

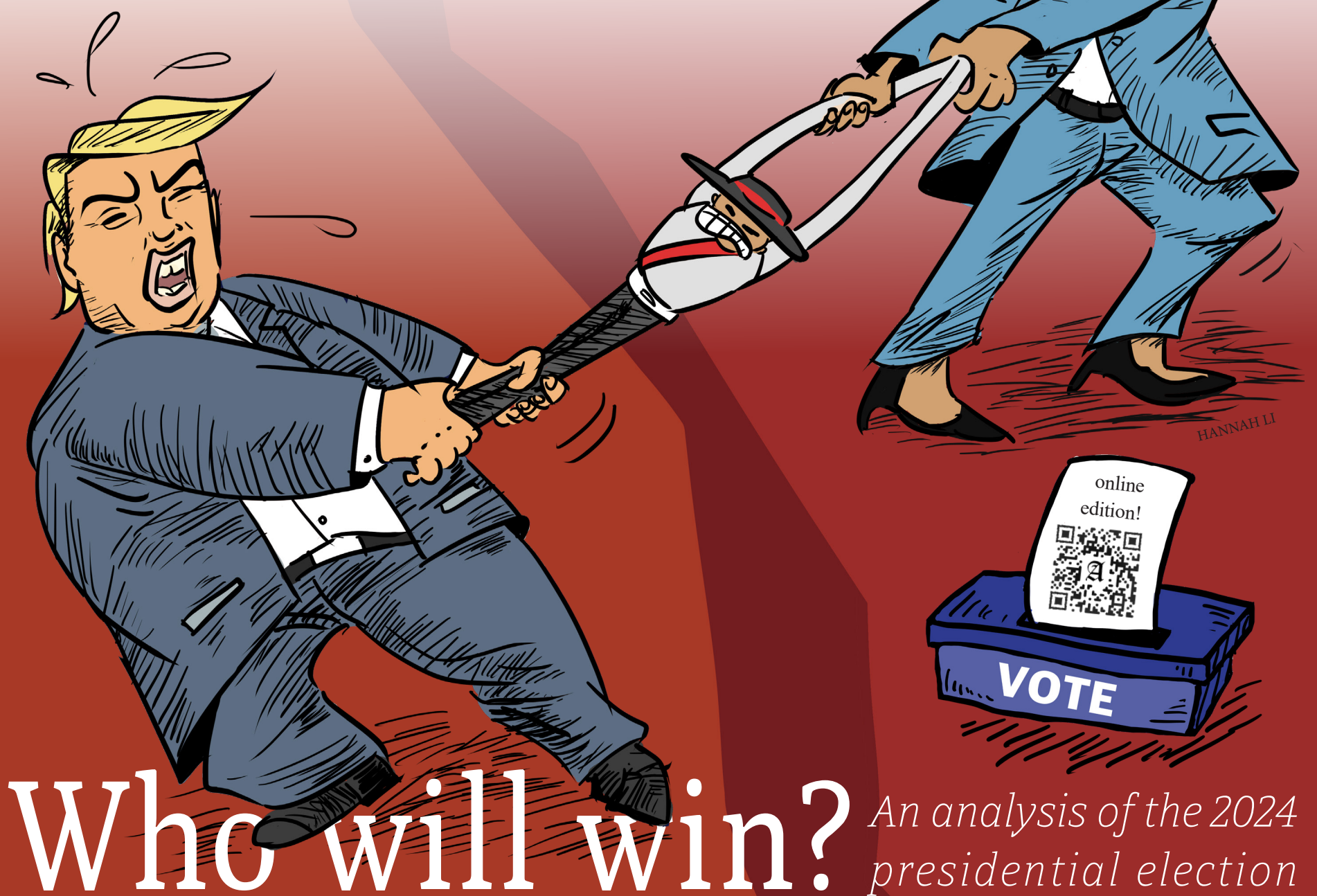
Editors' Picks

Editorial: Humanizing Aragon [pg. 2](#)

News: Analysis of presidential policy issues [pg. 4](#)

Features: PDA culture [pg. 7](#)

Sports: Increased use of analytics in sports [pg. 14](#)



Who will win? *An analysis of the 2024 presidential election*

Mark Rumberg
NEWS WRITER

The upcoming 2024 election is unprecedented, with incumbent President Joe Biden withdrawing months before Election Day and endorsing the new Democratic nominee, Vice President Kamala Harris. She will be running against former Republican president Donald Trump, as well as the Green and Libertarian Party's Jill Stein and Chase Oliver, respectively.

"[The presidential debate] was really hard to watch, just to see Donald Trump's arguments," said junior Kele'a Nacua. "He would continue to not answer questions ... even stating that he does not have a plan in place for when he's president."

Other students have differing opinions.

"I don't think I watched enough to have ... a big takeaway," said senior Diego Marengo. "I did see that there were three [moderators and Harris] versus [Trump] where they said Trump said a lot of lies, but Kamala only said one. But then I was seeing other videos where people were debunking that."

There are many false and misleading statements about the candidates, which are only further inflamed by the Internet. A study by Massachusetts Institute of Technology analyzed 4.5 million tweets, finding that falsehoods are 70% more likely to be retweeted on Twitter than the truth. A 2018 study also suggests that algorithms

can control people's intake of information, recommending news that only aligns with a user's views.

"A lot of people, especially young people, are really close-minded," Marengo said. "And that goes for both political groups. I've seen Trump supporters absolutely disregard anything that Kamala has to say, [when] she has really good values. But there's also [a lot of] fear-mongering going around, especially within the youth."

Picking out the faults in a president is easy, but multiple Aragon students are also optimistic about a candidate with compelling leadership values.

"[I want] someone who's a strong leader and is really able to delegate different peo-

ple," said senior Seth Kantor. "Someone who's respected, not just in their party, but the other parties, and someone who's able to really gather bipartisan support, not just from Republicans or Democrats, but both [sides]."

The two parties still disagree on many of their ideologies. Harris and Trump's views on policies such as immigration, abortion, the war in Gaza and environmental changes are vastly different. According to the Pew Research Center, 81% of registered voters say that the economy will be an important factor for their vote in the election. 93% of Republican voters consider the economy a leading issue.

"[Trump] runs the economy really well," Marceno

said. "He's already been one of our presidents. There were no wars ... and for me and for my family, that's what works best for [us]."

Varying policies on immigration, abortion and LGBTQ+ rights have also been present on both parties' campaign goals.

"I like [Harris'] immigration policies ... [and] her stance on *Roe v. Wade*, like reestablishing it," said senior Samirah Field. "I'm voting for [the] Democratic Party. They don't do much, but I'm gay, and I don't want my rights taken away from me ... that's a very real possibility under Donald Trump."

The country will vote for the next U.S. president on Nov. 5.

CONTINUED ON PAGES 8-9

Humanizing Aragon program

Helen McCloskey
NEWS WRITER

This school year, Aragon began implementing its Humanizing Aragon campaign to eliminate dehumanizing language on campus. The program involves lessons taught by teachers during Flex and Leadership students during fourth-period CARES lessons. As part of the program's efforts, all teachers have agreed to stop any dehumanizing language that they hear. They have also included reminders about humanizing language in their syllabi.

The program was created after results from a survey conducted by the Student Equity Council in February, which found that students heard dehumanizing language on campus.

"We took some of [the findings from the survey] to the faculty, to the department heads, to the principal," said Steve Henderson, social studies teacher and Student Equity Council advisor. "The teachers, using the voice and guidance of students from the Student Equity Council, designed a program we thought would really change the campus culture."

When designing the lessons, the teachers sought to emphasize the importance of using humanizing language.

"We defined what dehumanizing is, but we also defined what humanizing [language] is, and we wanted to strive toward making that more of the reality here at school," Henderson said.

On Sept. 4, teachers school-wide taught their fourth-period classes a Flex lesson, ad-

[were] laughing and thinking it was insignificant, even though they're probably not the ones experiencing it. With time, [dehumanizing language] might become better, but I don't know if it will dissolve [entirely]."

students completed a survey on the effects of the CARES lessons. The survey found that 61% of students believe the lessons were beneficial, and 39% thought the lessons were ineffective. When students explained how the program could be improved, some suggested stricter enforcement of dehumanizing language. Others pointed out that some students see the lessons as a joke.

"We're gonna continue working with [ASEC], amplifying student voices and we're gonna look at the data," Henderson said. "We're [going to] talk

In the few weeks since the lesson, some reported seeing decreases in dehumanizing language.

"[The program] has the ability to make some change," said senior Adi Shankar.

"[During] that discussion in class, [even though] some people laughed at it at the beginning, there were some points where [it] hits people."

about what we think is best, and then continue moving on the campaign, but we're going to pick either another lesson or different kinds of activities, or call in a public speaker, something else to emphasize our message."



Mock election

Claire Dong
NEWS WRITER

On the week of Oct. 7, Aragon High School hosted a mock election. Around a month earlier than the actual voting dates, Aragon partakes in a mock election held by the California government.

Aragon has been participating in the mock election for several years now.

"All of our teachers agreed to do some background education so everyone knows what they're voting on, what the propositions are about and a little bit about who the presidential candidates are," said American Government teacher Giancarlo Corti.

This time around, students voted through an online anonymous form. Everything on the official statewide ballot was also on the mock election ballot.

"They're not required to vote on every single thing," Corti said. "If there are four propositions they care about and four they don't or don't know anything about, then they can just vote on the four they care about. And again, that's true to how voters vote."

After all schools have finished voting, the California government will gather the results and release them to the public.

"Historically, students have been more in favor of Democrats than Republicans," Corti said. "So I wouldn't be surprised to see Kamala Harris win. For propositions, there's one about changing the language in the California Constitution to remove the concept that only men and women can be married [and] I think that will pass for students. They generally tend to be more liberal [and] open-minded than adults."

However, concerns about low voter turnout among students have been growing, with many speculating on the reasons behind the apathy.

"[Students aren't voting because] it takes time," said junior Samantha Stanley. "Or they feel pressure to tell other people who they're vot-

ing for. Like, if you were a Republican in a Democratic family or vice versa, then you wouldn't want to tell them who you're voting for and then you'd feel guilty to vote at all."

Senior Andrew Huang added another layer to the issue, emphasizing the impact of political polarization.

"Political polarization is a bit too rampant right now," Huang said. "It's a time of desperation where there is this inequality, so people really want to find a leader who wants to fix things fast, and then they go extreme as a result. There's this mob mentality in this polarization where someone says something, and everyone [blindly agrees]. Students don't really think about it beforehand on what the policy or idea actually is."

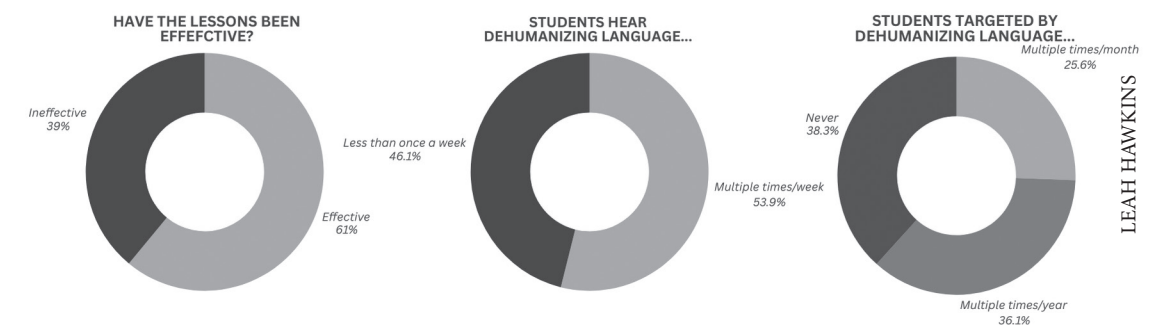
Some students may be discouraged from voting because they believe their preferred candidate has little chance of winning.

"This is mainly because they think the vote may not change anything," Huang said. "Because they think, 'Oh, so many people are voting for Candidate A, but I like Candidate B over A. I don't think Candidate B's gonna win, so then I will not vote at all.'"

This is an opportunity for students across all the grades to go through the experience of voting.

"I like the idea of students having access to the election process, for them to have it all demystified a little bit, and to realize that it's not very burdensome," Corti said. "It's not very hard with 20 to 30 minutes of preparation, they're probably doing as much preparation as most voters. The fact that we can give them the chance to do it in an educational place, it takes away any hesitation they have or any stigma associated with voting that they might encounter after they leave high school."

Aragon will be releasing the mock election results on Oct. 10.



ressing the effects of using dehumanizing language and the importance of humanizing language. Students added to posters about dehumanizing language, humanizing language and interrupting dehumanizing language. Leadership students have also presented short lessons during Aragon CARES on Mondays.

"[The lessons are] really beneficial," said sophomore Aveah Pok. "It's cool that people are working towards making a better community at Aragon, and with the live announcement sessions, it's nice to know about the harmful effects of dehumanizing language."

Julia Del Mundo, senior and Student Equity Council member, offers a contrasting viewpoint, however.

"I feel confident about [the program], but I'm also worried, because during the [lesson], people weren't taking it seriously," Del Mundo said. "Some people

Pok believes the program is able to make an impact because of its publicity.

"This time, everyone knows about the consequences if you say something dehumanizing, and more people are aware of how it harms other people," Pok said. "So [there is] a stronger sense of empathy throughout the school."

Still, on the same day of the lesson, Sept. 4, the n-word was found written in an oil-like substance on a lunch table.

"This is hate speech, and there is no acceptable use of the n-word on our campus. It causes harm to all who come in contact with it," said Principal Michael Jones in an email to the Aragon community following the incident.

After the school-wide lesson, Aragon staff held a meeting where they considered the impact of the lesson. On Sept. 30,

Ethnic Studies teacher Courtney Caldwell believes the program must be sustained past this year.

"We have students here for four years," Caldwell said. "So we [plan to] continue building on the momentum of what we've started now and hopefully over time, we'll see [dehumanizing language] go away, so we have to do these explicit lessons [less and less], [and instead] can take smaller opportunities to have these conversations with all students and staff."

Henderson thinks the H has been successful so far and could have a district-wide impact.

"People from the district office have come to study what we have been doing and ask us for copies of what we've been doing," Henderson said. "I think other schools in the district are looking at what we are doing and saying, 'Would that work for us?'"

