of normalcy by taking up a new hobby or finding a community are realistic ways students can make the best out of this unusual time.

“I’ve gotten to try new things such as improving my culinary skills, which I always wanted to do before but didn’t have the time for,” Lee said. “Being involved with Aragon clubs and organizations has allowed me to stay connected with other students.”

It’s also important to practice self-care, anything that stimulates relaxation. The smallest acts such as keeping up with friends and making an effort to interact with others can be a mood booster. Even a simple change such as revamping one’s room can make all the difference. Lee has taken to keeping his room organized, and Gomez decorated her workspace, both efforts to make staying in their rooms all day more enjoyable. They’ve also implemented activities to keep themselves busy and in high spirits.

“I try to get as much fresh air whether it’s taking a walk in my neighborhood or going out to my backyard,” Lee said.

For Gomez, school sports and going out with family are highlights of her days.

While cabin fever may seem never ending, there are ways to make this time useful and enjoyable.

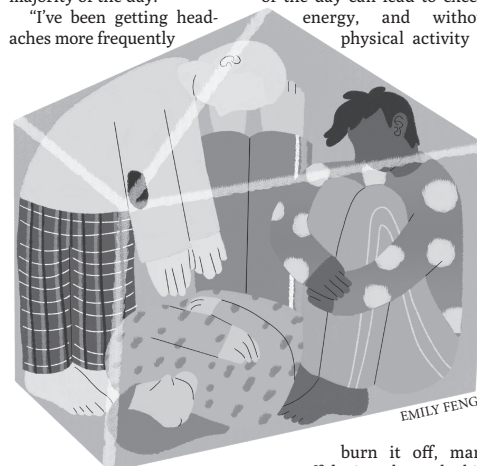
“Being involved with Aragon clubs and organizations has allowed me to stay connected”

and extreme irritability, cabin fever occurs when one is restricted to the same area for a prolonged period of time.

Even with the requirement of face masks and social distancing, many students, such as sophomore Faith Gomez, continue leading somewhat “normal” lives.

“I have been going out a bit but not as much as pre-COVID times,” Gomez said. “I did conditioning for cheer over the summer and hung out with

on mental well-being and academic performance. Poor mental well-being is exacerbated during isolation. Feeling antsy, impatient and restless are classic symptoms of cabin fever. Eventually, these symptoms can lead to the development of mental illnesses, such as depression and anxiety. Both Lee and Gomez felt that their mental wellbeing has taken a turn for the worse due to the lack of social interaction. Although less talked



EMILY FENG

compared to pre-quarantine times,” Lee said. “Now, I’m on my computer for both Zoom classes and homework.”

Academic performance has also been plagued by cabin fever. Zoom classes and asynchronous learning make it easier for students to get sidetracked. The home environment can also present many distractions, such as other family members creating background noise.

“My grades have dropped over quarantine,” Gomez said.

burn it off, many zone off during class. The biggest enemy for many students, procrastination, presents itself as a major threat to academic success with a shorter school day and a less demanding schedule.

“Cabin fever has made me more distracted because I have more energy while being confined,” Lee said. “I have more time to do schoolwork, but it takes me a lot longer to do my assignments because I procrastinate.”

But cabin fever blues can be overcome. Maintaining a

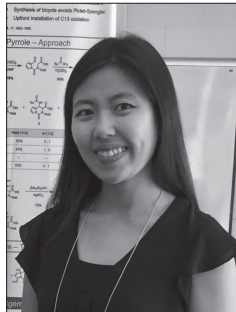
A glimpse into the work of a medicinal chemist: Doris Tang

Catherine Wang
FEATURES WRITER

For most people, the ultimate fighters against diseases, such as COVID-19, are frontliners like doctors and nurses. However, medical researchers also join this cause by discovering antiviral drugs for faster patient recovery. Dr. Doris Tang, a

ready thought of some compounds I want to make that day, so I’ll set up those reactions. In the afternoon, when some of the reactions are done, I’ll purify them or set up [new ones] ... depending on [the results].”

This research process comes with its challenges and setbacks. There are various situations Tang must



COURTESY OF DORIS TANG

Moreover, balancing work with life significantly impacts productivity and the design process.

“I watch some TV [and] do some painting,” Tang said. “I can’t help it sometimes, but I try not to think about work when I’m at [home], just to give my brain a break ... [to] come up with better solutions.”

Besides spending most of her time in the lab, Tang

go and talk to somebody and ask their opinion about some reaction that they’ve run or some other issues that you have that they might be able to solve,” Tang said.

Although the pandemic has significantly impacted the lives of many, Tang’s unique work routine and environment have been relatively stable.

“I’ll do some [Zoom] meetings from home sometimes, but day to day you have to be in the lab to make compounds,” Tang said. “We can’t do [much] work from home, at least in terms of chemistry.”

The routine, environment and demands of her job suit Tang very much. She was glad that she chose the right career to fit her interests. She recalled back to her original motivation for becoming a medicinal chemist.

“Growing up, I did all sorts of arts and crafts like

[certain molecules] together [just like with Legos].”

Tang attended the University of British Columbia, which provided her with valuable opportunities to explore this vast field.

“In UBC, there’s a [program] ... called a co-op that includes 16 months of internships,” Tang said. “I did eight months of fuel cell research, and I also did a couple of months of drug discovery.”

Those 16 months provided Tang deeper insight into the chemistry field.

“[Internships] help you figure out what you want to do in the future,” Tang said. “I really liked the fuel cell job, but at the end of the day, I realized that I didn’t want to do that for my real job, and I had a lot more fun doing medicinal [chemistry].”

Tang offered some final words for aspiring chemists.

“[Remember], doctors aren’t ... the ones who make drugs,” Tang said. “They’re the ones who prescribe drugs, but who has to go make these drugs? It’s chemists. [You can] help a lot of people and [not] have to become a doctor [to do so]. Along the way you can make stuff with your own hands, which is the most fun part.”

“Creativity helps, whether you are designing compounds or thinking of different ways to improve”

medicinal chemist at Gilead, a major biopharmaceutical company, is one of them.

As a medicinal chemist, Tang designs and tests molecules that contribute to drug development. Her job is a cycle of designing, experimenting and analyzing.

“Sometimes we have [chemical or project] meetings interspersed throughout the day, but usually I’ll get into the lab [and] ... check on some of the reactions that I had from the night before,” Tang said. “I’ll check [new] data to see if there are any compounds that came back with really interesting properties that I think might be useful to keep testing hypotheses with. Sometimes I have al-

account for during her job.

“You might design a certain compound that’s really hard to make, or you might [not get] ... the answer you were hoping for,” Tang said. “It’s like a double-edged sword. It’s really rewarding, because it’s so hard but at the same time, because it’s hard, sometimes it gets a little frustrating.”

