

# The ARAGON OUTLOOK

Thursday | March 25, 2021 | Volume 61, Issue 4

900 Alameda de las Pulgas, San Mateo, CA 94402

Aragon High School

Racial divide caused by GATE Page 6



People protest against the surge in hate crimes.

KAYLA LI

## Rise in hate crimes against Asian Americans

Cameron Leung  
NEWS WRITER

Since the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic on March 11, 2020, the number of anti-Asian hate crimes has surged by as much as 150% in major U.S. cities such as New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco. Individuals and Asian businesses alike have become frequent targets of assault and vandalism. Asian Americans Advancing Justice, a nonprofit civil rights organization, reported more than 3,000 accounts of hate incidents spanning physical, verbal and virtual harassment in the past year.

After the WHO pinpointed Wuhan, China as the origin of the coronavirus, Chinese Americans have been accused of being unsanitary foreigners embodying and spreading the virus. Former President Donald Trump encouraged these racist sentiments by referring to the virus as the “China Virus” and the “Kung Flu” beginning in March 2020.

This prejudiced hostility has spread to the entire Asian community. In early January, two cherry blossom trees that were originally planted in 1994 were found destroyed in Japantown, San Francisco. Holding both historical and cultural significance, this act left many Japanese Americans upset. The

community led a crowdsourcing campaign that raised nearly \$33,000 to replace the trees.

On March 16, eight people, including six Asian American women, were killed in a shooting at Asian-owned spas in Atlanta, Georgia. Asian Americans are no strangers to racism and discrimination as this act of violence is just one of many they have experienced over the past year.

Junior Lauren Mok, vice president of Asian Culture Club, accredited the differences in cities’ hate incident records to their diversity concentrations and community size.

“[San Mateo is] a lot smaller than Los Angeles and San  
CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

## Bark for Schools: internet safety through web filtering

Grace Xia and Elizabeth van Blommestein  
FEATURES AND SPORTS EDITORS

On March 1, the San Mateo Union High School District started using a paid, premium version of Bark for Schools, a school safety company that searches for and logs phrases linked to potential hazards to supervise student activity on Google Workplace accounts.

Bark was implemented to address several issues including concerns surrounding the decrease in in-person interactions with peers and staff and the increase in cyberbullying and hate speech-related incidents within the SMUHSD. The grand jury report released on Sept. 24 detailed the need for reform following an investigation of school hate incidents. The software has the ability to filter for phrases related to bullying, depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, drug and alcohol abuse, hate speech, risky contact, self-harm, sex-

tortion (sexual blackmail) or sexual content, violence, body image issues, dangerous organizations, profanity and weapons in both English and Spanish. Bark administrators are also able to contact the SMUHSD about severe cases.

“Since the pandemic, we have surged past our student hospitalizations from 2019 and 2020,” said SMUHSD Manager of Mental Health Programs April Torres. “We had a certain amount of student [hospitalizations] in our first semester of 2020. We surpassed that for a whole year in one semester, along with [Child Protective Services] reports, and some other reporting issues. We’ve definitely seen an uptick in harm to self or others ... definitely a lot of anxiety, a lot of depression, isolation, a lot of family issues that have really been exacerbated because they’re all home or [because] people lose their jobs ... or are sick.”

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Aragon in-person classes are set to open to freshmen on March 29.

RAHUL VISHWA

## SMUHSD reopening plans underway

Kamron Ramelmeier  
NEWS WRITER

Reopening plans are now underway as the San Mateo Union High School District moves forward with the spring semester. San Mateo County’s COVID-19 risk designation was changed from red to orange on March 16, meaning the district can begin enacting Phase 3 of their plan to reopen schools, where all students who choose to will return to in-person learning. Starting March 29,

freshmen will be invited back to campus and on April 12, after spring break, all other grades can begin returning. On March 10, Phase 1 began with the district bringing in students with individualized education plans in person.

District staff and the teachers’ association made a return-to-campus agreement earlier this school year. The district has also been working to keep individual campuses informed.

“The district gave all school sites a template to follow in

terms of all the things we should include in our return-to-school reopening plans,” said Principal Valerie Arbizu. “One struggle [we’re having] is staffing and making sure we have enough people on campus to walk around and remind students to follow protocols such as being physically distanced and having masks on.”

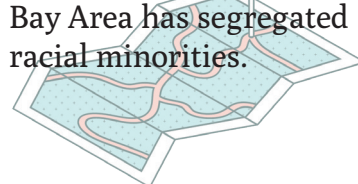
The district is moving forward with the agreement and is closely following state guidance plans.

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### FEATURES

#### Redlining

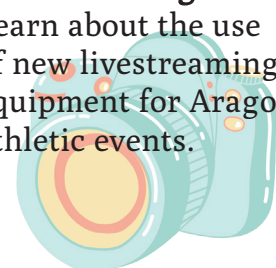
Read about how the legacy of redlining in the Bay Area has segregated racial minorities.



### SPORTS

#### Livestreaming

Learn about the use of new livestreaming equipment for Aragon’s athletic events.



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# AP exams amidst pandemic

Sophia Qin and Wreetom Dutta  
NEWS EDITOR AND NEWS WRITER

The 2020-2021 remote school year has posed additional challenges for Advanced Placement teachers and students across the peninsula, who must prepare for the rigorous AP exam in a virtual environment. To accommodate these uncertainties, the College Board has modified the traditional AP exams for this school year.

AP Literature and Composition teacher Rob Thurtle adjusted his teaching style to adapt to a new learning format.

"If we were in person, I might allow for more free-form discussion time," Thurtle said. "[For] online, I think it is important to keep changing the activities to keep the class engaged."

The time constraint of only meeting for 2.5 periods per week also forces AP teachers to teach material at a faster pace or strategize with delivering the information in a different way.

"I can't cut out topics with less time," said AP Calculus

cedure, technical difficulties and new testing rules were among the issues discussed.

On March 8, the SMUHSD retracted its initial decision and followed up with a binding survey, allowing students to choose between two options the district selected from the three College Board testing dates.

"More doors opened for us to consider," Elenz-Martin said. "We wanted to make a data informed decision to accommodate and provide, within the safety guidelines, what we can to make sure that students feel successful."

Online exams are regulated with strict anti-cheating measures. Students may not skip questions nor return to a previous problem. The format for paper-pencil exams will stay the same as in a regular school year, albeit students will be distanced from one another.

"Math is best done with pencil and paper in person," Jacobs said. "But I think that the College Board has made their digital option just as effective, so there's ... pros and

**"College Board has made their digital option just as effective, so there's no advantage either way"**

AB teacher Adam Jacobs. "[Instead], I have to ... get creative in terms of how I'm relaying the information."

On Feb. 4, the College Board announced three AP test session options ranging from the weeks of May 3, May 18, June 1 and June 7.

At first on Feb. 19, the San Mateo High School Union District released a decision to administer all AP exams digitally due to uncertainties with San Mateo County's health and safety guidelines. Moreover, in-person testing dates conflicted with final exam and graduation schedules.

"[College Board's announcement] didn't give districts time to process all of the different scenarios," Elenz-Martin said. "In the initial stages when there were so many of those unknowns, the safest and most feasible ... window that was the least disruptive was the June [digital] administration."

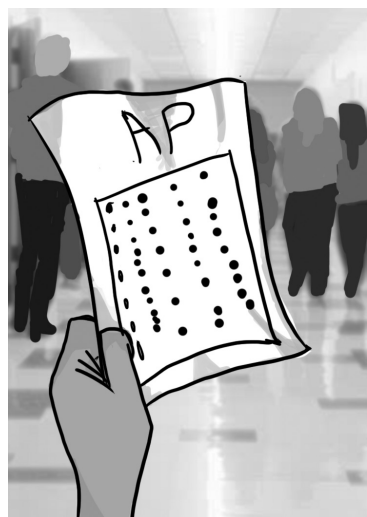
However, as San Mateo County moved to lower COVID-19 restriction tiers, a survey was sent to families and students on Feb. 24 to collect more feedback on preferences. Another push for the district to rethink was a petition began by district parents, who claimed the digital format put students at a disadvantage. The complicated setup pro-

cedure, technical difficulties and new testing rules were among the issues discussed.

cons to each of [the options]." In the Aragon community, responses varied. While some wish to take the exam in school for a less disruptive environment, others favor the comfort of home without needing to wear a mask.

"With [the] pandemic and health concerns, it's great that the students have a choice," Jacobs said. "I'm all about students having the best opportunity ... to show what they've learned in class, whether that's in person or digitally."

In the new AP testing framework, Aragon adjusted the final exam and graduation schedule. 1,412 AP tests will be administered by Aragon to showcase what students have accomplished this school year during distance learning.



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# New classes at Aragon

Kiara Lopez  
NEWS WRITER

As the school year comes to a close, student programming begins for the 2021-2022 school year. Among the already familiar course roster have appeared several new classes, such as agency and social justice, path to statistics, data science and AP Spanish Literature. These new curriculums can provide academic enrichment and social benefits to students looking to explore different careers and academic paths.

Marie Rose Escoto will teach AP Spanish Literature next year after advocating for the course since 2017. While the class is not a requirement, it is highly recommended for Spanish-speaking students who are motivated to improve their writing skills or enjoy literature. This course is available to students who have passed AP Spanish Language or Spanish IV Honors with a grade of B- or better.

While the course does not cover grammar, it studies multiple Latin American literary texts over the year. The diverse curriculum allows students to reflect on many different voices and cultures. The class discusses topics such as literary creation and interpersonal relations.

"I love literature and helping my kids become better writers and understand [readings] better," Escoto said. "You can see the difference when my [students] start taking the class, and towards the end they can speak better in Spanish and write better."

Agency and social justice, co-created by Lindsay Bussey and Jerrica Keane, will be the first class at Aragon to completely focus on empowering students to learn about social justice and create action plans to address socioeconomic issues. Offered to juniors and seniors, the interdisciplinary course emphasizes the belief that students can make a

change in their community.

"I am really interested in learning about the world and how, especially in our country, to change it for the better," said junior Sara Killoran who plans to take the class next year. "I think it will help me be more informed in the political environment of this world and in this country."

Students are expected to improve self-advocacy and critical thinking skills and learn to respond to different viewpoints in order to develop a more complete understanding of race relations. Bussey and Keane are hopeful that students impacted by social injustice will realize their voices matter and that they can be change-makers.

"We were very inspired by the youth that were leading these [Black Lives Matter] movements [and] protests, that were speaking up [and] speaking truth to power," Bussey said. "We wanted to create a safe, organized platform for students to be able

**"We wanted to create a safe, organized platform for students to ... continue their activism"**

to continue that work during the school year and to be able to have a framework in which to continue their activism."

In addition, new math classes will offer students more advanced and personalized pathways in STEM.

Taught by math teacher Craig Sipple, data science will offer an alternate path for students who don't plan on taking calculus in high school. Students who have already taken geometry are eligible to enroll. This course is recognized by the University of California and California State University schools as an equivalent class to Algebra II.

"Data science is kind of a hybrid of statistics and computer science," Sipple said. "It's statis-

tics, but we also ... do coding to make statistical models that are used for predictions."

Students will learn how to properly use Google Sheets for practical tasks such as budgeting. After taking the course, they will be able to organize and enter data using the statistical programming language R, a skill used by data scientists and business analysts.

"We have technology that can crunch numbers for us," Sipple said. "The class is not so much about cranking out [equations] by hand. It's more about having technology crunch the numbers for us. Then we still need human beings to interpret the data."

Path to statistics, also taught by Sipple, is a course designed to prepare students for college level statistics and for those not majoring in STEM. Unlike AP Statistics, there is no AP exam for path to statistics, which gives students more time

to learn material instead of reviewing in April. This course will relate math to daily activities where one must understand the data presented. Exploring statistics to find patterns in everyday life will allow students to establish their own opinions on societal matter.

"We want people to ... be able to tell facts from fiction," Sipple said. "Part of that is being able to look at data ... and make decisions."

These new courses are only a few of the many available to students next year. All classes will provide students with the opportunity to dive deeper into what career path they want to pursue and enhance their knowledge on subjects that interest them.



# Editorial: Bark surveillance imposes on student privacy

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

Concerns over internet safety prompted the San Mateo Union High School District to intervene with computer content monitoring software, Bark for Schools. On March 2, Superintendent Kevin Skelly sent a memo inadequately notifying students and families that Bark was being used to surveil student activities through their SMUHSD email accounts, but didn't explain much else including the method and ex-

and the lack of transparency from the district regarding Bark's implementation only leads to distrust. The editors of The Outlook urge the district to better address the negative implications of the system and possible sacrifices students will make due to Bark.

Bark uses artificial intelligence to analyze student actions throughout school Google services, including emails and attachments, chat messages, and Drive content such as Docs, Slides, Sheets, photos and videos and notifies district administrators of potential is-

shouldn't have an expectation of complete privacy when using school provided technology and accounts, understanding both the tracking that is taking place and the potential alternatives is still important.

Bark intrudes on student privacy and places administrators in circumstances that they don't need to be involved in. Between March 1 and March 19, Bark reviewed a staggering 2.1 million student records, and although the software may prevent some cyberbullying and alert the district to hate speech, the negative implications of violating student trust and privacy far outweigh the possible benefits. Bark has identified cases of household abuse, self-harm and risky sexual interactions: all deeply personal issues that may not warrant school intervention. If students know about the platform, they may not discuss certain issues with friends or utilize the internet for help. Students reach out to their friends to talk about personal struggles that they may not be comfortable sharing with anybody else. Having school administrators view personal information when a student is not prepared or aware violates not only privacy but could also add additional stress. Simply, the administration isn't in a

position to help students with their personal struggles — especially because most of the people they would catch are the ones who are already trying to help themselves through their peers or online searches.