ONLINE EXCLUSIVE

REMEMBER

NEWS

Senator candidate comparison
SamTrans CSM route
October surprise
Tri-M Induction Concert

FEATURES

Handmade clothes

ARAGONOUTLOOK.ORG

SPORTS

Boys water polo

ELLEN LI

Editorial: more conversations about Humanizing Aragon

This editorial represents the opinion of 10 out of 14 Outlook editors

After a survey conducted by Aragon Student Equity Council in February revealed that a staggering 53.9% of students hear dehumanizing language on a weekly basis, administration and ASEC im-

plemented the Humanizing Aragon campaign to combat the issue through education. However, despite their well-thought-out intentions, the flextime slideshow lessons and Monday CARES presentations are insufficient.

We aren't the only ones who questioned the effectiveness of this reinforcement; while 61% of the student body thought continuing the lessons was worthwhile, Leadership has asked for admin to implement more punitive measures.

While we are supportive of how Aragon has made huge progress in addressing dehumanizing language, we believe that there needs to be a change in how the message is delivered. Standardized presentations simply lack the power to change a deep-rooted cultural problem.

Some students even treat the lesson and the issue of dehumanizing language as a joke. In a form responding to the effectiveness of the campaign, students remarked that "Some people are using what we learned more as a joke than anything. I haven't heard or seen anyone actually

use [the content of the lessons] with someone who was seriously using dehumanizing language" and "People think that this initiative is kind of a joke and is not a real problem." Rather than inviting self-reflection, the ques-

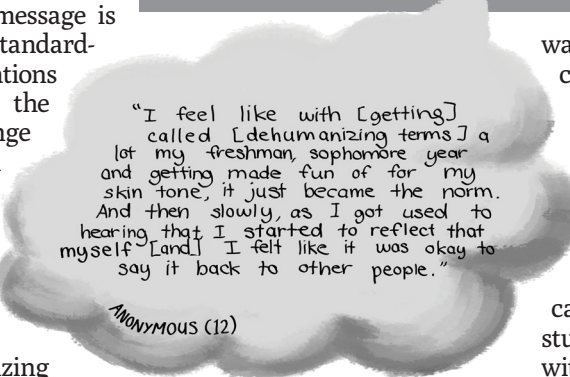
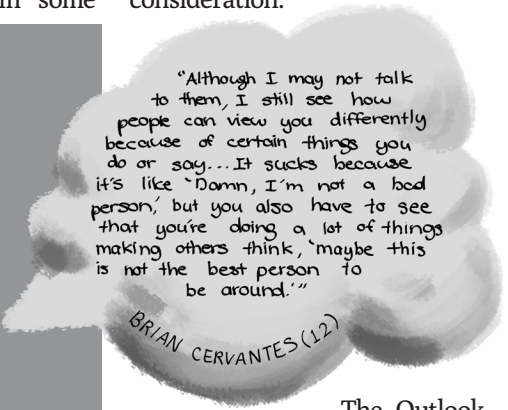
the people actually doing the harm makes the lessons seem more like a way for people to feel morally upstanding rather than questioning their own actions.

Nearly everyone on campus has been implicated in some

student," said senior Brian Cervantes. "I've been thinking a lot about it and I was like, 'Maybe I do need to watch what I say. Maybe I do need to be careful and take other people's feelings into consideration.'"



When have you used dehumanizing language?
 When has it been used against you? in what context?
 Would you say that language in front of someone who's been personally affected by that issue?
 What would your friend group be like if it didn't use this language?
 What kind of language do you want those around you to adopt from you?
 How would you like to be perceived by other people?
 How does it affect the way you present yourself?



EVA LUDWIG
 tions posed to these large groups create an unserious atmosphere. Furthermore, the three questions assume that the person answering is a bystander, not the perpetrator. But excluding

way, but many can dodge accountability in these classroom settings, whether that be because they don't realize their language is dehumanizing, or because it's become so normalized that people have fallen back on the attitude that "some people just can't change." However, most students are never presented with the opportunity to engage in mature discussions that allow them to view their language from another perspective.

"[When a classmate told me about my language], it really caught me by surprise because I've never been told that by a

The Outlook proposes that we implement more one-on-one discussions with classmates to encourage the exchange of personal stories. This should be guided with discussion prompts that allow students to reflect on their language usage at school. Carrying out this activity will promote understanding of others' experiences while fostering respect and building connections between different student groups.

While we as the Aragon Outlook support this program and the people taking steps to help this process, we believe that authentic conversations within the community should guide the Humanizing Aragon lessons.

Student voices: vegetarian lunch



Janak Bhuta
GUEST COLUMNIST

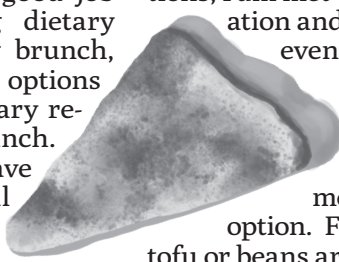
that this meal is inadequate to fulfill the California state standard of making "available both a nutritiously adequate breakfast and lunch for, not just needy children, but all children each school day" (California Ed. Code Section 49501.5). These meals are low-calorie and low-protein. The only source of protein in the "fruit salad" is yogurt, but students who are vegan or have religious dietary restrictions on dairy are left with a couple pieces of fruit. Oftentimes, when asking for vegetarian options, I am met with exasperation and confusion or even turned away.

The solution I propose is nutritious vegetarian meals as a daily option. Foods such as tofu or beans are high in protein, relatively low cost and are friendly to vegetarians, vegans and all religious dietary restrictions.

I understand I am privileged to live in a state where free lunch is a fundamental right for students, but I believe all students should include those who hold dietary restrictions, whether by choice, religion or any other reason.

As a vegetarian, it is difficult to get adequate options to eat for lunch. While the school does a good job of accommodating dietary restrictions during brunch, there are limited options for those with dietary restrictions during lunch. While there have been occasional vegetarian meals, vegetarian options are a usually rarity, happening once every couple of weeks. And even if there is a vegetarian option, there are often not enough servings. When I hear the lunch bell, I know that I have to race to the lunch line and fight for a spot in line to get one of the coveted slices of cheese pizza (one of the only vegetarian options), or starve that day — this should not be the case. These daily meals offered "to ALL San Mateo Union High School District students" (SMUHSD Student Nutrition Policy) are in fact, excluding a group of students who, just like other students, also need nutritious lunches.

The primary option currently in place is the "fruit salad"; however, it is my belief



bit.ly/OutlookLettertoEditor

THOUGHTS? SUBMIT HERE!

The ARAGON OUTLOOK

aragonoutlook.org

Ellen Li & Leah Hawkins
Editor-in-Chief

Scott Silton
Faculty Adviser

FEATURES

- Chloe Chen*
- Hannah Li*
- Angela Nguyen*
- Meilin Rife*
- Gemma Albertson
- Oliver Levitt
- Kyra Hsieh
- Zack Li
- Ceylon Liu
- Antonio Mangano
- Anushka Punjabi
- Emma Sakai
- Seona Srivastava
- Ashley Tsui
- Allinah Zhan

BUSINESS

- Anna He*
- Hannah Li*

TECHNOLOGY

- Chloe Chen*

EDITORIAL

- Emma Shen*

NEWS

- Darshan Bal*
- Darren Lo*
- Emma Shen*
- Ellie Blakely
- Dora Chen
- Claire Dong
- Naomi Kotani
- Reika Lam
- Helen McCloskey
- Jannah Nassef
- Diya Poojary
- Mark Wang-Rumberg
- Yang Yang

PHOTO

- Anna He*
- Madeline Allen
- Felix Ma
- Darra McLintock
- Victoria Santana

- Ethan Tawn
- Mia Thurrell
- Lian Wang
- Martin Zheng

CENTERSPREAD

- Alexa Sterry*

SPORTS

- Andrew Dong*
- Jack He*
- Phoebe Harger
- Charlie Henderson
- Sora Mizutani
- Olivia Mukherjee
- Claire Qi
- Quinn Shirley
- Advika Singh
- Adya Tewari

GRAPHICS

- Eva Ludwig*
- Lillian Huang
- Eden Kwan
- Melody Liu
- Winona Reif
- Audrey Wang
- Ian Wang

SOCIAL MEDIA

- Anna He*
- Meilin Rife*
- Alexa Sterry*

* denotes editors

House of Rep. comparison

Diya Poojary
NEWS WRITER

On March 5, Incumbent U.S. Rep. Kevin Mullin, D-Calif. and Anna Cheng Kramer, R-Calif. advanced as candidates to represent California's 15th Congressional District, spanning from Daly City to Redwood City, in the House of Representatives.

Mullin, a San Mateo native and fourth-generation Californian, has had a long history of being politically involved in the Peninsula.

"I originally ran for Congress with the slogan 'Fighting For Our Future' because I am committed to working on issues that will create a safe, prosperous and equitable future for all of us," Mullin said in an email. "I am running for re-election to continue that work: strengthening democracy, fighting climate change and addressing our region's affordability crisis."

Kramer was born in Taiwan and immigrated to the U.S. for college, where she earned a BA in economics. Since then, she has mostly worked with non-profit housing management and multi-housing investment along the West Coast.

"We really need government accountability," Kramer said on her website. "We need to stop the crime, the homelessness and close the borders. We cannot afford to keep spending money with no returns. And that's why I'm running — to bring some discipline to the Congress and fight for our people."

Both candidates focus on similar policy issues, some of which are evident in the county to students.

"In San Mateo, there's a big disparity between ... the allocation of resources," said senior Ruhi Mudoj. "There's this very affluent, wealthy side to it, and then there's the other side of it that's under-resourced."

Sophomore Natalie Gourlie thinks high living expenses in the Bay Area contribute to gaps in wealth and resources accessible to the community.

"Costs of living have skyrocketed and wages haven't really followed," Gourlie said. "So a lot more families are having to take out debt. Especially medical debt ... because there's many families who don't have the savings."

Others see how these gaps affect students at Aragon.

"I think there are certain demographics of kids that experience a lot of dehumanizing language because of what their ... neighborhood's like," said senior Chloe Laddaran. "It's very unfair because that's

not up to the kid ... especially in areas where, maybe, it's violent to be out at night. No kid should ever have to live through that."

The candidates approach these gaps in wealth and resources differently.

"In 2023, I introduced the Poverty Line Act ... to modernize the way the federal poverty line is calculated, which has not been updated in nearly 60 years," Mullin said in an email. "This bill would increase accessibility to federal safety net programs for hard-working Americans who don't make enough to afford their basic needs."

As someone who has overseen housing improvements in low-income communities, Kramer plans to introduce a Community Housing Initiative, which will provide affordable housing through shared facilities and increased collaboration between public and private sectors. Her goal is to eventually establish permanent market-rate housing.

They also have different stances on immigration policies.

Mullin believes better funding for the judicial system will allow asylum claims to be processed faster and that it will require a bipartisan compromise. Kramer supports work programs providing jobs for immigrants, and argues for securing the southern border and establishing a merit-based immigration policy.

"I think that aligns with their respective parties very well," Mudoj said. "Immigrants are a vital part of the Bay Area, and so I hope that whoever wins the seat ends up embracing that."

Some, however, are critical of Kramer's approaches to policy issues.

"[She] does advocate for less single family housing, but she's also against giving housing to migrants or to homeless people," Gourlie said. "It's better to have someone who's willing to take the extra step of also ensuring other people get housing; not just people who might need it in the future, people who also currently need it."

The candidates will continue to discuss their goals, including consumer protection and clean energy reforms, through campaigns and events.

"[Constituent] services are one of the most important functions of being an elected official," Mullin said. "We are trusted by the public to represent their values in Sacramento or D.C., and we must always earn that trust."

The general election will be held on Nov. 5.



Presidential policy analysis

Jannah Nassey
NEWS WRITER

*Source names have been changed to protect source privacy.

In the months preceding the Nov. 5 presidential election, Republican and Democratic candidates, Donald Trump and Kamala Harris respectively, have been holding rallies to explain their plans to the public. Although they have stated similar goals, like bringing down inflation and better housing opportunities, their actual policies differ. Despite this, it can often be difficult for voters to gain a sense of those differences by simply watching the candidates' media performances.

"You're not going to have undecided voters fact checking issues," said junior Aayushi Kothari. "They're going to be listening for goals. And so a lot of the time, I felt their goals ... which they passed off as policies, overlapped."



ECONOMY

In terms of economy, Harris emphasizes tax increases for corporations while Trump focuses on tax cuts and tariffs.

Harris has repeatedly spoken about something she calls an opportunity economy, aimed at strengthening the middle class. She's stated her goal of making groceries more affordable and putting a stop to price gouging. However, grocery prices rose 21% in cost, part of a general 19% increase in cost, under the Biden-Harris administration, and the Penn Wharton Budget model approximates a \$1.2 trillion deficit increase by 2034.

"The foundational principle of capitalist economics [are] supply and demand," Kothari said. "There are a lot of plans where you want to increase supply — for example, housing ... because there aren't enough homes from the number of people who want to buy homes ... I like anything that looks on the

supply side, even if it requires spending, because there are ways to get the money granted. I slightly less like the idea of controlling the demand side of economics ... [Harris' policy] about price capping groceries raises a bit of concern, because if you price cap groceries, then the quantity supply doesn't always meet the quantity demanded and you come up with issues like shortages."

Harris also proposed enlarging corporate tax rates from 21% to 28%, increasing tax deductions for small businesses, and promised not to raise taxes on citizens making under \$400,000 a year. Her proposals would lead to taxes rising by \$4.1 trillion.

As for Trump, he stated he wants to "make America affordable again," and plans to extend the Tax Cuts and Job Act, which lowered taxes, usually for those in higher tax brackets, and brought people into lower tax brackets. After Trump imposed the TCJA in 2017, corporate tax decreased from 30% to 21%, and if renewed, he plans on depleting it to 20-15% for companies that domestically produce their goods.

Trump also plans to enforce a 20% tariff on services and goods from any country, which he feels is an aim to guard working-class occupations, and penalize prejudiced trading practices. Such changes would most likely add \$3.6-\$6.6 trillion dollars in the U.S.'s deficit over the course of 10 years. Additionally, Trump wants to lower the value of the American dollar as an effort for other countries to purchase more American made goods.

IMMIGRATION

Another major issue for voters is immigration. According to the Pew Research Center, 61% of voters say it is important to their vote.

Harris has proposed passing the border security bill that Trump rejected, which would have given the president more power to shut down borders when crossings reach a high, added 1,500 agents to the border and shut down loopholes in the asylum process.

Trump has been explicit about his immigration policies, stating his goals include sealing the border, stopping migrant invasion and carrying out the largest deportation operation in American history.

"Immigration is really important [to me], just because [from] what I've heard, Trump [has] a hard set immigration and deportation [policy], [and] I have family members that would be deported, according to Trump if he was elected," said junior *Amelia.