Tang noted a few qualities that help overcome these challenges during the job.

“Having grit and believing in what you’re going after and being willing to chase after it [helps],” Tang said. “I’ve [also] ... seen that creativity helps, whether you are designing compounds or thinking of different ways to improve [them].”

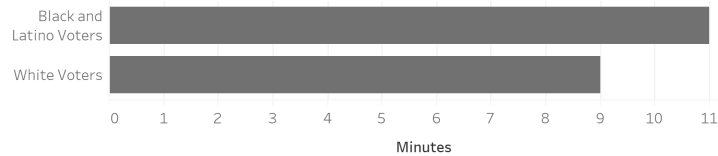
“[You can] help a lot of people and [not] have to become a doctor [to do so]”

also works in an office environment where good communication and teamwork are essential.

“We all work around each other, so it’s really easy to

Legos,” Tang said. “I think that really helped [me decide], because [those activities] also applied to chemistry. ... [It’s] cool to think about how I should piece

Average wait time in minutes during the 2018 midterm elections



Voter Suppression in 2020

AIDAN GERBER



Peyton De Winter
FEATURES WRITER

I remember going to the local voting center in 2016 with my mom to cast her ballot in the presidential election. We walked to a table with the list of registered voters. They searched for her name, but they couldn't find her name due to a mistake in their system. As a result, she had to cast a provisional ballot — a way to vote in person when your name isn't on the register.

While this specific instance was most likely a mistake, being left off of the register purposefully would fall under voter suppression. Voter suppression was a key issue in the 2020 election, and despite the blatant encouragement of it from President Donald Trump, some members of Congress and other government officials, they failed to stop the election from being won by President-elect Joe Biden in not only the electoral college, but the popular vote as well.

The fight between Democrats and Republicans has recently boiled down to Democrats trying to make it easier to vote, and Republicans trying to make it more difficult — especially for minority groups that vote against their conservative interests. For example, Trump opposed the expansion of mail-in voting this year.

In many counties, the shortage of election equipment and poll workers can end with incredibly long waits, and although you can still vote if you are in line before the polls close, this can lead to lost wages due to hours waiting in line to exercise their basic right to vote. According to a study from the University of California, Los Angeles, voters in Black neighborhoods waited in line 29% longer than voters in white neighborhoods.

Not providing an adequate amount of equipment to run the elections is voter suppression, and targets specific areas of the country, as people overseeing polling may control where

equipment is concentrated based on who they support.

Throughout the 2020 election season, Trump has been consistently questioning the legitimacy of the results and spread a message, often through Twitter, to his followers that he would have won the election, if it were not stolen by the Democrats.

"He only won in the eyes of the FAKE NEWS MEDIA. I concede NOTHING! We have a long way to go. This was a RIGGED ELECTION!"

Tweets like this one have been flagged by Twitter for things such as spreading false information about election fraud. Trump has been accusing Democrats of trying to unlawfully steal the presidency since before Election Day, sparking fear and anger in his voters, resulting in some vote counting buildings closing.

Blaming others for failures is a norm in today's politics, but by questioning the legitimacy of the election to this

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The dangerous spread of online disinformation



Thomas Jadallah
PHOTO STAFFER

Recently, several of my generally apolitical friends and relatives have been posting political messages on social media. I suppose all that's been going on in the news recently has piqued their interest. I've made quite an effort to keep myself informed, so when I saw them posting or reposting blatantly false information, it bothered me.

A lot of these posts had good intentions; however, some of their sources made impractical feats sound feasible. Many people, for example, started to post about redistribution of wealth, particularly from billionaires or the military, to pay for things like universal health insurance.

And their sources made these seem like easy feats. However, they left out fundamental economic factors. Regarding free health care, it would cost almost \$4 trillion a year which the government can only afford for one year even with radical actions like defunding the military. The problem with this thinking isn't the fault of social media users, rather, it reveals a much larger problem — the unmoderated spread of misinformation online.

In the past few months, social media networks have flagged massive amounts of disinformation that have spread around their platforms. Recent studies by the Pew Research Center have found that close to one-fifth of U.S. adults now get most of their news

There are many potential motives for America's adversaries to do this, whether it be to weaken trust in the government or to cause deep political division among Americans; in the end, their actions lead to belief in misinformation. For example, during the 2016 election, Russia sponsored the creation of fake Twitter personas to spread misinformation to help Trump's campaign. These personas, who disguised themselves as Republican voters from key swing states, often replied to Trump's tweets with propaganda and conspiracy theories, generating engagement and influencing viewers' opinions.

This sea of misinformation flooding social media has consequences — over 80% of social media users have seen posts claiming that bad actors planned the pandemic, and they are more likely than average to believe in COVID-19-related conspiracy theories and QAnon. On top of this, polls have shown that most social media users don't fact check information they are reading, which has led to what some have dubbed a "second pandemic" — misinformation.

The spread of misinformation has led not only to political division and the growth of radical political groups, but also an elevated death toll from the pandemic. False rumors spread online have motivated many to refuse to wear a mask — something they see as a suppression of their freedoms; many have even been led to believe that COVID-19 doesn't exist and continue to gather en masse where they could infect others with the virus.

Even with this issue of online misinformation, social media companies have been slow to remove posts or even label them as false. The blame for this can partially be placed on Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, which prevents internet companies from being held liable for information published by their users. This law, which has long been heralded as the gateway to the internet as we know it,

"[O]ver 80% of social media users have seen posts claiming that bad actors planned the pandemic"

from social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. These habits have led to a dangerous level of belief in conspiracy theories, whether related to COVID-19, QAnon, election fraud or otherwise.

When getting news from social media, it is vital to fact-check information, especially before reposting. Many social media news outlets have begun to omit sources from their posts. Several major foreign actors, notably Russia and China, have taken advantage of social media as a platform to spread disinformation.

along with pressure from outside groups who claim biased moderation of platform guidelines, has led to slow action from tech companies.

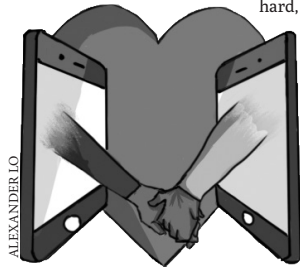
Unfortunately, until the federal government can adamantly mandate that social media platforms properly work to combat misinformation, malicious entities will continue to take advantage of the impressionable and often ignorant minds of American social media users, and false information will continue to spread, dividing the nation and degrading American's democracy.

COVID-19 couples

Sarah Yu
FEATURES WRITER

With school being held remotely, students in relationships are faced with limited daily interaction. Although many students are already used to texting and calling their partners in the digital age, they are forced to do so now more than ever.

