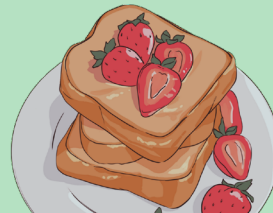


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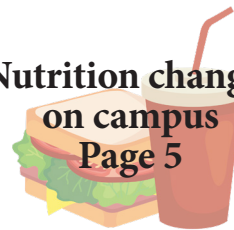
# The ARAGON OUTLOOK

Thursday | September 30, 2021 | Volume 62, Issue 2

900 Alameda de las Pulgas, San Mateo, CA 94402

Aragon High School

Nutrition changes  
on campus  
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## Tri-M Induction Ceremony

Frankie Mayor  
NEWS WRITER

After a year and a half of virtual concerts, the Aragon Music Department kicked off the school year with the Tri-M Honor Society Induction Ceremony on Sept. 17. The ceremony was held in the theater and lasted from 7-8 p.m.

In order to comply with COVID-19 regulations, John Chen, the Director of Choirs and Orchestras, and Kevin Gallagher, the Director of Bands, allowed audience members to choose where they sat amongst the socially distanced family pods. They also required face masks for

all attendees and provided extra masks and hand sanitizer at the entrance to the theater.

Chen and Gallagher prepared for the ceremony with a different mindset compared to previous in-person concerts and worked with the space they had. They held the ceremony in accordance with the national Tri-M Honor Society by-laws, which require all chapters to hold a ceremony in which selected students are commended for their talents.

The ceremony gave the musicians' families, friends and other members of the Aragon community the opportunity to publicly celebrate and learn

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Students in the Tri-M Honor Society performed on Sept. 17.

KENDALL MAKUTA

## New COVID-19 school policy

Eesha Gupta  
NEWS WRITER

After a month of in-person learning, Aragon's vigilance against COVID-19 has been effective so far. The combination of vaccination, ventilation and masking has helped Aragon avoid outbreaks and school closures.

Freshman Sabeeha Sheikh was vaccinated at a clinic at San Mateo High School.

"My dad heard about [the clinic] from one of my brother's friends," Sheikh said. "It was pretty crowded, but it wasn't super crowded so I didn't feel unsafe."

While the San Mateo Union High School District has allocated substantial time and resources into reaching out to unvaccinated students in the District, SMUHSD Superintendent Kevin Skelly spoke about the amount of Aragon students and staff who are already

vaccinated at the Sept. 9 Board meeting.

"[At Aragon], 89% of students ... and 98% of staff are vaccinated [according to self reported data]," Skelly said.

As of Sept. 24, there are 42 confirmed COVID-19 cases district-wide and four at Aragon. The confirmed infection rate at Aragon is approximately 0.2%, while the district's total rate is 0.4%, according to data from the District's COVID-19 dashboard.

The current preventive systems in place at Aragon follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's guidelines.

"We are fortunate that the vast majority of our indoor spaces in our district are not only relatively modern, but also of relatively high echelon in terms of capacity and safety," said Craig Childress, president of the Teacher's Association.

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## Aragon adjusts to a new bell schedule

Lauren Bennett  
NEWS WRITER

Alongside the transition back to in-person school, students and faculty at Aragon have been adjusting to the new bell schedule implemented this year. With a start time of 8:30 a.m. and block periods four days a week, the new schedule

is a big change from the previous schedule at Aragon during in-person classes. This shift came with a lack of consultation with teachers and students, so the schedule changes came as a surprise to many.

"[The bell schedule] was mandated by the district without any teacher or student input," said freshman English

teacher Dena Johnson. "We came back to school without any training ... we didn't know what this was going to be like."

Although the schedule last year had a similar block format, students and staff have had to get used to the multiple long periods in an in-person setting. Despite the initial surprise of the schedule, many people on campus seem to be adapting to and maximizing the extra time in each period.

"I think one positive thing [about in-person learning] is that I can get more done in a class period," Johnson said. "At the end of the period you have students do their work, ... so I think that part is good."

With classes meeting only three times a week, students have the ability to spread out their homework and spend their time more effectively. Some Aragon students are using the new schedule to complete more homework at school.

"[The new schedule has] helped me because I can do homework from whatever classes I've had that day and

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### FEATURES

**The freshman and sophomore experience**  
Learn about how the underclassmen are adapting to a new environment.



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### A&E

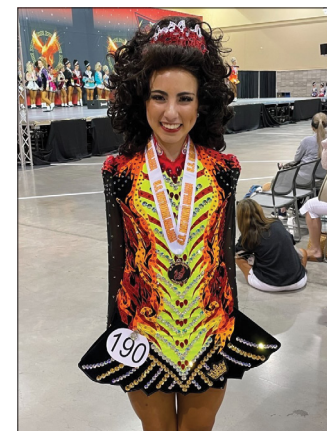
**"Shang-Chi" movie review**  
Check out Lian Cualop-ing's review of Marvel's latest movie.



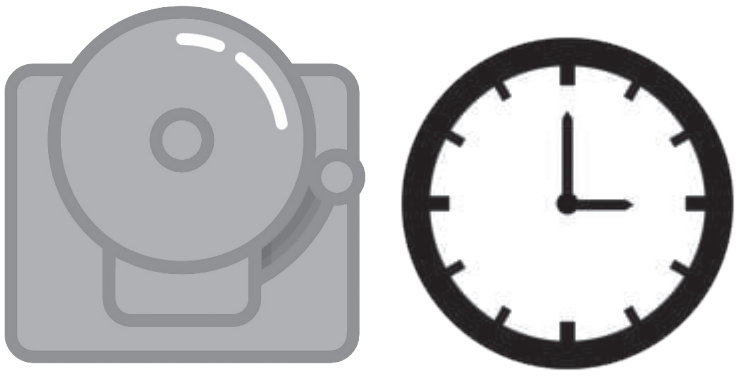
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### SPORTS

**Irish dancer Amelia Aquipel**  
Follow Aquipel's journey into the unique sport of Irish dance.



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## New year, new schedule

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I don't have seven classes worth of homework to do everyday," said freshman Naveen Schwarzkopf.

Sophomore Kayla Kassner uses the schedule to also finish homework at school.

"I don't have any homework at home now because [classes] are so long," said Kassner.

Many students are able to get work done in class. However, because classes are only

"It's really rough having periods that long," Johnson said. "The freshmen have been complaining about how long it is. It's just a really long amount of time to be sitting in class."

Some teachers are implementing mid-class breaks, which can be beneficial for student learning.

"Teachers have done a really good job of allowing their students to take little breaks

**"The freshmen have been complaining about how long it is ... to be sitting in class"**

meeting three times a week, the need for asynchronous work has increased in some classes. While longer periods mean less homework for some classes, other subjects are not experiencing the same benefits.

"I've had to adjust to only seeing my students three days a week instead of four," said calculus teacher Adam

here and there so they can stretch and refocus," said senior Mabryn Manu. "That's been a huge help."

In addition to adjusting to longer periods, students and staff are also leaving school later due to the 8:30 a.m. start time. While students may appreciate the extra sleep, getting home later can pose a problem for many. Photog-

AHS Bell Schedules: 2021 - 2022		
Subject to change as necessary during the course of the year. Last updated: July 28, 2021		
<b>(Mondays)</b>	<b>(Tuesday/Thursday)</b>	<b>(Wednesday/Friday)</b>
<b>1-7 Period Day</b>	<b>Even Period Block + Flex</b>	<b>Odd Period Block</b>
Period 1 8:30 9:20	Period 0 7:25 8:20	Period 0 7:25 8:20
Period 2 9:25 10:15	Period 2 8:30 10:00	Period 1 8:30 10:00
Brunch 10:15 10:25	Brunch 10:00 10:10	Brunch 10:00 10:10
Period 3 10:30 11:20	Flex 10:20 10:55	Period 3 10:20 11:50
Period 4 + LA 11:25 12:20	Period 4 + LVA 11:05 12:45	Lunch 11:50 12:20
Lunch 12:20 12:50	Lunch 12:45 1:15	Period 5 12:30 2:00
Period 5 12:55 1:45	Period 6 1:25 2:55	Period 7 2:10 3:40
Period 6 1:50 2:40	Teacher Collab 3:05 3:45	
Period 7 2:45 3:35		
<b>(-1 Monday per month)</b>	<b>(As Needed)</b>	<b>(As Needed)</b>
<b>1-7 Early Release (PD for start)</b>	<b>Minimum Day 1-7 Period</b>	<b>Start of School</b>
Period 1 8:30 9:10	Period 1 8:30 9:00	Period 1 9:05 9:50
Period 2 9:15 9:55	Period 2 9:05 9:35	Period 2 9:55 10:40
Brunch 9:55 10:05	Period 3 9:40 10:10	Brunch 10:40 10:50
Period 3 10:10 10:50	Brunch 10:10 10:20	Period 3 10:55 11:40
Period 4 10:55 11:35	Period 4 10:25 10:55	Period 4 + LA 11:45 12:35
Period 5 11:40 12:20	Period 5 11:00 11:30	Lunch 12:35 1:05
Lunch 12:20 12:50	Period 6 11:35 12:05	Period 5 1:10 1:55
Period 6 12:55 1:35	Period 7 12:10 12:40	Period 6 2:00 2:45
Period 7 1:40 2:20		Period 7 2:50 3:35
Staff Prof Dev 2:35 3:45		

AHS WEBSITE

Jacobs. "I'm having to create more asynchronous work for students to do before they come into class. Especially with math, I need them to be able to be familiar with some information before they come."

Although the long periods can be used to do homework, 90 minutes of instruction and work time test students' attention spans.

"The classes are so long," said junior Michelle Jin. "It's hard to stay focused the whole time."

Younger students especially seem to have a difficult time staying focused and present.

raphy and ceramics teacher Brooke Nelson, like many other teachers, has seen effects of the bell schedule in her home life.

"My son is in after-school care longer, and it's a long day for him," Nelson said. "Once I get home, it's like doing the normal household stuff and then getting to my school work, grading and prepping. So, I stay up later now."

The new bell schedule has altered many students and teachers' daily lives and after school schedules. It remains to be seen whether the new bell schedule will have an overall positive or negative impact at Aragon this year.



A student playing at the ceremony

KENDALL MAKUTA

## Aragon musicians inducted into Tri-M Music Honor Society

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 who the Aragon Chapter, Chapter 3534, members for this school year are.

The musicians performed classical arias, concertos, sonatas and jazz standards. These pieces, requiring a small number of musicians to perform, highlighted the musicians' talent. The student performers were mainly section leaders who consistently practiced over the summer, or the past semester, making it easier for them to prepare for this early concert.

and then returned to their seat once they finished.

"This [ceremony] is a little easier to space out just because the performances are [in] smaller groups," Chen said. "[With] solos, duets and quartets, [there is] not too much traffic jam on-stage."

During the Tri-M Honor Society Induction ceremony, Chen and Gallagher inducted the Aragon Chapter's officers and the officers gave a joint-speech describing how the Honor Society had gotten its name and what being part of the Tri-M Honor

Tri-M Induction ceremony, is satisfied about being a part of in-person activities for Chapter 3534.

"It's my second year this time and [since] my first year was kind of scuffed because of COVID-19, I'm really excited to be a part of the actual Tri-M," Dutta said. "[I was] able to do my activities in person, see what it is actually like and bring music to the community."

Senior Katie Lau, a violin player inducted at the Tri-M Induction ceremony, also enjoys her experience with Chapter 3534.

"I think it's a great experience to be a part of something with ... other people who love music as much as I do," Lau said. "There's so many groups of musicians and a lot of interesting areas and it's great to be a part of [the group]."

The new members of Chapter 3534 will continue showcasing their music for the rest of this school year, sharing their musical talents with the Aragon community and beyond.

**"I think it's a great experience to be a part of something with ... other[s] who love music"**

Chen and Gallagher kept the musicians distanced from each other on stage by rearranging their stands and chairs. When it was time for a musician to give a solo performance, they left their seat and went to the center of the stage

Society meant for its members. The Chapter's officers then inducted each individual musician, and throughout the ceremony different members of Chapter 3534 performed.