FOREIGN POLICY

International issues, such as ongoing conflicts in Russia/Ukraine, Palestine, China and NATO are concerning for many voters. Both politicians made their unwavering support for Israel very clear, which caused some frustration.

"I would hope that [Harris] would support Palestine," said freshman Urjita Debnath. "I think if Harris did say ... 'I'm gonna go for a ceasefire. I'm not gonna give any more aid,' it would definitely bring a lot of young voters to her."



HOUSING

Housing is another topic both candidates have touched upon.

"I think [homelessness] should be the first thing they focus on," said freshman Gabriella Sablo. "They do stuff [like] putting [in] benches that are not homeless friendly ... [but] I think they should ... have a separate fund for them."

In response to the housing crisis, Harris proposed building 3 million housing units, which brings affordability for those who need it, but will make obtaining wealth through real-estate challenging. On the other hand, Trump wants to free up federal land for building houses and replace the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing, allowing towns to choose peoples' residency rather than the government.

Both candidates present differing approaches to issues like the economy, foreign affairs and housing, for voters to consider as the presidential election nears.



Aragon launches new Financial Literacy course

Ellie Blakely
NEWS WRITER

This school year, Aragon is offering a Financial Literacy course for the first time. The elective is taught by Advanced Placement Government and Economics teacher Kevin Nelson, who has been trained as a financial planner.

Nelson has designed the curriculum to give students an overview into the world of personal finance, pulling content from college courses.

“Especially with social media, a lot of people think about day trading and getting rich quick,” said junior Matthew Hagedorn, a current Financial Literacy student and Economics Club president. “This is more about, how do I find financial stability? How do I get a retirement account? How do I do taxes? Having a little bit of that background helps you navigate [the financial advice on social media] better so you’re not so easily swayed or misled.”

A lack of knowledge about how to manage money can be detrimental to many.

“In the early 2000s [or] late 1990s, I got a phone call from the mayor of Burlingame and [they] asked me to put on a financial literacy workshop because so many students [had] gotten themselves an incredibly large amount of debt,” Nelson said. “Students were leaving college because ... they

couldn’t handle it ... I originally started with a course called college financial survival [and] it became very popular. I even had a group of individuals who [were] incarcerated [and] were brought over by probation officers to participate in the workshop, because they [were] like, this is what’s going to keep you from being in prison.”

The effects of making uneducated financial decisions can be long-lasting and difficult to move on from, especially as a young adult.

“I had friends who [got] into trouble financially because emergencies happen and they may not have been fully aware [that] the decisions they were making to handle those emergencies [would] cost them many, many years to kind of climb out of debt,” said Heather Sadlon, Advanced Placement United States History and Government and Economics teacher.

This can be seen as an issue all over the country; according to an article in the Journal of Consumer Affairs, fewer than a third of young adults possess basic knowledge of interest rates, inflation and risk diversification.

This has led many to advocate for financial literacy to be taught in schools. Among them is the Palo Alto based company Next Gen Personal Finance, which started the non-profit

NGPF Mission 2030. They have made it their goal to make personal finance a mandatory stand-alone course in every state by 2030. As of September, they have succeeded in 26 states, with California being the most recent to pass financial literacy legislation.

The state of California announced plans to make financial literacy course a graduation requirement in California high schools on June 27. Many

when they take the class,” Sadlon said.

Some students have been hoping for financial literacy to be more prevalent in high school curriculums.

manage your money, because it is more or less a life skill.”

The introduction of this required course at Aragon means that beginning with the class of 2031, students will no longer take Economics during their senior year, which some see as unfortunate news.

“Economics is an incredibly important discipline,” Nelson said. “Removing the ability to understand decision making and how markets work is, to me, is not a good decision. [But] we have only so much space in the day, and personal finance has to come in.”

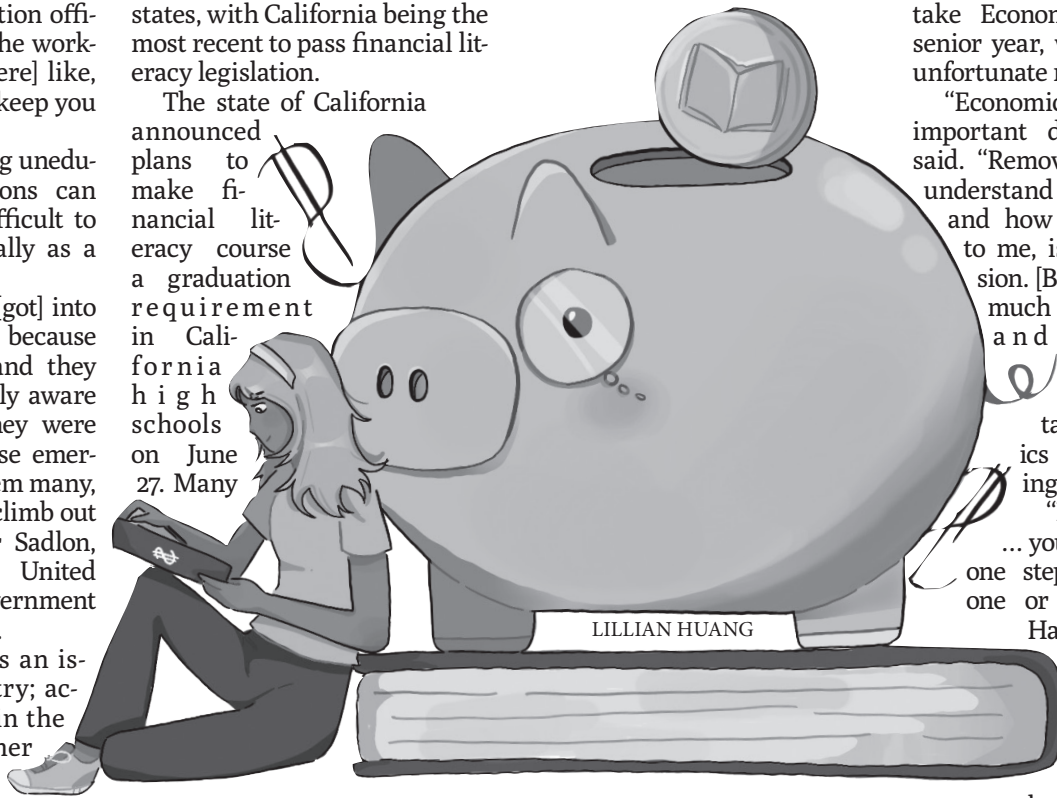
The decision to take away economics has left some feeling torn.

“It’s tricky, because ... you’re kind of moving one step forward, maybe one or two steps back,”

Hagedorn said. “I think you need both [economics and financial literacy], because they both bring a lot of benefits.”

Overall, many agree that the introduction of financial literacy at Aragon will be beneficial to its students, even if it means making future compromises in terms of other classes.

The elective will become a mandatory graduation requirement starting in 2027.



are enthusiastic about this step toward making financial literacy more widespread.

“I’m definitely excited about the possibilities of being able to go more in-depth with these topics that will become really important to [students] within a year from

“It’s unfortunate that [financial literacy was] not something that’s [mandatory] like Health or Ethnic Studies because I truly feel like it’s such a necessity,” said Reet Bhatia, sophomore and officer of the Smart Money Club. “You should know how to

All-gender changing room opens

Naomi Kotani
NEWS WRITER

After many construction delays, Aragon’s all-gender changing room opened for the 2024-2025 school year. Construction started in June of this year and ended in late July, making it available for use at the start [of August]. The changing room was initially planned to be completed in December, but faced setbacks as architecture plans were not approved by the state until this April.

The idea for an all-gender locker room was proposed in 2022 by Aragon’s Student Equity Council, as well as students in an Agency and Social Justice elective class and Gender and Sexuality Awareness club who had concerns about students not feeling safe in gendered changing areas.

This past summer, English teacher and GSA adviser Vince Bravo corresponded with Deputy Superintendent Kirk Black and Director of Student Services Donald Scatena about the changing room. Black and Scatena said that the district was working with the San Mateo County Attorney Office and the Office of Education on how to move forward with the logistics of the room.

Similar to the all-gender bathroom, the changing room is only accessible to students with permission from the administration. In order to have access, students must talk to their PE teacher or counselor. Some feel that this process adds an extra layer of complication for students.

“It needs to be a space that all students have access to,” Bravo said. “There should be no requests, no paperwork, no additional hurdles for anyone to use this space.”

Senior Alex Pate expressed a similar sentiment.

“You already have so much going on,” Pate said. “You already have to fit in so many places ... there’s already so many steps. So many students who are transgender struggle to already reach out and find a teacher to talk to.”

Despite the completion of the all-gender changing room, it hasn’t been promoted to the school community.

“Upon return at the beginning of the school year, there was a [slideshow] shared with the faculty about all of the construction that’s been successful over the summer,” Bravo said. “The all-gender locker room was not included on that list.”

In the map of Aragon’s campus that was issued at the start of this school year, the changing area was included, though it was marked as still being in the “planning phase.”

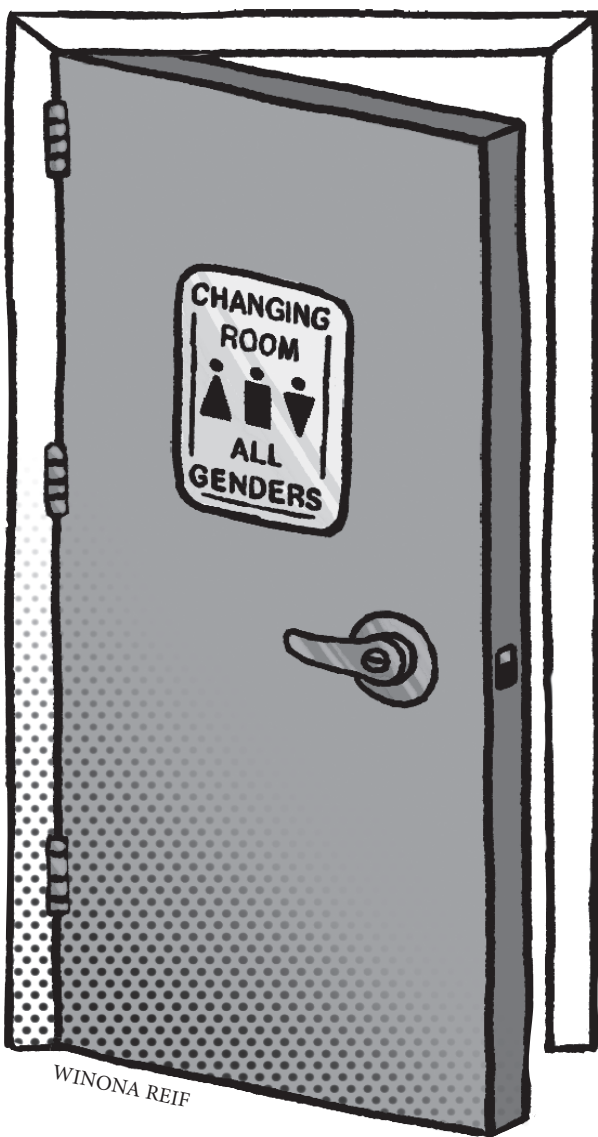
The changing room, which was converted from a football team room, has individual changing stalls and lockers that can be used by PE students and athletes. It is located next to the boys’ locker room, allowing it to be supervised by PE teachers.

“The idea was [to] give students as much privacy as possible,” said former Aragon principal Valerie Arbizu. “Very similar to if you’re going to try on clothes at the mall ... you [have] privacy while you [are] changing ... but [PE teachers are] still able to open a door to the PE office that was right on the other side and ... understand what was going on in the space.”

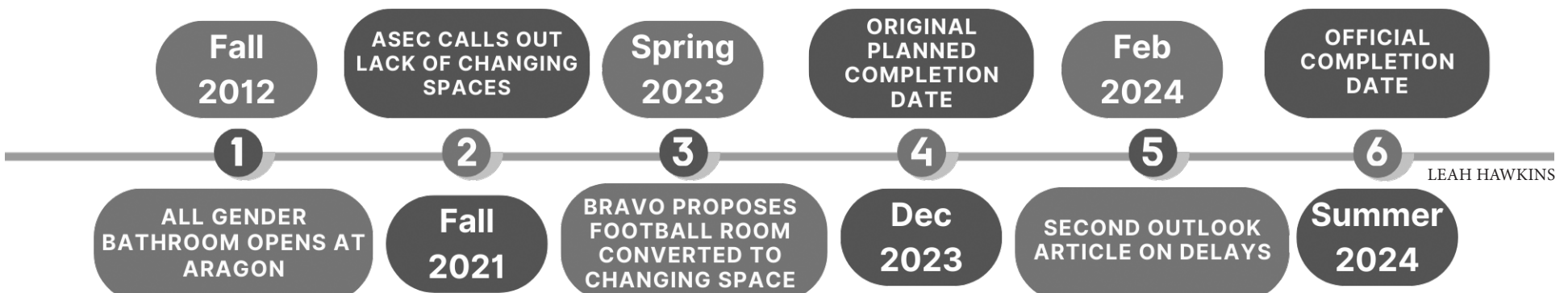
The all-gender changing area can offer a more comfortable environment than a gendered locker room.

“I feel more safe [with] people from the LGBTQ community because they understand, they don’t judge,” said sophomore Juan Carlos Ayala Rodriguez.

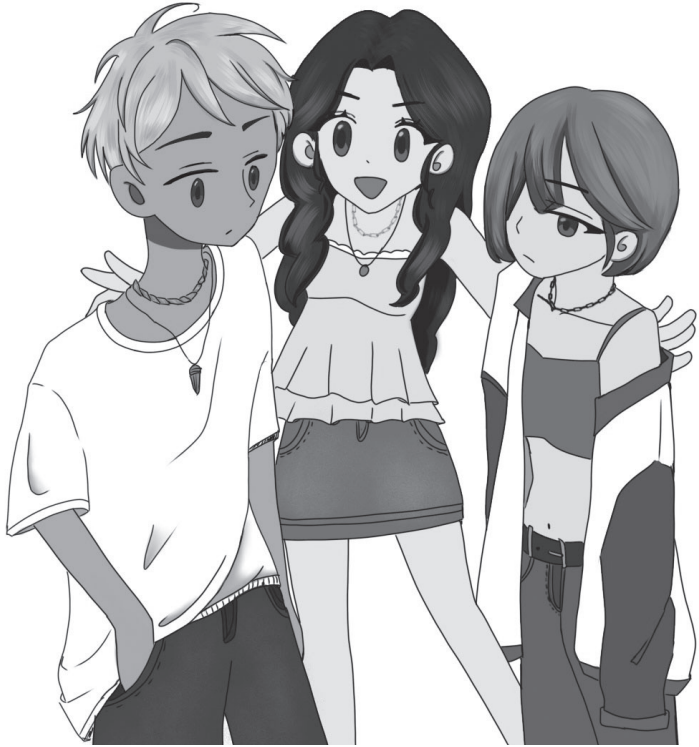
Students wanting to use the all-gender changing space should speak with their PE teachers.