Implementing Bark also causes equity issues and additional struggles for those seeking resources or advice online. Considering Bark is in the pilot stage and there is no infrastructure in terms of how to discipline students, once Bark is fully integrated it will enable the administration to assign consequences. Research from the U.S. Government Accountability Office showed that Black kids are much more likely to be disciplined in school than white kids, and Bark may lead to the administration learning more about offenses that would be disciplined. Bark could also disproportionately impact LGBTQ+ individuals who may use the internet to better understand themselves and

their sexuality. Overall, participating in internet surveillance normalizes its usage which can be weaponized against more vulnerable communities in the future.

Ultimately, students should have their privacy respected and comprehend the extent of internet surveillance being imposed on them. The district should offer students the opportunity to consent to being monitored as well as uphold the values of privacy, transparency and disclosure. Children should be taught ways to protect themselves and it starts with being well informed. Without the district leading the way in supporting positive values, students won't feel the need to emulate these values themselves — in school or in life.

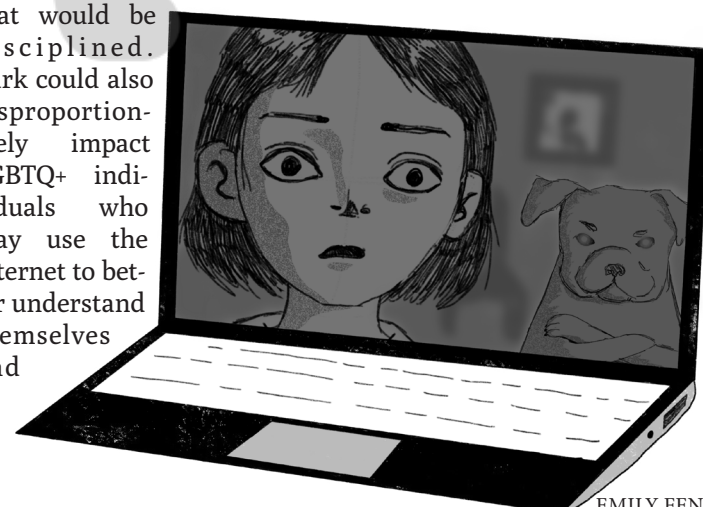
**“The people they would catch are the ones who are already trying to help themselves”**

tent of tracking. The district is using Bark as a pilot, which wasn't disclosed in the memo.

Bark attempts to monitor cyberbullying, suicidal ideation, sexual predation, pornography, threats of violence and more and notifies the district of any potentially harmful activities on student accounts. With minimal evidence of Bark improving student safety, the cost of its implementation is too high to warrant its usage. This surveillance software also compromises student privacy,

sues. Although parents signed an acceptable use policy at the beginning of the year, students did not give informed consent to this degree of surveillance on district technology, especially because using this technology was required.

Even though students are legally able to opt out of being tracked, it would render them unable to use Canvas or any other Google software related to their school account — considerably restricting their learning abilities. Although students



EMILY FENG

## Asian hate crimes

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Francisco,” Mok said. “[Large cities] are spread out and less diverse when you break it down into each neighborhood. [In a small city], there are lots of different ethnic backgrounds and cultures within [one] neighborhood.”

Although xenophobia levels are perceived as significantly lower in San Mateo than in other places, the city is not void of hate. Residents have been verbally attacked, and anti-Chinese messages were graffitied on an Interstate 92 and De Anza Boulevard freeway sign.

“It [brings] a lot of anxiety to my everyday life,” said junior Filipino Club Secretary Parker Guban. “Someone could say, ‘Oh god, you’re Asian. Get away from me.’ Even at school, that happened a lot [at] the beginning of 2020. No one really cared ... because it was a joke. ... I didn’t notice until recently, [but] it doesn’t seem like it should have been said to me at all.”

In an attempt to bring light to these issues, Burlingame seventh grade student Ashlyn So organized and led the Stand Up for Asians rally in Central Park on Feb. 27.

“There’s so much violence, ... and it made me want to do something ... to stop it,” So said. “Within a week, [my family and I] were able to start [a] whole rally [with] 300 plus people ... [which] shows how much support there is in our community.

It makes us become more aware of what’s been going on for many, many years. ... It’s finally time to speak out against this.”

Despite growing support from local government officials and students, the rally was met with some defiance.

“A lot of people were honking, which was great to make some noise, but then, while we were marching, a car sped by,” So said. “This white guy had his whole body out of the window, and he told [us] to go ‘f’ ourselves. It gives us the motivation to stop this [hate] even more because in the middle of such a big cause it’s still happening.”

In addition to rallies, the rise in media attention to support the Asian American community has helped decrease fear around confronting discrimination.

“People are starting to utilize their platforms to share their voices [and others are] more willing to listen,” Mok said. “It’s a good start to [making] changes that were much needed.”

On Jan. 26, President Joe Biden signed a memorandum to condemn the use of derogatory COVID-19 monikers and provide more accessible resources for Asian Americans. In California, Gov. Gavin Newsom budgeted \$1.4 million to fund a hate-tracking and reporting site called Stop Asian American/Pacific Islander Hate. On both the local and national scale, steps are being made to address the ongoing anti-Asian hate crimes.

# The ARAGON OUTLOOK

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# Bark begins to monitor online student activity

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While Bark is currently in its pilot phase, it has already caught incidents of abuse, self-harm and cyberbullying.

“At this rate, we’re talking about 1% of the student population potentially being affected, meaning that we’re going to follow up with them,” said SMUHSD Director of Student Services Don Scatena. “We’re probably talking about 90 in a year ... that we would not

alert indicates abuse or mental health issues, the student may be connected with a wellness counselor or provided other mental health services.

In the case that a student partakes in cyberbullying, usage of hate speech or other hurtful actions, they may face disciplinary consequences, including police involvement, if the infraction is severe enough. The SMUHSD’s responses would follow the Cali-

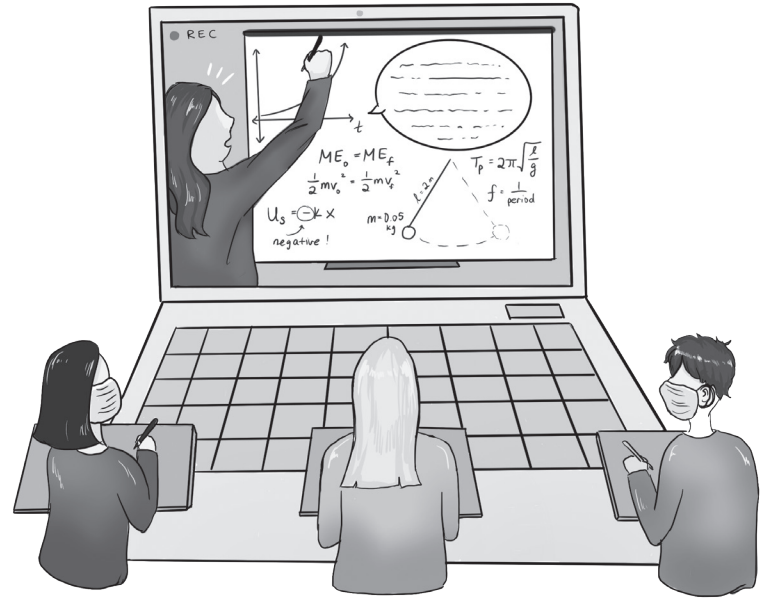
“[We] will probably [send] a survey to our administrative teams or wellness counseling teams to find out if they felt like the use of such a platform helped ensure the safety of the campus better [than before], or [if it was] worse,” Scatena said. “Would these incidents [caught by Bark have] come to light if Bark didn’t exist? If the answer’s ‘No, we wouldn’t have known about it,’ and we had 100 incidents that we followed up on, then you could start to see that [it’s] something of value.”

Aragon administrators hope to increase awareness about Bark’s implementation for students who return to school.

“I’m hoping to include something [about Bark] in our back to school training for students as they’re coming back ... in the next couple of days just to say, ‘Hey, don’t use hate speech in any of your school accounts, because we’re using this other software,” said Aragon Principal Valerie Arbizu. “Keep in mind that we’re still in the pilot implementation phase of this. It came up and was adopted pretty quickly, so we haven’t been able to respond as quickly as we would have liked to.”

Arbizu cautions students against using their SMUHSD accounts to inadvertently disclose private or risky content.

“Students need to know that this works in a similar fashion to what some adults are working through with their businesses, where you



CHRISTINA WU

## Aragon reopens

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“We haven’t asked for anything other than for the district to comply with the guidance from the state,” said SMUHSD Teachers Association President Craig Childress. “If the guidance from the state changed, we would probably meet and negotiate if it affected our agreement.”

The district’s plan to reopen consists of three phases. In Phase 1, students in specialized programs returned to in-person instruction exactly two weeks after San Mateo County transitioned to the red tier on Feb. 24.

“We are first opening for students in specialized education, then opening for our general education students and even then only with 200 to 300 students at a time,” Arbizu said. “[Because] our county [changed] to the red tier, we’re able to open up our phase programs, and it puts us one step forward to let cohorts of students come back.”

Phase 2 allows students in the Middle College program and some voluntary enrichment programs to return, which began the week of March 22. Phase 3 will start the week of March 29 for freshmen and the week of April 12 for sophomores, juniors and seniors.

“We have plexiglass available for teachers,” Arbizu said. “Classrooms are already set up with 12 desks that can be used. ... It’ll still be hard to walk into a classroom where you want to see students working cooperatively.”

fore they actually feel comfortable being on campus.”

In order to make sure that students follow protocols and guidelines, the school will provide them with training documents that outline health, safety, screening and behavioral expectations. The district has also hired safety specialists to come on campus and educate teachers and students.

The required safety protocols for in-person learning will be rigid: custodial and health staff will disinfect the whole campus every night with sanitization machines and products and students will be assigned individually to designated areas six feet apart during lunch. Students will need to wear a mask at all times, except while eating, and be tested for COVID-19 every three weeks. Staff will be tested every two weeks.

While the state is offering a \$6.2 million in-person instruction grant to the district, SMUHSD will not qualify to receive it until schools have opened campuses for at least one grade level, which is a part of Phase 3. Arbizu has some concerns about how the district will continue with their plans.

“[There] is stress and anxiety of coming back as we have a lot of people with small children at home, and no one wants to get their families sick,” Arbizu said. “The SMUHSD is working with the county to get people who are on campus right now vacci-

“At this rate, we’re talking about 1% of the student population potentially being affected”

have found out about [without Bark]. I would say that’s probably a worthwhile investment for the district.”

The SMUHSD previously monitored student Chromebooks with GoGuardian, a software that provided teachers access to the sites students viewed, in addition to their SMUHSD Google Workplaces. In light of the software’s invasiveness, the SMUHSD switched to Bark.

“We felt like [GoGuardian] gave the teachers too much visibility into what the students were doing,” Scatena said. “The difference is that [GoGuardian] was more for instructional purposes. [Bark] is strictly for safety purposes.”

Bark operates through sending an alert to an administrator each time a potentially harmful combination of words is caught in Google applications associated with a student’s Google Workplace, such as Google Documents, Sheets, Slides, Keep, Hangouts, emails, comments and images. The administrator is able to view the context in which the phrase is found as well as the name of the student behind it. Based on the situation, administrators are able to determine whether the alert is a cause for concern.

Bark uses artificial intelligence to improve its accuracy when analyzing phrases. If the

fornia Education Code, a set of laws related to California’s public schools.

“One of the most common ways that a teacher finds out about a student’s issues at home ... is when they write about themselves,” Scatena said. “If it was written on paper, the teacher would have turned [it] over to the administration if there was something of concern.”

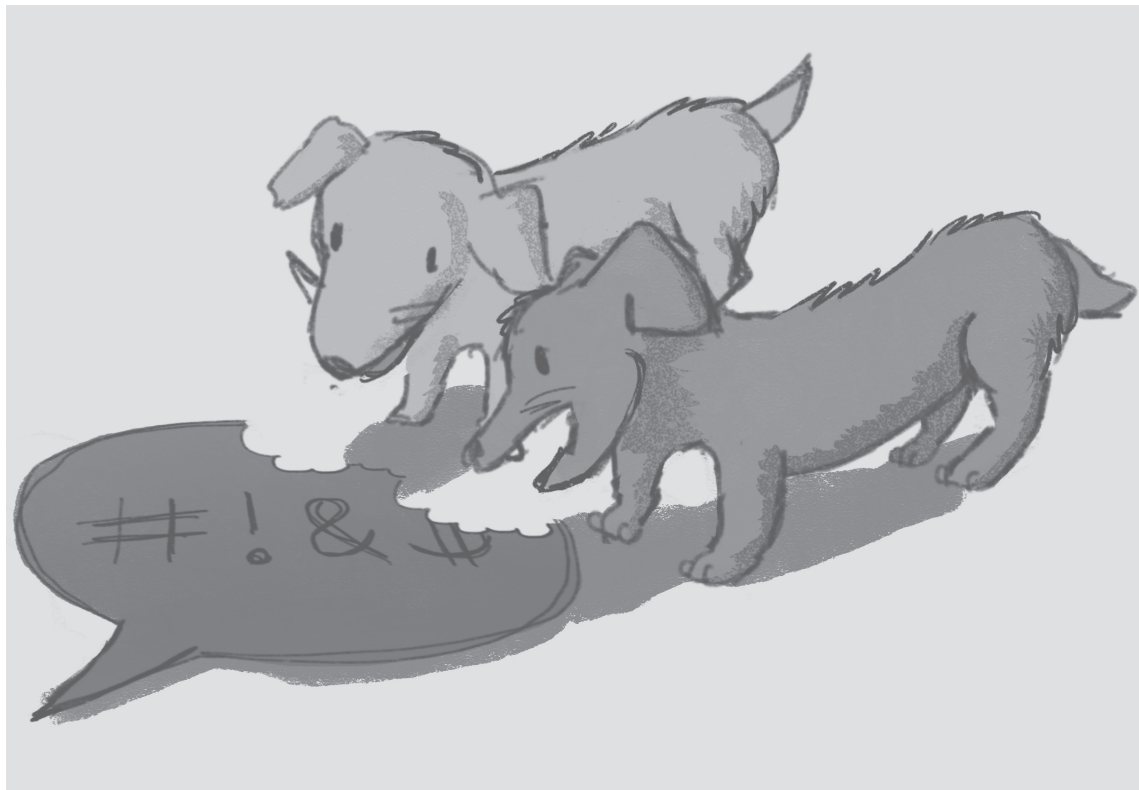
Despite the software’s extensive capabilities, most alerts are not serious enough to warrant a response. Since its implementation, Bark has reviewed 2.1 million records and sent 44 severe alerts across multiple areas, with two requiring emergency responses. Furthermore, out of the 27 alerts of severe profanity Bark

“It ... was adopted pretty quickly, so we haven’t been able to respond as quickly as we would have liked to”

caught, only four were moved on to the administration.