Junior Wreetom Dutta, who was inducted and sang at the



Students at the Tri-M Honor Society Induction Ceremony

KENDALL MAKUTA

# Editorial: We need more transparency on COVID-19

*This editorial represents the unanimous opinion of all 13 Outlook editors.*

The pandemic has prompted COVID-19 protocols for the new school year, including indoor mask mandates, testing opportunities and vaccine promotions for students and faculty. However, the San Mateo Union High School District and Aragon administration have lacked transparency toward community members because they did not spread enough awareness about information that could help people fulfill these protocols. The editors of The Aragon Outlook urge the District to increase publicity about vaccination locations, case data and testing opportunities to protect the Aragon community's health and privacy.

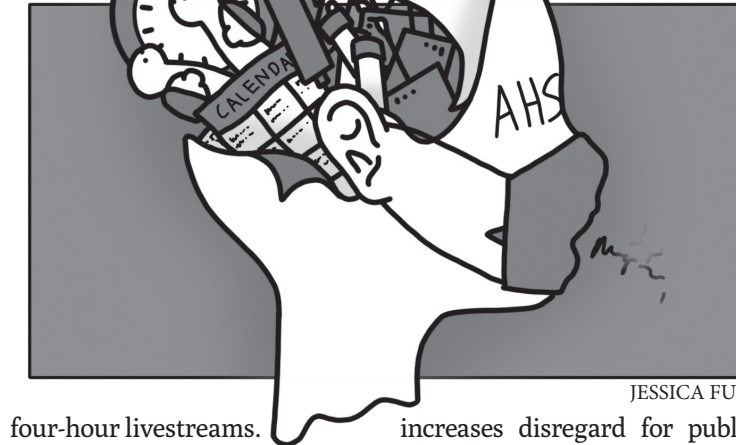
The District has been offering vaccination opportunities at locations such as Capuchino

fewer opportunities advertised this year than during the spring of 2021. While other opportunities outside of school exist, such as through local pharmacies and grocery stores, some parents may be reluctant to allow their children to get vaccinated, or simply may not have the time to take them to get their shot. Thus, the SMUHSD must ensure students who want to get vaccinated can.

Postings about vaccination opportunities on the District website are not enough, as they do not reach the entire student population. Information should also be promoted through Canvas announcements, loudspeaker reminders, emails and video announcements to ensure the entire school community is aware.

The District should also more openly communicate with the community about new

four-hour livestreams. Routine publicizing the dashboard is an effective way to achieve transparency to the entire community.



JESSICA FU

The case dashboard is also a useful source for reducing uncertainty during the already confusing and stressful pandemic. More exposure to such resources informs the commu-

nity and minimizes panic. Keeping the community in the dark about positive cases, even unintentionally, is irresponsible. In the absence of accessible figures and data, rumors can spread, exacerbating mistrust and anxiety. Additionally, some may falsely assume the pandemic is not affecting the community, which

increases disregard for public health. Sharing the real numbers frequently and clearly can prevent this spread of misinformation and motivate people to take safety measures seriously. COVID-19 testing is also crucial to ensuring school safety. Weekly testing is available for Aragon students from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on school days at the

theater lobby. Students can test during the 10-minute passing periods. However, the administration needs to more energetically promote these opportunities.

While publicizing, the administration should be considerate of student privacy. When unvaccinated students are required to be tested starting on Oct. 15, announcements to the general student body will be preferable so that unvaccinated students can be reminded of their responsibility without being singled out.

Transparency is integral to any healthy community. Allowing parents, students and staff to learn about public health decisions as they are made will create a constructive, informed environment. A deeper understanding of COVID-19 at Aragon and at each SMUHSD school will allow every member of the community to contribute to public health measures. Ultimately, students and staff on campus have to reap the consequences of district officials' decisions, and thus have a right to know what is going on. Sharing information that will protect classmates without betraying students' legal right to medical privacy is a complicated but important process to undertake.

**“Keeping the community in the dark about positive cases, even unintentionally, is irresponsible”**

and Hillsdale High School, but there have been significantly

cases. While a data-based dashboard displaying weekly posi-

## Aragon adopts new COVID-19 policies for the community

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

While Aragon meets ventilation requirements, contact tracing has been ineffective. Usually, students and faculty are alerted of cases up to a week after the student tests positive for COVID-19.

“There has to be some delay because first you have to take care of medical privacy in terms of HIPAA, so the close contacts have to be contacted first,” Childress said. “Then the larger community is contacted, but I believe this would be more efficient with improved staffing and protocols.”

While the District mandates students to keep their masks on in class, some students feel that teachers have become too relaxed with masking policies.

“They let you drink water in class, and I feel like that’s just gross,” Sheikh said.

On Aug. 23, Gov. Gavin Newsom passed a weekly testing requirement for unvaccinated teachers and staff.

Childress advocates for testing beyond that, and specifically for more staffing and testing to catch COVID-19 cases earlier on.

“We can offer testing to any student or employee regardless of vaccination status,” Childress said. “We have the resources to test everyone regularly. We could conduct weekly pool testing.”

Childress believes weekly pool testing for all students and staff would result in more effective contact tracing. However, Skelly disagrees.

“More testing isn’t gonna solve some of the problems in terms of notification, because you know [there are] just a lot of steps to it,” Skelly said.

Parents and staff who advocated for a districtwide vaccine mandate for all students referenced following in the footsteps of the Los Angeles Unified School District, which has mandated the vaccine for students 12-years-old and older.

“We’re following the state, and waiting until it’s fully approved for 14 and 15-year-olds by the Food and Drug Administration,” Skelly said.

The Board at the Sept. 23 meeting discussed a renewed proposal to mandate vaccination for extracurriculars. The proposed policy states that “Students who participate in any extracurricular activity ... must: (1) be fully vaccinated; or (2) submit weekly negative COVID test results ... COVID tests must take place within 48 hours (ideally 24 hours) of a contest or in-person activity.”

However, there were a myriad of concerns, such as the varied impact due to variations in vaccination rates by race and student’s mental health, privacy and individual liberty.

Like many who spoke during public comment time at the Sept. 9 and 23 board

“They really should [mandate vaccines], because everyone’s so close together at lunch and outside of school,” Sheikh said. “It really matters during sports

like water polo, where you can’t wear a mask.”

Board Vice President, Peter Hanley, agrees that vaccines need to be mandated as soon as possible.

“If I had my preference, we wouldn’t wait,” said Hanley.

The Board eventually voted to table the policy for further discussion at a later meeting.

# The ARAGON OUTLOOK

aragonoutlook.org

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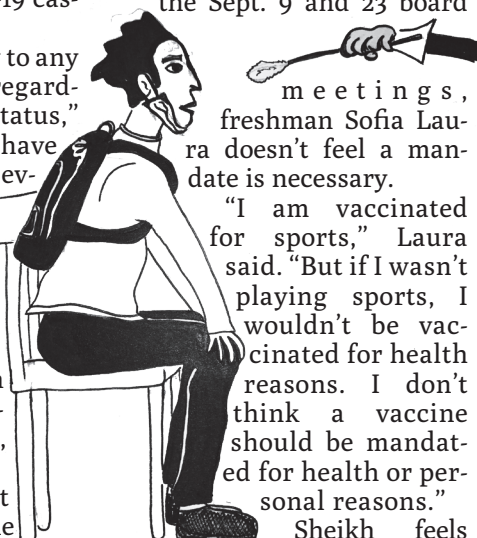
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GENEVIEVE BIGUE

# Events amidst COVID-19

Marlee Cherkas  
NEWS WRITER

Throughout the spring and summer, a large percentage of students in the San Mateo Union High School District got vaccinated against COVID-19. With high vaccination rates, school events for the 2021-22 school year have returned after a year of loss.

Along with the return of fully in-person classes, all fall sports have resumed practices and competitions. On Sept. 9 and Sept. 23, the SMUHSD Board met to discuss vaccination policies for the upcoming school year. Future board meetings will decide whether athletes need to be vaccinated to participate.

masks to play which will make things a little bit easier, and I expect that we're going to have more players."

Another sector of Aragon extracurriculars impacted in the 2020-21 school year was visual and performing arts, as all concerts performed by the Aragon band and orchestras were held virtually. The first in-person music event was the 2021 Summer Symposium.

"It's great to have people back again," said orchestra teacher John Chen. "Musicians are so excited to rehearse again. The things that used to feel like a lot of hard work [are] now what we really miss and enjoy."

Aragon Drama recently

**"The more you get involved in school, the more fun school is, the more memories you have."**

"We're playing our normal schedule," said Athletic Director Steve Sell. "I'm hopeful that the numbers will settle down and people [will] get vaccinated on their own."

In 2021, all sports, including those with low risk of spreading COVID-19, such as cross country, were limited. For this upcoming season, seven cross country meets will take place at the same locations and with the same number of runners as pre-pandemic meets.

"The rest of the meets [will] be very familiar because we're not stuck on campuses," said cross country coach Frank Hunt. "Running on cross country courses will ... be a benefit for everybody."

In last year's sports seasons, masks, social distancing and temperature checks were enforced. Many players were discouraged from playing because of the strict guidelines and chance of exposure to the virus.

"We're going to start regular time in the fall," said girls soccer coach Michael Flynn. "We're not going to wear

announced its fall play, "And Then There Were None" and spring musical "Legally Blonde." Though regular rehearsals have been taking place, the permitted audience size has been reduced to 25% capacity, or a maximum of 157 filled seats in the auditorium.

"I'll encourage [the audience] to be as enthusiastic as they can," said drama teacher and director Shane Smuin. "They've really got to go wild. Zoom was just wretched, so I'm glad we're back."

The revival of in-person school events provides new opportunities for students to explore their interests.

"I think it's a valuable part of high school, whether it's sports, drama [or] music," Flynn said. "The more you get involved in school, the more fun school is, the more memories you have. I'm just glad to see sports back in action."

The Aragon Community is hopeful that with time, events will return to normal. In the meantime, several have already been planned for the upcoming months.



KYLE DELMO

# The growth of Aragon's extracurriculars and student

Liza McGilpin  
NEWS WRITER

Aragon was established in 1961 and has expanded its diversity and population since then. Thirteen years ago, Aragon housed 1,570 Dons, according to Student Data Analyst Thalia Luna. This year, that number reached

Aragon in 1989, lacrosse, girls water polo, boys volleyball, competitive cheer and girls wrestling. The school now holds over 20 different sports teams.

"[If] you have more kids, you have a bigger pool to choose from in terms of athletics," Sell said. "This increase in athletes strengthens

Some students have indicated they chose to attend Aragon in light of the school's diverse activities.

"One of the reasons I came to Aragon was because of sports," said sophomore Hunter Kwan. "I've also joined a few clubs like Red Cross and Key Club and they're fun as well. I'm really happy I chose to come to Aragon, because I like the people I've met here and I don't know if I would have [had] the same experience if I went to another school."

Sophomore Devika Mehra, who was originally registered for Hillsdale, believes one of the factors that makes Aragon stand out is the school's environment.

"I think that Aragon has a much better community and I feel that [we] have a lot more spirit than a lot of the other schools," Mehra said. "I also believe that Aragon's interesting group of clubs drew me in. I personally have joined Speech and Debate, Mock Trial, Track and Field and plan to join more. The community of these clubs are extremely welcoming and friendly which [is] refreshing."

Aragon's extracurricular activities intend to help bond the school's community and connect students between grade levels. Aragon is also home to many inclusive school traditions, such as the Lip Dub and Link Crew.

"I feel like students here are always trying to get one another involved in different stuff at Aragon," said freshman Jane Hershberger. "Aragon does a good job trying to hype everyone up and create a lot of school spirit."

Over the last two decades, Aragon's student body has greatly increased in size. This has allowed for more opportunity and diversity in sports and other programs, more extracurriculars on campus including a wide variety of clubs and teams and a greater sense of community amongst students on campus.