WINONA REIF



LEAH HAWKINS



AUDREY WANG

Influence of aesthetics

Ashley Tsui
FEATURES WRITER

As students have grown older, many are seeking to discover their own sense of identity. Through experimenting, one can discover their own style. Styles range from grunge and goth to cottagecore and coquette. As social media has grown its presence, there are many photos and short-form videos showcasing different clothing aesthetics.

Clothing trends have been separated into different groups, also called aesthetics, with dedicated followers styling themselves in that manner. Many factors go into choosing an aesthetic, including color scheme, materials and vibe.

"I follow a '90s or early 2000s skater style because I love how the clothes look and fit on my body," said sophomore Andrew Doolittle. "[It's defined as having] a lot of baggy clothes with alternative designs and dark colors."

But for others, settling on one aesthetic is more difficult.

"I don't stick with one [aesthetic]; I fluctuate between [styles]," said freshman Ellie Kim. "I usually [go for] coquette, like dresses or bows, but there are times where I like the Y2K look too — the plaid dresses, skirts and wrap tops."

Having an aesthetic means the overall look of one's outfit doesn't often differ outside of the parameters of their style. One advantage of these niches is that this manner of self-expression can help followers form bonds with others.

"If you see someone with a similar style as you, you're [often] like, 'oh, that looks so cool' or 'I want those pants or that shirt,'" said freshman Amara Noelle Garcia. "You can end up being friends with them just based off of complimenting each

other and asking where [they] got their clothes from."

In addition, aesthetics can help shape one's personal style and help them learn about themselves and their fashion preferences.

"It's cool for people to follow [aesthetics] because it gives them a sense of consistency," said junior Mai Brisset.

"We're all young and trying to figure out what direction [of fashion] we want to go. Aesthetics help [us figure it out], even if it's temporary, [they'll] give us a sense of direction."

Moreover, aesthetics can be a confidence booster.

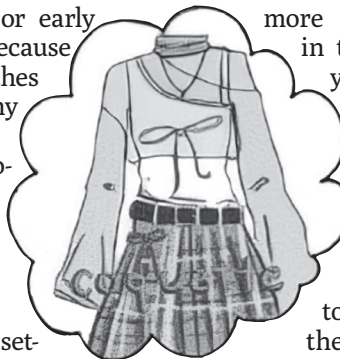
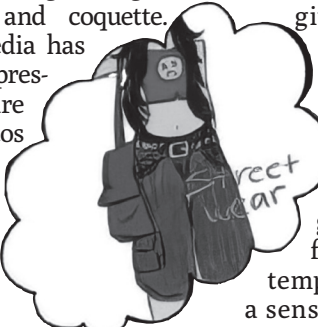
"I believe [aesthetics] can [affect your mindset], but more in a positive, self-confidence way," said sophomore Catherine Tsao. "Most aesthetics you choose because you feel more comfortable in them, so when you're wearing them, you feel at home, giving you a sense of confidence."

However, committing to a fashion aesthetic may have certain drawbacks.

"If you constantly dress cute, coming to school in something you don't feel comfortable in takes away from your confidence," said Audrey Yanez, senior and secretary of Fashion Fanatics club. "You don't feel as comfortable because you think that people are going to say 'oh, you look tired today.'"

Some feel that an ideal setting would be seeing everyone express their individuality through their unique aesthetic.

"It'd be super cool for everybody to find their own aesthetic because then you can compare and integrate into different aesthetics too," Garcia said. "Everybody's style is unique in their own way and nobody should be ashamed to show their style. It's so nice to see different aesthetics, especially at school."



Getting involved in local elections

Gemma Albertson
FEATURES WRITER

On Nov. 5, the next president isn't the only thing the people of San Mateo will be voting on. Charles Hansen and Nicole Fernandez are both vying for San Mateo City Council's 2nd District seat, while Danielle Cwirko-Godycki campaigns unopposed for District 4.

Much of peoples' daily lives are controlled by local politicians, as opposed to far-off federal governments.

"At the local level, you can see your policies," Hansen said. "When people say, 'Oh, I'm not political,' they just don't know [that] they are. It's the air you breathe, it's the sidewalk you walk, [it's] everything that you have. [Everything] that you love ... is a policy."

Almost everybody recognizes the names Harris or Trump. However, the same can't be said about those running for local government positions.

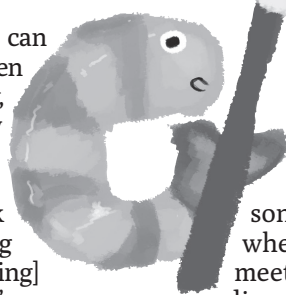
"If [local elections] were publicized more, and if they were brought up more in school and our history or government classes, [they] would reach the youth a lot better," said junior Charlie Harger. "People view [local government] as less important than larger government, because they think that a city councilman might not have as much authority or influence as a president would."

National elections can also feel distant if one has no involvement in a higher level of politics. In contrast, many council members stress that community opinion is a priority when it comes to policy-making.

"Each [council] meeting has opportunities for public comment," said San Mateo Councilman Adam Loraine. "You don't have to sign up in advance. We also have Zoom. You can also email the council ... and it actually goes to each council member and the city manager and the city clerk. Not only do we get your comment, but the city manager may want to talk to de-

partment heads and give an official city response."

Local government doesn't end with the city council. If a student wanted to petition one of Aragon's rules, they would speak to the school board. If someone notices an issue with the infrastructure of their townhouse, they would look to their Homeowners Association.



Additionally, each neighborhood has its own personal association, where members meet regularly to discuss goals specific to their area. For example, District 4 candidate Danielle Cwirko-Godycki saw the flood damage dealt to her and her neighbors' homes and decided to rebuild her neighborhood association.

"As I started talking to residents, I learned that more and more people were impacted by the flooding ... so I rallied the community together," Cwirko-Godycki said. "We went to City Hall, and we petitioned the city council for emergency relief to help fortify the city ... I actually worked with our city council to put together a ballot measure to secure \$4.1 million a year in flood infrastructure."

As of the 2020 election, about a third of eligible voters did not vote because they felt their vote would have no effect. Local elections mitigate this feeling of powerlessness. With a much smaller voter pool of around 436,500 registered voters, in comparison to the 161.42 million nationwide, 1 vote has the same weight in local elections as 307 people nationally.

18-29 year-olds in particular have the

lowest number of votes. While not often represented by actual politicians, young voices have their own growing power in the city of San Mateo.

"I was carried to the finish line successfully because of the work of young people and the vision of young people who felt like ... they saw their vision of the future in me," said Councilwoman Amourance Lee, the first Asian-American woman to serve on San Mateo's city council.

Lee has pioneered a youth internship program for high school students to be included in local politics. The Youth Group meets with Lee weekly, attends campaign meetings and directly interacts with the community. The members are included on the library board, parks and rec, senior, sustainability and infrastructure commissions.

"It's a really great opportunity for people wanting to learn more about local politics, and people who want to help out with the community," said sophomore and Youth Group member Lincoln Elliott. "It's a good way to intrigue soon-to-be voters, introduce them to the new kind of things that they would implement into the community and let them know what's at stake when voting."

While a majority of students are ineligible to vote, age isn't a barrier stopping students from getting involved. There are many clubs striving for change at Aragon.

"I joined [Student Equity Council] because I wanted to [have] a bigger role in this community," Harger said. "I wanted to have a bigger impact on the people around me."

Some argue all students should strive to participate.

"The old saying is, if you don't have a seat at the table, you're what's on the menu," Fernandez said. "That very much applies to politics ... it will be your values at stake if you're not there discussing the terms of whatever policy is being made."



EVA LUDWIG

Dangers of Snapchat: a slippery slope

Allinah Zhan
FEATURES WRITER

On Sept. 20, the entire San Mateo Union High School District was alerted about a potential school shooting. This rumor was propagated on Snapchat and sparked widespread fear, causing many to skip school. Although it was a hoax, this highlights the prevalent issue of the lack of security measures employed in Snapchat and the growing misinformation.

"[Misinformation is] really dangerous because there's this idea that when it's on the internet, it's real," said

anxiety that can cause for them, as well as the teachers and staff."

Snapchat's transient design, where Snaps vanish after being viewed, makes it difficult to fact-check claims and rumors after they've spread. As a result, users may feel less accountable for their actions, lowering their inhibitions and making them feel free to post and send anything.

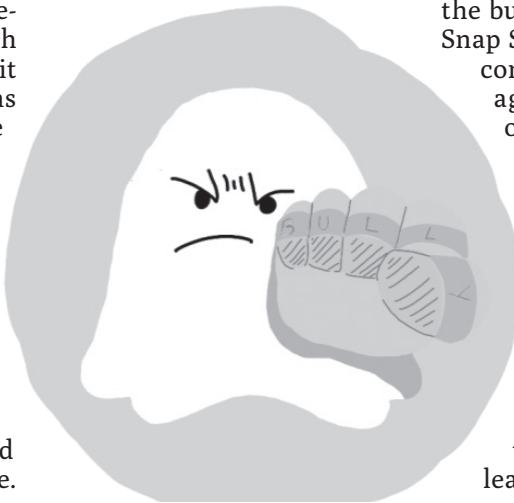
"The way the app is structured [and] the kind of people who are on the app is asking for a lot of dangerous things to happen," said sophomore Anjalika Khare.

"People get flashed on there, and [because] you can't go back and see the messages previously, you don't have proof of something happening in the past."

With over 160 million users between the ages of thirteen and seventeen, according to SocialFly, Snapchat's primary demographic makes it a prime target for scams and phishing attacks.

"You get a bunch of bots that add you, and they send you ... spam and scams or 18+ inappropriate content,"

said junior Jonathan Phi. "It's very annoying and awkward. I have stopped adding people



back on Snapchat because of the bots. These bots are more harmful towards younger people that use Snapchat because they don't know what they are doing."

Outside of Snapchat's potentially inappropriate nature, the app can also have downsides that may affect physical, social and mental health.

"A lot of Snapchat filters [give] people clear skin and everything, and then makes people believe that everyone is like that," said sophomore Ashely Cheng. "[If] a friend sends a picture of themselves in their bed, almost getting ready to sleep, and they look amazing,

you might be like, 'Oh my gosh, why do I look so bad?'"

Alongside these concerns, the built-in Snap Streaks and Snap Scores create a sense of competition that encourages daily use and spurs on addiction.

"I have so many friends who use Snapchat," Cheng said. "I can see them during class constantly tapping into chats and sending pictures. Then, you feel pressured to send a picture to them too. That just leaves them in a cycle of picture sending and picture taking."

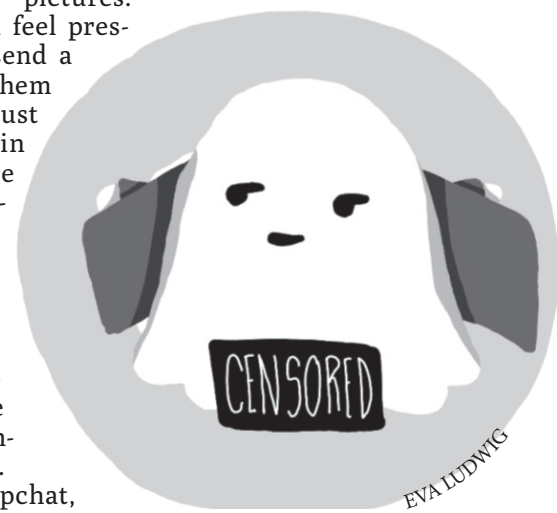
This endless sequence of interaction may lead to more than just distraction; overuse may interfere with real-life connections and work.

"Being on Snapchat, staying up late and not getting enough sleep can cause sleep deprivation and [affect] mental health," Perez said. "There could be some addictive qualities as well to continuously posting, where you're spending a lot of time and can't put the phone down. It might interfere with

schoolwork [and] face-to-face communication."

While Snapchat is an excellent tool for communication with its entertaining features and innovative ways to connect with friends, there are many risks that accompany the app.

"It's like what the doctor will tell you about sugar, everything in moderation," Perez said. "There's this whole body of literature on doom scrolling



and it does have an effect on us ... Being online can be a really great way to self-care, but having balance and limits set [is important] so you know to prioritize the things that are making you thrive and that are making you healthy."



wellness counselor Eddie Perez. "We take it super seriously as a district and as administration, but we also have to think of a student seeing it, the stress and

PD-Nay culture: avert your eyes

Zack Li
FEATURES WRITER

"I was walking out of history class and there was this couple that ... [was] against the wall making out right outside the [classroom] door," said junior Julia Chang.

Witnessing unsolicited acts of intimacy has become a prevalent experience in daily high school life and school culture. According to Worldmetrics, 78% of people have witnessed public displays of affection in public spaces. Acts of affection can vary from heated make-out sessions in the middle of the hallways to less intense acts such as hugging or holding hands. Regardless of whether or not students choose to avert their eyes, these expressions of affection have begun to raise concerns over its disruption of student comfort and the academic learning environment.

"Hugging or holding hands [or] a little peck [on the cheek] is fine," said sophomore Gabriela Ramirez. "But other than that, it's just inappropriate. [I] walk by people touching each other, grabbing each other really inappropriately ... it's not something that I want to see."

This boundary on which many people seem to draw

the line of what kinds of PDA are "acceptable" arises from the difference between affection with romantic intent versus affection that is more sexually suggestive, acts such as groping and making out.

"[Sexual] actions are more private ... so [it's like an] invasion of privacy to [the] people who observe it," said senior Rocco Lamberti. "Especially [at school] because you're surrounded by your peers, and typically people that know you [at] some personal level. It can be awkward if they observe you [partaking] in more graphic forms of PDA ... It's a bit of a social taboo."

The social context of a high school environment significantly impacts peoples' perception of what PDA is appropriate.

"School is a place for education ... where people are forced to be," Chang said. "I don't want to be forced to be in a place where couples are doing excessive [and] uncomfortable things.