When school shut down last March, junior Kaelyn Luebke expected shelter-in-place orders to last a week. She and her boyfriend junior Eueni Georgievski were best friends before the pandemic, having met during a school musical. They



began dating just as school closures began.

"We're both really into drama, theater, the arts, all of that," Luebke said. "We just had this instant bond [when we met] ... and became friends. ... Then [we] only really started dating in quarantine. ... It was a good time to say how you feel."

Despite her initial expectations, coronavirus regulations are now nine months in with no definite end, and the two are seldom able to see each other. They have only met five times since campus closures.

"We try to actually social distance as much as possible," Luebke said. "Like my mom [says]: 'masks in the house, stay as far apart from each other as we can.' Same with outside: 'do activities outside like a bike ride, go for a walk or something to just keep it as safe as possible.' We try, but again, it's hard."

Even though their interactions have mostly been online, they made the relationship work.

"Honestly, in all, I would say it's brought us closer together," Luebke said. "We now know we need to savor every moment we have with each other. When you have that special person, any time to talk to them is just that special moment."

Sophomores Brooklyn Beaumont-Bent and Jared Walsh had been dating since December of 2018, and before Nov. 10, they were seeing each other three times a week. Initially, they did not meet face-to-face at all.

"Our parents thought that it would be best if, with everything going on ... we were separated for the time being," Beaumont-Bent said. "Then they realized ... it wasn't really going to work out that way if we didn't see each

other, so they agreed that we can just be in our own bubble and only see each other and each other's families, but not really our friends."

A big struggle for the two, however, has been finding time to meet. Walsh, a player for Aragon's football team, has conditioning nearly every day, and cheer season is beginning for Beaumont-Bent.

"Last year, he went to San Mateo, so we'd see each other every weekend," Beaumont-Bent said. "Now that he's transferred to Aragon, we thought it [would] be easier because we'd get to go to school together, but then we never did. It's been hard, but we work around our schedules."

Even when the two do meet, deciding what to do can be difficult with so many restrictions. San Mateo County is currently in purple tier, the most restrictive of four, indicating that there are either more than seven new cases per 100,000 per day or over 8% of tests are returning positive. On Nov. 30, the county began enforcing a curfew; between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. residents may not meet with each other, and shopping and dining options are halted.

"[The challenging part of having a relationship during the pandemic is] just finding new things to do to keep it entertaining," Beaumont-Bent said. "[There's] not really much we can do."

Similarly, seniors Kausik Kolluri and Taylor Rokala, who have been dating since sophomore year, notice less variety to their discussions.

"It's definitely harder to talk, because there's nothing really interesting going," Kolluri said. "[Before] quarantine, we'd talk about [exciting aspects of] our day, whether it was my tennis season or tests or her job. Now, [there isn't much to talk about] besides something interesting going on in our classes, [and] that doesn't happen often."

The two have met regularly, nearly every other week, but they are still cautious and strictly adhere to social distancing guidelines and wear masks when they only see each other. However, like many other couples, they struggle to find time together with college applications and various extracurriculars.

It hasn't been all bad, as the two have made the most out of their common interests.

"I think [the Aragon Model U.N. Conference] was good," Kolluri said. "We prepared beforehand together."

Despite the distance obstacle, Aragon students in relationships have creatively adapted to the times in part by increasing technology use.

Opinion: Southeast Asians need better representation

Lipika Goel
FEATURES WRITER

Before I watched the movie "Crazy Rich Asians," I remember assuming "Asians" would yet again equate to East Asians, and the movie would take place in China, Japan or another East Asian country popularized in Western media. I was pleasantly surprised to find out the movie took place in Singapore, where my aunt used to live. Still, the movie brought to my attention the media's lack of Asian diversity that I had accepted as normal.

The official definition of Asian, as quoted from the U.S. Census Bureau, is "[a] person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent." Yet many people struggle to identify some groups as Asian. In a 2016 survey conducted by the National Science Foundation, 15-17% of white, Black, Latino and Pacific Islander interviewees said Filipinos were not likely to be Asian Americans. Numbers like these are not necessarily due to a racist mindset but rather an uninformed one.

In the media, being Asian means two things: South Asians watch Bollywood movie musicals, eat spicy food and smell like curry, and East Asians are good at math, have small eyes and an affinity for rice. From Baljeet's meltdowns over poor grades in the cartoon "Phineas and Ferb" to Long Duk Dong's thick accent and foreign-sounding name in the popular movie "Sixteen Candles," the widespread stereotyping of Asians in the media is not something that can be ignored.

Between these overly clear-cut definitions of South and East Asians lies a marginalized group: Southeast Asians, who are forced to identify with the media's warped definition of Asian rather than with their own unique identity. Southeast Asia is a region south of China and east of the Indian subcontinent. It consists of 11 countries, including Indonesia and Thailand, spread between mainland Asia and a group of island chains commonly known as insular Southeast Asia.

Often, this group is left out in the media. By consequence, Southeast Asians are marginalized, and their identity is questioned by the general public. They are marginalized even by other Asians and Asian Americans, who consider Southeast Asians too dark to be true Asians. This view is then

internalized by the people of this forgotten region, where whitening creams and pale makeup are applied to fit Asian beauty standards, and a fair complexion is portrayed to guarantee success, an idea stemming from field workers being tanner than elite people due to extensive sun exposure.

Some progress seems to have been made to include Southeast Asians in the media, most notably in gaming. Famous video games such as "Hyperscape" and "Overwatch" have included characters from Southeast Asia.

However, rather than a show of support and diversity, this "progress" is mere tokenism, included for the sake of seeming progressive. A white character can be anywhere on a range of intelligence, religion and rebelliousness. On the other hand, characters of different races often become a sum of stereotypes — wearing traditional clothing, speaking broken English with occasional phrases in their native tongue. The popular video game "Hyperscape" is just one example: the character Noor Casulink hails from Pekan, Pahang, Malaysia and speaks a mixture of Malay and English. Donning a headscarf, she seems to represent the 61.3% of Malaysians who practice Islam (as found by the 2010 census) perfectly.

While on the surface this token may seem like a solution, it is impossible to include one Southeast Asian character and claim to support diversity when this disingenuous action does nothing more than group together a diverse population of individuals, select a few defining qualities — Muslim, Malay-speaking, olive-skinned — and assume that is enough representation to satisfy the Southeast Asian market. Rather, it creates a harmful and one-dimensional view of Southeast Asians, separate

from their true identities.

A similar issue occurs when Southeast Asia is blatantly misrepresented, because reality doesn't fit into existing stereotypes. The British television show "Cold Feet" altered scenes of Singapore, because despite being shot in the country, it didn't look "authentic" to the production team. At first, they assumed the camera crew had rushed and shot the scene locally. When they realized the shots were taken in Singapore, they guessed they were from an "Englishtown" in Asia similar to a "Chinatown" in the U.S., refusing to believe Singapore is a well-developed country with English as its national language.