With a price point of about \$2,000 for the remainder of the spring semester and a future annual subscription price of about \$7,500, the SMUHSD plans to use the pilot phase to determine whether Bark will continue being used in the fall.

have to think of the accounts that you have attached to the school as a school account, and not a personal account,” Arbizu said. “Be aware of what you’re using school-based Google accounts for. If there’s anything that you wouldn’t want forwarded to somebody, then maybe it’s not the best use of [your school] account.”



EMILY FENG

“It’ll still be hard to walk into a classroom where you want to see students working cooperatively”

SMUHSDTA Vice President Carlo Corti says that there’s hesitation among many teachers about returning to on-campus learning.

“In terms of the educational benefits, one of the challenges is that ... we’ll still be Zooming and communicating through computers even for students who are here on campus, so I think there’s some educational questions of how valuable that can be,” Corti said. “The other hesitation is that certain teachers have health conditions which put them at a higher risk if they were to contract COVID-19. Some feel like they’re getting the vaccine be-

nated and then bring all other staff and teachers through to get vaccinated [as well].”

District staff sent a binding survey to families on Feb. 26 asking about their interest in returning to in-person learning, and slightly less than 40% of students from Aragon said they plan to return. Of those students saying yes, 35% are freshmen, which the Aragon administration wants to bring in first for a couple of days, walk them through on-campus guidelines and practice giving safety checks to them each morning before bringing back students from all other grades.



# Student career exposure through CTE Industry Days

Marlee Cherkas  
NEWS WRITER

All students in the San Mateo Union High School District are required to take 10 credits of Career Technical Education as a graduation requirement. These courses prepare students for a career and provide students with the skills necessary to be successful in the future. Students are able to explore

entering the workforce with the skills they learned.

Students who take two years of a CTE course are able to attend an off-site Industry Day where they have the opportunity to network with adults who work in the industry. Second year pathway students have the chance to present their portfolios, listen to industry talks and practice participating in or conducting interviews. This

a career, create a resume [and] assemble a portfolio of work — those professional skills are transferable to every industry.”

Industry Days not only offer a wide range of professional experiences, but also showcase efforts to diversify different career pathways by seeing typically less represented minorities in successful jobs.

“Many industries have been dominated by people of a certain gender or a certain race or cultural background,” Gamlen said. “Industry Days give students a chance to meet leaders who are shifting the power.”

Aragon CTE Chairperson Susan Hontalas works to find speakers for the Hospitality Industry Day. The classes she teaches, foods and nutrition and culinary arts, fall under the hospitality, tourism and recreation pathway. Past speakers have ranged from restaurant owners to fast food workers. Hontalas tries to find a wide range of speakers to show her students the different pathways they can take using the skills they have learned from her class and Industry Days.

“CTE days are teaching some of the industry skills, some things that you [put on] your resume, your professional bio or portfolio, and you learn some interview skills that aren’t really taught in any other class,” Hontalas said.

Digital photography teacher Nick Carrillo has been helping organize CTE Industry Days for several years. Carrillo allows all of his students to attend Industry Days because he has seen the impact that they can have on students trying to pick a path after high school.

this on the Industry Days.”

Biotechnology teacher Michael Wu helped put together Industry Days in the 2019-2020 school year before they were cancelled.

“The CTE Industry Days give students a better chance to learn how the knowledge you’re

“CTE days are teaching some of the industry skills, some things you [put on] your resume ... [or] portfolio”

“The goal is to bring that authentic conversation to each of these kids, so they know what they’re really getting into, because sometimes having a hobby doesn’t [necessarily] translate [into success] in the professional world,” Carrillo said.

Computer science teacher Kris Reiss has been taking his students on engaging and interactive field trips each year for Industry Days, introducing them to all the career paths available to them through using the skills they have acquired in his class.

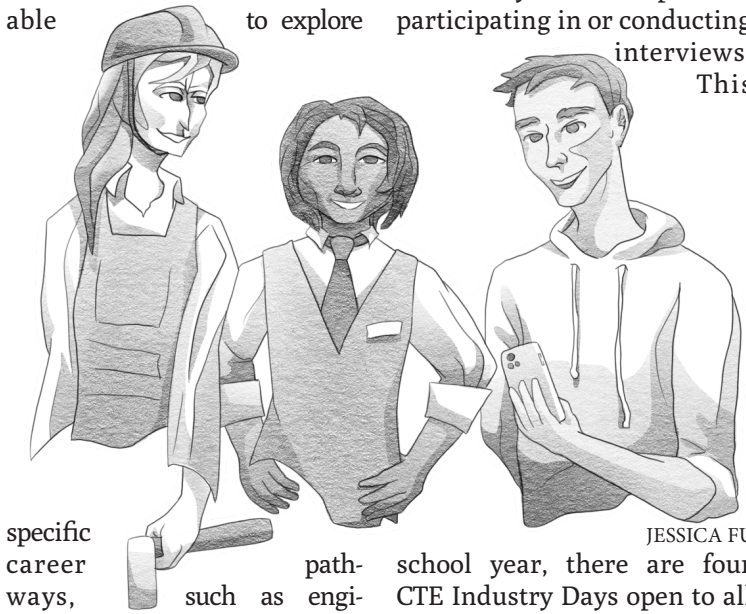
“I think a lot of students have no idea what you could apply computer science to,” Reiss said. “Most of them have this vague notion of what a software engineer is on TV or maybe they have family members that code, but they might not have thought that you could do so much more and they can see

learning is applied in the real world,” Wu said.

Senior Marcella Chan has taken both foods and nutrition and culinary arts, which made her eligible to attend the Hospitality and Food Service Industry Day.

“I think even if you’re unsure [of] what you want to do or where you’re looking for jobs, [industry days] are a really good start because [of the] insight [you receive] from people with experience,” Chan said.

CTE Industry Days are an impactful way to teach students the paths they can take after high school, as well as help create networking for the students in college and eventually in finding careers. Having the knowledge of the guest speakers and presentations is valuable for deciding and creating a life after high school.



JESSICA FU

specific career pathways, such as engineering and architecture, health science and medical technology and food service and hospitality, all of which have real world applications for their lessons. After finishing a CTE course, most students have a strong understanding of what their next steps after high school could entail, whether they are pursuing advanced training in college or

school year, there are four CTE Industry Days open to all students due to them being asynchronous this year. District CTE Coordinator Allison Gamlen works closely with CTE teachers throughout the district and has been planning Industry Days for three years.

“We are training students for real-world experiences,” Gamlen said. “They will learn the basics about how to research

## The Female Future Part V: Women in finance

Sophia Zhou  
FEATURES WRITER

Women have been historically underrepresented in the finance field. However, as more women hold leadership positions, the finance world is becoming more open minded.

Lorree Novotny is a controller who works for the St-upski Foundation. Novotny is responsible for handling daily financial transactions and creating yearly financial information. Her experience with finance began when she took an introductory accounting class in high school.

“Debits and credits made sense to me,” Novotny said. “I enjoyed the challenge of finding discrepancies and why accounts were out of balance.”

Ayako Fukudome serves as chief financial officer for the Filoli Historic House and Garden. Unlike Novotny, she did not originally intend to enter finance.

“I worked in a completely different profession right after graduating from college with a major in European studies and linguistics,” Fukudome said. “I realized that in order to become good at what I do, I needed to understand the business and finance side. That’s when I decided to go back to graduate school to earn a master’s degree on accounting and become a Certified Public Accountant.”

While it was not an easy decision for Fukudome to give up what she liked to start over, she does not regret her decision. During her time working as a CFO, Fukudome has experienced both positives and negatives.

“I enjoy analyzing numbers and finding clues to

“Follow your passion and don’t let any perception of the openness of females deter you from doing so”

solve problems,” Fukudome said. “I also enjoy learning something new and figur[ing] out how to apply it to make my job easier or make a difference for other people. What I don’t like is I feel I don’t have enough time to keep updated with constantly changing rules and new technologies. Time management is a challenge.”

Fukudome has seen a shift in what the field places an importance on. Whereas in the past the field emphasized mathematical intelligence, nowadays it is emphasizing leadership, computer science and social skills.

“Back in [the] old days, people thought finance folks were good at math and were just a number cruncher,” Fukudome said. “That is not true. Computers will do the work and create beautiful

graphs and charts. Instead, we are required to have a higher level of analytical, problem-solving and people skills.”

Technology in particular has been one of the main reasons the finance field has been changing as of late. According to Forbes, factors such as banking technology,

artificial intelligence and the popularity and accessibility of apps are the reason for this shift in industry makeup.

Although, historically, finance has been perceived as a male-dominated field, many women feel they are treated equally, a positive trend in a field striving for gender equality. Throughout her career, Novotny feels she has received equal compensation, in addition to being offered robust opportunities to challenge herself.

Finance covers a vast array of responsibilities, therefore the representation of women varies based upon individual companies and positions. Fukudome

has noticed an uptick in the number of women working in accounting, especially in leadership, compared to when she started 20 years ago. However, in finance as a whole, female representation has been declining. According to Forbes, women only represent 15% of finance executives despite representing 46% of financial services employees. And according to Investopedia, at hedge funds women only make up 11% of senior management roles.

Nevertheless, Fukudome highlights that there are many ways she

has seen finance support women working in her field, specifically with other women in the field.

“There are many female finance leaders willing to mentor you; [this has] helped me and my female colleagues,” Fukudome says.

For women seeking to pursue finance, Novotny stresses the importance of not taking stereotypes to heart.

“Follow your passion and don’t let any perception of the openness of females deter you from doing so,” Novotny said.



KAITLYN HA



# GATE-keeping: gifted programs create a racial divide

Kayla Shiao  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

A year after the Soviet Union launched Sputnik 1, Congress passed the National Defense Education Act, giving \$1 billion (worth about \$9 billion today) to strengthen science, math and technology programs in public schools in fear of falling behind other countries. Students nationwide were given intelligence tests with strict cutoffs to determine “giftedness.” Remnants of these programs remain in local districts, but tend to exclude historically socioeconomically disadvantaged and underrepresented students in their operation.

In the San Mateo-Foster City School District, children can start self-contained GATE learning, where students take core classes only with other GATE students, in fourth grade at College Park Elementary School. In middle school, students can continue their GATE-exclusive education at Bayside Academy. To be GATE-identified in the SMFCSD, students must pass an optional academic test in third or fifth grade. These programs are effectively schools within schools, as GATE-identified kids only see non-GATE children during breaks or elective classes.

Senior Zachary Daniloff graduated from Bayside in 2017 and didn't know about the GATE program's existence until he entered middle school.

“I would hear teachers talking about how kids in the GATE classes would act different than we would ... [or were] more responsible,” Daniloff said. “An education shouldn't differentiate us based on how we act.”

Beyond providing two different educations at the same institution, the GATE program at Bayside acts as a de facto racial segregator. According to the U.S. Department of Education's Civil Rights Data Collection, in 2017, 46.7% of the school's population was Latino or Hispanic and 8% was Pacific Islander. White and Asian students were 16.1% and 19.7% of the school's enrollment, respectively. Yet, 25.3% and 54.9% of the GATE program at Bayside was comprised of white and Asian students respectively. In that school year, no Pacific Islander students were in the GATE program, and only 1.1% of the program was Latino or Hispanic.

In the San Mateo Union High School District, GATE does not function as a curriculum-based cohort. The program acts as an enricher for those who seek academic or career-focused opportunities, manifesting itself in SAT and ACT preparation courses, guest speaker series and college application essay workshops.

Although the SMUHSD's GATE program is not self-contained, it has a similar demo-

graphic makeup. This school year, only two Pacific Islander students and eight Black students are enrolled in the GATE program districtwide. Asian and white students make up 385 and 269 students in the program respectively. Data from 2017 shows Hispanic and Latino students make up 32.4% of the district population, but only 9.9% of the GATE program.

Most GATE opportunities at Aragon are offered to all students, with students actually in the program given priority. This year, students in the program access information through a Canvas course run by history teacher Jayson Estassi, who assumed the role of site representative at the beginning of the school year. Students not enrolled in the program are usually informed about GATE events on the Canvas home page or through an opt-in email list offered each year on summer paperwork.