**"I feel that Aragon has a much better community and I feel that [we] have a lot more spirit than a lot of the other schools"**

1,763. The school is home to a wide academic department, a variety of athletics and more than 60 different student-led clubs.

In the 2016-17 school year, 1,576 students were enrolled at Aragon. In the course of five years, the student population has increased by 11.8%. In tandem with the growing population, Aragon has seen an increase in extracurriculars.

Since Aragon's current Athletic Director Steve Sell began working with

many of the Aragon sports teams, which in turn can help amplify the success rates for said teams."

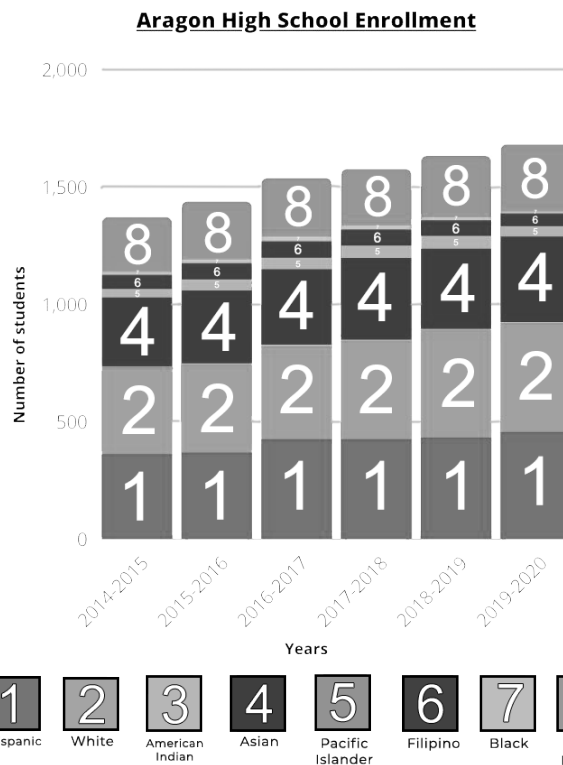
Sell is optimistic about the progress Aragon's athletic department has been making.

"What I'm proud of is that we tend to be consistently strong across all sports," Sell said. "There's 17 schools in the [Peninsula Athletic League] and at the end of the year they always do a commissioners cup. We've never finished lower than fourth."



Aragon students gather at the annual Club Fair to gauge their interest in the over 60 student-led clubs.

PURVI SINGHANIA



Data from SMUHSD

KYLE DELMO

# Public schools receive funding to provide free lunches



Students wait in the lunch line.

ALESSANDRO RIEDEL

**Cameron Leung**  
NEWS WRITER

For the 2021-22 school year, The United States Department of Agriculture and California Department of Education have required the San Mateo Union High School District to begin offering free meals — breakfast, snack and lunch — to all students.

Previously, the Free and Reduced Price Meal Program required families to submit an application about their financial status to qualify for discounted school lunches. Because California's cost of living is the third most expensive in the country, some low-income families in the state may not have been eligible.

“Offering [free meals] to everybody eliminates the barrier and stigma so it doesn't distinguish the people who are on free and reduced lunch from a student who can afford it,” said health teacher Justin Cottrell. “[Another benefit is that] a lot of students who ... don't normally get breakfast at home are able to take the advantage ... [and] likely stay awake in class and pay attention [because they are full].”

The California state government plans to permanently continue funding public school lunches under the Free School Meals for All Act. In addition to improving students' learning abilities, free meals eliminate expense concerns for public

schools, especially because in the past, the SMUHSD has spent more money on food than it gained from sales.

Demand for meals has increased from an average of 1727 meals to 3477 meals daily district-wide, pushing food preparation employees to work harder.

“Some people [work] extra hours, but ... we just need more employees,” said Aragon Nutrition Services Lead Emilia Rivera. “There's only so much we can do.”

Similarly, manufacturers are in a shortage of staff because many were laid off during the pandemic. This poses a challenge for producers and distributors, ultimately limiting the variety of the food served.

“[Before the pandemic], you submit an order and you get your full order,” said principal Valerie Arbizu. “Right now we're submitting orders, [but] we don't always get everything that we've asked for. There are some national shortages of different ingredients like ketchup or mustard packets, [which] take a toll on what your menu finally looks like.”

All snacks distributed on California school campuses are in accordance with the 35-10-35 mandate, which requires that snacks must consist of no more than 35% fat calories, 10% saturated fat calories and 35% sugar by weight.

“We carry a bag of Hot Cheetos, [but] it's not the same Hot Cheetos you see in the grocery stores,” said the SMUHSD Director of Student Nutrition Denis Vorrises. “It's made differently to meet ... the state's calories, fat, sugar [and] salt regulations.”

In 2010, Michelle Obama enforced the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act, making snack options for high school carts and vending machines “Zero Sugar,” “Low Calorie” or “Low Fat” versions of normal name-brand foods. In 2012, the American Beverage Association, which represents Coca-Cola Co., PepsiCo Inc. and Dr. Pepper Snapple Group Inc., launched a program that added the decal

calorie count for that day.”

Although the slogan attempted to encourage healthy diets, it could trigger eating disorders and dieting.

“For people who don't have a great relationship with food, ... seeing [the sticker] causes [them to] compare ... what they eat to what somebody else is eating,” said senior Maggie Cayan. “Food is fuel, and if you're ... getting enough nutrients in your diet and staying healthy by giving your body what it needs, [as opposed to] what fad diets or 'health magazines' say, ... then you can be sustained [throughout] the day.”

Cayan and senior Julia Jeck brought the “Calories Count!” label to Arbizu's attention and

**“Offering [free meals] to everybody eliminates the barrier and stigma”**

“Calories Count: Check Then Choose” and showed calorie counts on the buttons of the beverage vending machines.

“It seems like the intent [of the sticker was] to get students to be aware of what they were eating in terms of calories,” Cottrell said. “But, I think the impact can be ... negative because it can lead [students] to depriving themselves of food or skipping meals if they feel like they're going to go over their

the District Nutrition Department removed it in two weeks.

“Even though not too many people knew it at the time, ... it was ... like a little victory for Julia and I, knowing that what we did made an impact,” Cayan said.

The SMUHSD Nutrition Department will continue to regulate the food's quality, hire cafe workers and endorse California's Free School Meals For All Act.

# Board of trustees reorganizes trustee elections

**Ayman Ahmed Khan**  
NEWS WRITER

The San Mateo Union High School District's Board of Trustees votes on decisions that the district makes on behalf of the schools. Now, the fundamental way that the elections of these officials works is changing.

Previously, every trustee running would be chosen by the entire district. But as of Feb. 25, 2021, each trustee will represent a portion of the District and only those in that area will vote on who is elected there. The Board decided that the entire District will be divided into geographical areas, sectioned by neighborhoods and areas with shared social and economic opinions, policies and common interests.

This change is due to the California Voters Rights Act, which states that voting procedures that discriminate against minorities, or instigate racially polarized voting, are unfair and disenfranchise minority groups. Other districts who tried to ignore this change have been sued.

“Some have fought it, but they lost,” said Board member Ligia Andrade Zúñiga. “[It] was not only a very time consuming process for everyone involved, but also it ... [was] a waste of resources

[and] a waste of effort”.

It is important that voting procedures in the trustee election process do not violate the CVRA.

“At times, a minority population might get drowned out if the trustees are elected by just a broad swath,” said history teacher Will Colglazier.

**“At times, a minority population might get drowned out if trustees are elected by just a broad swath”**

The newly introduced by-trustee area board elections do not violate the CVRA, allowing for an election of trustees that more accurately represent the

district population. Better representation increases the County Committee and the Board of Trustees' ability to make decisions that benefit the entire community.

“If one district votes on some trustee that's in a more privileged community, they're going to have differ-

ent opinions than ... ones for less privileged communities,”

said junior Mathew Zheng.

The chosen geographical areas are crucial to whether

**“We [want] to give people access to opportunities and make sure that all of our communities are”**

the by-trustee area elections will work or not, which is why many more meetings will be held in the future to deliberate and finalize all of these plans.

“We are willing to ... try to change things ... and be collaborative,” Zúñiga said. “We [want] to give people access to opportunities and

want to make sure that all of our communities are represented.”

“Having different districts will give more diversity of opinion because each district probably has their own circumstances,” Zheng said.

In early 2022, meetings will be held to finalize the exact boundaries of each of the trustee's areas. The final map adoption meeting will be on Feb. 24. at 7 p.m.

Zúñiga encourages all students to learn about this policy and follow the board meetings. These meetings are open to the public, so anyone can attend to observe and make a public comment on the maps being proposed and what policies the District will adopt.

“I want to make sure that people are informed,” Zúñiga said. “That's my biggest concern. ... I just want to make sure there is ... access to information for everyone and that everyone understands how it works, ... especially the students.”



JESSICA FU

# Being high schoolers for the “first” time



ALEX LO

Lipika Goel  
FEATURES STAFFER

As another year begins, a new class of Dons is welcomed to Aragon. Due to virtual learning last year, however, around half of the student population is coming to campus in person for the first time.

Both freshmen and sophomores have had to adjust to a bigger campus. For freshman Yael Boaz, Aragon is much dif-

ferent than the private K-8 school she came from. “The biggest difference was] either the really big campus or the amount of people,” Boaz said. “There are hundreds

of people here, [but] in my old school, ... there were only 200 in total. My grade graduated [with] 19.” Sophomore Trish Clemente had a similar reaction when she stepped foot onto campus for the first time last year during hybrid learning.

“The school was big,” Clemente said. “I got lost between the hallways.”

On the other hand, sophomore Benjamin Ricket was

not as disoriented by the bigger campus. “The campus is] laid out differently than my middle school’s and there are ... more buildings,” Ricket said. “But ...

other than that, the classrooms are similar. It’s a bigger school but not so much bigger that it feels overwhelming.” Some sophomores feel like they missed a year of their high school experience due to distance learning.

“It’s nice to be back in school and among people ... especially because we’re in our sophomore year now,” Ricket said. “There are four years of high school. One of those years [is] already done and it feels like it didn’t really happen. I did not get to know any new people. While I know clubs ... happened last year, I personally did not want to spend any more time on Zoom than I had to.”

Some sophomores, like Ricket, feel out of place since their last year of in-person school was in middle school.

“I still think of myself as an eighth-grader,” Ricket said. “[The freshmen] seem like seventh-graders.”

The school environment is just as new to some sophomores as most freshmen.

“I feel like we’re ... at the same level as the freshmen because I still don’t know the entire campus that well,” said sophomore Rachel Ma. “I’ve never been in the theater or [even] on the football field much.”

Many sophomores found it hard to connect with their classmates through a screen.

“A lot of communication [is conveyed through a person’s] body language and you can’t really tell that through Zoom,” Ma said. “[Being in-person adds]

a more human element than a square on the screen [does].”

More than just the difficulty of interacting on Zoom, many felt less motivated to socialize.

“Honestly, I didn’t make friends online,” Clemente said. “[I might have] talked to them, but I didn’t really know if I should call them my friends until I came to school and met them in-person.”

Being in-person has allowed underclassmen the opportunity to understand and experience the Aragon community better.

“I probably wouldn’t have noticed if you put me into San Mateo High School classes [instead of] Aragon classes because it was all over Zoom,” Ma said. “It’s just so much easier to be spirited when you’re together and everyone’s having fun and celebrating.”

However, Clemente found that teachers were able to

maintain school spirit in online classes too. “Teachers always talked about Aragon,” Clemente said. “[Teachers said things like] ‘If we were at Aragon, my classroom would look like this,’ and ‘If we were at Aragon, you would have lunch [at] this time.’”

“Aragon has been really great [at] making freshmen feel welcome,” Boaz said. “[Clubs are great] because I [get] to meet people.”

Freshman Chloe Gee has also found clubs helpful for connecting the Aragon community.

“I’ve joined G.S.A. and Aerospace,” Gee said. “I think clubs at Aragon are more established.”

Despite the challenges of the past year, both class grades are glad to finally be at Aragon.