Instead, the visual effects team of the show edited the Singaporean shots, changed the street signs to Chinese, removed British tourists and added foreign buildings. The producers' perception that Singapore was a third-world, underdeveloped country led them to create a show that only perpetuated stereotypes of Southeast Asian countries rather than exposing falsehoods and changing viewer's mindsets.

Southeast Asian representation is just one of many examples where the media leaves out or stereotypes a group of people under the false pretense of diversity. East Asians make up less than half of the population of Asians in America yet almost all of the Asian representation in the media. It is a poor reflection on us that we can claim our country to be a land of freedom where all are welcome but have such difficulty reflecting that diversity on the big screen. Rather than accepting a stereotypical side character as an indication of diversity, seeing a strong minority protagonist should be normalized.



AVA GAWEL

Christmas albums to light up your holidays

Carole Darve
FEATURES WRITER

A noble fir stands in the living room, laced with shimmering ribbons and covered in green and red ornaments. Twinkling decoration lights glow in the room darkened by night, illuminating the faces of a family huddled together around a crackling fireplace. Warm mugs of hot chocolate and eggnog are passed around. In the background, the slow murmur of “Silent Night” resonates.

Many families practice the tradition of listening to Christmas songs during the joyous holiday season. Along with other Christmas-themed purchases of fir or pine trees, festive decorations and colorful gifts, the demand for Christmas albums and singles during this merry time skyrockets.

“White Christmas” is the bestselling Christmas single of all time. Written by Irving Berlin in 1940, Bing Crosby’s cover version of “White Christmas” sold approximately 50 million copies worldwide. The lyrics, like many other holiday songs, hold a touch of bittersweet nostalgia. They reminisce on a frolicsome white Christmas “[j]ust like the ones [the singer] used to know” from his childhood.

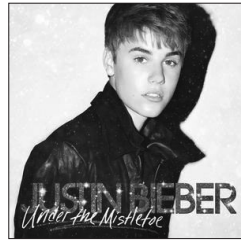
A majority of the Christmas songs artists release are cover songs — songs recorded by someone other than the song’s original artist or composer. Usually, an artist making a cover song must pay copyright fees to the original composers for the rights to remake the song,



DECCA RECORDS



143 RECORDS



ISLAND RECORDS



CAPITOL RECORDS



COLUMBIA RECORDS



REPUBLIC RECORDS

but many Christmas songs are a few decades old. Their copyrights, Vox writes, “have [either] lapsed, are owned by the public, or never existed at all.” Without having to pay the copyright fees, there is greater profit in making Christmas cover songs. These famous, familiar covered tunes are associated with Christmas tradition, making them more likely to be recognized and enjoyed.

Some adventurous artists compose original songs for Christmas in the hope that their songs become Christmas staples. However, crafting an original song demands the inspiration and creativity to compose entirely new lyrics and tunes, while making a cover song requires minor tweaks to

fit a genre or singer.

Michael Bublé’s album “Christmas” sets a precedent for cover albums. Released in 2011, his album is now considered a staple of Christmas. It sold more than 4 million copies in the U.S. alone. In its standard edition, all 15 songs are covers except for “Cold December Night.” The lyrics of “Santa Baby,” one of the album’s covers, are modified to fit a male singer. Eartha Kitt, the original composer of the song, addresses Santa Claus as “Santa baby,” “Santa honey” and “Santa cutie.” Instead, Bublé sings “Santa buddy,” “Santa pally” and “Santa poppy.”

Sometimes, Christmas originals hit the jackpot. Ariana Grande’s single “Santa Tell

Me” is an original composition with more than 200 million views on YouTube. What’s surprising is that it did better than her album “Christmas Kisses,” which consisted of a mix of originals and cover songs. “Christmas Kisses” sold 70,000 copies, whereas “Santa Tell Me” had already sold 600,000 copies by 2018.

Christmas wouldn’t be Christmas without mentioning Frank Sinatra. His holiday album, “A Jolly Christmas from Frank Sinatra,” contains a plethora of religious-themed, traditional Christmas classics such as “Silent Night,” “O Little Town of Bethlehem” and “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing.” While Christmas is a holiday that celebrates the

birth of Jesus for Christians, carols were originally pagan songs sung to celebrate the winter solstice. When pagan celebrations were adopted by the Christian religion, carols were sung about the Christmas story. Priests, such as Joseph Mohr who composed the lyrics to “Silent Night” in 1818, wrote carols to be sung in Christmas Eve masses.

While traditional Christmas songs revolve around religion, in more modern Christmas music, romance is a popular, lucrative theme.

In 1986, Wham! released “Last Christmas,” which got more than half of a billion views on YouTube. The song sold over 2 million copies in the U.S. The chorus, “[l]ast Christmas / I gave you my heart / [b]ut the very next day you gave it away,” alludes to themes of romantic yearning, nostalgia and heartbreak. In 2011, Justin Bieber released “Mistletoe,” which, in its first week, sold more than 160,000 copies, and currently has more than 400 million views on YouTube. In the song, Bieber uses the classical symbol of Christmas romance, mistletoe, to express longing for his absent lover.

Each year, well-known artists choose how they will address the Christmas market. Whether original or cover, album or single, many factors come into play. In the past, religious-themed songs ruled the market. But now, themes of nostalgia and romance are becoming more popular and lucrative amongst modern original songs.

☰ New boba location: RareTea ☰



Laurelwood Shopping Center’s RareTea exterior has a pick-up and ordering station.



KAYLA SHIAO

Audrey Smetana
FEATURES WRITER

Nestled in the western hills of San Mateo and tucked away in a discreet corner of the Laurelwood Shopping Center lies RareTea, an unassuming new boba shop. RareTea, only a 3-minute drive away from the College of San Mateo, has filled up the boba desert of this neighborhood, providing a closer and more convenient option to thirsty customers who may have previously had

to travel downtown for boba.

Since its opening in August, RareTea has garnered positive attention from locals, earning an impressive five-star rating on Google and a 4.5-star rating on Yelp.

RareTea belongs to the RareTea franchise, which has locations all across California. Its first location was started in Berkeley in 2016, and it has quickly expanded to include multiple stores across both the Bay Area and California in general. Rare-

Tea’s menu offers an ambitious array of milk teas, fruit teas, smoothies, ice blends, cremas, fresh fruit drinks, Yakult drinks and food. It also boasts a sizable variety of toppings, including classic tapioca pearls, grass jelly and almond pudding. RareTea’s expansive menu undoubtedly offers something for everyone — even boba tea haters.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent health regulations, RareTea is currently partially opened: it’s available for online orders with either in-store pickup or delivery. Their main website links to an ordering website for the San Mateo location, which is easy to use. The drinks were ready to be picked up on time, already placed in a convenient bag for carrying. The indoor section of the shop is closed off to everyone besides employees, with an outdoor pick-up station up front — equipped with napkins, straws and hand sanitizer.