Some SMUHSD GATE activ-

“I definitely want to be conscious of being all encompassing and being really thoughtful that if we do change the acronym that also means that GATE parents have to buy into that,” Shoman said. “They are part of this partnership, and they are helping fund our program.”

GATE, as it exists now, was established in 1980 by California Assembly Bill 1040, which

we're going to see some of the same outcomes that we see nationally, and we do see it. ... We don't have a diverse representation in our GATE program. We don't have a high number of students who are learning English or who are Spanish speaking or who are coming from families who are socioeconomically disadvantaged.”

Even with teacher recom-

“I think we need to continue to have a conversation about what it means to be gifted and talented”

allows districts to set their own criteria outside of pure academic ability.

“I think we need to continue to have a conversation about what it means to be gifted and talented, what the criteria for this program and how it is that we as educators operating this system can best serve the needs of our students,” Estassi said.

In the SMUHSD, outstanding

recommendations in place, students can be disadvantaged when teachers' implicit bias comes into play.

“We are working in a system where systemic inequity is present,” Estassi said. “It is the air that we breathe. ... Classification is in some sense necessary, but it is also deeply problematic.”

While information about GATE testing in third and fifth grade is sent home by the SMF-

rate of those who were not. When socioeconomically disadvantaged students aren't adequately informed about opportunities to be identified as advanced, however, they aren't given the same resources for life success that are offered to students in the GATE program, who are primarily white and Asian.

Freshman Vanelly Torres Godinez graduated from Bayside in 2020 and received the Latinos del Futuro scholarship, which aims to motivate students from a Latino or Hispanic background to consider pursuing post-secondary education. She didn't know about the GATE program until the beginning of eighth grade, despite being on the same campus as it.

“I think I would have been better without GATE [because] I didn't really hear about it,” Torres Godinez said. “I never knew much [about] the program.”

In 2013, California's Local Control Funding Formula redistributed GATE funding, allowing stakeholder input in how funds are used to support high-ability students. Most SMFCSD funds set aside for the GATE program go towards its upkeep and optional testing, which leaves little room for diversifying the program.

“I think at the core, where we struggle, is that we have created a class that sits outside of the general curriculum,” Heneghan said. “When we look at the move from the national level ... that's the primary reason why self-contained GATE classes have been dismantled [in other districts], because they don't represent the diversity of the general population. It's complicated because ... we don't have the resources to focus on creating a perfect GATE class, and I don't think a lot of districts do which is why they don't have them. Our resources, primarily, go to ... our students who are historically underrepresented and ensuring that they have access to the core [not GATE] curriculum.”

Despite issues with the GATE program, some constituents in the SMFCSD advocate for its continued existence.

“I'd say [they're] not a diverse group of parents,” Heneghan said. “I think I probably don't hear from our Title I school families.”

Title I schools have a student population where at least 40% come from low-income families. Such families may not have the resources or time to lobby the district and may not even know about the program.

In public schools, resources allocated towards GATE programs only serve a portion of the school's population. Gifted and curious students deserve a place to excel, but those kids are not solely white and Asian. When a lack of funding and regard for inclusion forces schools to retain the structure of the GATE program they have, it stays the way it is: exclusive.



EMILY FENG

ities are funded and organized by the GATE Parent Group, a districtwide organization of parents of GATE-identified students. They operate test preparation and summer enrichment courses, which are available to students for a fee or for free if a student qualifies for aid.

“Our mission is to help enrich kids' lives in our district,” said President Ella Yun, parent

“We are working in a system where systemic inequity is present. It is the air that we breathe”

of a Burlingame High School junior. “We're set up as a GATE [program], but we help the whole community. We also provide different funds and grants for each school in the district.”

Samia Shoman is the liaison to the SMUHSD GATE program, meeting with site representatives to overview events and managing student entry into the program. In the past few years, she has been involved in discussions about changing GATE's acronym to avoid.

VAPA performance and leadership and creative ability qualify with teacher recommendations.

The SMFCSD recently removed teacher recommendations for GATE eligibility, citing that some teachers asked for them to be removed as parents were pressuring them to recommend students they were not comfortable recommending, leaving the academic test as the only criteria for en-

try into the program despite the California Department of Education stating that “best practices support using more than one factor to identify GATE students.”

“Where it becomes tricky is with our students who are historically underrepresented in classes and programs like this,” said Alicia Heneghan, SMFCSD director of curriculum and instruction for elementary schools. “If it's just one test score, then we can predict that

CSD, many people hear about the opportunity through word-of-mouth, and homogenized parent groups can preserve racial divides.

Divides from SMFCSD's GATE program extend to high school; white and Asian students make up the majority of Advanced Placement classes at Aragon. According to CRDC in 2017, calculus classes, which are only offered as AP classes at Aragon, are 6.3% Latino or Hispanic in student makeup, while the student population that year was 27.2% Latino.

Senior Jessica Chen graduated from Bayside in 2017. She didn't hear about opportunities to test into the GATE program until it was too late.

“Looking back now, I feel like if I was in the GATE program I would have been more prepared [for advanced courses in high school],” Chen said.

A study by Vanderbilt professor David Lubinski found that adolescents identified as having “exceptional mathematical or verbal reasoning abilities” before the age of 13 pursued doctoral degrees at rates 50 times the



# The effects of redlining on urban displacement

Anoush Torounian and  
Grace Xia  
FEATURES EDITORS

Third Avenue in downtown San Mateo has long been a popular after-school destination for Aragon students. But 70 years earlier on this same street, Claire Mack, the first Black Mayor of San Mateo (1991-2004), 84-year resident of Central San Mateo and proud owner of Claire's Crunch Cakes, saw a large red sign boasting brand new homes with no down payment for soldiers. However, one important word sat at the bottom of the sign: restricted.

"Restricted meant that if you had served in [the military], and your skin wasn't white, you were not going to be able to buy a home there," Mack said to *The Outlook*.

When Mack's husband returned home after fighting for freedom, he wasn't hailed as an honorable veteran. Instead, he and his wife, law abiding Black citizens, were denied housing.

"This man had just come home from Korea," Mack said. "He had been on the front lines. ... He came home, and banks didn't want to give us a loan to buy the house that we live in right now."

After the U.S. economy's devastation during the Great Depression, the government sought to increase homeownership by creating the Home Owners' Loan Corporation, established in 1933, to pay for mortgage debt that had accumulated during the economic downfall. However, the HOLC had to decide which neighborhoods would be favorable investments and which would not be. One aspect they took into consideration was the minority population of the area. Communities with greater minority populations, such as Oakland, were deemed less worthy of receiving investments. These neighborhoods were shaded red on maps,

ily had owned a restaurant, but they couldn't buy the house just by going to a real estate office. ... They couldn't do that right here in San Mateo, California."

While the Federal Housing Act of 1968 prohibits discrimination in housing, neighborhoods remain socially stratified as a result of previous laws. De facto segregation, the separation of groups based on corporations' policies or individuals' choices, continue to prevent integration of ethnic groups today.

"Redlining occurred so long ago, but it's the kind of evil that has been attached to the people that it was attacking; it's followed them for generations," said Tim Thomas, research director of The Urban Displacement Project, a University of California, Berkeley research and action initiative, to *The Outlook*. "We're not dealing with Jim Crow right now, but we're dealing with evictions amongst Black households."

Thomas' 2013 dissertation, "Forced Out: Race, Market, and Neighborhood Dynamics of Evictions," reveals that Black women were being evicted seven times more than their non-Black counterparts in King County, Seattle. His research has since helped change laws in Washington state.

In line with Thomas' work, the Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County aims to protect marginalized and low-income people from afflictions like eviction, a by-product of discriminatory practices such as redlining.

"We always [represent] a large number of people of color ... who are living below the poverty line," said David Carducci, an eviction lawyer at the nonprofit.

The Bay Area is home to intense racial and economic divisions. According to the *San Francisco Chronicle*, out of 100 regions in the country, SF ranks No. 84 for economic inclusion. Stratified communi-

ties leave little room for communal understanding among people of varying socioeconomic status.

"One of the biggest issues that white individuals tend to face is that they don't know the experiences of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and people of color) individuals because they just cluster with [their own ethnic groups] and benefit from privilege," Thomas said.

During her time as mayor, Mack discouraged policies that prevented integration of communities.

"Anytime you build an apartment over ten units, 10% of your units need to be low income, or affordable income," Mack said. "There's a move afoot through San Mateo just to get rid of that. I don't believe in building ghettos."

The most affluent parts of San Mateo County are overwhelmingly white. Hillsborough, for instance, boasts a \$4.6 million median property value and a \$440,000 average annual household income. Its population is 60% white. Six miles from Hillsborough lies East San Mateo, where 36% of the population is Hispanic or Latinx, the average house is worth \$866,000, the median household income is \$115,000 and the poverty rate is over four times higher than in Hillsborough.

Aragon's student body, which consists mostly of residents from San Mateo, reflects the socioeconomic disparities seen across the city. A former Aragon student, senior Gloria Carrabino, who moved to Manteca due to the rising cost of rent at her old San Mateo home, recounted her time here.

"I'd always feel so different [from my friends] ... because of the income difference," Carrabino said. "You would see all the kids coming from the neighborhoods right in front of Aragon and Hillsborough. Me and my brother, we'd have to take the bus all the way over to Aragon from our neighborhood, and then we'd see all the kids with their cars ... driving Teslas."

Carrabino's mother worked at a grocery store and her father took on two jobs, one at a golf course and the other in produce. However, this three-income household could not combat the city's high costs of living.

"I really did not want to move, but ... our landlord kept raising rent," Carrabino said. "[One day] he just came to our house screaming at my dad about raising our rent [again]."

While some landlords believe that their evictees can find new homes, this is not the case for Carducci's clients.

"Low income tenants aren't so much going to be able to rebound," Carducci said. "They're going to have to survive ... before they can be self sustaining again."

To escape inflated prices, Oceana High School senior Nicolas Nelson, who is Brazilian and white, will move to Idaho after graduation. He has witnessed the gentrification of his neighborhood, a mobile home community he has called home since childhood.

"[The community] used to be pretty affordable," Nelson said. "A lot of the houses [that] are older and rundown are getting taken out, but those ... more modern looking [or] new ones are expensive to buy and rent."

As living costs surge, forcing different groups of people into new areas and allowing new, wealthier buyers to move

into emptied spaces, the demographics of communities have shifted accordingly.

"We're entering an era where segregation is flipping," Thomas said. "There [are] still a lot of cities with high levels of segregation, [and] a lot of households have been displaced or pushed out of the Bay Area because of the cost or other reasons, leading to ... what we see as diversity. Eventually, what's happening is [a] replacement of people."

The soaring cost of living in the Bay Area prevents people from choosing their home location, but it's not the only cause. Thomas described the four primary theories of segregation in modern neighborhoods: preference, economics, discrimination and networks.

"Everyone has free opportunity to move to any neighborhood they want to, but there has to be a home available to them, it has to be affordable, has to be a place they prefer ... where they're not being discriminated against," Thomas said. "Finally, they [have to be] aware of the dimensions of what they're getting into. ... You tend to cluster with certain similar types of people ... [and] want to stay closer to kin or people that are of your community."

In tandem with housing limitations are underfunded education systems. According to Edbuild, a nonprofit that focuses on education funding, school districts where the majority of students enrolled are students of color receive \$23 billion less in yearly education funding than predominantly white school districts, despite serving the same number of students.

"There [are] high property taxes [near Aragon], and the people who live near there have a lot of money," Nelson said. "That's what drives a lot of schools being developed and [having] great education and sports [programs]."

California's Local Control Funding Formula, enacted in 2013, distributes a certain amount of money to schools with a higher proportion of underprivileged groups like English learners and low-income students. While this measure is a stride for socioeconomic equality, if a school's local property taxes exceed a value specified in the LCFF, like Aragon, it can allocate more money than underprivileged schools to provide resources for its students.

Extending past Aragon, the San Mateo Union High School District's revenue for the 2020-2021 school year totals at \$166 million for over 9,000 students across eight different schools, while the Jefferson Union High School District's revenue comes

in at \$64 million for nearly 5,000 students across five schools, including Oceana.

"Jefferson Union High School District is [less funded than SMUHSD] ... because of the amount of people who live here who can barely live here," Nelson said.

The new top of the line finding from Edbuild calls into question the ways state and local dollars are used to prop up some children at the expense of others, exposing a similarly

startling funding discrepancy even when comparing poor white and poor non-white school districts. Carrabino has noticed a sharp difference in funding between Aragon and Sierra High School.

"[At Sierra], we can't just buy ourselves a new football field or a massive theatre," Carrabino said. "We really have to put [the money] into helping students with having resources for education that they wouldn't normally have access to, especially during times like this."

Manteca Unified School District has a total revenue of \$256 million across its 30 schools for around 24,000 students, 56% of whom are Hispanic. Half of the schools in this district are rated below average for school quality. With an average spending per student significantly lower than that of the SMUHSD, the MUSD is one example of the way in which poorer areas receive fewer educational benefits than students in wealthier areas, contributing to more economic instability within families.

The costs of living contribute to a lack of social mobility in housing — people barely have enough money to survive, much less relocate to a more affluent part of the Bay. While housing costs drive people out of expensive neighborhoods, the prospect of a home increasing in value overtime keeps homeowners from leaving.

Although San Mateo has made headway from its days of redlining, current socioeconomic divisions won't be easily erased. However, Mack's neighborhood, which she admiringly describes to be a flourishing community with people from China to Bangladesh to Black residents like herself, serves as proof that diversity is on the horizon.