“Being on campus is so important for me ... because this year ... my classes are harder than they were last year,” Ma said. “It would be much harder for me to keep up and learn all the [new] material over Zoom. I would’ve missed out on so much if I hadn’t been able to come back on campus.”

Gee is glad to be on campus as well.

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## A year in review of Ethnic Studies

Aakanksha Sinha  
FEATURES STAFFER

A year ago, Ethnic Studies became a graduation requirement for freshmen across all schools in the San Mateo Union High School District. After a rough start due to the pandemic, the Ethnic Studies teachers are ready to transition back to in-person learning.

“Online, it was a challenge because it was the first year we were teaching it and we had no idea what to expect,” said Ethnic Studies teacher Jerri-rica Keane. “[We] initially had planned for in-person [learning] ... so we had to completely change things in a lot of ways.”

ditional perspective and so far, so good.”

Ethnic Studies is the interdisciplinary study of the histories, cultures, experiences, traditions and issues of the historically overlooked and marginalized racial-ethnic groups in the U.S. At Aragon, the units covered in the semester-long course include Identity, Race and Ethnicity, Gender and Sexuality and Transformation and Change. The curriculum ends with students creating a project that showcases their improved understanding and growth.

Compared to conventional social science classes, Ethnic Studies focuses on the stories and experiences of those who

perspective,” Keane said. “It’s about humanity.”

After taking the class last year, sophomore Tara Sardana was inspired to create Ethnic Studies Club to provide students who hadn’t had the opportunity to take the course a chance to learn about and experience Ethnic Studies.

“To me, [Ethnic Studies has been] a blessing,” Sardana said. “I think that everyone should be able to take the class. [Ethnic Studies] is really important to me because it [focuses] my life in the way I want it to go.”

One of Sardana’s favorite topics was the identity unit.

“As ... an Indian [who] grew up in America, ... I was adapting to the American culture and not my own,” Sardana said. “When I finally took this class it made me realize how blind I was to my culture and why I should be ... more in touch with it and not be embarrassed or ashamed [by] it.”

Henderson believes that making Ethnic Studies a graduation requirement emphasizes its fundamental importance and gives students a basic understanding of the topics taught as they affect people’s everyday lives.

Sophomore Jeremy Hsieh feels that embracing the difficult conversations that come with the class makes students more accepting of

each others’ differences.

“I think [students] shouldn’t be afraid to talk about these sensitive topics, especially race and gender and sexuality and ethnicity,” Hsieh said. “[They] should be open to the course ... because the course is just trying to help us.”

There has been controversy surrounding critical race theory and how it may connect to Ethnic Studies classes. Critical race theory describes a set of ideas regarding how the intersectionality of race and gender commingle, which can either limit or benefit certain racial and ethnic groups.

“Politicians ... are mistaking some of the topics that we are talking about in the course ... and saying that teachers should not be

allowed to teach anything that has to do with the past of our country that doesn’t put America in a favorable light,” Henderson said.

Keane believes it is people’s differences that make them so interesting. She is hopeful that people will love each others’ differences and change Aragon’s campus culture for the better.

“I just want students to be able to see themselves in the chain of human history, and understand that they matter,” Henderson said.

The Ethnic Studies teachers unanimously agree the course strives to show students the importance of demonstrating humanity and being upstanders in society, in hopes of creating a more unified generation.

“I want students to ... see themselves in the chain of human history, and understand that they matter”

Now that students are back in person again, the teachers are excited to give students the real, hands-on and collaborative experience that they had originally planned for the Ethnic Studies.

“This is our first chance to teach it on campus with kids, live,” said Ethnic Studies teacher Steve Henderson. “It’s been really positive. The kids are getting a chance to gain some ad-

were left out of the master narrative: a dominant and deeply embedded social anecdote which mutes and erases the role of other minorities, and is perceived from only one point of view. Ethnic Studies aims to broaden the perspectives of younger generations and show them various histories and cultures, which are just as essential as the “master narrative.”

“What we teach in ethnic studies [is] from the human



Students taking Ethnic Studies

BRIANNE MARTIN

# California's shaky history

Amelia Butler  
FEATURES WRITER

Earthquakes are a common phenomenon most Bay Area residents are familiar with. As the threat of a future earthquake inches closer, it becomes more important to prepare and understand the risks that earthquakes pose.

"Faults are the boundaries between pieces of earth that move at different speeds or different rates," said biology teacher Richard Whitmarsh.

Faults are located all around the world, including in the Bay Area. There are seven major local hazardous fault lines, the most prominent ones being the San Andreas Fault and the Hayward Fault.

"When the chunks of earth slip past each other along what's called a fault, that's when ... [built up] energy is released, and that energy being released ripples through the earth," Whitmarsh said. "That's an earthquake."

The San Andreas Fault, one of the largest faults in the world and the fault that has caused most Bay Area earthquakes, is located between the North American and Pacific tectonic plates and runs for more than 745 miles. This fault has a sizable history of causing damaging earthquakes. Possibly the most famous example of its destructive ability is the earthquake of 1906. Biology and AP Environmental Science teacher Greg Moretti has a personal connection to the event.

"I'm a fourth-generation San Francisco born ... and my great grandparents were living in San Francisco during the 1906 earthquake," Moretti said. "My great grandfather was a firefighter in San Francisco during that time so he fought the fires after the earthquake."

The 1906 earthquake stretched across more than 290 miles of California's coast. "[The 1906 earthquake] was a 7.8 [on the earthquake scale]," Moretti said.

This earthquake and the Loma Prieta earthquake of

ings on campus are examples of structures built according to updated codes.

"Outside of the small gym, there's these ... big angled iron beams that go at like

**"When the chunks of Earth slip past each other along ... [built up] energy is released"**

45 degrees ... and those are actually seismic safety features," Whitmarsh said. "[They ensure] that the gym and big buildings like that are able to flex ... but not fall down."

The San Andreas Fault has also caused several small earthquakes.

"I have experienced small

"It works anywhere in California," Moretti said. "Theoretically, if an earthquake hits, [the app] will give you maybe ... 30 seconds of warning which might be enough to ... get somewhere safe or get out of a building."

Other ways of preparing for earthquakes include mapping out an evacuation plan and building earthquake and emergency supply kits that contain tools, food and water. Finally, keeping up with current events relating to earthquakes and natural disaster safety can help.

"You need to be personally prepared, not just generally prepared," Whitmarsh said.

"This means preparing for your individual medical needs, along with everything else."

earthquakes but you don't really notice them that much," said senior Ella Klein. "I usually sleep through them."

Smaller earthquakes cause disruptions like shaking windows and furniture.

"I [have] felt many earthquakes like 2.0," said freshman Phoebe Taylor.

**"You need to be personally prepared, not just generally prepared"**

As time goes on, the threat of a larger earthquake grows increasingly imminent.

"What they actually seem to be more worried about ... in the ... future is a bigger earthquake on the Southern portion of the San Andreas Fault ... or on the Hayward fault," Moretti said. "[The U.S. Geological survey] said

Taylor and Klein's families have already prepared emergency packs.

"We have a big box full of non-perishable food and bottled water and flashlights

and those aluminum foil blankets," Taylor said.

The Bay Area, home to the highest density of active fault lines out of any urban area in the U.S., has also been preparing for earthquakes. California laws require homeowners to improve specific aspects of houses built before 1960 that may be unsafe during an earthquake. Newer building codes, including the ones several Aragon buildings have been constructed to follow, have been put in place to make structures more shake-proof. These regulations are designed to help current buildings and structures withstand earthquakes and provide people with an increased level of safety.

we're likely to get something larger than a 6.7 [on the logarithmic scale] in the Bay Area before 2032."

Though these predictions may seem daunting, there

are many recommended ways to prepare for earthquakes. For example, Moretti uses an innovative new app called Quake Alert, run by the U.S. Geological Survey.



Members work together to build an airplane. COURTESY OF MAYA AYOUB

## Soaring in STEM

Carole Darve  
FEATURES WRITER

"Let's build an airplane."

These words, uttered at a lunch table during January of 2020 at Lick-Wilmerding High School in San Francisco, sparked the creation of Flight Club Aerospace, a nonprofit organization composed of high school students from across the Bay Area who share the goal of building an airplane.

In March 2020, Aragon senior Maya Ayoub, the current technical president of Flight Club, heard of the team Instagram advertisement. She brought Flight Club to schools in the San Mateo Union High School District.

"When it comes to development, one challenge is that no design is perfect," Selvakumar said.

The team gets together on weekends for fabrications days: days when the team works on construction. The team used to hold fabrication days at a member's garage. But, as the team and the plane grew, they moved to a hanger at the Hayward Executive Airport.

The hangar is an opportunity for Flight Club to become more official and professional.

"We started out as this 10 person friend group trying to research Ultralights," Ayoub said. "Now, we've become a nonprofit organization in the Bay Area building

**"It gives amateurs the ability to try out being an aerospace engineer"**

The team is building an Ultralight: a single-seat plane that weighs less than 254 pounds and has a top speed of 55 knots.

"It's basically a really small, really light, really not speedy airplane that can fly in places that aren't controlled," Ayoub said. "It gives amateurs the ability to try out being an aerospace engineer. It seemed like the perfect choice for the team."

Since Flight Club intends to have professional test pilots fly the plane someday, the team follows safety regulations.

"Your regular nuts and bolts at Ace Hardware would crack under half the force that [our plane] would be taking," Ayoub said. "So our bolts and everything [else] on the plane need to be aircraft certified."

Generous sponsors help fund the team's materials.

"We've ... [branched] out to companies [like] Elroy Air, professors and other amazing people who've graciously lended us resources and knowledge," said junior Harish Selvakumar, software lead of Flight Club.

The team has received a total of \$5,000 from Elroy Air and Atkinson, two organizations that support youth STEM education. A large number of donations also come from crowdfunding.

"We reached out to [the] community ... and ended up raising \$17,000," Ayoub said.

In addition, sponsors such as Elroy Air and Jump Aero provide the team with mentorship.

an Ultralight airplane out of a hangar."

Although the move changed many things, it did not affect team camaraderie.

"The atmosphere is very relaxed," Selvakumar said. "Our casual interactions are no different than those between a group of friends. [But], during our meetings and build days, ... we work with more dangerous tools, [so] seriousness is crucial. [Flight Club] is amazing fun to be part of and I absolutely adore the community."

The club has recently accepted 24 high schoolers, making a total of 40 members. "[The team is] really welcoming to [new members], accepting them, bringing them together and enveloping them [as] part of their community," said freshman Leah Hawkins, one of the club's new members.

As new recruits learn more about aerospace, they are excited to contribute meaningfully to the project.

"I look forward to when we get to the final stages of building the plane, refining it, actually being able to fly it and seeing all our hard work pay off," Hawkins said.

The team has finished the construction of the first wing of the Ultralight and they look forward to starting the construction of the plane's main body soon.

**"My great grandfather was a firefighter ... so he fought the fires after the 1906 earthquake"**

1989 led to updated building codes and the necessary rebuilding of several key structures including the Bay Bridge. The Aragon gymnasium and other large build-

# ..... Aragon welcomes new teachers .....

Reporting by Ellen Li. Interviews have been edited for concision and clarity.



PURVI SINGHANIA

*Can you tell me a bit about yourself?*

I'm a San Francisco native and went to French American International school. I studied chemistry at Cal Poly

in San Luis Obispo and joined Teach For America. After college, I taught in Brooklyn before returning to California and taking a job at Mills High School. I love to travel. I took a year off from Mills

## Max Von Euw Chemistry

to teach in Tanzania in East Africa. Last year my family and I moved to Latvia where I taught before Aragon hired me. I come from a long line of teachers in my family.

the issues they had encountered to create a data-driven healthcare system because they didn't have access to a lot of healthcare. We built a health clinic there and

ing the news. A lot of my time is dedicated not only to my family, but also to trying to be the dopest teacher ever.

**"I have a 4 and a half year old son. He is my passion"**

*What was your experience in Tanzania like?*

Tanzania was an interesting experience. I had a buddy who started a nonprofit to increase educational opportunities for students and start a health clinic. I gained a lot of learning on the ground. I lived at a boarding school, taught there part time and then would hike two hours to a remote village and interview locals about some of

now the village is building a home for a doctor. I made some good friends in East Africa. It was definitely a great experience.