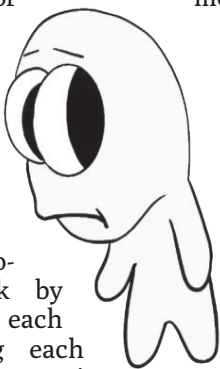
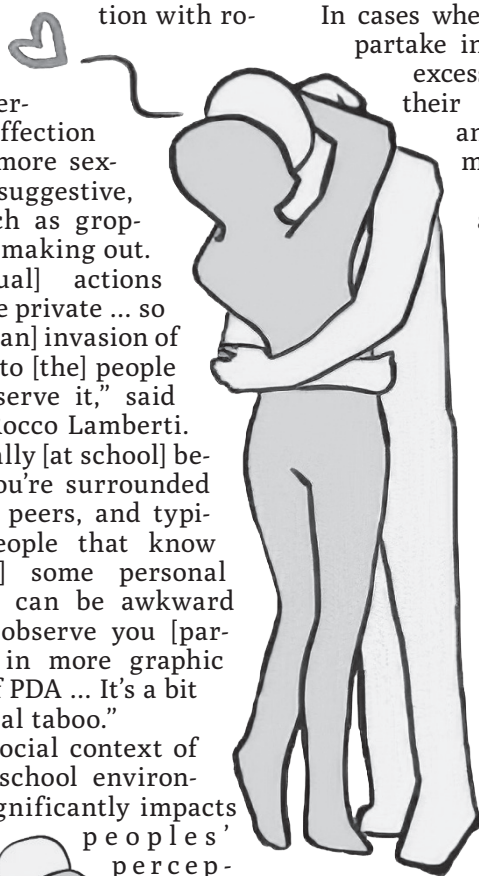
Outside of school, it's more acceptable because ... you can just walk away."

In cases where couples do partake in PDA that is excessive in nature, their public image and respect may warp.

"Due to all the negative stigma around PDA, people [do make] fun of the couple [for showing PDA]," said junior Darren Benavente. "I was in a past relationship that people would view as 'very PDA,' [and] I felt people took it to an extreme ... I've definitely [experienced] people talking badly about us."

Sometimes, this judgment directly affects the relationship and the couple.

"People talk a ton about PDA when it comes to relationships, and ... it can be very damaging," Benavente said. "[I] had a partner that was very insecure about that, and they felt uncomfortable ... [which] hurts the couple as a whole."



Yet, despite all the criticism that arises, couples still partake in PDA at school for a variety of reasons.

"Maybe they don't have the time to see each other outside of school," Lamberti said. "Maybe their parents don't allow them to see each other, or they're not supposed to, and so they do it at school to still express their affection."

While this seems to be the primary external factor for why PDA occurs at school, personal preference also plays a part in how couples choose to express their affection.

"Some people's love language is physical

touch ... [It'll] make them feel more comfortable around their partner and they just consistently want that," Benavente said.

Although the presence of acts of affection has received many different opinions, it is still a visible culture that is practiced in many different public spaces, including schools.



Student Opinions

"I would probably vote for Trump. I know that there was a bill that Democrats were trying to pass to spend tax money on buying illegal immigrants their first houses. Luckily it wasn't passed, but just knowing that they'd want to spend our money on illegal immigrants instead of actually helping the Americans inside America right now is kind of concerning and not something that I would want to support."

Isaac Cheung (10)

Kamala Harris
 Donald Trump

"I'm leaning towards Kamala because I don't stand for what Donald Trump said in his election. I generally align more Republican, but I believe Donald Trump's beliefs are too radical, especially toward immigration. [Also] some of the stuff he said about Hurricane Helene recently, he wasn't acknowledging the victims."

Derek Chan-Wittry (11)

Kamala Harris
 Donald Trump

"I feel like Donald Trump is not a good person... [he] has a very strong campaign [where] people trust him almost blindly... It seems crazy to me that [abortion] has somehow gone from being legal in the '70s to now being illegal in many states... I would also say LGBTQ rights are [being] slashed, which I think is horrible."

Charlie Birkelund (12)

Kamala Harris
 Donald Trump

"I would support Jill Stein from the Green Party... I am sick and tired [of] the two-party system and how they've failed to listen to the people about issues ... They continue to fund billions [of dollars] into Israel to commit genocide ... they both refuse to have a climate emergency plan or ban fracking ... I see the Green Party and I see a really authentic party."

Andrea Lazo-Cruz (12)

Kamala Harris
 Donald Trump
 Jill Stein

Boxing for Ballots!

Reproductive Rights: Wants abortion rights nationwide
 Healthcare: Medicare for all, trying to reduce medical debt
 Climate: Now supports fracking, wants to diversify energy, lessen dependence on foreign oil
 Gun laws: More safety regulations
 Read more on page 4!

Reproductive Rights: Leave abortion rights up to the states
 Healthcare: Wants to reduce government spending/involvement with healthcare
 Climate: Thinks environmentalist policies/agreements are economically unwise
 Gun laws: Defender of Second Amendment
 Read more on page 4!



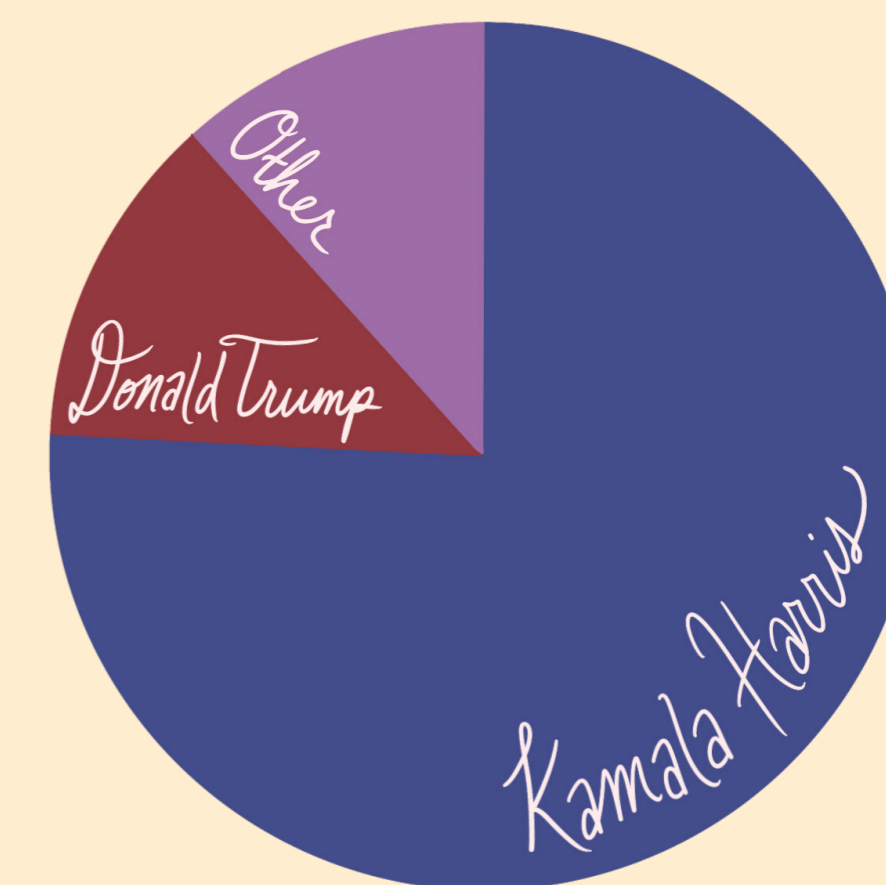
Kamala Harris, Oakland-born daughter to an Indian mother and a Jamaican father, first ran for president in 2020. Her punitive attitude towards crime in her prior positions as Attorney General and District Attorney made Harris unpopular until becoming Biden's running mate, which led her to her current position as vice president. Kamala is well-liked for her progressive viewpoints and calm, collected persona, but she's also criticized for her flimsy policy and inaction as border czar and vice president.

Donald Trump is a New York-native billionaire businessman, ex-reality TV star and former president from 2016-2020. After losing reelection, Trump falsely claimed that Biden's win was fraudulent, inciting an attack on the Capitol. A polarizing figure, Trump is popular with some for his personality, his firmness with illegal immigration and focus on lowering the cost of living. However, he's also controversial because of his felony status, his election denial and checkered personal life.

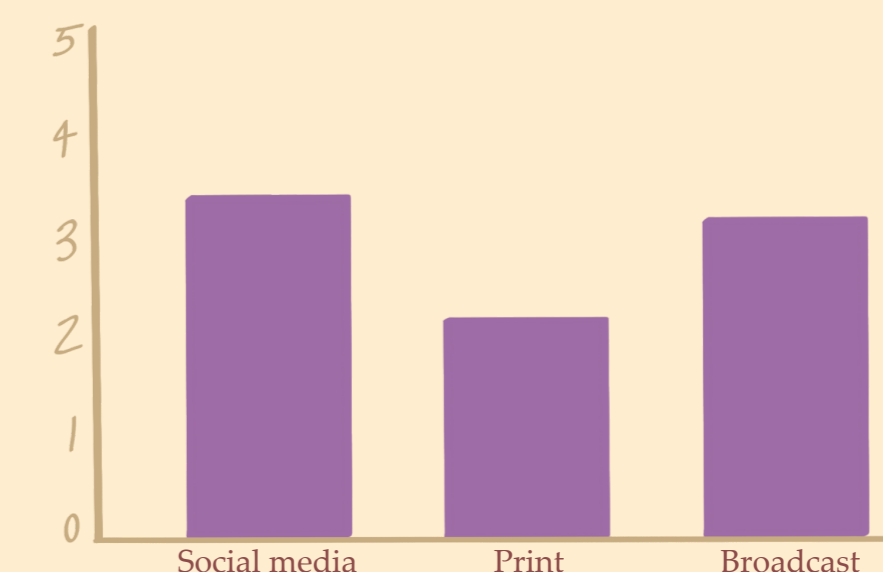
Aragon's Data

We asked Aragon students about their thoughts on the election. Here's what 335 respondents said.

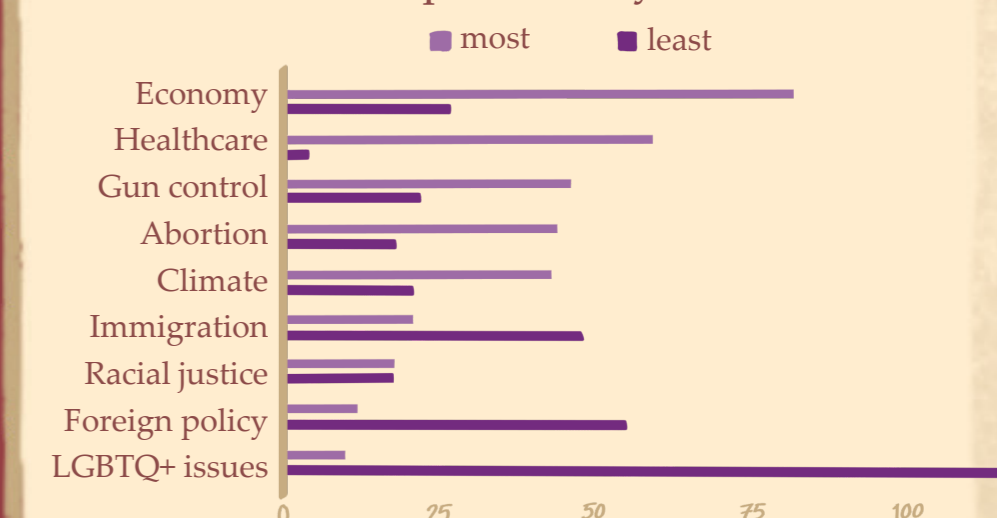
What candidate do you support?
 Harris - 75.8%, Trump 12.5%, Other 11.7%



Where do you get your news from?
 (1-5: 1 being least often, 5 being most often)
 Social media - 3.4, Print media - 2.2, Broadcast News - 3.1



Which issues are most and least important to you?

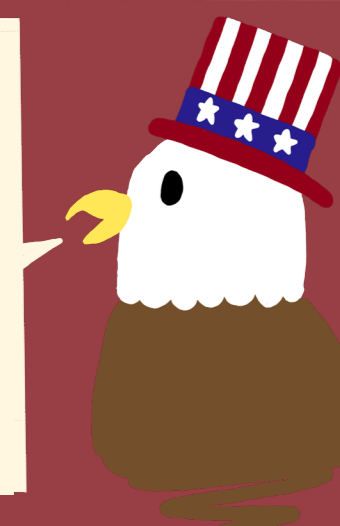


The student body of Aragon High School is far more Democratic than the United States at large. According to the Pew Research Center, 49% of registered voters are Democrats while 48% are Republican. In contrast, 73.1% of 335 respondents at Aragon High School generally aligns with the Democratic Party, while only 12.2% aligns with the GOP, leaving the rest as either undecided or a part of minority parties. Similarly, 75.8% of Aragon students surveyed would vote for Kamala Harris compared to 12.5% for Donald Trump. The remaining 11.7% are either undecided or mentioned names such as Joe Biden, Bernie Sanders, Jill Stein, Cornel West and some even suggested Barack Obama if he were eligible to run. When asked where students get their news, their responses were similar to the average American citizen, prioritizing social media and TV broadcasts over print media. Aragon students cite the economy, healthcare and gun control as the 3 most important issues to them in the upcoming election.

Copy: Alexa Sterry, Hannah Li, Jack He, Darren Lo

Graphics: Alexa Sterry, Eva Ludwig

Layout: Alexa Sterry



New staff members join Aragon team

Reporting by Emma Sakai and Meilin Rife, Photos by Felix Ma

Karen Chan



Music Director

Why did you become a music director?

"I wanted to give back to the community. I've been a professional violinist for many years, and so I'm going from the professional performance world to more of an educator position. I thought it was really important to share what I know with the students at this age. It's a great age group to work with. I [also] enjoy teaching, that's a big part of it."

What are your goals for the school year?

"I [want] to make sure everyone is comfortable in this environment and that they can learn and feel comfortable and safe and welcomed. It's a great, inclusive place to be and I want everyone to enjoy their time. It's really a place to enjoy camaraderie and [make] music together with classmates."

Why did you become a school psychologist?

"I grew up in a family of educators and after I graduated school, I went through multiple different careers here and there, and something has always brought me back to the educational world. I enjoy helping people and I enjoy providing support. I had my own experience as a student and a young learner where those things were necessary for me occasionally, and so I decided to give the study a whirl and I've just been going since."

What are you concerned about?

"I'm concerned as to whether students know what their resources are on campus and that they have a place to be connected and get the support they need, whatever that might look like. I'm always concerned as to whether or not students have and know the supports that they have available here."

Gina Sunie-Lopez



Psychologist

Alex Magaña



Geometry Teacher

What are you looking forward to?