"Let's build equality into our countries, into our communities," Mack said. "Let's make this a place where you can live equally. Just because you have more money than me, because you're the banker, or because you own Facebook, doesn't mean you're a nicer person. It doesn't mean you're a better person. You're just a person that's got a bigger bank account."

**"There [are] still a lot of cities with high levels of segregation, [and] a lot of households have been displaced ... because of the cost"**

which led to the coining of the term "redlining" to describe discriminatory practices that prevented residents of certain locations from receiving services or resources.

Mack's encounters with redlining extended beyond her personal experiences. Around the same time in the 1950s, her Black friend's family struggled to purchase a home in San Mateo Park.

"This family had to buy their home by getting a white person to go to buy the house [first]," Mack said. "They had the money. They [owned] several houses in this neighborhood. Their fam-





This article is an accompanying piece to the Outlook's video "Fruitvale, Oakland | Lead poisoning in the Bay Area," which you can watch on our YouTube channel. A full list of people who contributed to this project can be found in the video's credits.

KAYLA LI

# Fruitvale: environmental racism in Oakland

Josette Thornhill  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

At first glance, the Fruitvale neighborhood of Oakland may appear as little more than a commuter plaza nestled next to a bustling Bay Area Rapid Transit station. Between public markets, an Oakland library stand, check-cashing storefronts and mom-and-pop restaurants, many residents set up street markets to sell fresh fruit, juices or trinkets. In reality, it's a neighborhood with a deep history, which can be traced all the way back to when it was inhabited by the Ohlone people, before conquistadors arrived to the West Coast in the 18th century, before its later incorporation into America in the 19th century or the urbanization that transformed it into the Oakland we recognize today.

One of the first things a visitor to Fruitvale might notice are city blocks of antiquated houses, the exterior paint of many being in a clear state of decay. A large number of houses in Oakland were built before a federal ban on lead paint was put in place in 1978, which means the older houses may have lead paint under layers of newer paint or never got repainted at all. Many of these lead-contaminated houses, which can pose a severe health hazard to inhabitants, are concentrated in the Fruitvale neighborhood. As paint chips off of walls, children

**"A large number of houses in Oakland were built before a federal ban on lead paint"**

can ingest it, it can enter the soil or contaminate water supplies. According to the Alameda County Department of Public Health, 7.5% of children under the age of six living in Fruitvale experienced elevated lead levels in 2012: five times greater than California's lead poisoning rate.

Inequality is often a side effect of urbanization, especially in the Bay Area, which has seen several distinct epochs of demographic makeup of inhabitants. According to data from 2016, 53.8% of Fruitvale's population was Hispanic, the highest concentration in any neighborhood in Oakland, and it seems to have evaded gentrification for the most part. A 2019 American Community Survey reported that almost a quarter of Fruitvale's residents were

not U.S. citizens, and 22.5% live below the poverty threshold.

Located less than five miles from Downtown Oakland, Fruitvale remains unpopular with Bay Area tourists and visitors due to it being largely residential and possibly perceived as a place with endemic violent crime. The neighborhood was recently referenced in the 2013 film, "Fruitvale Station," based on the true story of a man who was fatally shot by BART police officers at the Fruitvale train station in 2010. More recent mentions of Fruitvale were written into Native American novelist Tommy Orange's critically acclaimed book "There There," published in 2018, which was a semi-autobiographical account of Orange's experience growing up in Oakland. Orange's novel centers the experiences of Native Americans' attempts to preserve their cultural identity in urban settings, and takes its name from a famous and often misinterpreted Gertrude Stein quote. Stein describes her experience growing up in Oakland and returning several decades later, unable to recognize the city after a population boom caused the area to rapidly urbanize. "There is no there there," she wrote.

The first period of gentrification in the city of Oakland began in 1993 and occurred largely because of the construction of transit communities, like the Fruitvale Village, and the demo-

lition of low-income housing. As public transit systems like BART are established in lower-income neighborhoods of urban areas, gentrification often follows as white collar workers move to an area where rent and cost of living are more affordable while retaining an easy commute to work in different neighborhoods. Fruitvale's lead problem exists in part because it hasn't been gentrified as much as other areas of Oakland and where new housing would have been constructed, old buildings with lead paint intact still stand.

In his thesis "The First Cycle of Gentrification in West Oakland, California," Jason Zimmerman describes how the suburbanization of Oakland occurred with the help of government real es-

tate subsidies and private companies taking advantage of people's desire to live in an immigrant community like Fruitvale: "working class areas were promoted to the new middle class as economical and exotic alternatives to the suburbs."

These periods of gentrification followed a long era of "white flight" from Oakland, where the demographics of the city radically shifted as white residents began to migrate out of more urban areas to establish suburbs that still exist today, such as Piedmont, Walnut Creek and areas of Contra Costa County. During a period of "urban renewal" in the 1950s, Hispanic and Black residents of West Oakland were displaced and relocated to the east part of the city, including the Fruitvale neighborhood.

Despite the recent development of the commuter village, the Fruitvale neighborhood has been studied as an example of "development without displacement," meaning that more modern additions to the neighborhood, like a charter school, a public library and a farmers market, have been established without causing any dramatic shift in the population makeup of the area.

While the culture of Fruitvale has been preserved, and its diverse ethnic makeup remained mostly intact, progress on issues like lead contamination have remained stagnant. Although Fruitvale's high lead poisoning rate is due mostly to outdated architecture and a slow governmental response to the crisis, or feigned ignorance of its severity, it's easy to draw parallels to the recent lead crisis in Flint, Michigan. At the very least, there are apparent connections in the socioeconomic and racial makeup of cities most affected.

Flint's lead crisis, where a lack of clean water plagued residents (54% of which are Black, according to the U.S. Census Bureau in 2019) has populated the news cycle for over half a decade. The crisis began with the emergency appointment of an unelected city official, Darnell Early, who was tasked with cutting costs for a city already deep in debt. His solution included switching the public water supply from the Detroit River to the Flint River as well as putting a stop to chemically treating the water, which experts say would have only cost around \$80 a day.

In mere months, both fecal co-

liform and Legionnaires' disease-causing bacteria were detected in the water, and an outbreak of the disease caused a dozen resident deaths. The people of Flint continued to only have access to contaminated water, which was soon found to have dangerously high levels of lead. They implored the city government to recognize the danger in their undrinkable water supply, but were ignored. The city government denied that anything was wrong with the water while filtered water was provided for government officials to drink. Flint's environmental injustice was declared a federal emergency — nearly 100,000 residents were exposed to lead through the drinking supply — and Flint's government faced civil lawsuits or even stood trial for involuntary manslaughter.

Lead's long-term effects are brutal, and contamination over time disproportionately hits minority communities like Flint and Fruitvale the hardest.

**"Consequently, systems of power are placing less value on the lives of Fruitvale's inhabitants"**

Lead poisoning causes irreversible brain damage in children, disrupting normal cognitive development which decreases ability to focus, can cause underperformance in school and has been proven to drop IQ scores several points. In adults, exposure to lead can even cause lowered sperm counts or abnormal sperm, and miscarriages, stillbirths or premature births.

Michael Macarenhas, a professor at the University of California, Berkeley, works in the Department of Environmental Science, Policy and Management. He believes that capitalist industries can cause people of color and impoverished people to have irregular exposure to lead in two ways: first that the jobs that the socioeconomically disadvantaged frequently work expose them to more toxicity and health hazards than the average white collar worker and second, that industries whose production has serious environmental ramifications choose to target minority areas geographically.

"The leading indicator of where a hazardous waste site will be located in this country is race," Macarenhas said. "It's people of color who live in these neigh-

borhoods and industry actually comes in after them ... and [this is enabled by] a racist ... system of government that has created ghettos [and] segregated residential areas, either through gerrymandering [or] redlining."

This concept relates to that of racial capitalism, which hypothesizes that society commodifies racial identities, and extracts wealth from non-white people. This collection of capital, according to scholars, can only happen through acute inequality. In Fruitvale, this manifests itself as a guarantee that residents will continue to pay rent and inhabit a neighborhood permeated by lead poisoning without any comprehensive or all-encompassing government plan to stop this dangerous risk to their health. Consequently, systems of power are placing less value on the lives of Fruitvale's inhabitants, like what was done for many years in Flint, because of their ethnic identities, citizenship status,

wealth or how important people deem their well-being to be.

Sociologist Ruth Wilson Gilmore once defined racism in complete geographical terms, writing that "racism, specifically, is the state-sanctioned or extralegal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death."

Fruitvale is a clear example of environmental health hazards that have a disparate impact on minority neighborhoods. But it's not a problem with an easy solution. While local governments do make efforts to test for lead in homes, help is not accessible to everyone who needs it. A new wave of gentrification may make way for construction of new homes and bring money into the area to rebuild, but in doing so it would push out the current inhabitants, leaving the culture of the neighborhood a piece of lost history. Displaced residents, who would likely be disproportionately minorities and socioeconomically disadvantaged, would probably be pushed into a neighborhood with its own set of problems as Oakland continued to develop without them.



# Teens on dating apps

Sarah Yu  
FEATURES WRITER

When senior Ryan Chan's friend asked him to livestream with them on Yubo, a networking application often used for dating, he agreed and downloaded the app. At first, he felt comfortable and enjoyed his time on the platform, mainly chatting with other Aragon students. However, it soon turned into talking to strangers, some of whom kept their cameras off to conceal their identities.

"At that point, I started getting a little uncomfortable," Chan said. "Some people weren't showing their faces. ... You don't know who you're talking to [or] their intentions."

Dating and friend-making apps such as Tinder and Yubo

"[When] you look at the people around you, most of the relationships [people have] created are interpersonal and [are] ones that they've created authentically," Chan said. That's something to keep in mind."

However, not all people are looking for long-term relationships on these apps. For Aragon alumna Florence Ye, a freshman at University of California, Los Angeles, Tinder has been a great source for casual relationships. She began using Tinder in January of this year after she broke up with her boyfriend and has had positive experiences on it but also acknowledges that it may not be for everyone.

"There are no strings attached," Ye said. "It's good for people like me. I'm not looking for anything serious."

**"Some people weren't showing their faces. ... You don't know who you're talking to [or] their intentions"**

are rapidly rising in popularity, with Yubo's daily users tripling during the pandemic according to Forbes. Now that teens are unable to meet new people face to face, many are turning to dating apps as a way to find new friends and even love interests. However, with the rise in popularity of these apps comes significant dangers, especially for minors. Child predators with shielded identities can easily prey on teenagers online.

"I think dating apps should be centered for adults [because] ... online you can lie about anything," said sophomore Adrien Amorim. "I could be a 45-year-old man from Queens, New York, ... and nobody would know who I am."

Dating apps, like most social media apps, can also perpetuate unrealistic expectations. This is especially pervasive among teens. Many seek approval from peers due to the rapid development of their social behaviors according to the North Carolina Medical Journal.

"I know a few friends who have [dating apps], and they only go on there to get validation," said sophomore Alexa Latini. "[There is] that constant need [where people think] 'I hope they add me back on that. I hope they messaged me.' It just puts so much pressure on a person to present a perfect image of themselves on the internet."

These glorified snapshots often make it difficult to build genuine connections in the non-digital world as interacting online is drastically different from bonding in person.



ALEXANDER LO

Ye elaborates that Tinder can curb the decline of social interaction due to COVID-19.

"Right now, nothing's open," Ye said. "There's no nightlife, so you can't meet people that way. Even if you go to the beach, it's hard to meet people that way because everyone's keeping to themselves. ... [Tinder is] easy and it's fast and it's free."

Junior Marlena Marshall shares a similar sentiment to Chan, expressing the difficulties of connecting through a screen.

"When people go back, how are they going to communicate with people when it's not online," Marshall said.

These platforms could intensify pressure on teens to date and feed into societal expectations. The message that teens and children need to be dating can be spotted in Instagram posts depicting happy moments of a couple to children's shows on the Disney channel.

"[It is] like with anything on the internet," Latini said. "If people see it, they feel pressure to conform."

Ultimately, though dating apps can be a feasible way to meet new people amidst the pandemic, teens must be wary of the numerous potential risks, from predatory behavior to blows to mental health.



Koe interned at the Marine Science Institute in Redwood City.



COURTESY OF IAN KOE

# Ian Koe studies the Bay's evolving fish population

Peyton De Winter  
FEATURES WRITER

In senior Ian Koe's free time, he often scours through data gathered from the San Francisco Bay, then organizes it into a different visual. Green and orange graphs stand out boldly against white presentation slides, each corresponding to fish population size. Koe has been running this project since 2019, looking at relationships in fish that he might be able to discover in the area.

"I was doing an internship [at the Marine Science Institute], and my boss at the time curated this database on fish data they had been collecting," Koe said. "[They recorded the] size, the length, where they caught the fish, what kind of species they were."

The Marine Science Institute's primary purpose is to educate students about the environment through a direct connection to their relative area. The institute's massive database on the fish, started in 1971, was originally a side project. With access to the information, Koe uses the programming language Python to analyze this data.

"First, I tried to format and organize [the data], so it was easier to work with," Koe said. "From there, I started trying to learn more about the bay. I did a bit of research about different species in the environment there and the whole ecosystem and started asking questions about what relationships could there be or what could I find."

Koe's inspiration for this project started in elementary school when he started learning about environmental issues and volunteering to support others in solving them.

"I've always been pretty passionate about the environment," Koe said. "When I was young ... I read something about habitat loss and how that was affecting whale sharks, and I was upset about that and wanted to do something. I came up with this idea of baking cupcakes and selling to other people at the preschool to raise some money [for] the World Wildlife Fund and [to] help with [the] protection of whale sharks."