For a boba tea shop — one of many notorious for mask-

ing cheap tea with loads of sugar — the tea was surprisingly tasty. The black tea was strong and clear, with pleasantly light and nutty undertones. The sweetness levels are adjustable, but the recommended 80% sweetness is inoffensive, an agreeable level comfortably between saccharine and bitter. The peach black tea was also decent. While the peach puree itself had a very one-dimensional flavor and was quite obviously not real peach, the end result of the peach puree mixed alongside the black tea and tapioca balls was nonetheless delightful and refreshing. Of course, most boba tea shops don’t use real fruit in their teas anyway, but a more authentic fruit flavor would have been a nice addition.

The tapioca balls themselves were unobjectionable. Naturally, there is a good degree of variance in peoples’ preferences in the consistency, texture and flavor of the boba, but most would

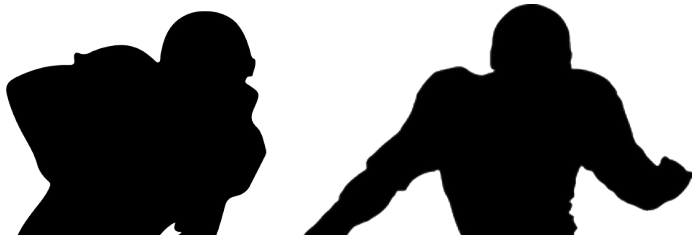
likely enjoy RareTea’s tapioca balls. They’re on the firm and chewier side, generously given and thoroughly sweetened — nothing far out of the ordinary expectations for boba.

There is, however, a certain something left to be desired in the tapioca balls; they lack a softness that usually adds an interesting juxtaposition to the chewiness.

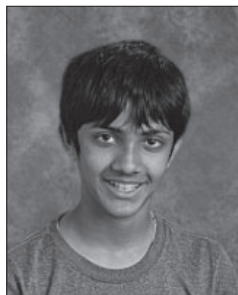
Regardless, RareTea’s ability to stay running during the pandemic is admirable, especially with the constant threat of shutdowns looming over San Mateo businesses. Even though nothing besides its location really distinguishes it from the countless other boba shops in San Mateo, RareTea provides another convenient place to grab boba tea from, with a solid array of options, reliable boba and good quality tea.

OUR OUTLOOK





Opinion: Rooney Rule



Pratham Valluri
SPORTS WRITER

Over the past few years, racism has been a huge topic in the NFL. Hiring practices in the NFL still remain a problem. For a league that is 70% Black, it is shameful that there are only three Black head coaches with a permanent job — Pittsburgh Steelers' Mike Tomlin, Miami Dolphins' Brian Flores and Los Angeles Chargers' Anthony Lynn. These coaches have a winning percentage of 63%.

The dismissal of Black head coaches Tony Dungy of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers and Dennis Green of the Minnesota Vikings in 2002 publicized the NFL's dearth of minority coaches, scouts and front office personnel. The firing caused an uproar because Dungy was coming off of a 9-7 season where the Buccaneers had made the playoffs and Green had nine winning seasons in the past 10 years. After the incident, lawyers Johnnie Cochran and Cyrus Mehri decided to challenge the NFL's practices of hiring coaches.

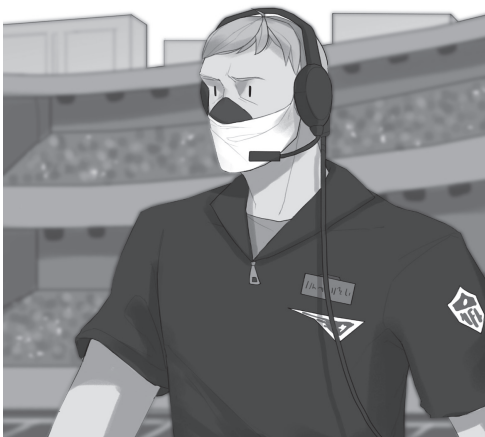
University of Pennsylvania sociologist Jane Madden found that Black head coaches averaged over nine wins a season while white coaches averaged around eight wins a season. A Black coach took their team to the playoffs 69% of the time compared to only 39% of the time for white coaches. These firings of coaches caused the NFL to change its hiring practices, and Steelers owner Dan Rooney led a committee that created the Rooney Rule.

The rule requires league teams to interview ethnic minority candidates for head coaching and senior football

and consider them for the job.

Despite the rule, there have only been 21 minority head coaches in the NFL's history, which means that only 4% of the NFL's past and present coaches have been minorities. Only 19% of minority head coaches keep their job over four seasons, compared to 25% of white head coaches. In addition, minority head coaches land with rebuilding teams more often, where they have to work with little talent and don't produce results as quickly. According to the Undeclared, 14% of minority head coaches were hired to a team

hired white head coaches despite the Giants meeting with Kansas City Chiefs offensive coordinator Eric Bieniemy, an African American assistant coach many people considered to be the best available coach. Instead, the Giants hired Joe Judge, the special teams coach for the New England Patriots, who had no experience with coordination. The Panthers hired Matt Rhule, the Baylor head coach. The Cowboys hired Mike McCarthy, who had just been released by the Green Bay Packers due to his lack of creativity in calling plays.



KAITLYN HA

with five or fewer wins the previous season in comparison to 8% of white coaches.

If minority head coaches go to teams with less talent, why are they not getting more time to acquire better players and coach them? Coaches need at least a few years to change a team's personnel and culture, which isn't possible when minority coaches are cut after one poor season.

In some cases, the firings are warranted. Jackson was previously the Oakland Raiders head coach in 2010 and was fired after just one season record of 8-8. He then went on to head coach the Cleveland Browns starting in 2016 and was let go after accumulating a record of 3-36-1; his performance clearly did not match their expectations.

But there are many instances where this is not the

To nobody's surprise, all of these teams have losing records due to injuries, a lack of team chemistry and pitiful coaching.

On the other hand, Bieniemy's coaching record for the Chiefs is 8-1. The team also leads the league in passing yards per game and is second in the league in terms of points per game.

Throughout the history of the NFL, people have constantly highlighted the huge role racism has played in the lack of minority coaches and front office members. Whether it was Steve Harvey joking at the 2019 NFL awards ceremony about the absence of an NFL team owned by a Black man or former players Kellen Winslow and John Wooten putting together a group of scouts, coaches and front office members to advocate for the Rooney Rule, minority coaches have to start getting more opportunities. Right now there are 12 assistant coaches in the NFL who are Black and many of them are on winning teams. In order for minority coaches to become prominent in the NFL, teams have to first give them a chance.