*What are some of your hobbies and passions outside of school?*

I have a four-and-a-half year-old son. He is my passion. I love to box, not people, but bags that can't hit you back. I love to cook, I enjoy bike riding and read-

*How has the Aragon community been for you so far?*

Fan-freaking-tastic. I know that COVID has hindered a lot of what Aragon is all about. But everybody that I have met has been super welcoming, the chemistry and science departments have been incredible. It is very welcoming and opening. Just a very open kind of community. What I love most is that the students are fantastic and I know that after a year of remote learning, or virtual learning, it feels great to be back in person.



Ms. Meyer's classroom

PURVI SINGHANIA

## Jennifer Meyer Foods and Nutrition, Culinary Arts

*Can you tell me a bit about yourself?*

I came to teaching as a second career, after working in the restaurant industry. I have three kids and have been teaching consumer science class, including cooking and sewing, for three years in the East Bay.

*How was the restaurant industry?*

It's an exciting industry. I grew up in foster care for eight years, so for me, school was never a big priority, but getting to work was. So the restaurant industry was a place where I felt very welcomed, but it's hard work.

*When did your passion for cooking start?*

I think my passion for cooking came after I started working at restaurants. I wanted to do things in fashion for a very long time, and

*other passions outside of school?*

I really like to sew and make and create. I like to do DIY

**"I felt very welcomed [In the restaurant industry] but it's hard work"**

I actually went down to Los Angeles and worked as a costumer for a little while. But while I was there, I realized that when I was working on these shoots, that I was more fascinated by what was going on in the craft services, which is the food department for these movies and television. And so, I was drawn back into the restaurant business.

*What are your hobbies and*

projects at my house. I have all my own tools. I love to build shelves, build things in my backyard. I love to sew and make things for my home. Basically all of my passions have to do with making things for the world around me, and that might come from being in foster care. I never really had my own things, so now that I'm an adult, I create my atmosphere to be as comfortable as possible for myself.



PURVI SINGHANIA



**Daniel Rubino** Algebra 1, Geometry, Personal Finance

*Did you like math from a young age or did you only like math after you started learning how to teach it?*

I did not like math growing up. When I started to work with algebra in high school,

is, this is completely different. I understand math differently.

*Why did you choose to teach math?*

I started out as a history teacher and teaching histo-

learn math and how much they hate math. They don't understand math, they never use math, and I don't believe any of that. I'm able to really break down those barriers with anybody that I teach or work with and that's what I really appreciate about it the most, is that I can, I can really make a difference in somebody by teaching math no matter what confidence level.

*Any additional information you want to add?*

I don't know whether any of my fellow teachers are veterans, and I just hope on Veteran's day, the school does something, or maybe acknowledges Veteran's Day in the school newspaper. Just for us. That's all.

**"[The Navy] was life-fulfilling. It was challenging....It's probably one of the best experiences I've ever had"**

I enjoyed the mystery of algebra. I had to kind of figure things out and use variables. I liked that aspect of it. But I failed algebra in high school and I had to retake it as a senior. I really started to appreciate math more once I started to actually teach it to students. Then I understood, 'Wow, this

ry didn't mesh with me too well. I love the progression of math, how it builds off of everything and I don't look at math as math. I look at it like a puzzle. That's why I like teaching math and another thing that stands out is that most students say how much they cannot



PURVI SINGHANIA

*Can you tell me a little bit about yourself?*

I'm originally from Chicago, Illinois, and I went into the Navy a few weeks after I graduated high school at 17. I really appreciated that experience, and I ended up staying for four years. I served in the Army National Guard for three years after that.

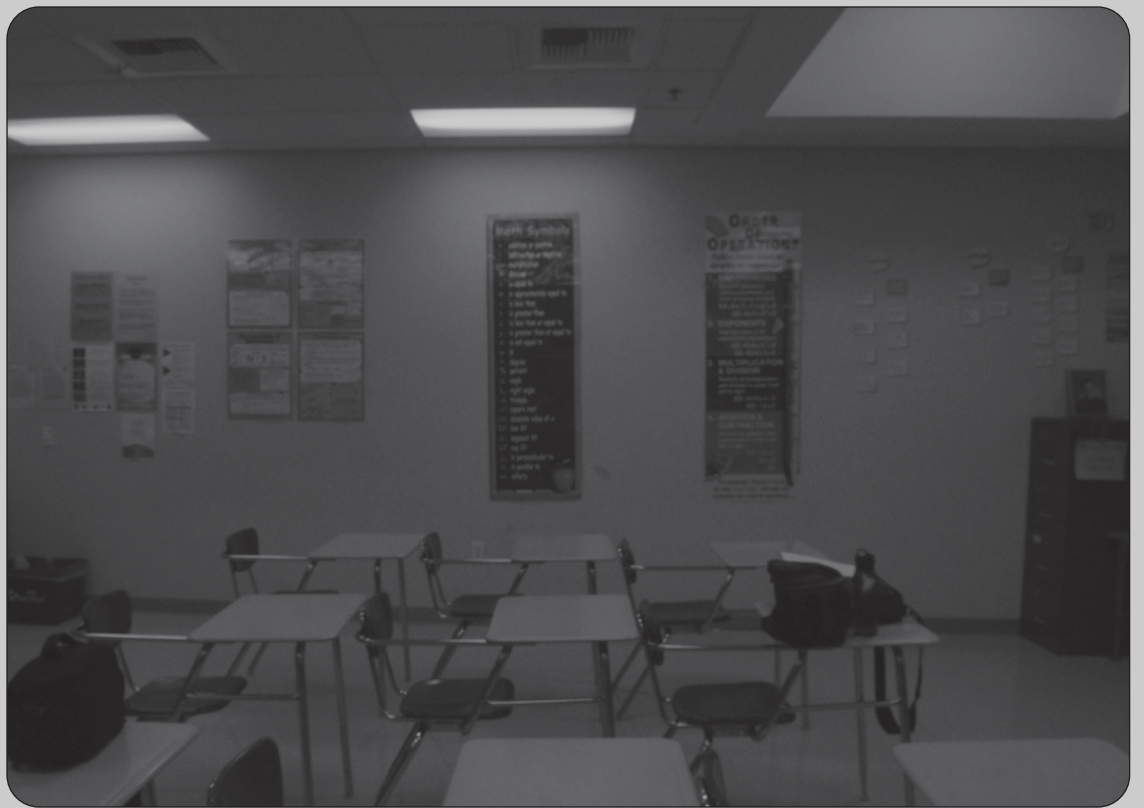
I worked in the design field in Chicago and New York City for about 10 years. I was really unhappy working in the design field and I've always wanted to be a teacher, but I didn't have the confidence to do so.

I was having dinner with one of my friends in New York and his father, and one of their former students came in to tell my friend's father how much they appreciated him as a teacher and missed him and

how much they added to their lives. And I'm sitting there listening to all this, like, what am I doing with my life? So I decided to go back to college and get a teaching degree. I love teaching, which I've done for 10 years in Chicago, Arizona and California. My dog is my best friend. He's a big part of my life. I've had him for nine years now.

*How was your experience in the Navy?*

It was life fulfilling. It was challenging. It was scary. And it's probably one of the best experiences I've ever had. I got to travel and meet so many people, and the proudest thing I'm able to say is that I'm a veteran. Just being able to say that I'm a veteran means everything to me.



Mr. Rubino's classroom

PURVI SINGHANIA

**Michael Stultz** AP English Language and Composition, English 3

*Can you tell me a little bit about yourself?*

I just moved to California this January from Madrid, Spain, where I taught International Baccalaureate English and History. Before that, I taught [for] ten years in New Jersey where we raised three kids. I taught in Indiana, where I'm originally from, for ten years.

*What are your hobbies and passions outside of school?*

I used to be a semi-professional cyclist, and I still like to bike. I raced for ten years, road cycling. I also mountain and gravel bike. I retired from rigorous biking, though, after an accident last year. I'm just riding for fun now. Not racing any-

more and not going downhill crazy fast like I used to.

*How did your passion for biking start?*

My mom bought me a twelve gear bike when I was a teenager. Since then, biking has taken off in this country because Americans have done well in European



PURVI SINGHANIA

racing. Like Greg Lamond and Lance Armstrong, I just picked it up in college, and

cepting, they've embraced me with open arms. The students are very respect-

**"I hope I can be here for a long time"**

I loved it because it's a great way to get healthy, to make friends and to be competitive.

*How has the Aragon community been for you?*

Everyone's been very ac-

ful and have really been engaging and have really challenged me to become a better teacher. I've been very excited about this opportunity that I've been given and I hope I can be here for a long time.



Mr. Stultz's classroom

PURVI SINGHANIA

## Shang Chi stuns viewers as Marvel's first Asian superhero



Lian Sterling Cualoping  
FEATURES WRITER

"Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings," released Sept. 3, stands out as the first Marvel movie to include an Asian American lead character along with an Asian American director. Hit-

ting a record-breaking \$90 million in the box office over the Labor Day weekend, "Shang-Chi" exceeded fans' expectations everywhere with its action-packed fighting scenes and heart-touching focus on familial bonds.

The movie did a great job including Asian American and

Pacific Islander representation and influence. The main characters constantly switch between speaking in Chinese and English, immersing the audience in the movie's world and helping the movie feel much more authentic and integrated with real Chinese culture. Marvel took a risk, as the language switching could have been confusing, but it instead managed to strengthen the movie's authenticity and integration of Chinese culture. The movie did include a few common tropes seen in Chinese-focused media, such as a grandparent asking their grandchildren when they would marry their friend. However, the movie did not overdo such tropes in any way.

The movie's special effects included high-quality computer-generated imagery. Well-done special effects are a must for Marvel movies, and "Shang-Chi" did not disappoint. The animation of the titular 10 rings and magical scenes were breathtaking. Additionally, the characters' explosive movements paired with the smooth-as-butter CGI and immersive camera angles created fighting scenes that left the audience on the edges of their seats. The way the 10 rings flew around their owner's wrists and the CGI's demonstration

of the power they put into their wearer's punches was especially impressive. While there were a few short scenes scattered throughout the movie that included CGI of questionable quality, the film's visuals overall lived up to the expectations for a Marvel movie.

As for acting, all the actors displayed intense emotion through their expressions and dialogue. They were able to effectively impart the characters' feelings to the audience, evoking laughter and tears. Similar to the CGI, there were a few scenes in which the acting seemed contrived, but these slightly lackluster scenes did not lower the movie's overall quality.

The plot and characterization in "Shang-Chi" were also

lan" (2020), in which the titular character had exemplary martial arts skill with no training because of her "innate chi," Shang-Chi had to train diligently and learn techniques from other people to achieve his martial arts skill, demonstrating growth throughout the movie that created a more believable plot and character development arc.

While "Mulan" and "Shang-Chi" are both Asian martial arts movies, the latter was a stronger movie that did a much better job representing Asian culture. Instead of featuring characters who spoke English in exaggerated Chinese accents, "Shang-Chi" featured bilingual characters who spoke in both English and Chi-

**"Well-done special effects are a must for Marvel movies, and 'Shang-Chi' did not disappoint"**

well developed and well-written. All of the characters had distinct personalities, down to the specific details in the ways they talked. All of the characters' powers and abilities were well-balanced and none of the characters were a "Mary Sue," or an overpowered, perfect character. In contrast to "Mu-

nese. All in all, "Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings" is a beautiful, well-made movie that deserves five stars.

OUR OUTLOOK



## "star-crossed": heartbreak, regret and self-discovery

Charlotte Gregory  
FEATURES WRITER

In 2018, life couldn't have been going any better for East Texas singer-songwriter Kacey Musgraves. The 33-year-old had just dropped her third album, "Golden Hour," a magnetic mash-up of pop, country and disco, which was awarded Album of the Year and Best Country Album at the 61st Annual Grammy Awards. Musgraves tied the knot with boyfriend Ruston Kelly the same year and the couple's fairytale romance captured the hearts of millions of fans globally. She seemed to be on top of the world, in both the music industry and her love life. But as her fame grew, her marriage declined.