The World Wildlife Fund is a nonprofit organization that dedicates itself to the conservation of wildlife in areas that need help with protecting the integrity of their natural surroundings. Koe's interest in volunteering was initially the reason why he interned at the Marine Science Institute. This evolved into the project he is working on now, which hasn't always been a smooth process.

"I realized very quickly that I had to be thoughtful about what I was doing, plan everything out and do it in steps instead of trying to do 20 different things at [once]," Koe said.

**"I'll spend time thinking about [questions like] how can I write this code to do what I want?"**

In such a big project, there will be challenges to reaching the final destination.

"The main thing I had to learn [was] how to use all the different tools," Koe said. "I had a general understanding of computer programming. I [had done] some [programming] in middle school and elementary school, and I learned a few [new] things too. I initially had all of the data in Excel, and I [didn't] think that was [going to] work that well. It may be easier to use a programming language to do things instead, so my initial challenge was how [I was] going to get this data and work with it in a programming language."

Realizing that there was much he did not know, Koe reached out to professionals for advice on this project.

"I have a family friend [who] works in computer science, so I reached out to him independently [to ask] if he had any advice for me or any ideas of what kind of tools it would be good to use," Koe said. "If you ever have questions, it's good to try and find people when you're trying to work on a project or something. Teachers are great. I talked with Ms. Ward quite a bit about my project ... She had ideas I could use, and I would bounce stuff off her. It was a collaborative and beneficial experience."

Some of these roadblocks might also take the form of mental challenges, rather than learning gaps or physical difficulties, including running out of ideas or questions to ask about the environment using the data already there.

"I [would] come up with this idea and then [try to] pursue it, but you also have to stay on top of things and try to keep an order because it's a lot more efficient to be methodical about things than to get distracted, which is annoying sometimes," Koe said. "It is also very rewarding to find solutions to problems along the way. I'll spend time thinking about [questions like] how can

I write this code to do what I want or how can I phrase this question [better]?"

Remembering the overarching goal can be important when starting a new project or hobby, and in many cases, the goal is learning as much as possible. People tend to focus on the negatives and narrow in on grades or their college applications, but at the end of the day, a winning experience expands knowledge.

"I feel really excited to learn more," Koe said. "It has been a really interesting experience to have access to this kind of data and just to learn not just about the bay, but also about all the different tools, how to use them, how I can apply [my learnings] ... to the real world."

Finding new and exciting ways to spend our time has gotten more difficult amid the pandemic, but engagement is more important to motivation now than ever.

"It's important to find something you're interested in because you can work on a project, but if you're not interested in it, there isn't a point in doing it," Koe said. "You're not going to enjoy it, and you're just going to feel like you're wasting your time. The project I worked on was tough, but it was definitely something I don't regret doing. I think the experience is important."



## Cosplay as self-expression

Carole Darve  
FEATURES WRITER

With a picture of Kokichi Ouma in their mind, senior Koki Barrera applies black eyeliner around their eyes. They tinker with the black and purple wig they've been styling all week. Kokichi's checkered undershirt and suit look better in the cosplay than they had originally anticipated.

Barrera is participating cosplay, an activity where one dresses up as a fictional character in a movie, book, show or video game. For nearly five years, Barrera has been reputed for their cosplay of the character Kokichi Ouma from the anime series "Danganronpa."

"Kokichi Ouma is a controversial character. ... His motivations in the story are hard to figure out because he likes to lie a lot," Barrera said. "I cosplay him because he's fun to act as, and I enjoy people's

reactions to seeing me dressed as him."

Getting into cosplay usually takes multiple hours. "[Cosplay] can be anything from just a makeup look to an entire thing with props," said senior Lydia Zawilski.

While some choose to make their own props and costumes, others buy the necessary accessories. Either way, cosplaying can be expensive. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, many cosplayers have lost their steady source of income, leading them to cosplay less frequently than they want to.

Conventions are major events in the cosplay community. They are the perfect way to form connections with photographers who show off the cosplay they spent so much time putting together.

"I like the social aspect [of cosplaying], going to conventions and meeting different people," Barrera said. "It's all really fun. I've made a lot of friends through cosplaying. We hang out regularly outside of cosplaying."

In the wake of COVID-19, cosplayers wonder when the next convention will take place. Until then, they rely on social media to showcase their cosplays.

TikTok and Instagram are the two main platforms that cosplayers use. Instagram gives off a more professional look, whereas TikTok provides instant content.

"It's very easy to share and to spread and grow [on Instagram and] TikTok," Zawilski said. "A lot of people can relate to TikTok being a creator-friendly platform [for cosplayers]."

On TikTok, junior Addison Cornwall witnesses the drama within the cosplay community, where some cosplayers

receive hate from after taking inspiration from someone else without properly crediting the original cosplayer. "[Social media is] a little bit of pressure sometimes," Cornwall said. "I have a friend ... [who] decided to start over completely from scratch because she didn't want a ton of people seeing her [posts]."

Still, the cosplay community on social media is primarily a source of inspiration, encouragement and support.

"Some people have told me that I am their favorite cosplayer, that they look up to me and [that] I inspire them to do cosplay," Cornwall said. "That's super nice."

A supportive environment is important, for many cosplayers struggle with the stigma associated with cosplay. "[People] think that if someone cosplays they're weird or outcasts," Zawilski said. "When I started cosplaying,

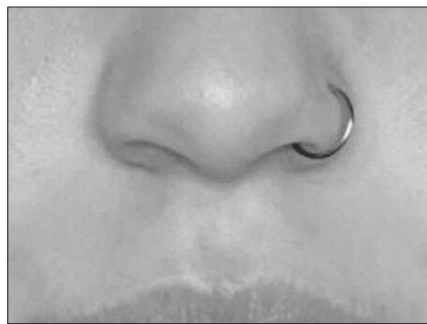
I was afraid of [the] backlash or what people would think of me, but in recent years, I've just [decided] ... to be open about [cosplay] being my hobby and my passion."

Cosplaying is a form of artistic expression, and it is more mainstream than people may realize. Despite only being a hobby, cosplaying has changed the lives of many people, especially for the many high school students who struggle with identity and body image.

"[Cosplay] definitely helped with self-image a lot," Zawilski said. "Even putting on a bunch of makeup and being someone that you're not somehow helps me personally get so much more comfortable with my own face [and] body image."

Like other creative outlets, cosplayers can also use cosplay as an escape. "It's probably my biggest passion," Zawilski said. "[Cosplay] appeals to a lot of people who [may be] struggling with mental health, have physical disabilities, are neurodivergent or LGBT. [It's] the idea of being able to transform yourself into another character who has an impact in their own story."

With the growing attention that cosplay receives on social media, there is hope that it will lose its stigma and become more accepted.



Top left: Brett Tsamasfyros, top right: Sasha Kassimov, bottom left: Mia Birkelund, bottom right: ZongYun Deng

## Students with tattoos and piercings

Catherine Wang  
FEATURES WRITER

Instead of using typical creative outlets that require filling a blank space, some students become the canvas, accessorizing themselves with piercings and tattoos to display their unique styles.

Students' inspirations for getting body art come from different places. For junior ZongYun Deng, who has three pairs of lobe piercings, their grandmother sparked their interest. Deng describes how

since ... the tattoo was going to be permanent, [but everything] ... went [well]."

Deng got their first two pairs of lobe piercings with a piercing gun at Claire's. Piercing guns puncture a hole in the skin, creating a wound that can be easily infected, a risk that led Deng to use a needle for their third pair.

"[Tattoo and piercings shops use] a needle ... that glides through your ear ... and creates less damage," Deng said. "My friend and I used sewing needles and sterilized them us-

minor infections are present in 30% of cartilage piercings. "My friends thought [my piercings] were cool," Manu said. "I ended up taking the daith piercings off after [a few] weeks ... because people told me it was dangerous."

The stigma surrounding body art poses another challenge. Elaborate tattoos and bold piercings are sometimes considered flashy and unnatural for academic and professional settings. Birkelund sometimes feels judged for having a nose ring. "[I am] a little self-conscious going into high-level STEM classes," Birkelund said. "[Situations] where being blonde and having piercings have made me feel uncomfortable."

Birkelund's mom was concerned about how her nose ring could possibly impact her college interview. "My mom was like, 'are you seriously wearing your nose ring to that?'" Birkelund said. "She was so scared, but the interviewer was totally nice."

Junior Sasha Kassimov has experienced stigma against her stomach piercing within her family. "Even though my grandma wasn't okay with it, that doesn't make me feel bad about the belly piercing because it's

their grandmother helped pierce Deng's mother's ears. "They would ... grind [a grain of rice] against the lobe [to numb it]," Deng said. "My mom [used this method to get] ... her ears pierced as a teen. ... I thought that was so cool."

Sophomore Rashmika Manu received daith and industrial piercings on her cartilage two years ago. "Having a lot of piercings in one ear was trendy, so I thought I'd [stand out] ... by getting [them]," Manu said.

Senior Mia Birkelund's nose piercing had a far more spontaneous origin. "[We] went to a tattoo shop [for my sister] ... to get her doubles pierced, but she ... chickened out," Birkelund said. "My mom was like 'we set up an appointment; do you want to get something pierced?' I was like, 'Oh my gosh, of course.'"

Senior Brett Tsamasfyros got her first tattoo in 2021, which pictures two intertwined poppy flowers. "I wanted people to know ... [that] I have my roots in California," Tsamasfyros said. "The poppy flower is the state flower [of California]."

Although excited to get her tattoo, Tsamasfyros initially had some concerns about how it would turn out. "I was scared that it was going to hurt or the tattoo artist was going to mess up," Tsamasfyros said. "I was very picky

ing fire. We kind of angled our earrings wrong, but it could have gone worse."

Birkelund finds piercing guns and needles have different levels of pain. "[The piercing gun gives off] ... a burning sensation," Birkelund said. "A needle is more [like a pinch], but you get that rush of adrenaline."

The healing process is important in getting the best result. Tattoos require lotion to prevent skin dehydration. Piercings need more careful precautions for proper healing. This is especially true for

swimmers, like Birkelund. "When I was little, I would swim throughout the school year and then [take a break] during the summer," Birkelund said. "I would align my piercings with that timeline, so they had time to heal."

When taking care of her healing piercings, getting an infection was her worst fear. "I got [the nose ring] done on a Friday and had to swim on a Tuesday," Birkelund said. "[After practice, I would] dump [saltwater] in my nose because I was so scared that something would happen."

Her concern is reasonable: a study by Dr. Henry Hoffman and Dr. Timothy Simplot found

what I want," Kassimov said. "I know people can be judgemental, ... but I focus on myself."

Fortunately, some believe that the stigma is improving. "My mom ... got her nose pierced in her '20s, and she [couldn't] wear them for ... long ... because she went into the workforce right after," Birkelund said. "I've gotten a job with my nose ring before, and I've interviewed for my top schools with [the ring]. It's no longer a big representation of your intelligence."

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YUE YU



# How racism behind accent discrimination strips identities



Aakanksha Sinha  
FEATURES WRITER

“Aakanksha! Say the letter ‘H’ for me”

Startled, I looked around my fourth-grade classroom, trying to find the source of the voice. A few tables over, I found the speaker, who repeated herself with exasperation.

## “I started to feel insecure and excluded based on my Indian identity”

Surprised at my classmate’s simple request, I proceeded to pronounce “H” for her.

“Hetch,” I replied with confidence.

My classmate whispered something to her friend, and they both giggled as if the letter H amused them immensely. Puzzled, I was still looking their way when the second

girl glanced over at me and scoffed: “It’s aych. Not how-ever you said it.”

I inhaled sharply and stiffened in my seat. The direct statement felt like a slap in my face. After that incident, people often asked me to say certain words and ridiculed my accent.

I started to feel insecure and excluded based on my Indian identity. I tried hard to change how I spoke so I wasn’t mocked. I felt as if being born in America was significantly better than being born somewhere else, as if being an immigrant was somehow wrong.

That year I made a friend who was an immigrant like me. We spent most of our lunchtime together, discussing our experiences in the U.S. and our lives before we moved.

Once, a boy walked up to us on the playground and candidly spoke to my friend: “you have a really heavy accent.” My friend immediately and firmly denied it, to which the boy just shrugged and ran back.

I was in awe of her prompt and confident response. She did have an accent, but I don’t think I ever found out why she



JESSICA FU

denied it. Maybe it was because she didn’t want to accept a part of her that made her different. Maybe she was ashamed. Maybe it was because of her cultural pride, or her open mind about the fact that a standard “accent” is a societal construction. I now chose to assume the latter. I realize the error in my old perspective. I began asking myself why I was changing the way I spoke just so I could fit in. I didn’t realize that, even if to a small extent, I was being discriminated against because of my accent.

Accent discrimination is an unjustifiable bias against individuals who speak English without the standard American accent. It occurs when prejudice against certain accents evolves into actions that can have detrimental impacts. Some general examples include imitating and mocking foreign accents, terminating workers because

of the way they speak and bullying those with an accent. In fact, reports of workplace discrimination based on language ability and foreign accents increased by 76% from 1997 to 2011, resulting in more than 11,800 complaints being filed with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

Accent discrimination is powerful, but it’s often overlooked. It is responsible for social discrimination. We discuss and stand against visible acts of racism through skin color, gender and ethnicity.

unique. When immigrants like me work hard to change our accents so we don’t have to face the discrimination, we don’t just change the pronunciation of words, we shed our identities. Accents carry stories of our roots and backgrounds. Excluding and mocking specific ethnic groups solely on the basis of their accent is a result of the prejudices we hold as a society by believing that certain accents are unsuitable in certain parts of the world.