Review: 'Jungleland'

Julia Renner
SPORTS WRITER

The movie "Jungleland," starring Charlie Hunnam and Jack O'Connell, is a powerful film that explores the dark world of underground sports. Directed by Max Winkler and written by Theodore Bressman, David Branson Smith and Winkler, the movie premiered on Sept. 12, 2019 at the Toronto International Film Festival and was officially released in the U.S. on Nov. 6, 2020.

O'Connell plays Lion Kaminski, a boxer, and Hunnam plays his brother, Stanley Kaminski, his struggling manager. In the past, Stan made a dirty deal that ended up getting Lion banned from the traditional boxing circuit. However, things can only

Garcia does an incredible job creating captivating images throughout the film. From early morning boxing sessions in front of a beautiful sunset to bright neon lights in cities along their journey, getting drawn into the film and feeling as if you are there is very easy.

I found the actual boxing matches to be the most interesting. The dirty setting, loosely wrapped hands, roar of the sketchy crowd, blood spatters and smoky back alleys complete the mood of a true underground street fight. The camera placement and choreography of the movements do a fairly good job of making Lion's punches appear genuine. Unlike some other films where you completely feel like a fight is going on in front of you,

"The dirty setting, loosely wrapped hands, roar of the sketchy crowd, blood spatters and smoky back alleys complete the mood"

go up from there as the brothers plan on using all of their savings to get to San Francisco for a bare-knuckle boxing match with a \$100,000 prize.

However, along with Stan's mess-up with his brother's career, Stan owes a lot of money to a gangster named Pepper (Jonathan Majors). To clear his debt, Pepper offers Stan a deal to clear his financial debt that entails driving a woman named Sky (Jessica Barden) to Reno for a "family matter," a coverup for her delivery to a mob boss, which the brothers assumed to be sex work. After this arrangement is made, the true plot of the story begins to unfold.

The movie's main plot seems to be boxing, but it goes much deeper than that. Of course, the task seems simple: drive a mysterious girl to Reno, and Stan's gambling debt is paid. However, nothing can ever be that simple. Car, money and sibling trouble and Lion's growing protectiveness over Sky stunt their seemingly easy task.

The plot is not the only captivating part of the movie. The character development and mood of the film rise above the plot. The mysterious mood is enhanced by plenty of high stakes moments, allowing the characters to compliment each other in a chaotic yet entertaining way. Stan is very charismatic, but also slightly sleazy, while Lion is quiet and angsty, which is surprising for a boxer. Though they fight a lot, the brotherly relationship between Stan and Lion is one of the most impactful dynamics of the warped boxing story. Sky is the most compelling character. She has lived a very rough life being handed around, but remains strong and witty through it all.

The cinematography of the film is stunning. Up-and-coming cinematographer Damián

though, some of the punches thrown were not realistic at all, leading me to fall out of the on-screen universe at times.

As much as this movie is unique with its ever-changing plotline, it is also somewhat conventional. The theme of two polar opposite brothers, one good and one bad, has been seen time and time again. However, the combination of this theme with threatening gangsters, a diffi-



IMDB

cult road trip, a cunning travel companion and the overall complex plot of boxing does a lot to set this movie apart from others. It does a very respectable job of making a unique, interesting story out of a somewhat over-used concept.

When I started this film, I was expecting it to be one dimensional: a simple story of two brothers trying to make their way through the boxing circuit. However, I was pleasantly surprised to delve into the other layers of the movie: family, adventure, risk and reward. It is a story about boxing packed with drama communicated through a road movie.

OUR OUTLOOK



"Despite the rule, there have only been 21 minority head coaches in the NFL's history"

operation jobs. The rule doesn't necessarily mean teams have to hire more minority coaches; they simply have to interview

case. Just this year, the Dallas Cowboys, New York Giants and Carolina Panthers had coaching vacancies. All three of them

Correcting controversial team names

Stephanie Lin
SPORTS WRITER

The names and mascots of sports teams should be a symbol of honor and pride, yet sometimes these names carry controversial meanings that people are unaware of. What happens when such names or mascots are associated with derogatory slurs?

“Rather than honoring Native peoples, these caricatures and stereotypes are harmful”

Increasing awareness towards systemic racism, such as with the Black Lives Matter movement, has given rise to a wave of protests against racial inequality. Media influence has drawn public attention to the issue of discrimination against minorities, leading the public to revisit the racist connotations associated with the names of some well known sports teams in the U.S. One of the teams involved is the Washington Football Team, formerly known as the Washington Redskins.

A total of 15 Native American advocacy groups signed a letter to the NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell demanding the immediate change of the name, Washington Redskins, due to its insensitivity to the history behind the name. “Redskin” was first used by European colonizers arriving to

North America more than 200 years ago as a racial identifier, but today referring to a certain racial group by skin color is largely considered racial discrimination and offensive.

The word “redskin” was frequently used as a derogatory slur to refer to Native Americans, who were portrayed as savages and uncivilized people in popular American Holly-

wood cowboy movies. Some also believe the name also carries connotation to the mass killings of Native Americans that occurred in American history. The team’s original fight song, “Hail to the Redskins,” originally referred to scalping, the practice of killing and removing the scalps of enemies to sell or to use as trophies. The stanza seen as most offensive was removed in the 1960s after pressure from Native American groups.

“Rather than honoring Native peoples, these caricatures and stereotypes are harmful, [and] perpetuate negative stereotypes of America’s first peoples,” said the National Congress of American Indians on their website.

For decades, multiple Native American groups have been protesting the 88-year-old football team’s mascot: a picture of a Native American

side profile. Since July of 2020, the Washington Redskins have been renamed the Washington Football Team and will remain so until they pick a new name and mascot for the season.

The Navajo Nation welcomes the change. “For generations, this team name and logo [have] misrepresented the true history and events that define the term ‘redskins,’” said Nez, the current president of the Navajo Nation, in a statement released on Twitter.

But not all Native Americans agree that changing the Washington Football Team’s name was necessary. According to a poll conducted by the Washington Post in 2016, nine out of 10 Native Americans were not offended by the team name. However, a poll conducted by the University of California, Berkeley in 2020 reported that

“Media influence has drawn public attention to the issue of discrimination against minorities”

49% of Native Americans found the word “redskin” offensive. The surveys highlight the difference of opinions among Native Americans and how they are changing over time.