In the summer of 2020, after nearly three years of mar-

Made up of 15 tracks, "star-crossed" explores the blissful highs and bitter lows of a relationship, creating a beautiful emotional rollercoaster. The album is accompanied by a film of the same title, now streaming exclusively on Paramount+. Fans will also be able to experience the album live when Musgraves tours in 2022.

Compared to the bright, romantic songs on "Golden Hour," "star-crossed" tells a much more somber story. All of the songs portray to listeners Musgraves' sorrow, grief, hope and remorse.

The album opens with "star-crossed," a genre-bending ballad that sounds like something straight out of a Shakespearean tragedy, with dreamy vocals and ethereal harmonies. It's the album's title track, and deservedly so. Soft, haunting and ominous, the song is remi-

In "good wife," Musgraves grapples with the pain of sacrificing her own happiness to preserve her marriage. In the chorus, Musgraves' voice is warped with a small dose of autotune, which emphasizes her sadness and desperation as she struggles to be enough for her husband. While Musgraves' vocals are the star of the song, her singing is strengthened by playful guitar, honoring her country roots.

A couple tracks later is "breadwinner," which has a catchy chorus and empowering lyrics that warn listeners to never let anyone make them feel small in a relationship. "He wants your shimmer to make him feel bigger until he starts feeling insecure," Musgraves sings. The track's funky, '90s pop beat complements Musgraves' vocals perfectly, making it a highlight of the album.

If there's any song on "star-crossed" that requires tissues while listening, it's "camera roll." The lyrics breathtakingly encapsulate the devastation of a breakup, raw with grief, regret, heartbreak and a hint of nostalgia as Musgraves looks back on the beautiful memories she made with her ex-husband. Musgraves pours her entire heart out in this song, making it one of the most stunning, emotional pieces she has ever written.

Things begin to slow down during the second half of the al-



bum. While all beautiful tracks, "hookup scene," "keep lookin' up" and "what doesn't kill me" are so similar in style, mood and tone that they blur together, making the final stretch of the album less emotionally impactful than many of the earlier songs.

However, "there is a light," the second to last track, is a powerful bounce back. The song is a colorful, electric explosion of disco and pop, surprising listeners with a refreshing flute solo that is easily one of the greatest moments in the entire album.

The album closes with "gracias a la vida," written by Chil-

OUR OUTLOOK



**"Soft, haunting and ominous, the song is very reminiscent of Shakespeare's 'Romeo and Juliet'"**

riage, Musgraves and Kelly announced their split. In a statement to E! News, they agreed the decision to separate was mutual. The couple's separation shocked and devastated both singers' fans, but as heart-breaking as it was, it paved the way for Musgraves' most recent musical masterpiece: her fourth album, "star-crossed."

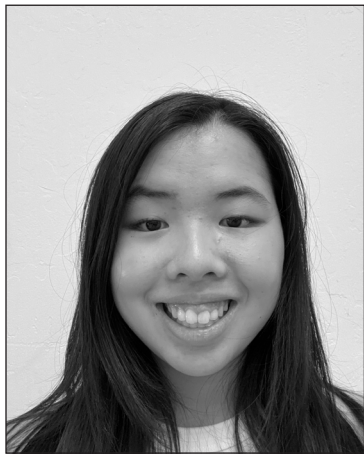
niscent of Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet." Musgraves illuminates the hopelessness and despair two lovers feel as they watch their relationship crumble apart with her chilling lyrics: "What have we done? Did we fly too high just to get burned by the sun?" The song perfectly sets the mood for the rest of the album.

ean composer Violeta Parra.

Sung completely in Spanish, the song travels through time with different filters and instrumental accompaniments. Starting as a crackling vinyl record, it slowly evolves into different musical styles, eventually ending in an electronic, futuristic medium. Musgraves' ambitious interpretation of Parra's work breathes new life into the piece, and it is, without a doubt, the perfect song to close the album.

With "star-crossed," Kacey Musgraves takes her music to new heights. The vulnerability, heartbreak and self-discovery presented in the album make it some of her most powerful work yet. "star-crossed," to put it simply, is art in its truest form. "star-crossed" undoubtedly deserves four and a half stars.

# Election Recall



Sophia Zhou  
FEATURES WRITER

Few people expected the Democratic stronghold that is California to be swept up in a recall election that put Gov. Gavin Newsom's political future at risk. Nonetheless, with an energized group of Newsom opposers unhappy about homelessness rates, the handling of COVID-19 and liberal policies, the recall campaign was successful in gathering a number of signatures equivalent to 12% of the total votes cast in the previous election, ushering a special election.

A total of 46 candidates from all political spectrums appeared on the recall, but conservative radio host Larry Elder ended up being Newsom's primary challenger. Elder ran on a campaign that promised to remove mask and vaccine mandates, restrict abortion, remove the state minimum wage and more. Although there were fears Newsom would lose the recall due to the lack of awareness surrounding the election and a fired up Republican base, he won 63.9% of the vote.

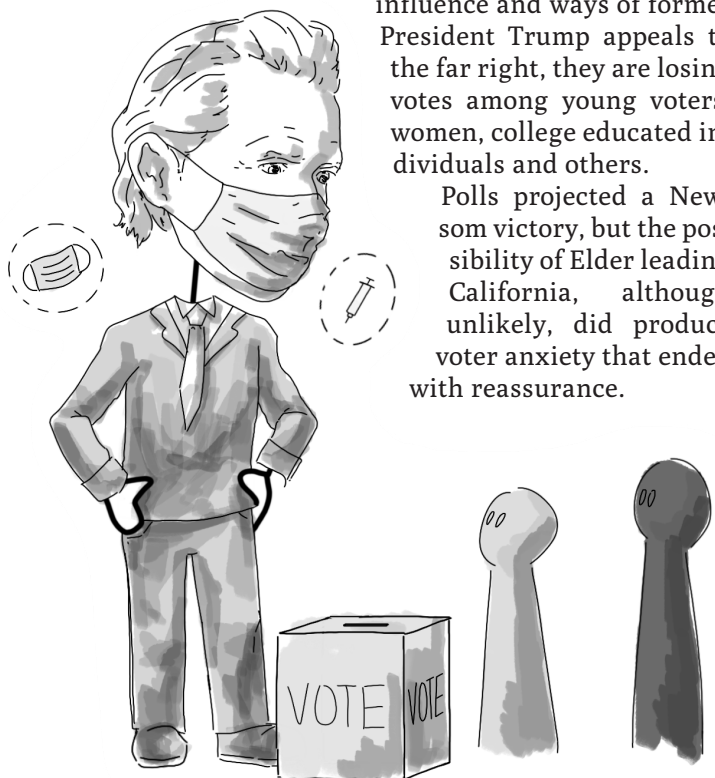
In the unlikely event that Elder won the election, the state would have seen a drastic shift to the right, with policies modeled after the likes of states such as Florida and Texas. Just as promised in his campaign, it is highly possible that Elder would have cut all funding of abortions and made it difficult to obtain one. The current state-

wide minimum wage of \$14 would have ceased to exist, meaning that people already struggling to afford the cost of living would see their living conditions further deteriorate. Programs such as Medi-Cal would have been threatened.

Overall, Newsom's resounding victory sent assurances to Democrats, who can use his campaign strategies as a playbook to retain majorities in Congress. Science, public health and equality proved to be popular among Californians. However, a recent trend of Republican candidates peddling accusations of voter fraud show no sign of slowing down, and will continue to dominate elections. Both Republican candidates and voters adopted this rhetoric, believing a losing result is attributed to an election being stolen and not the fact that their platform wasn't as effective. A major political party adopting a conspiracy theory undermines integrity in the election process and makes room for restrictive voting measures designed to suppress voting.

Newsom was successful at using the urgent nature of the pandemic to appeal to individuals who were either not going to vote or were indecisive with which candidate to pick. Rather than focusing on issues associated with political parties that could have driven away potential voters, he zeroed in on a public health issue that affects all Californians, gaining momentum among voters who were not registered democrats but felt driven away by Elder's unsafe anti-mask and anti-vaccine messaging. For the Republican party, this could be a sign that it needs to shift away from extreme political agendas and pivot back to the core values of Republicanism if they want to rebuild and expand their support. While its current party platform, based around the influence and ways of former President Trump appeals to the far right, they are losing votes among young voters, women, college educated individuals and others.

Polls projected a Newsom victory, but the possibility of Elder leading California, although unlikely, did produce voter anxiety that ended with reassurance.



JESSICA FU



KYLE DELMO

## Biden's plan for tuition-free community college



Mikaela George  
FEATURES WRITER

This April, President Joe Biden proposed an ambitious plan to make community college free of charge, giving millions of students a chance at a higher education. The plan caters to the needs of many, but mainly targets minorities and people in the lower to middle class. The plan would benefit millions of students and allow many to earn college degrees and maintain full-time jobs. The proposal is a heavily debated subject that will influence the lives of many in America.

Biden's American Families Plan includes \$109 billion to make two years of community college tuition-free, among free universal preschool and increasing the maximum Pell grant by \$1400. These college retention programs would include emergency grants and daycare for college students with children and would be funded primarily by increased taxes on the upper class of America. Those who are a part of the wealthiest 1% of Americans would receive a reversal on the 2017 tax cuts and would pay a maximum individual tax rate of 39.6% instead of the previous 37%. Biden also plans on eliminating a few taxing loopholes, including some of the capital gains tax breaks, whose main beneficiaries tend to be rich taxpayers. Additionally, Biden means to provide more resources for the International Revenue Service, allowing

it to perform more audits on the wealthy's tax returns and in turn enforce taxing regulations. This would mean the overall percentage of unpaid taxes would decrease and the government would be able to collect roughly \$700 billion in the next ten years, purely from unpaid taxes that the rich have skimmed on. This alone will provide the government with a sufficient amount of money to help fund the ambitious endeavor of making college education affordable.

The proposition creates an incentive for Americans to pursue higher education and would decrease dropout rates nationwide. It would be a lifeline to less affluent communities and enable many to achieve new heights in their careers. It would boost the economy, while enabling many to maintain stable living situations. This plan also benefits "Dreamers," undocumented immigrants brought to America as children, and

concern, it's important to acknowledge that these scholarship opportunities may not be available to all students. Some also argue that the plan's overall cost is too high and that the increased taxes on the upper class are unreasonable, but I for one believe that this issue is worth the time and financial commitment. Most complain that it would be a financial burden on the taxpayers as well and that the idea as a whole is unnecessary. While this may seem true to some, we will only begin to see the positive effect of the plan on society once it commences.

I believe Biden's community college plan would be extremely beneficial to America. Many would be saved from the financial stress of loans and would actually be able to support themselves through their education. Not only would they have an easier time finding higher paying full-time jobs to support themselves and their families after college, but they'd also be able to improve

**"Many would be saved from the financial stress of loans and would be able to support themselves"**

adult students who wish to attend or return to college. Considering that higher education provides a major advantage in interviews and job applications, the less fortunate often struggle more to find higher-paying jobs as some are unable to afford college tuition or get a degree and thus struggle to stand out in the ever-competitive job market. Especially with the perils of COVID-19 emerging again, it is more important than ever that everyone has access to jobs and financial stability.

However, some believe that the plan won't help as much as others think and that there are already a sufficient number of ways for students to decrease their financial burden such as scholarships and grants. Although this is a somewhat valid

upon themselves and perhaps find a career that they truly enjoy through their studies.

This plan also has the potential to level the job playing field immeasurably and would support so many students in their pursuit of academic improvement. It would also allow even more people to live more comfortable lives that aren't riddled with financial instability and uncertainty. If we are able to aid people to reach higher levels of schooling, then America as a whole will improve. Additionally, the outcome of more people graduating with degrees and improved livelihoods would ultimately outweigh the financial cost. All in all, Joe Biden's plan for community college sounds extremely promising and has the potential to revolutionize U.S. education.