"I'm looking forward to the Halloween teacher rally. I'm super hyped for that. I'm also excited to build more connections with other teachers across different departments at Aragon, because often times we're really far away from each other."

How does it feel like looking at the school from the perspective of a teacher?

"I had a different experience when I was a student here at Aragon. It's very cool to see how much teachers collaborate within teams and departments to make sure they're giving out the best teaching practices to go out to all students. There's a lot of behind the scenes stuff that you don't always get to see from the perspective of a student. It's very cool to be a part of."

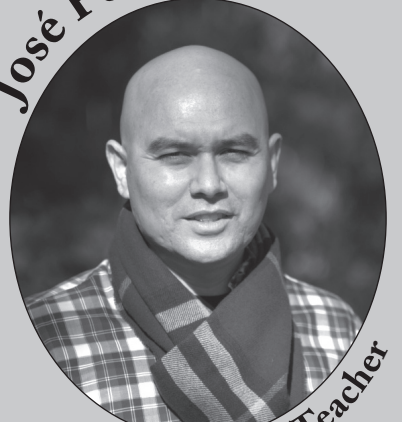
What inspired you to become an English teacher?

"I struggled in reading because I was taught in Spanish, but my secondary schools were all in English. When I was in high school, I was inspired by my honors 11th grade teacher to focus on writing. During my senior year, I went to San Jose State University to sit in master classes and listen to the type of discussions they had trying to figure out some of the complex character conflicts. I knew I wanted to be in a class to help students improve their reading skills so that they can get to have those types of discussions ... You have to teach the power of words."

What advice do you have for students?

"One: Aim to be the best, not like the rest. Two: All love is self love. Three: You should want the best for others so that others want the best for you."

José Pérez



English Teacher

Noise overstimulation: not a moment to think

Kyra Hsieh
FEATURES WRITER

"What's your favorite song?" and "Who's your favorite musical artist?" are common icebreaker questions. Music is one of the most common topics when getting to know someone. It has been a way for people to bond and form connections. Every culture has its own unique music, and through technology, all different types of music have spread and evolved across the globe, becoming an integral part of many people's identities.

"Metal is very cathartic," said junior Leonidas Telfer-Man-touvalos. "[It's] an outlet, especially if I feel angry at something ... It affects how I dress [and] how I think. Metal is known for questioning authority, like religion."

Many teenagers now use AirPods to listen to music, as they offer them a sense of safety and security in an uncomfortable environment.

"When [I'm] walking in the hallways. It feels awkward when [I'm] walking by [myself]," said junior Neeha Ku-



EVA LUDWIG

mar. "Having AirPods in and having music on makes me feel like I'm still doing something, so I'm not as awkward, and I can be more confident."

Music can lift people's mood and make them feel more comfortable. However, with these positive effects of music, there are also negative ones like lowered focus.

That's why many teachers have banned students from using AirPods in their classrooms, along with their phones as a result of concerns like not being fully present in class.

"When you're with a group of people, [using AirPods] closes you off," said Precalculus and Advanced Placement Calculus teacher Cheri Dartnell. "It isolates you. You lose a lot of the [collaboration] and conversations around the assignment."

Before COVID-19, Dartnell didn't see phones as much of an issue, but last year she made the decision to tighten the restrictions and usage of it. This year, she's expanded it to earbuds and AirPods.

"[Students] got into a habit of a different routine ... like having the TV on, having the music on in the background, during that year and a half," Dartnell said. "That has carried over into the classroom because that's the way they conducted themselves during the shutdown."

Although many teachers ban AirPods and phones in class, many students enjoy listening to music while doing work outside of the classroom, as it helps them concentrate.

"I find that pop music is really good for listening to in the background while I'm doing homework," Kumar said. "I can disassociate and have it in the background as white noise."

However, the type of work a student is doing also affects if they are listening to music.

"When I'm reading in English class ... I'll listen to music," said senior Bridgette Martin. "I can read while listening to something [because] I already know the lyrics, so I'm not actively thinking about it."

Humans are constantly bombarded with noise from the outside world when they are out and about, so sleep should be a solace from this noise overstimulation. Yet, many people continue to use noise to fall asleep. Kumar falls asleep watching the television show "Gilmore Girls" while Martin habitually falls asleep to music or YouTube gaming videos. While she doesn't need the music or videos to fall asleep, she has found that there are some ramifications.

"It's affected how I dream," said Martin. "I don't think [I've] dreamed in the past couple years." The creation of headphones and accessibility of music and movies has altered the world's soundscape, allowing for sound all the time, anytime.



Tang Bar: a delicious adventure

Oliver Levitt
FEATURES WRITER

The malatang cuisine, originating from Sichuan China, involves choosing a variety of skewers and toppings with a spicy broth. Unlike hot pot, malatang is made using a combination of different street food skewers that can be shared. It has recently gone from a traditional Chinese

cuisine to a modern restaurant style. This August, the Tang Bar, a malatang-style restaurant chain, opened a new location in San Mateo on 4th Avenue. It utilizes exciting Sichuanese components, allowing you to choose from their wide variety of meats, seafood, vegetables, noodles and more to build your own malatang. Some of the most popular combinations are able to be ordered from their website, like Meat Lover, Seafood Lover, or Feeling Veggie.

My family and I went to try out the restaurant for ourselves to see if it was up to the hype. From the moment we entered the restaurant, we could tell it was more than going to meet our expectations. Upon entrance, the aesthetic was very eye-catching, utilizing both natural elements with greenery and a small stream of water along with artificial elements, like bright hanging lights and glass windows. This mix created a dynamic, peaceful and visually appealing atmosphere throughout our meal.

The ordering process was one of the most exciting parts of the restaurant, as it was all do-it-yourself, which

allowed for a much more user-friendly experience. We could decide what elements we wanted and the quantity of each element. We designed every aspect of our meal, creating a very personalized experience with our food.

To begin our ordering process, we simply grabbed a bowl and started adding items.

My brother and I shared a bowl of a variety of different meat and vegetables such as wagyu beef, squid flower, tofu, and glass noodles. As the pricing was based on the weight of the bowl and the ordering system was do it yourself, we could add however much we wanted of any item in the bar. My mom, for example, was able to make a soup salad, using only the vegetable items, and my brother and I could pick varying amounts of different items to satisfy our preferences. We then went to the cashier, weighed our bowl, and paid at their rate of \$16 per pound. We gave them our bowls, then had to decide on our broth, among a selection of chicken broth, Szechuan spicy, pickled veggies, among others. We selected chicken broth, handed them our bowls, then we were served at our table. The activity of building our own meal was a highlight of the unique experience of the Tang Bar.

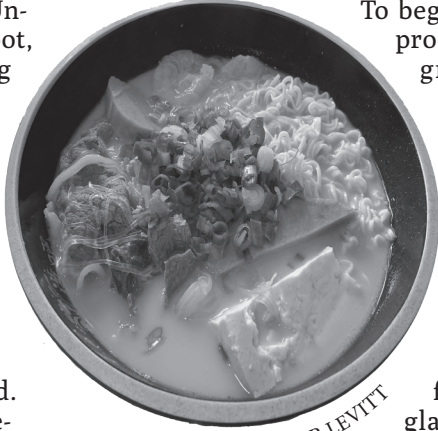
When it comes to the taste, all of the items were up to par, meeting or exceeding our expectations of the component. The broth was super

flavorful and well-steeped, providing a strong base for the soup that would add flavor to all of the other components. After being boiled by the soup, all of the meat elements were very tender. The lettuce was crispy and the previously raw broccoli had cooked nicely in the soup. We felt the meal was super high-quality and enjoyable to the taste.

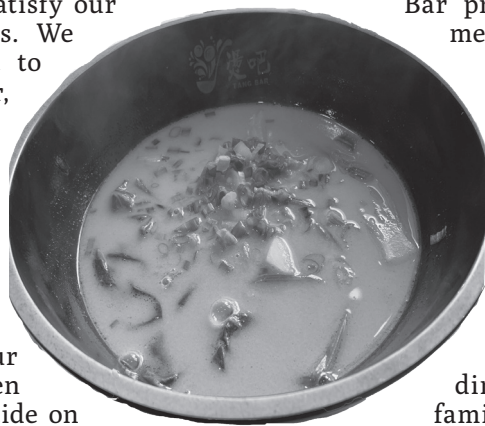
The entire experience of the Tang Bar was very individualized, convenient and user-friendly. From the entrance, we were drawn in by the beautiful atmosphere, followed by the exciting activity of building the bowl, which allowed us to choose our own adventure between a wide variety of items, then taste our very own soup that we had constructed based on our personal interests. As we could choose our amounts, pricing was also a factor that, in some ways, we could control for ourselves.

We chose to have an afternoon lunch, but, with its hours of 11am to 7pm, I could easily imagine the Tang

Bar providing a meal at many times throughout the day, from a quick bite after school to a filling, fancy dinner with family. All-in-all, the Tang Bar was a fantastic experience with a fancy appearance, personalized ordering process, and a strong taste. I would give the Tang Bar a five out of five stars as a new restaurant for students in downtown San Mateo.



OLIVER LEVITT



OUR OUTLOOK



Pictures of Tang Bar restaurant.

OLIVER LEVITT



WEOWNTHECITY

No fireworks: Katy Perry's 143 album

Ceylon Liu
FEATURES WRITER

On Sept. 20, Katy Perry released her seventh studio album, "143," numbers popularly representing the phrase "I love you." The album marks an attempt to return to Perry's old sound, which defined the 2010s pop genre. Through 14 tracks, Perry attempts, with minimal success, to explore the complex nature of love and relationships.

The album opens not with a song about love, as suggested by the title of the album, but an attempt at a feminist anthem. "WOMAN'S WORLD," Perry's first single, is meant to talk about the importance of women. However, I found the lyrics to be bland, giving basic reasons why women are important in society. The message feels contrived — although this song is about feminism, the majority of the songs in the album talk exclusively about being in a relationship with a man.

Additionally, though Perry aims to empower women through the song, the message falls flat due to Perry's producer choice, Dr. Luke, who has previously been accused of sexual, physical and emotional abuse by musical artist Ke\$ha. Perry's ironic producer choice sours the song and its message for me.

The songs that follow face similar problems: upbeat melodies and repetitive lyrics about the joys of being in a relationship. "NIRVANA" is one such song that perfectly captures this theme of monotony. Perry sings, "You make me feel, make me feel so high/ You make me feel, make me feel alive." Uninspired lyrics like this that continue to be repeated are all too common throughout many songs. Like "NIRVANA," many songs in this section of the album began to blend together with similarly catchy tunes, but overly simplistic lyrics about being in a relationship, leaving me with little interest in listening to the songs again.

These simple lyrics are also especially disappointing when Katy Perry has previously presented much catchier, more exciting songs.

"I would say that her older songs, especially Roar, were very unique songs,"

said senior Lola Lewis. "But her newer songs are very repetitive."

Despite these problems, I don't think the album was all bad. I appreciated how a few of Perry's songs feel reminiscent of her fun, upbeat sound during her "Teenage Dream" era. "CRUSH" was a refreshing song with a catchy backing track that I truly found myself enjoying. However, lyrics about having a crush seemed strange, considering Perry is engaged with a 4-year-old daughter. Perry's backing tracks being so similar to her older sound also acts as a double-edged sword. On one hand, the melodies feel nostalgic, but that familiarity fails to showcase growth as an artist.

To me, Perry's most interesting songs of the album explore the more complex nature of the trust necessary to keep a relationship alive. "TRUTH," the penultimate song of the album, provides a look into Perry's thoughts and adds some much needed depth to the album. "TRUTH" works well because it not only explains how trust is a necessary part of a relationship's success, but also gives an insight into Perry's own insecurities. I also enjoyed the slower beat to the song and the more serious tone it took on, showcasing that even if it was just in a few songs, Perry still tried to explore a larger range of emotions in "143."

"143" suffers as Perry's unique musical style was noticeably absent from the album.

"It had the potential to be better," said senior Matthew Grabow. "But I don't think there was much marketing and hype to it. There was nothing super special [about the album]."

Although Perry attempts to imbue two of her songs with messages of inspiration, it is simply not enough to overcome the majority of this album focused on repetitive surface-level relationship themes. Perry's messaging and songs fail to stand out to me in an oversaturated genre all about love. Overall, "143" may have catchy tunes, but it disappoints with simplistic lyrics and shallow messaging, earning the album 3 out of 5 stars.

OUR OUTLOOK



Nepotism plagues the music industry

Seona Srivastava
FEATURES WRITER

Having seen Gracie Abrams live twice now — first as an opener for Taylor Swift's Eras Tour and more recently at her own sold-out show — I can't help but feel a mix of admiration and skepticism towards her. Her energy in the venue was palpable, and her voice deeply resonated with the audience. Yet, watching her, I couldn't shake the thought: is her success merely a result of talent, or does her family's influence provide her with an unfair advantage?

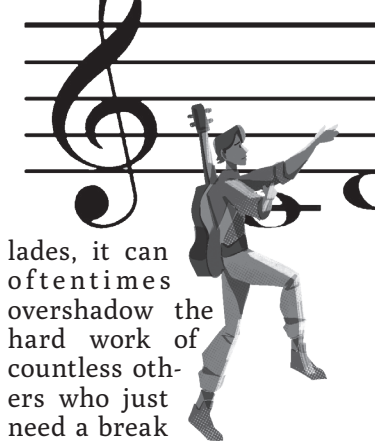
As the daughter of renowned producer and filmmaker J.J. Abrams, Abrams fits the textbook definition of a "nepo baby." This term is used to describe individuals who leverage their famous lineage to navigate the music industry. She's not alone in this regard; Clairo, another indie darling, has faced similar scrutiny since her advertising executive father's major music company connections sparked accusations of her be-

ing an "industry plant." Both artists' success stories often trigger backlash, as many perceive them as beneficiaries of privilege rather than hard-earned merit.

The music industry is dominated by major players — think Universal Music Group and Warner Music Group — who decide which artists to elevate. Connections often trump raw talent, and that's a tough pill to swallow.

At the core of this issue lies the identity crisis of the indie genre itself. Indie music has historically been about scrappy, do-it-yourself artists who start from the ground up — playing small venues, self-funding their albums and slowly building an authentic fan base. When artists with industry backing are marketed as "indie," it feels disingenuous, as though the genre has traded its gritty authenticity for a polished aesthetic. The charm of indie has always been its rawness, and the rise of nepo babies in this space is a troubling departure from that ethos.