Similarly, the Kansas City Chiefs are reexamining their team name in light of the Washington Football Team’s name change. The team was originally named after former

Mayor Harold Roe Bartle, a non-Native American man who according to a legend from his Boy Scout troop, the Mic-O-Says, was nicknamed “Chief Lone Bear” by an Arapaho Indian chief. Bartle founded the Mic-O-Says, which painted their faces and wore regalia. Despite its Native American references, the team does not plan to change their name. However, there might be other changes to their traditions and fans’ game outfits.

One of the Kansas City Chiefs’ most famous traditions is the “tomahawk chop,” a chant and arm gesture used when celebrating a play in the game or as a pregame tradition. As a pregame tradition, Chiefs Cheerleaders, celebrities and former players beat the drum while the fans in the stadium hum a tune and make

the forwards and backwards hand gesture. There is currently debate over whether the “tomahawk chop” is offensive and should be removed. For some, the chant mocks and exaggerates negative Native American stereotypes.

Fans may also no longer be able to dress as Native Americans because it is often seen as disrespectful and considered

cultural appropriation. In a recent statement released by the Kansas City Chiefs, they banned fans from wearing headdresses and any Native American styled face paint that were deemed derogatory.

While these bans might be disappointing for some fans, there are still plenty of opportunities to demonstrate devotion to their favorite teams in inoffensive ways.

SIMPLIFIED HISTORY OF THE WASHINGTON FOOTBALL TEAM'S NAME CONTROVERSY

1971
The Washington Football Team's name is first publicly recognized as a slur.

1972
The “Redskins” logo is released and activists ask for it to be changed.

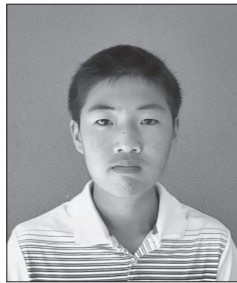
1992
Protesters sign a petition to try and take away the team's name registrations.

2013
The team's owner, Daniel Snyder tells USA Today that the team will “never change the name.”

2020
The team retires the “Redskins” logo and name. Their temporary name is The Washington Football Team.

SOURCE: CBS SPORTS
ELIZABETH VAN BLOMMESTEIN

Opinion: athletes should not be receiving backlash for BLM advocacy



Cooper Wong
SPORTS WRITER

Almost four years ago, Colin Kaepernick lost his job and his future in the NFL when he refused to stand for the national anthem in protest of systemic racism. This caught the eye of the entire country, which created controversy and sparked protests for racial equality. Other athletes also began kneeling, causing major conflicts with those in disagreement with the Black Lives Matter movement. These athletes are unfairly judged for expressing their opinions by racist and intolerant critics who are more interested in shutting down Black voices than keeping politics out of sports.

Kaepernick’s protests of the national anthem sparked

a conversation throughout the U.S. — one that led to protests and boycotting nationally as well as ignited the flame of social revolution.

In an ESPN interview the same year, LeBron James and Kevin Durant criticized President Donald Trump and talked about the struggles of being Black in America. Not surprisingly, they received major backlash from many right-wingers.

In response to James’s criticism of Trump, Laura Ingraham from Fox News told James and Durant to “shut up and dribble.” This isn’t the first time Ingraham has made a statement as outrageous as this. She has used different variants of the phrase to call out left-wing celebrities for talking about politics such as when she told Jimmy Kimmel to “shut up and make us laugh every once in a while.”

“In a country that has a widespread issue of intolerance, we have to learn to listen”

However, in a similar situation this year, New Orleans Saints quarterback Drew Brees got into political controversy of his own. Brees called kneeling

and protesting disrespectful to the country. Not surprisingly, Ingraham defended Brees instead of attacking him.

“I will never agree with anybody disrespecting the flag of the United States of America or our country,” Ingraham said in response to Brees’s stance on kneeling.

This was to be expected, as she defended Brees in quite a hypocritical manner. She stated that Brees is “allowed to have his views” and that “this is beyond football.” But when James and Durant express their views, according to Ingraham, they should “shut up and dribble.” Both James and Brees shared their personal opinions, and yet James was the only one being told to keep sports and politics apart. Clearly Ingraham

major problems that continue to exist in our country today.

During this year’s NBA playoffs, the players of the Milwaukee Bucks refused to come out of their locker room and play in



wake of the shooting of Jacob Blake three days prior in Kenosha, Wisconsin. This led to a lot of controversy and backlash, but players in leagues like the WNBA, MLB and MLS also began to protest against playing in their games. Many of these issues have personally affected a lot of athletes. Players are trying to bring more awareness to systemic racism. They are using their platform to reach a broader audience and that should be applauded rather than condemned.

Even if people disagree with athletes’ views of the country and social justice is-

sues, attempting to suppress celebrities is part of the problem itself. Everyone should be able to express their beliefs freely. We don’t live in a perfect society. One reason why our country contains so much bottled up racism is because some people’s voices cannot be heard. Some athletes are being told to stay silent, while others are praised for their views.

In a country that has a widespread issue of intolerance, we have to learn to listen. To combat the issues in our country, we cannot ignore them otherwise these issues will simply build up.

Athletes should remember that there will be unfair treatment, and they cannot please both sides. Though this may be the case, it should not stop them from speaking up about what they believe in. I believe that they are doing the right thing, but others may not. They should tread carefully, knowing that they might be the target of hate.

People with platforms, such as athletes, should be encouraged to spread awareness rather than be criticized for sharing their beliefs.

Impact of body image issues on student athletes

Colin Johnson
SPORTS WRITER

Sports are often valued as a way to stay fit and healthy, and many people around the world see athletes as having the ideal body. However, many athletes experience body image issues, partly due to the high expectations of the general public of what an athlete should look like.

American psychologist William Sheldon defined three main body types based on body composition and skeletal structure: ectomorphs, endomorphs and mesomorphs. Ectomorphs are tall and skinny and have little muscle or fat. Endomorphs are the opposite: they have more muscle but also more body fat and a slower metabolism. Mesomorphs are what most people think of as the ideal athlete. They are lean and gain muscle easily, contributing to a more defined structure. People are usually a combination of these body types, but body types don't reveal everything about an athlete.

"When we look at one another, we see muscle or we see fat," said wrestling Coach Sean Schochet. "We don't see agility, quickness, flexibility, balance. Those are all equally important to muscular strength. ... Some body types show muscle, and some body types have internal muscle. They're as strong [as they] can be, but [because of] whatever genetics are in that individual, they don't show it externally."

Even though elite athletes have the essential skills to excel at their sport, 49.2% of female NCAA Division 1 athletes deal with body image issues. Many of these issues stem from stereotypes within sports and pressures from daily life.

"The most common questions that I get are either how do I get more muscular or look bigger," said strength and conditioning Coach Michael Wu. "On the opposite end of the spectrum, I'll notice some athletes in certain sports won't want to lift because they're afraid of how it might make them look physically. Some students might not push themselves as hard, because [they] don't want to get [their] arms too big or [their] legs too big. [Otherwise] it's like how do I get my pecs popping and all that nonsense."