# NFL season starts with high anticipation

Pratham Valluri  
SPORTS WRITER

There's a lot of excitement at Aragon for the 102nd NFL season. With some monumental rule differences, from changing the schedule to feature 17 games to allowing spectators back into arenas, fans and players alike are ready for the season.

**"The 49ers are better than every other team in the division"**

The new 17 game schedule poses both solutions and problems. Although the extra game allows teams to potentially get into the playoffs, it also risks player injuries.

But the status of elite NFL teams hasn't changed. Last year's Super Bowl finalists, the Kansas City Chiefs and Tampa Bay Buccaneers, have only added more firepower to their previously loaded teams. Tampa Bay, the defending champions, became the first team in NFL history to return all 53 starters from their Super Bowl team. They extended the contracts of quarterback Tom Brady, linebacker Shaquil Barrett and wide receiver Chris Godwin while also drafting edge rusher Joe Tryon to add more depth. After their most successful campaign since 2002, the Bucs are preparing to compete for another title. Their division, the National Football Conference South, should not stop them from doing so. The Carolina Panthers and Atlanta Falcons won a total of nine games last season due to various injuries to key players. The biggest challenger to the Bucs are the Green Bay Packers. Led by reigning league MVP Aaron Rodgers, the Packers have an offense that can score in a hurry.

The NFC West is very competitive this year. Any of the four teams — Arizona Cardinals,

San Francisco 49ers, Seattle Seahawks and Los Angeles Rams — could reasonably make the playoffs. The Rams' defense is arguably the best in the league, marshalled by three-time Defensive Player of the Year Aaron Donald and All-Pro cornerback Jalen Ramsey.

The 49ers are looking to make it back to the Super Bowl after losing to the Chiefs in the

2020 Super Bowl. The team traded up in the NFL Draft to select QB Trey Lance, an athletic dual-threat passer. They still have QB Jimmy Garoppolo, who led them to a 13-3 record in 2019, and have surrounded him with a great roster offensively and defensively.

Math teacher Adam Jacobs is looking forward to seeing the 49ers perform well.

"I grew up in San Mateo so I'm a 49ers fan," Jacobs said. "My favorite player is George Kittle but I'm also excited to see Trey Lance play. Kyle Shanahan is one of the most innovative play-callers in the NFL and I would love to see his packages with Garoppolo and Lance."

Sophomore Kaushal Namuduri is confident about the team's future wins.

**"I think the Broncos [can] make the playoffs [since they] have a terrific defense and ... [consistent] offense"**

"The 49ers are better than every other team in the division," he said. "They are more balanced than the Seahawks and Cardinals but also have a far superior rushing attack to the Rams."

The Seahawks and Cardinals are in similar positions. Both have top-tier, dual-threat QBs — Kyler Murray for Arizona and Russell Wilson for

Seattle — but also flawed defenses and a lack of experience.

On the other hand, the NFC East is the weakest division in the NFL. The Dallas Cowboys are usually the favorites because of their extreme offensive force. However, player injuries have damaged their chances of making playoffs. The American Football Conference picture is murky as well.

English teacher Michael Stultz is cheering for the Broncos this season.

"I was a big Peyton Manning fan," Stultz said. "I think the Broncos have the ability to make the playoffs [since they] have a terrific defense and ... their offense is more consistent. They probably won't win their division because of Kansas City, but they [are] good."

Stultz is also looking forward to Von Miller and WR Courtland Sutton.

"Von Miller is my favorite player," Stultz said. "He's getting [older] and is coming off of injury but he's still really good."

Like the Broncos, the Las Vegas Raiders lack star power. QB Derek Carr gets the job done but the Raiders haven't built a great roster around him. The team moved from Oakland to Las Vegas this year, but they still have fans at Aragon.

"I'm excited ... because of [the Raiders' winning] start," said junior Noel Muttath.

The NFL season is only in its fourth week but new stories are constantly forming, from Rodgers' potential departure from the Packers to Stafford's role on a new team. There's only one thing for sure — football is back and that means loads of fun.



ZELDA REIF

## Aragon students work as referees

Cooper Wong  
SPORTS WRITER

As sports begin to resume, the demand for referees is also on the rise. The global pandemic significantly impacted the workforce and students are taking on the job.

Soccer is a popular sport for student referees. Refing can be a good source of income for students while also keeping them engaged in a sport they love.

"I started refing because it was a good way to make money," said senior Taj Gadiraju.

"Because I play soccer, I already knew most of the rules, so I didn't need to learn much extra. I also already knew what refing entailed so that gave me a head start on becoming [one]."

In order to get certified, students need to complete an online course.

"I started refing over quarantine when my friends and soccer club pushed me to," said sophomore Enya Yuan. "It was simple to get started and as soon as I got my online certification, I was set to ref."

out the game because it is youth soccer. Other than that, I always stay impartial and try to make the right calls."

Referees also had a responsibility to enforce the mask policy before the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention removed the outdoor mandate for vaccinated people in April.

"[Before], I was making sure the [players] wore masks during the game and that [they] didn't have their masks off unless they weren't near others or getting water," Gadiraju said.

Now that masks are no longer required, it makes the job of a referee a little bit easier. However, there are other difficulties that come with the position.

"One time when refing a game, the coach came into the field and almost attacked me because he didn't like a call I made," said senior Alex Neve. "Some of the parents from the other team rushed on the

**"Seeing their energy and determination in a sport I love fills me up with joy"**

Not only is refing an enjoyable way for athletes to make money, but the activity is also not too time-consuming.

"If I see that I have an empty morning, I can go on PenSRA [Peninsula Soccer Referees Association], the referee organization's website, and search for games," Yuan said.

Student referees hold power and responsibility as they are in charge of keeping the players in check and making game-changing decisions.

"I have to maintain a constant flow of the game because each second counts in soccer," Gadiraju said. "On top of that, I make sure that the players, coaches and parents are respectful through-

field and almost started a fight."

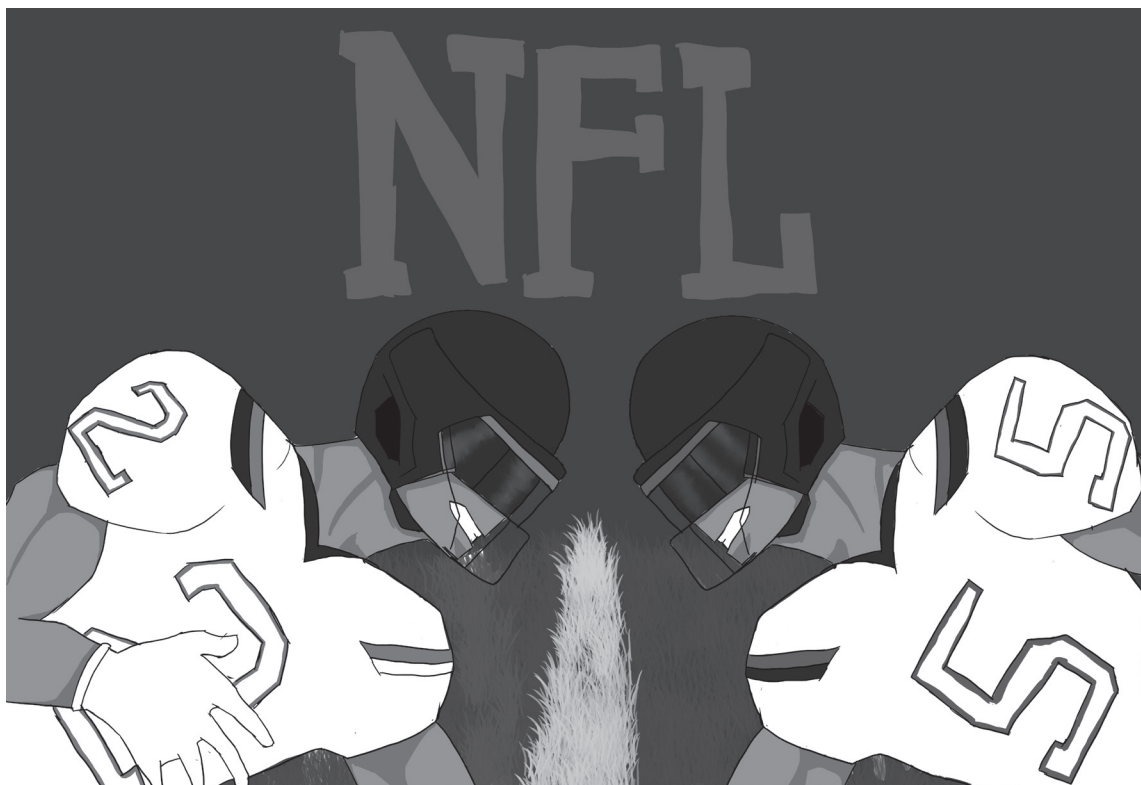
In addition, time-consuming schoolwork and other extracurriculars can limit students' availability.

"I enjoy making money and getting to watch soccer at the same time, but I dislike that I can only ref on weekends," Neve said.

Gadiraju, on the other hand, doesn't mind being restricted to weekend games.

"I [like refing] for the younger generations every weekend," Gadiraju said. "Seeing their energy and determination in a sport I love fills me up with joy."

Despite the conflicts they may face, student referees get rewarding experiences from overseeing a sport they love.



ALEX LO

# Amelia Aquipel: dancing queen

Stephanie Lin  
SPORTS WRITER

Ever since she was a child, junior Amelia Aquipel has been passionate about dancing. She began ballet and gymnastics lessons when she was seven years old. Since then, her quest for dancing has never stopped. Eager to learn more, her enthusiasm ultimately led her to discover Irish dance.

“One day, I was just scrolling through the [San Mateo Parks and Recreation Center] magazine and happened to find this little spot on the magazine that said Irish dance,” Amelia Aquipel said. “The next day, I went and did it. And then I never stopped

footwork and is the precursor to modern tap-dance. It originated from traditional Celtic ceremonies, rituals and festivals. Today, it has evolved into dance competitions known as Feiseanna.

“Irish dance is a competitive sport that consists of two types of shoes, a lot of stamina and a lot of determination and hard work,” Amelia Aquipel said. “There’s hard shoes, which are like a tap performance, and we usually dance two rounds in hard shoes. Then there’s also the soft shoes, or the light shoes, which are more of a ballet and athletic performance, and you only dance one round at a competition for that.”

Irish Feiseanna have three

to the pandemic, Feiseanna have resumed.

Amelia Aquipel participated in the U.S. National Irish Dance Competition hosted in Phoenix, Arizona in July of 2020. This year, Amelia Aquipel ranked 55th in the U-16 group at the U.S. National Irish Dance competition, which consisted of about 160 girls. She also ranked third in the U.S. in the Level 5 category for the preliminary championships.

“Irish dance [has] made me more determined and it’s really given me more drive and motivation in my regular life,” Amelia Aquipel said. “I have a lot of passion for dance and it’s taught me to have more passion for the other things I do like school and helping people.”

Amelia Aquipel is currently preparing for the Western U.S. Region Oireachtas that will take place in November. This year she hopes to make it to the top 15 and qualify for world level competitions. In 2019, she placed 27th in the U-14 group.

“I think it would be a really big honor to be able to go to Worlds,” Amelia Aquipel said. “That’s ... a lifelong goal I’ve had for pretty much all eight years I’ve danced. Once you qualify for the World Championships, ... you’re in the top 1% of dancers around the world.”

Being a dancer requires hard work and commitment over many years. This means hours of diligent practice each day. On a typical weekday, she does her homework, then immediately goes to dance lessons.



COURTESY OF AMELIA AQUIPEL

“I usually leave [home] at 4:30 p.m., drive about an hour [to O’Connor Kennedy] and I dance [for] about three hours,” Amelia Aquipel said. “It usually will end at 7:30 p.m. or 8:30 p.m. and then I come home and stretch. I’m usually trying to go to bed by 10:30 p.m. or 11 p.m.”

Making it to nationals is definitely not easy.