The consequence of prolonged accent discrimination is the continued exclusion

## “When immigrants like me work hard to change our accents ... we shed our identities”

But language is a powerful source of discrimination, and we still forget any and all biases based on it.

No one should decide which accent is right and which is wrong. Unfortunately, the Western world spreads its influence through language: not only is English largely essential all around the world, but people are shamed for not speaking it the “correct” way, which is relative based on location.

Language is so much more than how we speak. It is our identity, and it makes us

of certain ethnic and social groups, separated from those who speak English “correctly.” Language creates an invisible barrier. In the end, our stereotypes of social and ethnic groups form discrimination, not the sheer sounds we call accents.

Today, after spending years in a place surrounded by people who speak in the standard American accent, I have grown into it, but I still speak with a touch of my Indian accent because it makes me who I am, and I have no intention of changing that.

# Masks over mutations: vaccines won’t solve everything



Alexandra Ding  
FEATURES WRITER

Nearly everyone I know has elaborate plans for “when we get vaccinated” or “when COVID-19 is over.” To many, these are the same thing: once everyone is vaccinated, we can return to normal life. But vaccines are not the silver bullet we want them to be. We should look beyond them to implement measures here and now, such as masks, testing, contact tracing, self-quarantining and self-isolating.

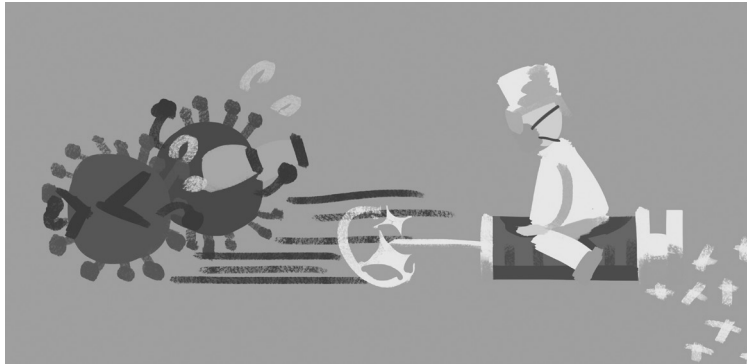
Public health experts agree that to return to pre-pandemic “normalcy” most people must be vaccinated or infected. The issue is that we’re months away from vaccinating enough people to stop the spread of COVID-19: allowing millions of people to continue getting infected will lead to a catastrophic death toll. President Joe Biden predicts vaccines will become available to all adults near the end of

May, but distributing those vaccines will take several additional months. Vaccines probably won’t be available for those under 16 until September, and countries who cannot afford vaccines could be waiting years. In the meantime, hundreds of thousands will die.

SARS-CoV-2 will continue to mutate after vaccines are distributed, possibly slipping out of the vaccine’s protection. It has already started: Variant B.1.351, first found in South Africa, has a mutation that reduces the efficacy of AstraZeneca’s and Johnson & Johnson’s vaccines. The same may apply to Moderna’s and Pfizer’s vaccines. Many immunologists agree that we’ll be forced to update and redistribute our vaccines year after year to combat a changing virus.

With this in mind, we shouldn’t wait for a vaccine to end the pandemic. COVID-19 has spread too far to make total containment possible, but there are still measures we can take to save lives and even partially “open up” closed businesses or schools. This starts at the personal level, with masks.

Masks work. Surgical masks and similar cloth masks are estimated to be 67% effective at protecting the wearer. Creating a better fit by double masking or using a mask fitter can increase a mask’s efficacy. Most importantly, masks protect those around us by catching virus-laden droplets (aerosols) before they reach others, as the spread of droplets is the most common way SARS-CoV-2 spreads.



YUE YU

Aerosols can linger for hours in unventilated spaces, so wearing a mask whenever you’re in public is important. Once you’re fully vaccinated (two weeks after the final dose), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention say that it’s safe to socialize without social distancing or masks with vaccinated or local, low-risk people (provided there is only one unvaccinated household present). Otherwise, the CDC recommends that you continue wearing a mask in public. Data from Israel shows that Pfizer’s vaccine is 94% effective against asymptomatic infection, suggesting that the vaccine prevents transmission of SARS-CoV-2, but the CDC believes that precautions should continue to be taken.

Testing, contact tracing, self-quarantining, which entails separating a person exposed to COVID-19 from others, and self-isolation, separating a person known to have COVID-19 from others, are crucial to a safe reopening. One model by Alyssa Bilinski, M.S., Farzad Mostashari, M.D. and Joshua Salomon, Ph.D. found that if we

bring symptomatic infection detection, contact identification, isolating and quarantining up to 90%, then transmission of SARS-CoV-2 would be reduced by 46%. Though this is an unlikely scenario, there are ways to boost the current testing and tracing system so that when coupled with other measures it will make an impact.

Antigen tests (paper strip tests that people can administer to themselves) are cheaper and

close proximity to a confirmed COVID-19 case, can boost the number of contacts found: a few studies have shown that they catch roughly twice the number of contacts as manual contact tracing does. Currently, only 20% of Californians have adopted CA Notify, the state’s contact tracing application. We need to use applications like this.

Of course, the efficacy of testing and contact tracing relies on our willingness to self-quarantine and self-isolate. Compared to the widespread lockdowns of past months however, this is a small sacrifice to make. The government should facilitate compliance by offering rooms to those in communal housing or other situations where they cannot isolate, though in the end the responsibility is ours.

A complex problem such as the COVID-19 pandemic neces-

## “Aerosols can linger for hours in unventilated spaces, so wearing a mask ... in public is important”

itates a multipronged solution. Vaccines are necessary but not perfect. Masks, testing and contact tracing, if implemented months ago, could have saved hundreds of thousands of lives. It’s not too late now. If everyone does their part to keep others safe, we’ll save lives and bring ourselves closer to normality.

fast than the more commonly used PCR tests, leading several to suggest that they be used instead despite their slightly lower accuracy. Providing these tests for free to all households allows us to catch cases before they spread the virus further.

Contact tracing applications, which alert you if you’ve been in





NETFLIX

## 'Moxie' downplays feminism

Lipika Goel  
FEATURES WRITER

Based on the novel by Jennifer Mathieu, "Moxie" was released for streaming on Netflix on March 2. Directed by Amy Poehler, it crams in as many social issues as possible. Although she has directed before, "Moxie" was Poehler's first movie intended for younger audiences, depicting a shy teenager who challenges the sexist status quo of her school by writing an anonymous zine — a homemade magazine — called Moxie.

Although a few reputable actors such as Clark Gregg play small roles, "Moxie" does well lending

brella of sexism but many are glossed over or don't affect everyone. Unequal representation in sports is reduced to a few girls from the award-winning soccer team grumbling about the state of their uniforms. Kaitlynn (Sabrina Haskett) is impacted by unfair dress codes and sent home for wearing a tank top. Rather than shedding light on several causes, 'Moxie' throws in a catchphrase for the representation of too many issues, which lessens the impact of each issue.

The movie seems to misunderstand its message by making a single, one-dimensional character out to be the main antago-

"'Moxie' tries to tackle ... different issues under the umbrella of sexism, but many are glossed over"

the spotlight to up-and-coming actors, such as Hadley Robinson who plays protagonist Vivian Carter, and was previously in "Little Women" and "Utopia." Though the movie has its flaws, the lack of familiar faces may be a contributing factor to its poor critical reception, earning 66% on Rotten Tomatoes and 6.7/10 on IMDb.

Near the beginning of the film, the writers introduce elements characterizing Vivian, which are mainly brought full circle and add nuance to the scenes. For instance, the song that Vivian's mom (Poehler) used to sing to her, "Rebel Girl" by Bikini Kill, is played in moments when Vivian feels empowered, such as writing the first zine or celebrating in anticipation of her friend Kiera (Sydney Park) winning the student-athlete award.

In other instances, the movie introduces elements and seemingly forgets them later. As a result, the conclusion feels one-dimensional. For example, Vivian is seen several times struggling with a question on her college application about issues she is passionate about. The viewer would assume that throughout the journey of the movie Vivian would

nist. Mitchell Wilson (Patrick Schwarzenegger) is viewed as the sole instigator of sexism at the school. Many of Vivian's efforts are directed toward him — she endorses Kiera for the student-athlete award to challenge Mitchell's unquestioned authority at the school. Despite other students also being responsible for harassing girls, there is never any major action taken to better the school environment. Completely abolishing sexism at the school would be an unrealistic resolution, but focusing on making one student responsible for sexist actions seems illogical.

Emotional scenes felt awkwardly crafted, as the characters often began discussing events that have nothing to do with the conflicts causing the scenes. For example, when Vivian vents to her mom about her frustration at the lack of progress "Moxie" is making, she brings up her dad not inviting her for Christmas. This is the only moment Vivian's dad is mentioned, so the sudden remark takes the viewer out of the scene. Additionally, it invalidates the status quo concerns Vivian brings up earlier in the rant by suggesting that they are on the same playing field as her relationship troubles.

Despite being a little over-ambitious with details, "Moxie" fulfills its main purpose — to entertain. The characters are likeable, and the storyline is easy to follow, although it may miss the mark in terms of being a revolutionary commentary on sexism. "Moxie" is worth watching if you are looking for a simple, entertaining coming-of-age story.

# The immersive stage of Little Nightmares II

Vedant Gaur  
FEATURES WRITER

A gentle breeze wallows across the grassy plain as the dim moonlight illuminates a dark forest scattered with old-timey television sets. The twilight follows me as I explore the landscape of overgrown roots and earth, continuing to shuffle through the underbrush. Nothing pops out besides a lone shoe or sporadic bursts of wind. Yet as I continue through the panoramic landscape, the buzzing of flies and creaking of hung rope alerts me of the grotesque bodies overhead, thrusting me into a true nightmare.

Little Nightmares II, a horror-adventure game sequel to Little Nightmares I, was released on Feb. 11. The game follows Mono, a boy battling his way through various levels to stop the mysterious "distortion" plaguing the Little Nightmare world. The game maintains a side-scrolling, platformer-like style, and although going through stages might take time, there isn't a steep learning curve for most novice players. The game introduces a pseudo-combat system where the player can use objects such as wrenches or hammers to smash the sub-villains.

"Little Nightmares' playful innocence captured a flourishing story in addition to the fear-inducing moments"

However, the 2.5 dimensional system of the game, meaning that the player mainly travels in a horizontal fashion while observing 3D objects, was frustrating at times. The lack

of vertical perception meant missing enemies by an inch or two and having to restart from the checkpoint. Although the game did a lot right with its level design, meticulous, frame-by-frame accuracy became marginally irritating.

The game is also specified as a puzzle adventurer. The "puzzles" were niche, and I found myself scouring YouTube videos after trying almost everything. Don't expect a brain teaser or logical puzzle when getting into the game, but more of a manipulation of certain aspects of the levels.

I initially expected Little Nightmares II to resemble many other games already out there. However, this game carries a certain uniqueness that you won't find in many others, especially those horror related. While most other titles use

jump scares or a first-person view to try to frighten the player, Little Nightmares' playful innocence captured a flourishing story in addition to the fear-inducing moments. Moreover, playing as a small child in a big scary world furthers the trope of wading through the great unknown.

The addition of Six, Mono's companion, acts as a pillar of humanity and assurance during the playthrough. Although

and direction left a lasting impact throughout and added to the ambiance. Many horror games strive for realism, but the animated characteristics of Little Nightmares II drew me into the game in general. Distorted world-design created a lasting obscurity towards the writers' intents, and progression into the story developed this unspoken narrative.

From beginning to end, there is little to no guidance

"The players' actions and progression are foundational to the lore and the storyline"

Six is controlled by the game's artificial intelligence, she ends up building a lasting impact towards the story, sometimes being instrumental to the player's progression.

While I found the left-to-right aspect of the game slightly irritating, it was a huge addition to the mystifying nature. Moving from one doorway to another created uncertainty that truly made the game feel like a horror piece. The player never knows what to expect when advancing into a new room, whether that be just another hallway or a dismem-

bered body part. I found myself squinting my eyes at times where I heard strange noises, wanting to drop my controller right before the camera panned over to what lay in the adjoining area. The game became a battle of fear and curiosity as I grappled with stopping and taking a few breaths or continuing on.

of where to go or what to do, making Little Nightmares feel less like a video game and more like a stellar feature. The players' actions and progression are foundational to the lore and the storyline, not the voice of a narrator. Overall, the game did great with immersing and engaging the player. Even if the game did get terrifying, the fear-factor kept me glued to my screen wanting to discover the next piece of plot in the storyline. The development throughout is entirely worth the play, although the game has a single storyline without much replayability. Furthermore, compared to many other large titles, the playthrough is only around seven to eight hours in length, depending on the player. That being said, the unexpected ending brings even more questions and had me fixated on finding answers.