Then there's the role of misleading narratives perpetuated by the industry. Biased reviews and over-the-top press release campaigns create a distorted picture of what true talent looks like. Are listeners genuinely celebrating artistry, or are they buying into a manufactured hype? When high-profile artists bask in acco-



lades, it can oftentimes overshadow the hard work of countless others who just need a break to shine.

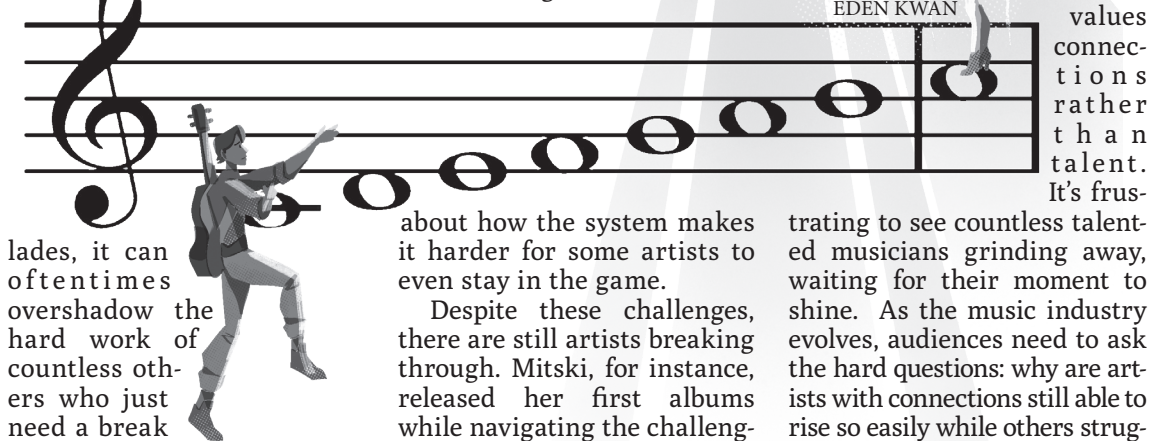
The financial reality for independent musicians only exacerbates these challenges. The industry already pays most artists poorly, and for those without connections or a wealthy safety net, mak-

ing music is often a financial risk. Privileged artists can afford to fail, but for those without that safety, failure can mean the end of a career. The pressure to balance artistic freedom with financial survival can stifle creativity, forcing many to compromise on their vision just to make ends meet. It's not just about who gets ahead; it's

These artists embody the true spirit of the genre, reminding us that success can come from sheer determination.

But these success stories remain the exception in an industry that often values connections rather than talent. It's frustrating to see countless talented musicians grinding away, waiting for their moment to shine. As the music industry evolves, audiences need to ask the hard questions: why are artists with connections still able to rise so easily while others struggle to even get noticed? And how long are listeners going to ignore the fact that not everyone gets a fair shot? If the indie scene wants to remain true to its name, it needs to be a place for genuine talent, not a haven for the well-connected.

Despite these challenges, there are still artists breaking through. Mitski, for instance, released her first album while navigating the challenges of being a broke college student. Phoebe Bridgers carved her niche with Dead Oceans, a label that champions independence. Chappell Roan spent nearly a decade working in the music scene until her career breakthrough this year.



EDEN KWAN

Piracy: Robin Hood or robbing good?

Anushka Punjabi
FEATURES WRITER

In 2023 alone, visits to online piracy websites skyrocketed to 141 billion, averaging a staggering 386 million hits every single day. According to data from MUSO, that's a 12% jump from 2019.

Piracy isn't just a niche activity — it's part of the daily routine for millions of people around the world. But is piracy just a modern-day Robin Hood story, providing the masses with access to content they might not be able to afford? Or is it a digital heist that robs creators of their hard-earned revenue?

The primary driving force for corporations is profit. This economic incentive often leads to content being commodified and sold for profit, which can create barriers to access in areas of lesser availability. This creates a gap that piracy is able to fill.

"In ... [many] cases, it just doesn't make sense to pay for a [service]," said sophomore Patrick Gomm. "To download songs on Spotify or Apple Music, you [still] ... have to pay for cellular data usage ... [Piracy is] kind of like free samples at Costco, you don't have to pay ... you can just take it."

Among the industries most targeted by piracy, multi-billion dollar corporations like Sony, Microsoft and Disney have massive resources, meaning they can absorb some loss due to piracy without significantly affecting their operations or the livelihoods of their employees. Disney alone generated \$82.7 billion in revenue in 2022, with its media division earning billions — largely outweighing the estimated \$29.2 to \$71 billion lost annually due to digital piracy in the US, according to the US Chamber of Commerce.

"I don't want to download five different streaming services and then pay monthly subscriptions for the rest of my life," said freshman Trevor Pulley.

Digital piracy can sometimes even benefit these large entities by introducing a form of "shadow competition," which can prevent monopolistic pricing and encourage broader content consumption. Shadow competition refers to the indirect competition that arises when consumers use free or illegal alternatives, such as pirated content, which pressures large companies to lower prices or improve services. This can benefit big companies by preventing mono-

polistic pricing, which can eventually drive legitimate sales when consumers are drawn into the ecosystem and willing to pay for "exclusive" or premium content.

Contrast this with indie developers and small creators, who operate on shoestring budgets and often struggle to make a living from their work. For these individuals, every sale counts. When their games or projects are pirated, it directly impacts their income and, by extension, their ability to continue creating. Unlike large corporations, small developers don't have financial cushions to absorb losses from piracy. The damage to their livelihood can be substantial, and it often means the difference between continuing their work or shutting down their projects.

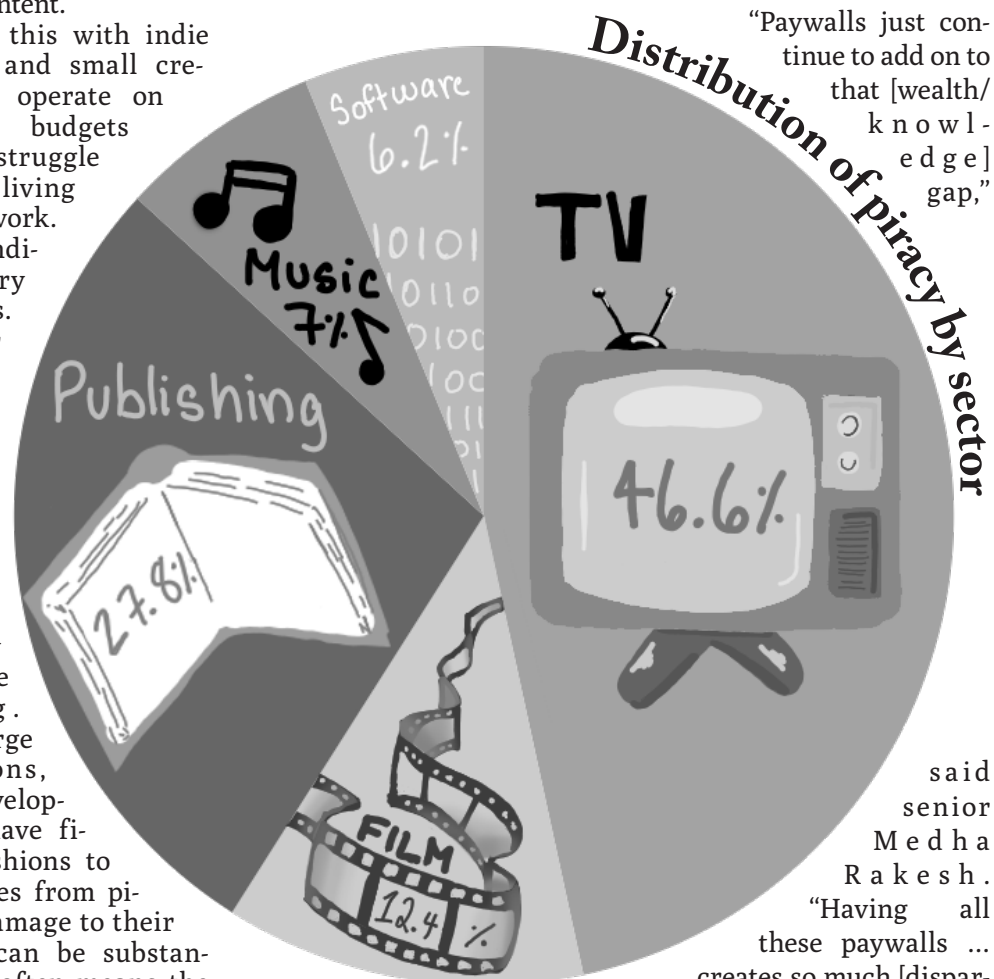
On the other hand, piracy is also able to give smaller creators exposure. For example, indie games like Slay the Spire and Geometry Dash had weak initial launches but later gained a following over time and

grew in popularity because of piracy.

Pirated content that's being widely used or discussed can unintentionally generate

participate in the academic conversation. Piracy helps to increase academic literacy irrespective of someone's socioeconomic status.

"Paywalls just continue to add on to that [wealth/knowledge] gap,"



buzz, raising awareness of a product or brand — even if the exposure was not through legitimate channels. This can apply to the research community, where paying for full access to articles has become increasingly common, which creates an environment where only those with financial resources can fully

said senior Medha Rakesh. "Having all these paywalls ... creates so much [disparity]. That's not how knowledge should work."

While piracy from multi-billion dollar corporations might be seen as less morally problematic, piracy affecting small indie creators poses significant ethical concerns. Striking a balance between access and respect for creators' rights is essential.

allcove

allcove is a youth drop-in center for ages 12-25 to take a moment of pause. Youth can hang out and access a range of services that include:

- Mental health.
- Physical health.
- Substance use.
- Peer support.
- Family support.
- Supported education and employment.

allcove San Mateo
2600 S El Camino Real,
Suite 300
San Mateo, CA 94403

(650) 226 -7030

allcove.org/san-mateo

  @allcovesanmateo



find your moment.

find your space.

find your center.



VICTORIA SANTANA

Coach Andrew Silva

Claire Qi
SPORTS WRITER

Aragon kinesiology teacher Andrew Silva went to the Paris Olympics this summer as part of the coaching staff of the USA women's water polo team. He played the role of video coordinator to the team, a position he is honored to have been chosen for. His job was to film all of the games and organize data and statistics for both the USA team and the opposing teams.

Silva describes attending the Olympics as a very memorable experience because of all the people he met there.

"Everything that happened that first day of competition was really, really special, not just to see, but to also be a part of it," Silva said. "It's so exciting to be around other people [who] are really motivated and really want to be successful. You look at all the time and effort and sacrifice and the commitments they've made to make it to the Olympics, and just to be around those people is really, really special."

Silva decided to coach water polo because of his own experience playing water polo and swimming in high school. When he found out that he wouldn't be able to play sports in college, Silva decided that the best way to continue being involved with the sport was to become a coach. He takes his experiences of playing with him into his coaching career.

"Being coachable is extremely important," Silva said. "So all the feedback and the instruction that the different coaches give you, take it and try to use it every chance you can, because you know that the coaches are there to help you get better."

Silva has been a part of USA water polo for 12 years and has been a coach and administrator for many different national teams during that time period. He has coached the under-18 and under-20 teams. Silva is also the head coach for water polo at College of San Mateo, teaching some classes there, as well.

At Aragon, Silva teaches one period of dual enrollment kinesiology, which covers the study of human movement, health and exercise. Silva enjoys teaching kinesiology because he feels that those learning kinesiology can learn about many aspects of life.

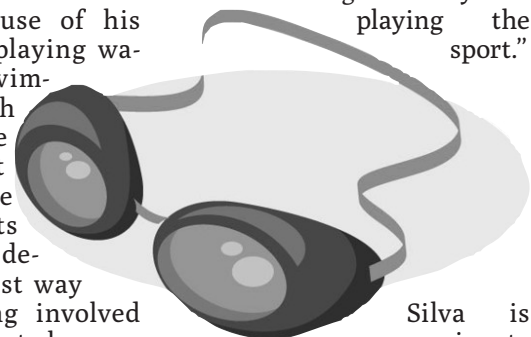
"Building that classroom environment and building those relationships with students and getting to know them as individuals is really exciting," Silva said. "It allows me to teach them about different parts of kinesiology that I know they're going to be motivated and excited about."

Some of his students took the class because they wanted to apply the knowledge to playing sports.

"I'm really invested in sports," said junior Tessa Sandhu. "I play three sports, and sports has been a part of my whole life and my mom especially recommended taking [kinesiology] to help a lot with injuries because it tells you what's moving while you're playing the sport."

Silva is very passionate about what he does. "I just want to get better at my job every day so I can provide students [and] student athletes with the best experience I possibly can," Silva said.

In the future, Silva hopes to continue teaching kinesiology and motivating students to apply their knowledge to playing sports.



USED BOOKSTORE



Feldman's Books

1075 Curtis Street
Menlo Park,
CA 94025

OPEN EVERYDAY
FROM NOON-5PM,
FRIDAY NOON-8PM

(650) 326-5300
feldmansbooks.net



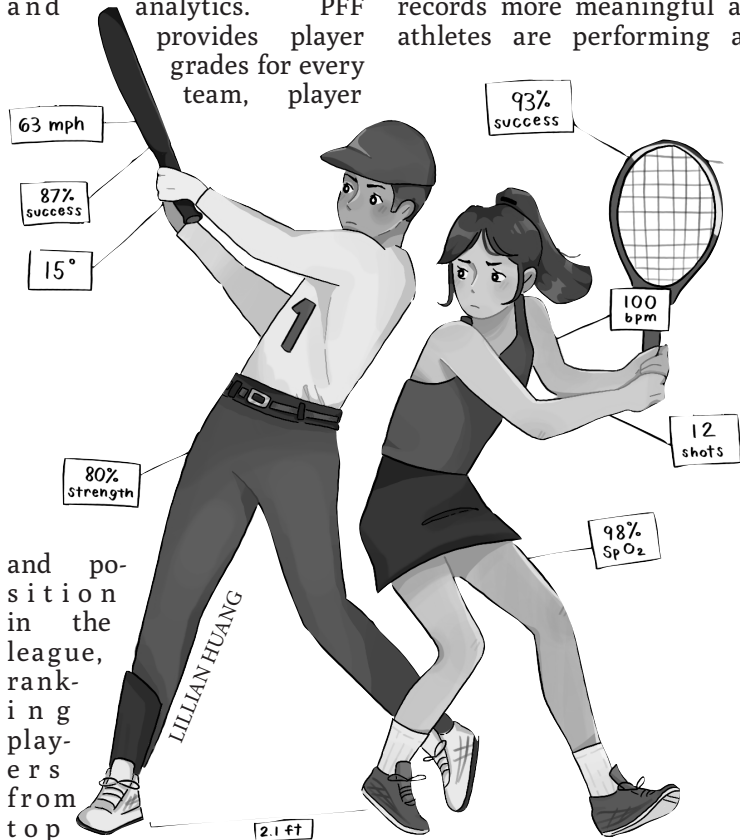
Analytics in sports

Charlie Henderson
SPORTS WRITER

Analytics hold an essential role in the world of sports, revolutionizing both athletic performance and the viewing experience. In almost every sport seen on television today, numbers and statistics are constantly flashing across the screen; whether it be metrics on individual players, team stats or the weather, all kinds of statistics have worked their way into playing key roles in athletics. Fans should embrace analytics as vital information to help coaches and teams for numerous reasons, such as increasing quality of play and providing live data, making sports more exciting to watch.