On top of that, there are differing societal expectations for how women and men should look. The National Institute on Media and the Family reported that roughly 78% of females in America are unhappy with their bodies by 17 years old. Men aren't immune to this pressure either. According to the Body Image Therapy Center, 43% of men are displeased with their body. Muscle dysmorphia, a form of body dysmorphic disorder, is common among male athletes and is characterized by a preoccupation with one's body image, excessive exercise to bulk up and fear of losing weight and getting weaker.

"Very few male athletes whom I work with will ever say 'I don't want to do this lift, because I don't want my legs getting bigger,'" Wu said. "When I'm coaching, especially football, I always have to tell them 'don't try to lift [anything] too heavy' or 'make sure you're resting enough,' whereas when I'm working with female athletes, the times that I have to push them to lift more weight occur at a much higher frequency."

Playing a sport can also inspire body confidence. At its core, sports are performance-driven activities. How an athlete looks doesn't matter if they can excel at their role.

"Before I thought that I wouldn't be able to do a lot of sports, because I had a bigger body, ... but I know that I can get my job done," said sophomore cheer backspot Gabriel Nersessian. "I can do what I need to do, and even though I am bigger I can still backspot girls. ... I know I can get that job done very well because I have a lot of force to hold them up."

Sometimes, being in athletics and staying healthy can be enough to keep a positive body image.

"I don't think I've ever had body image issues," said junior Mary Torres, a cross country and track and field runner. "I've always been an athletic person and just accepted that. [Running has] always kept me relatively in shape, and I never really thought about having to keep

my body a certain way, just because sports always did that for me."

To combat body image problems, Schochet recommends staying in sports. Working hard and achieving goals can increase self-esteem. He also recommends talking to a trusted adult and finding help when needed.

"When we find success, not just winning or losing, by putting in our full effort and getting something out of it,

an uncle or cousin. Someone you trust. Tell someone. Don't keep it to yourself because problems we keep ourselves can only get worse."

As well as finding help from others, Nersessian believes that one also has to cast out the negative comments from society.

"Don't listen to people who say that your body's not right for a certain type of sport and that you should look a certain way," Nersessian said. "As

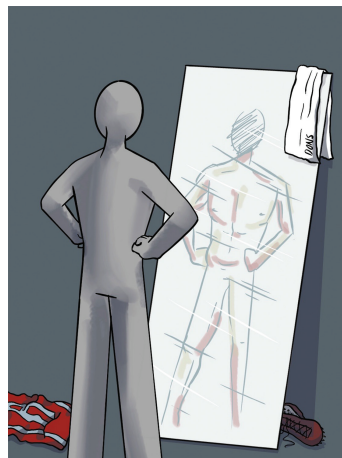
long as you're having fun, and you're enjoying what you do, you shouldn't let anyone get in your way."

In most cases, the way someone looks doesn't matter for performance. As long as athletes keep training hard and doing their best to succeed, the way one's body looks should not be a priority.

"[Don't] make [your body] your main focus,"

Torres said. "Focus on your sport and train the right way for what you're doing and then you can't be mad at your body for helping you compete."

Body image issues are prevalent and affect many athletes. However, with early intervention, body image can be addressed in a healthy way.



JESSICA FU

it might mean losing but losing with dignity," Schochet said. "Our self-esteem goes up, and all body image issues are all related to self-esteem. First admit it to yourself, and then admit it to someone else. Maybe it's a parent, maybe it's a best friend. Maybe it's a school counselor, a teacher,

In the classroom and on the court: teachers coaching athletes (Part II)



From left to right: Steve Ratto, Michael Flynn, William Colglazier, Samantha Belvini.



SMUHS AND COURTESY OF WILLIAM COLGLAZIER

Emma Quanbeck
SPORTS WRITER

As a large part of the Aragon community, involvement in athletics doesn't just entail students; teachers from various departments also work outside of the classroom to support athletes. Despite the time commitment, teachers involved agree that sports shape their views of students outside the classroom.

William Colglazier, a College Preparatory and Advanced Placement history teacher, coached varsity girls soccer from 2006 to 2012, starting as an assistant coach and transitioning to head coach in 2008.

"When I was student teaching here, I befriended the girls

soccer coach at that time, Mike Flynn," Colglazier said. "We talked soccer and watched soccer games."

Colglazier stopped coaching due to the difficulties of balancing it with the rest of his life.

"For four months out of the year, it was super important to me to be a good coach and that took away from other hobbies to the point where it got too much," Colglazier said. "I had to step away, because I was spending more time with other people's kids than my own, and it was sad to have to leave."

AP Physics teacher Steve Ratto served as wrestling head coach from 2002 until 2015.

"I was always interested in helping," Ratto said.

"[During] my first year as a teacher, [the wrestling team] didn't have a coach, so people got in contact with me and asked me if I could coach wrestling so that they could have a season."

However, similar to Colglazier, Ratto also gave up coaching due to the struggle of juggling coaching with other aspects in his life.

"There were many times where I missed things because of all the tournaments and the practices," Ratto said. "Eventually, I had to make the choice of making [the team] more of a priority ... more than before."

Biology and anatomy and physiology teacher Samantha

Belvini is currently an assistant coach for the track and field team, primarily helping with long jump and triple jump. Belvini always had interest in coaching sports because of her athletic background.

"I did track and field in middle school and high school and in college," Belvini said. "I always really wanted to coach, [and] I saw that opportunity."

Since teachers involved in athletics are on campus, there's a huge contrast between them and coaches who

having guided them throughout their high school career.

"My favorite thing was connecting with the students, having something outside of the classroom to be able to communicate with them," Ratto said. "Seeing the students and the wrestlers grow and watching their confidence and ability over that time period was just absolutely amazing."

Colglazier enjoyed the competitive aspect of coaching girls soccer, especially seasonal playoffs.

"I had to step away, because I was spending more time with other people's kids than my own"

are off campus. Teachers are often able to interact with their students and athletes.

"Being able to interact with students in a way outside of academics is a different vibe," Belvini said. "They listen ... because it's a different world, and then I also get to meet more Aragon students which is always nice."

As the former head coach of the wrestling team, Ratto treasured his ability to watch his wrestlers grow from timid freshmen to experienced seniors,

"It's exciting to work so hard, and at the end of the year, you get to prove it," Colglazier said. "All teams are all the same at the start of the game, so I liked that fairness in the challenge of it."

Despite the challenges of juggling coaching and teaching, while doing both, teachers are able to form closer bonds with students. Although some have to give up the two jobs at once, the experiences and memories made lasted past the seasons they were involved in.