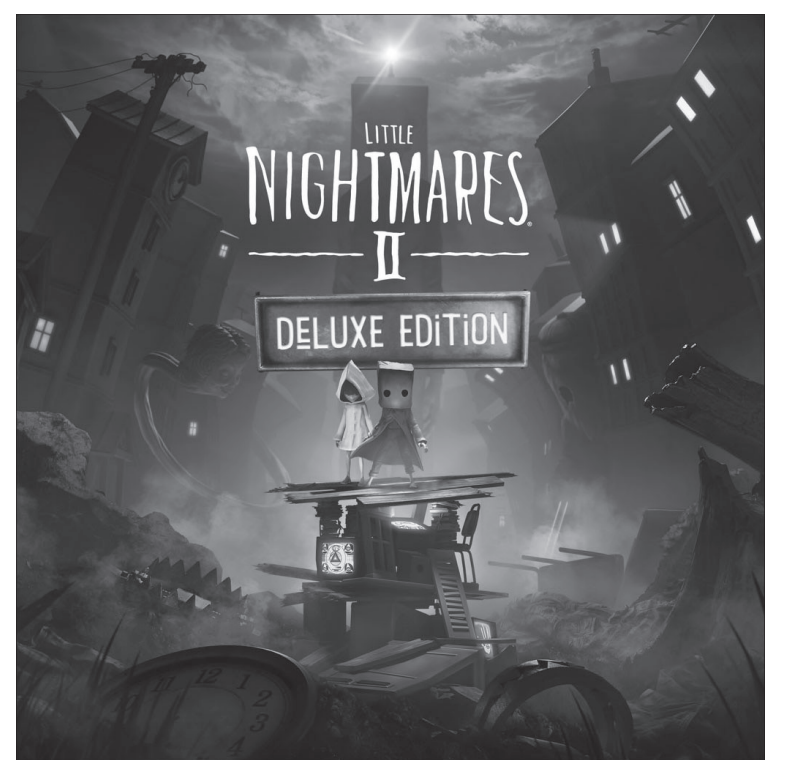
Although I don't usually gravitate towards the horror genre, Little Nightmares II is a game for those who love horror and those who may not alike. The mix of fear and artistic direction allows the game to be something more than just a horror game. The game delivers a single-hit experience that has merit in its ability to both frighten and entrance the player.

OUR OUTLOOK  
★★★★★

OUR OUTLOOK  
★★★★★

discover a passion for feminism and use that as inspiration for the question, yet the application never shows up again, leaving the viewer confused about Vivian's college plans.

"Moxie" tries to tackle many different issues under the um-



BANDAI NAMCO ENTERTAINMENT



# Livestreaming athletic events enters the picture for Aragon

Cooper Wong  
SPORTS WRITER

Earlier this school year, Aragon installed two expensive cameras on campus: one in the North Gym and the other on the main field. Athletic Director Steve Sell came up with the idea to have livestreaming cameras installed. The feedback so far has been mainly positive as many people will not be watching athletic events in person this year due to the risk of contracting COVID-19 and the fact that only four family members per athlete are allowed at each game. The first game was broadcast through the National Federation of State High School

Associations Network on March 12 and displayed the football game between Aragon (1-1 overall, 1-0 Peninsula Ocean League) and Sacred Heart Preparatory (2-0 overall, 1-0 Peninsula Bay League) which ended in a 49-12 win for Sacred Heart.

Typically, these cameras would cost up to \$10,000, but in Aragon's case, the cam-

eras were given to the school by the NFHS. In the end, the installation was the only cost in the exchange, so the school only paid about \$3,000.

**"COVID-19 hit and we thought we should really do this"**

Games will be broadcast

on the NFHS Network which costs \$10.99 a month for access to the competitions. Aragon has its own page for all of the recorded games, which can be watched live or prerecorded.

One important feature of the cameras is that they can be controlled remotely.

"Right now, the most likely scenario is us being able to broadcast football

games, soccer matches, boys and girls lacrosse and track meets," Sell said.

Even though the cameras were only installed in two locations on campus, sports that are not played in the North Gym or on the main field may be broadcast from mobile devices as well. Many games are recorded or broadcast by parents, and the NFHS Network makes online viewing more accessible to those who cannot attend in person.

The school was already looking into livestreaming games before the pandemic, but because of the new restrictions on crowd sizes, the idea became even more relevant. Streams will continue after the pandemic.



On March 19, the cameras were used to livestream Aragon's football game against San Mateo. AIDAN GERBER

"We were already getting ready to do this [before the pandemic]," Sell said. "Other schools in our district had started to do this ... and then COVID-19 hit and we thought we should really do this."

According to Sell, there were no objections against the installation of the cameras amongst players or coaches. Many players thought it was a great addition and had a positive response to the

eras is the possible lack of representation for other sports such as baseball, softball and swimming that will not benefit from the new cameras.

"I think it is unfair to give priority to different sports and to leave some sports out of it," said freshman basketball player Owen Browne. "The sports that do not have cameras can still be broadcast but in lower quality, leaving the argument of inequality."

**"I think it is unfair to give priority to different sports and to leave some sports out of it"**

prospect of their competitions being recorded.

"I think [the cameras were] a good idea because of COVID-19, so everyone can watch games without actually going," said sophomore baseball player Ronin Lee.

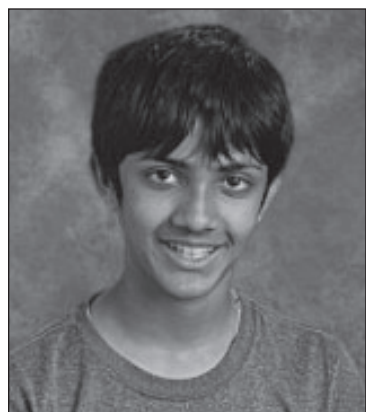
One criticism of the cam-

The new cameras will be helpful for members of the community that cannot or do not want to watch the games in person and are willing to pay the service fee. Because of the price reduction that was given to the school, this purchase seems cost effective.



AIDAN GERBER

## Opinion: is college basketball pandemic madness?



Pratham Valluri  
SPORTS WRITER

pandemic, NCAA officials decided that holding each tournament in only one area would be a safer option.

There are six different sites in Indiana that are hosting the games: Lucas Oil Stadium, Bankers Life Fieldhouse, Hinkle Fieldhouse, Indiana Farmers Coliseum, Mackey Arena and Assembly Hall. The NCAA is providing safe transportation for the athletes to travel between the different stadiums.

Although some may worry

about the safety of the tournament during the pandemic despite the precautions being taken, March Madness should continue. The NBA has already

**"The addition of fans in arenas creates a more normal environment for student-athletes"**

found success with a bubble-like system during the previous season and ended the season with a minimal amount of positive COVID-19 cases. Similar to the NBA, one of the NCAA's biggest priorities seems to be the safety of athletes, and they are doing a lot to keep the players as safe as possible.

The NCAA has stated that it will allow up to 25% of spectator capacity into the arena. As the vaccines start to get released and COVID-19

cases decrease, the addition of fans in arenas creates a more normal environment for student-athletes. Many athletes feed off the energy of the crowd, and the lack of fans during their normal season has hurt that aspect of the game.

The spectators will also help economically, because March Madness is one of the largest yearly events for the NCAA. At the 2019 Final Four matchups

between Virginia-Auburn and Michigan State-Texas Tech, there were 144,773 fans in total who attended the Final Four, along with an all-time record of 2,442 credentialed media. There were also 135 million social media views throughout the course of the tournament and an all-time record of about 100 million live streams, according to the NCAA.

**"One of the NCAA's biggest priorities seems to be the safety of athletes"**

March Madness likely will not greatly add to the spread of COVID-19. The COVID-19 positivity rate in Florida on Feb. 4, three days before Super Bowl LV, was 9.4%, compared to only 7.9% when tested on Feb. 23. The NCAA will constantly test athletes, officials, coaches, spectators and anybody who has had contact

with a team member.

March Madness should also be played because it is beneficial for both NBA teams and college athletes. The tournament gives athletes a chance to showcase their abilities while also allowing NBA scouts, general managers and coaches to see a player's potential.

According to a poll done by Columbia graduate Casey Ichniowski and Haverford graduate Anne Preston from 1997 to 2010, a player's performance in March Madness could positively or negatively affect their draft position. The tournament is the most popular college basketball event of the year, and professional teams get a look at how players perform under pressure, the style

of play, their leadership and how that play could possibly translate to the NBA.

March Madness is a crucial event that should be played, for economic purposes, for the benefit of NBA teams and college athletes and to give colleges a chance to compete for a national title, a chance they were robbed of last year.



AVA GAWEL



# Aragon swim season comes to a close

Elizabeth van Blommestein  
SPORTS EDITOR

On March 19, Aragon's boys and girls swim team defeated Hillside in their second to last virtual meet of the season. Snagging 12 first place finishes, the Dons won by a comfortable margin.

"I think everyone did really well," said senior swimmer Kris Nguyen. "We swam hard, and we had lots of fun. For my individual performance, I could have done better, of course, but the times that I got were good."

During this meet, as with any, having a focused mindset and staying free from distractions was a key to success for the athletes. Nguyen placed first in all four of his events.

"Usually during the relays

ponent swim teams," said junior swimmer Michelle Liu. "Relays are usually super exciting to watch and participate in since the races are usually very close which creates more competition. But now that we are always racing against the same people, there isn't as much cheering or fierce competition."

Not only have COVID-19 safety regulations changed swim meets themselves, but the new regulations have also changed practices. Instead of practicing six times a week, the Dons only practice three times a week now and in smaller groups. With smaller practice groups, coaches have been able to give swimmers extra attention as they have limited numbers of athletes to watch over. During prac-

been very different, all athletes have enjoyed the mental health break attending practices has given them.

"A favorite memory would probably be seeing my friends honestly," Nguyen said. "During quarantine, you don't really get to go out that much, so I guess having some sort of interaction with the coaches and my friends is pretty nice."

Seniors have also had to come to terms with the end of their swim careers being a lot different than usual.

"I think that it has to be much easier to adjust as a new player than as a returning player since you've already [gotten used to] prior seasons," said senior swimmer Jennifer Barerra. "[But] it's nothing like the seasons that we have now."

In terms of mental support in this hard time, Barerra also agrees that the coaches have been extra understanding of athletes.

"I think that [the coaches] have really come to terms with understanding how students must feel," Barerra said. "But I do think that they really understand."

As for hopes for the rest of the season, athletes and coaches are focused on the last meet of the season which will happen on March 24.

"Now that the season is coming to an end, I just am hoping for our final [meet is] a good one," Barerra said. "I do really hope I stay in touch with those team members that I've really become close with."

Additional reporting by Emma  
Quanbeck.

tics and meets, the athletes and coaches try to adhere to social distancing protocols as much as possible, but the swimmers are faced with a difficult environment as they cannot wear masks in the pool.

"With the few days of practice, it is a lot harder to get back in shape and I haven't been able to get back into the shape I was in for previous swim seasons," Liu said. "However, I really enjoy that during practices, there is a maximum of two swimmers per lane so I am able to go at my own pace and not worry about running into other swimmers or waiting for my turn to swim."

Even though the season has

"I think that [the coaches] have really come to terms with understanding how students must feel"

... I'm trying to get the best time," Nguyen said. "But during the individual meets, I'm usually thinking 'keep on doing your best, swim harder, don't breathe, just keep on going.' Sometimes I think to myself 'don't look back' because you don't want to see the person next to you because it can screw up your time."

Although athletes' mindsets have stayed strong, the atmosphere during competitions has shifted.

"In past seasons, I would look forward to seeing some of the people I knew from other schools but now we don't get to swim in the same pool as our op-



Swimmers are socially distanced in the pool and wear masks on the deck.

RAHUL VISHWA



The girls tennis has completed a shortened season this year due to the pandemic.

ALESSANDRO RIEDEL

## Girls tennis finishes off another season

Colin Johnson  
SPORTS WRITER

It's been over a year since San Mateo County issued its first shelter-in-place order. Now that cases are slowing down, high school sports have been allowed to start up again. Currently, the Peninsula Athletic League is operating under a two season schedule with the first season having already started on Feb. 8, while the second season is set to start on April 5. Included in the first season is girl's tennis (3-1 PAL) who have already started practice and games.

The start of the season brings excitement for the tennis players

Like in most sports right now, safety is the number one priority for girls tennis, and the team is taking precautionary measures such as wearing masks while playing, social distancing and disinfecting equipment. They also fill out a form on LiveSafe which tracks athletes' exposure to COVID-19 through an online questionnaire. It asks a series of questions such as if an athlete has experienced any symptoms of COVID-19 and if the athlete or their family members have been in contact with others who may be infected with the virus. It also asks if an athlete has been outside of San Mateo for practices or games. LiveSafe is used throughout the district for contact tracing of COVID-19.

With all of the COVID-19 restrictions in place, the season is a lot different than it used to be and less games are being played, but the team is happy to play nonetheless.

"It's kind of tough [and] a little bit confusing," said freshman first singles player Varsha Jawadi. "It's definitely not as fun because the season would normally be longer, and we would usually get to play more schools. It's shortened now because of COVID-19, but it's good that it's happening at all."

One of these differences is

that teams will play against less schools this year. Due to the way the league is structured this season, San Mateo Union High School District teams, including Aragon, cannot play against teams from other districts. Because of this, Aragon won't be playing many of the high-ranking teams like Menlo-Atherton, Carlmont, and Woodside this season.

"Our competition isn't as good as it was because in our league, the best teams are in the Bay [division] and lesser teams are in the Ocean [division]," said Coach Dave Owdom. "I always feel you get better when you play better people [than] playing a team that's not so good that our team can beat easily. That's changed a little bit competition wise, but I understand you got to start out slow. You got to see how this works."

Owdom hopes that the season can bring a sense of normalcy back into the lives of the athletes.

"[Our] goal right now more than anything is getting our lives back to normal," Owdom said. "Not just the physical activity, but the social aspect of playing tennis [is] more important than goals in the past. I always want people to get better; it's always a goal to get better. Being part of a team is always a goal of mine, but it's more so being a team this year than ever before."

The team fosters a variety of skill levels from beginners to advanced players. Jawadi believes that her experience on the court will help her be a leader even though it's her first year on the team.

"I've been playing tournaments since I was eight [and] I think for a lot of other girls, this is one of their first matches or they just never really played matches that much," Jawadi said. "I think that [my experience] definitely helps me help out my teammates when they're nervous before a match or if they have questions about points or something. I always feel like I can help them out."