“She sacrifices a lot,” Sue Aquipel said. “She’ll miss birthday parties and school dances and functions ... in order to practice or be in the studio. It’s been great to

see her passion through the years, how devoted she is to this and to see her set and achieve her goals.”

Despite the many challenges Amelia Aquipel faces, her family and friends support her every step of the way.

“My mom is at that 3 a.m. to 4 a.m. [session] when we have to do makeup and hair appointments,” Amelia Aquipel said. “She’s been my biggest supporter. My guest teachers and friends are always there for me and help me when I need that ... extra support.”

“She kept signing up for classes and got a chance to perform in the San Francisco St. Patrick’s Day parade”

and became an Irish dancer.”

Amelia Aquipel is now a student at O’Connor-Kennedy Dance Academy for Irish dance and is enrolled in Middle College. She is currently a Level 6 Open Championship solo dancer, the highest level in Irish dance. She has also danced in ceili group dances with four to eight other Irish dancers.

“She absolutely loved dancing,” said Sue Aquipel, Amelia Aquipel’s mother. “She kept signing up for classes and got a chance to perform in the San Francisco St. Patrick’s Day parade.”

Irish dance is a style of step dance with elaborate

different rounds: hard shoe tap dance, soft shoe performance and a contemporary dance. Competitors dress in colorful dresses decorated with crystal beads with intricate, oftentimes Celtic-inspired patterns. A panel of judges scores based on musicality, technique, difficulty, style, execution and other subtle details.

In November of 2019, Amelia Aquipel qualified for the 2020 National level Feiseanna in Nashville. She was thrilled, but only a few months later, the tournament was canceled due to the pandemic. After a long year without competing due

# Opinion: End dress codes in women’s sports



Emma Quanbeck  
SPORTS WRITER

Ever since women have been allowed to participate in competitive sports, dress codes have been created that target female athletes. As a female athlete myself, I am familiar with this issue. In 2019, I came across an article about 17-year-old high school swimmer, Breckynn Willis, from Alaska. She had been disqualified from a swim meet because the official said that her body was “too exposed” in the school-issued swimsuit she had worn. As a fellow swimmer, I was disgusted. It was outrageous how a victory that Willis clearly worked so hard for was taken back because of the way her swimsuit fit.

While male athletes also need to follow dress codes, female athletes’ requirements are much

more restrictive. Recently, the women’s dress code debate has risen again due to backlash over officials inappropriately prosecuting female athletes for their clothing choices. Officials are quick to criticize female uniforms deemed too “promiscuous” or “inappropriate.”

Disqualifications and prosecutions of female dress that impact athletes like Willis have occurred for too long. In the early 20th century, Wimbledon tennis player Suzanne Lenglen wore a low-neck dress with a calf-length skirt and was called “indecent” by

ter her pregnancy. In response, the President of the French Tennis Federation, Bernard Guidicelli, stated her outfit was not acceptable. In fact, the incident was followed by the announcement of a stricter dress code that banned catsuits to “respect the game and place.” The outfit was primarily intended to ease health concerns for Williams. Guidicelli’s statements demonstrate the unnecessary policing of female athletes’ bodies, rather than allowing them to play in what’s comfortable and safe.

Similarly, this past July, Norwegian women’s handball

even offering to pay the fines. These incidents contribute to a larger trend of the hypersexualization and policing of women’s bodies and lack of consideration for athletes’ comfort.

With new attention brought to the issue of women’s dress codes, modifications have been implemented. In mid-June, the Olympic Committee announced in a tweet that women would have the option to wear shorts over their leotards, instead of only being allowed to wear the traditional leotard.

Sports culture still has a long way to go. This is clearly only the beginning of women gaining more rights to what they are able to wear in competition.

Over-sexualization of women’s bodies in athletics ties into the larger problem of sexism. Beginning at a young age, women have been taught through dress codes and social norms to “cover up” and “be modest.” Starting in elementary school, school administrations strictly enforced dress codes, with rules like no midriffs and no shorts or skirts above a certain length. Almost all dress codes target females exclusively.

Like many other young girls, I didn’t understand why I was taught to dress conservatively, or why my mom would adjust my shirt and not allow me to

wear short dresses. As I grew older, I discovered the reality: dress codes are catered towards the male perspective and the sexualization of female bodies.

The presence of dress codes and idea that women need to dress conservatively to be respected are still present in society, proving that we need to take more initiative to fight against these norms. Changing rules in women’s athletics is only the first step towards this goal.

“It was outrageous how a victory ... was taken back because of the way her swimsuit fit”

the press. Similarly, in 1955, American tennis star Billie Jean King was forbidden to take a group photo at a tennis club simply for wearing shorts instead of a short skirt.

This trend has continued into this century with high-level athletes receiving backlash from the public and sports officials for their uniforms.

In 2018, Serena Williams wore a catsuit, in part to prevent blood clots, at The French Open after returning to the sport af-

players were fined 1,500 euros for wearing shorts instead of the typical bikini briefs. The women from the team wore the shorts in order to fight against the restrictive code for women’s brief requirements. While male handball players were able to wear any length of shorts, women’s briefs could be no longer than four inches.

This incident gained traction from female athletes and famous figures across the world, with American pop singer P!nk



GENEVIEVE BIGUE

# Girls water polo starts strong and defeats Carlmont



Senior Ainsley Cornwall passes to a teammate during the Carlmont match.

BRIANNE MARTIN

Gary Green  
SPORTS WRITER

The girl's water polo team (2-1)\* is back with a splash. After a tough spring season marred with COVID-19 issues and a lack of players, the team is looking better than ever.

"[Last] ... season was a doozy," said Coach Kielan Crow. "We had [around] 14 players total, [so] ... we barely had enough to run two teams. We also had players who couldn't be in the pool for multiple weeks at a time because I didn't have access to the pool [and] ... it was too dangerous [because of] COVID."

There was a positive case on the swim team, which many of the water polo players are also a part of. This forced the water polo team

into a two-week quarantine just before the season began.

"[We] had one practice before our first game," Crow said. "We weren't set up as a team [and] we couldn't effectively run any of our game plans. But as usual, given time, we improved, so the second half of the season we improved a lot against all of our competitors and won a couple games."

This season couldn't be more different, with quality pre-season training and a 11-5 win in their first match against Sequoia on Sept. 8. Co-captain and senior utility attacker Ruby Vogel thinks this victory was due to the experience of this year's team, which has eight seniors.

Chemistry has also contributed to the team's recent success.

"I think our team is really

awesome with communication," Vogel said. "We really bonded this season as a team ... because [we've all known] each other ... for years now." Leadership and communica-

tion are critical if the players are to execute Crow's strategies.

"I'm a big fan of pressure defense," Crow said. "You're focusing on ... pressuring [every player on] the team [and] you're trying to push them out of the offensive area. ... I want all my defenders on the outside wrestling and ... pushing them out of the pool."

According to Coach Crow, a key part of this strategy is a good defender.

"When you have a good two-meter ... defender who can front, that means stay between the ball and the two-meter player, then you can just press out everywhere and you don't need to worry about coming back to double team the set player," Crow said. "Maddie Dobbs, one of our captains, is a fantastic set defender so we're able to run a good press defense."

With the team running smoothly, they set a couple of goals for the season.

"[We] want to win a bunch and do a lot better than we did last season," said senior co-captain and defender Maddie Dobbs. "Last season was really hard because of COVID. ... We

Coach Crow believes that the games against Burlingame and Woodside will be matches to watch out for.

"We had a scrimmage against [Burlingame] last week and they are very well matched for us," Crow said. "They have a good driving offense like us so that's a really fun game to watch. ... [Woodside] is the other team in the hunt for that second spot."

On Sept. 22, the team showcased its strengths in a dazzling 13-3 victory over Carlmont (0-1)\*. The team scored eight goals before Carlmont replied.

"We know [Carlmont has] some really great players ... so ... we wanted to come in ... guns blazing," Vogel said.

The team also successfully implemented a new counter-attacking strategy for the Carlmont game.

"Our first ... eight goals were counter-shots," Vogel said.

Not only did the Dons excel on the offense, but they also kept defense tight in the back.

"One thing we did well was our press defense," Dobbs said. "We ... shut them down."

Overall it was a cohesive team effort and performance.

"Everyone shot at least once which is ... great," Dobbs said.

The Dons have their next home game against Sequoia (0-2)\* on Oct. 6 at 4 p.m.

\*Records as of Sept. 27

**"We know [Carlmont has] some really great players ... so ... we wanted to come in ... guns blazing"**



Veda Yama  
SPORTS WRITER

## Girls tennis swings into a new season



After a rough year for Aragon sports with delayed seasons due to COVID-19, girl's tennis (2-3 Peninsula Athletic League)\* is finally starting again.

Tennis looks a little different this year. Next to the tennis balls and rackets are wipes and bottles of hand sanitizer, but looser county restrictions on masks outdoors have made it easier for the team to play.

"They can play without masks now, and masks ... cut down on your respiratory system," said head coach Dave Owdom. "With

because we're spaced out and there's really no contact. I feel a bit safer not wearing masks during practice," said junior singles player Shreya Arjun. "I personally wear masks when I go to games because I want to be more safe when interacting with other schools."

Along with adjusting to a season amid COVID-19 concerns, new members of the Aragon girls tennis team have to adjust to the schedule.

"At first, it was a bit hard to get back into [in-person school] ... and now I have to adjust to ... practice after school," said freshman Katie Yue. "I've been adjusting alright. I have a lot of friends on the team and everyone's re-

ally ... welcoming."

The team is looking forward to a season of competition, with the end goal to qualify to the PAL playoffs.

"Our goal is to try to make the playoffs," Owdom said. "We've got some very good teams. [Menlo-Atherton] is the perennial champion and they're going to be very hard [to beat]. There are some other really good teams. If you finish in the top four, then

you make the playoffs and you can go from there. That's what I hope they can do."

Outside of the daily school practices, some players practice in their own time.

"On the weekends I also try to go out and practice," Yue said. "You get that ... mental toughness by playing games. Just practice."

An obstacle standing in the way of the Dons making it to the playoffs is that fierce competition from Menlo-Atherton (5-0 PAL)\*.

"There's not too much I can do to prepare," Owdom said. "They have a lot of ability. We'll just try to put the best team out there and give the best effort and just be mentally tough. People had to play up, they learned, and hopefully we get better."

The Dons faced Menlo-Atherton on Sept. 21. After tough games for all the players, the Dons were defeated 0-7.

First doubles team, consisting of senior Phoebe Lin and Yue, lost their first set 7-6. Sophomore first singles Varsha Jawadi was ahead in the first set, but her opponent came back to secure a two-set victory.

"[Menlo-Atherton is] very good, overall, and I think ... they kept that standard today," Jawadi said. "They just played really well."

Jawadi hopes to use this

game as a chance to improve.

"I think I need to make sure to keep working hard," Jawadi said. "I have some [technical skills] I need to focus on in practice and ... hopefully next time I can do a little better."

Other players on the team echoed her sentiments.

"I was really proud of me and my partner because we were close to [our oppo-

and a season of regular competition means a return to normal for players. After a year of delayed or cancelled sports, regular practice and games offer a sense of connection for players.

"It feels amazing [to be back]," Arjun said. "After [COVID-19], I [felt] so isolated, especially from sports. Just getting better at the sport [and] being able to play

**"I was really proud of me and my partner because we were close to [our opponents] in scores"**

nents'] scores," said senior doubles player Jazene Sacramento. "I feel like we did improve a bit after this game because it was really challenging but [also] really fun."

A chance at the playoffs

against other schools [is] a privilege and I'm very grateful for this opportunity."

The Dons will face Woodside (4-1 PAL)\* on Oct. 5 in a home game at 4 p.m.

\*Records as of Sept. 27

COVID-19, we're just doing the things we're supposed to. They've relaxed everything. We're still doing what we can; I wear a mask even though I'm vaccinated, just to protect them."

Tennis is a no-contact sport and allows players to social distance during matches, which helps make practices and games safer.

"[Tennis is] definitely one of the safer COVID-19 sports



Freshman Mana Ueno prepares to serve.

ALESSANDRO RIEDEL