For example, a sport where the advancement of analytics can be observed clearly is baseball. Though it has always been a sport where statistics have been important, as technology improved the type of analytics changed. Now analysts have the technology to track the smallest details of nearly every aspect of the game. Baseball is in what is known as the "statcast era" where a system of radars and cameras can quantify thousands of data points per pitch, such as pitch speed, exit velocity and launch angle.

In football, Pro Football Focus has changed the game when it comes to statistics and analytics. PFF provides player grades for every team, player



and position in the league, ranking players from top to bottom based on those scores. The statistics provided by PFF have a direct correlation with player salary and career longevity, as the players who produce higher scores stay in the league for longer and get paid more.

The results of analytics on sports manifests in many ways, through record contracts, signing bonuses and countless records being set and broken. One of the first major sports teams to find success using statistics to make roster decisions was the Oakland A's franchise of the early 2000's known as the

"Moneyball A's." Using statistics, the A's transformed themselves from a struggling small market team to a record setting and playoff contending franchise. Their trailblazing success transformed the way people used analytics in baseball and other sports, as other front offices across a variety of sports started to use statistics when making roster decisions.

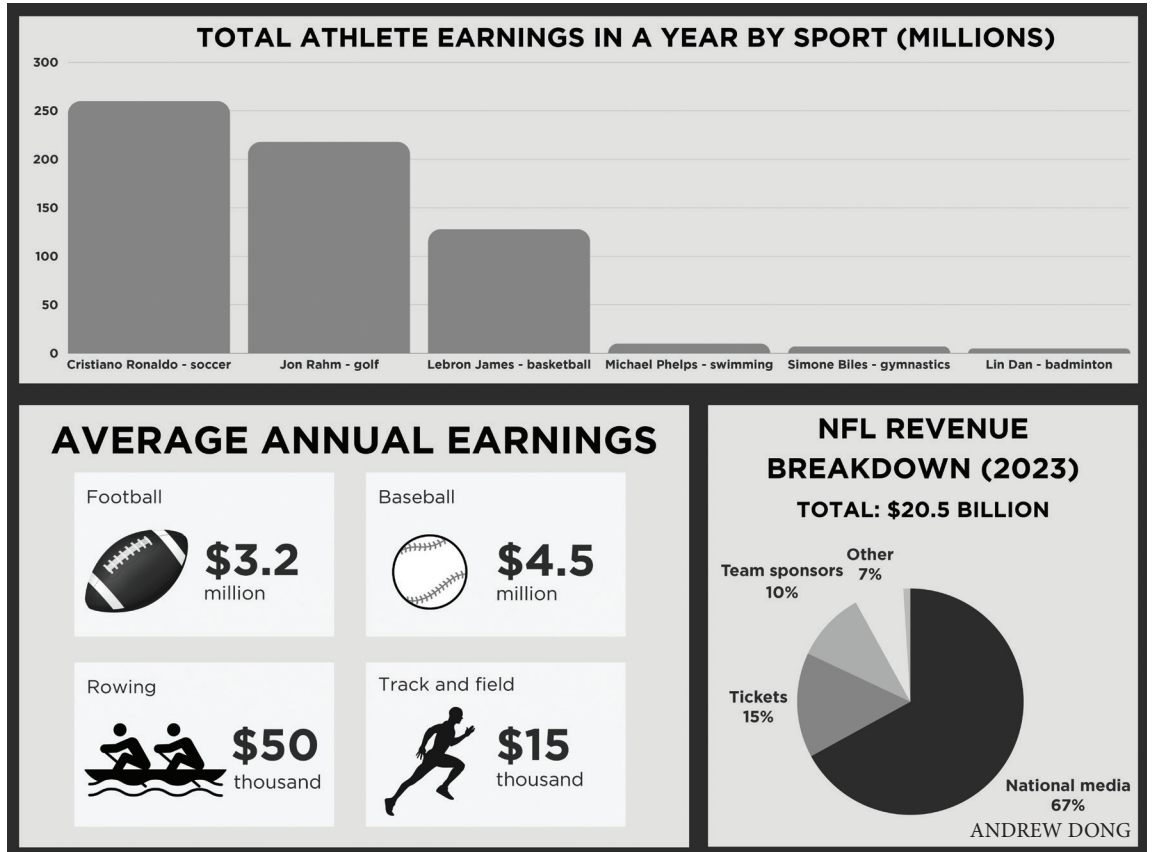
Almost every statistic you can think of is being quantified nowadays, and this makes watching sports more entertaining than ever before. Analytics have made athletes bigger, stronger and faster, and data used by professional athletes helps them design strict training regimens and diets that result in peak athletic performance.

This data also improves player health and safety, as it can be used to track injuries both in game and in training. In addition to its utility for athletes and coaches, the expansion of analytics vastly improves the viewing experiences for fans. When all the numbers and statistics stack up against a player or a team and they are able to pull out an improbable victory, it makes the win more satisfying for the viewer.

While some may contend that analytics have made sports boring and monotonous, in actuality they make records more meaningful as athletes are performing at

higher levels than ever before and live analytics give viewers more insight than ever before. Analytics have led to more records being broken because we now have step-by-step recipes on how to break them from the data feedback.

Overall, analytics have improved sports greatly. They have made sports more entertaining for fans and more productive for athletes. Data-based decision making in sports has led to athletic reforms at both the professional and amateur levels, improving the quality of play and changing sports for the better.



Every sport deserves equal pay

Adya Tewari
SPORTS WRITER

Olympic swimmers, some of the best athletes in the world, make between \$100,000 to \$1 million annually, depending heavily on competition winnings and sponsorships. In stark contrast, the average National Football League player makes around \$2.7 million annually, with top players such as Patrick Mahomes earning over \$50 million annually.

This poses the question: how should athletes be compensated? The pay gap between athletes is largely driven by media bias. Talented athletes in less publicized sports are often underpaid compared to those in high-profile sports.

Certain sports, such as football, are prioritized year-round, often leading to the neglect of others. Patrick Mahomes, for example, signed a \$503 million deal over 10 years, according to Fox Business, which earns him about \$50 million annually. On the other hand, Michael Phelps, despite his record 23 Olympic gold medals, relied primarily on sponsorships for his earnings throughout his career. At his peak, he was making about \$10 million annually according to Forbes, a small amount compared to Mahomes' yearly \$50 million.

Despite swimming's popularity in the Olympics, it seldom receives coverage outside the

games. The disparity in year-round media exposure leads to athletes being financially impacted, while players in sports such as the NFL benefit from continuous media exposure.

Furthermore, the National Basketball Association generates an average of \$10 billion per season. The average NBA player makes about \$10 million annually, with top players making over \$40 million yearly, according to Sportsnaut. In comparison, sports like gymnastics rely heavily on Olympic exposure for coverage. Simone Biles, one of the highest-paid gymnasts in the world, only earns about \$5 million annually, according to Sporting News. These earnings are mostly through endorsements, since competition earnings are minimal in comparison to NBA and NFL salaries.

This disparity demonstrates compensation for athletes in sports is often a reflection of the commercial value of the sport, rather than talent.

Helen Glover and Mahe Drysdale, both of whom have won gold medals and have excelled in rowing, only make around \$50,000 to \$100,000 annually according to World Rowing. Additionally, athletes in sports such as badminton experience similar issues. PV Sindhu, an Indian badminton player, in spite of her Olympic silver medal, only earns about \$7 million annually, according to the National Herald.

While this may seem like a reliable income source, this is what the top players are earning. Professional players who have not excelled as much earn far less, making it difficult for them to have a steady income and make a living.

When compared with leagues such as the NFL and the NBA, the small salaries of these top players raises concerns. Despite excelling at the highest levels, many athletes face challenges due to limited media coverage, and in turn, limited sponsorship opportunities.

Regular streaming events for sports such as rowing, fencing, table tennis and water polo on accessible platforms allow these sports to have regular, year-round engagement beyond the Olympic seasons. More fan engagement opens up doors for more endorsement and sponsorship opportunities for deserving athletes.

The pay gap across different sports is unjust, as it reflects popularity that comes and goes with trends, rather than the merit of athletes. The financial disparity must be addressed to ensure that athletes receive fair compensation for their hard work and dedication to their sport. Advocating for a higher visibility for smaller sports fosters a more inclusive athletic community which values hard work, skill and commitment across all sports.

Kris Nations

Aragon Student Discount
Save 20% sitewide with code: **DONS25**

Made in Half Moon Bay
Hypoallergenic earrings, necklaces, bracelets & rings

Instagram, YouTube, Facebook icons
@KRISNATIONS
KRISNATIONS.COM

Carlmont flag football ekes out win against Dons

Phoebe Harger
SPORTS WRITER

On Sept. 25, the Aragon flag football team (1-3 overall) fell 6-13 to Carlmont (4-0 overall) in a hard-fought game at Menlo-Atherton.

After losing to Carlmont twice last season, the Dons knew they would have to play their best if they wanted to compete with the Scots.

"The game is definitely going to be a challenge because Carlmont is a really strong team and they've kept consistent with their coaches and their plays," said junior Annalise Krause before the game. "We're going to really have to persevere and work hard because it's going to be a really hard-fought and competitive game."

The match started out with both teams in a tight contest, as both the Dons and the Scots were unable to get first downs in the early drives of the game. This was partly due to missed throws, but mainly a testa-

ment of the strong defensive efforts from both schools. Despite accurate passes from starting quarterback Kate Ramseyer, the Aragon offense had difficulty moving the ball up the field without getting their flags pulled.

The intensity picked up at the end of the first half after a long

drive got the Dons two first downs and put them in a good position to score. However, despite their efforts, Aragon could not penetrate Carlmont's strong defense and ultimately came up short from the end zone. In 24 minutes, both teams failed to get on the scoresheet, and the first half ended in a 0-0 tie.

Once again, Aragon's defense came out strong in the

second half, starting with senior Jenna Jee knocking down a pass from the Carlmont quarterback. Although the Dons and the Scots had several strong runs, neither team was able to capitalize off of them

for the majority of the second half. That was, until Jee made a crucial interception and ran the ball 15 yards into Carlmont's half. From there, Aragon was able to move further up the field before Ramseyer ran the ball into the end zone, giving the Dons a 6-0 lead over Carlmont.

"When I caught the ball I just blacked out and got in the zone," Jee said. "I'm

not really used to running the ball since I only play defense, but it felt really good."

Nevertheless, Aragon's lead was short-lived. After the Dons missed their extra point, Carlmont quickly pushed towards their end zone where the quarterback ran the ball to score a touchdown. The Scots then got the extra point, giving them a 7-6 lead. Despite the Dons playing aggressively for the rest of the half, the Scots held them to just six points. Finally, on the last play of the game, Carlmont intercepted a pass from Ramseyer and returned it for a touchdown, concluding the match with a final score of 13-6.

While the Dons did not get the result they were hoping for, the team takes pride in their performance, having fought hard against Carlmont and kept the score close throughout the game. After the game, head coach Ronald Douglass expressed his satisfaction with the team's performance.

"The team played even better than I could have expect-

ed," Douglass said. "I mean our defense was just great. "Everyone's been doing a great job at adapting during the game and I'm really proud of them for being so resilient."

Other players shared the same mentality as their coach. "The first half went really well," Ramseyer said. "We held Carlmont's offense and we completed a lot of our passes. Overall, it was a better game than the past two and it's clear that we're definitely improving."

While the team is happy having played a competitive game, they know they must work hard in order to improve their record and prepare for the next time they face the Scots.

"Moving forward I think our team can improve on offense," Jee said. "We're still getting the hang of it and we're working on new plays and trying to adjust and play to our strengths."

Aragon will look to apply their experience in their upcoming games, in hopes of making it to the playoffs at the end of the season.

The team's next game is Oct. 16 at 7 p.m. against Capuchino.



COURTESY OF IVAN HAGER

Aragon football falls short to Menlo-Atherton 35-7

Olivia Mukherjee
SPORTS WRITER

On Sept. 27, the Aragon Dons (1-4 overall) squared off against the Menlo-Atherton Bears (4-1 overall) in a Peninsula Athletic League match-

up. The game ended in a victory for the Bears with a final score of 35-7.

The Dons entered the game backed by supporters both on and off the field. Previous head coach Steve Sell spoke about his vision for the Ara-

gon program, emphasizing some important techniques.

"[It's vital] ... to keep working with the staff to make sure that they're using the best techniques and just encouraging them," Sell said. "With Coach Parham at the

helm, I believe this program can thrive for years to come."

Early in the game, Aragon showcased some notable plays, particularly in the defensive line. Senior Isaac Flores stood out with two sacks and multiple tackles for loss.

"I played one of my best games today," Flores said. "Team-wise, the energy was there, but we struggled with execution."

His personal performance was an important feature of this game, although the team grappled with losing momentum in the first half, which saw Menlo take a 35-0 lead.

"[The] effort was there, but we didn't really finish our assignments," Flores said. "We got lazy."

Later, in the final three minutes of the game, Aragon managed to shift the momentum temporarily with a fumble recovery in the end zone, bringing the score to 35-7. Despite this late effort, Menlo's strong performance in the first half carried them through the end of the game, even with a scoreless second half.

As the game progressed, the Dons were able to transition and cooperate better as a team. Senior Josh Jacobs highlighted key moments.

"We came out a bit soft in the first half, but after halftime, we really clicked," Jacobs said. "It showed our fight and determination."

Defensive player Damien Kama also acknowledged the team's evolution.

"In the second half, we stepped it up and played as brothers," Kama said. "We just need to lock-in earlier."

This sentiment was echoed by teammates, indicating a collective understanding that while effort was present, more focus was necessary from the outset.

"We came out soft in the first half," Jacobs said. "And we [hadn't] really ... woken up, we were kind of scared."

Coach Ashley Parham reflected on the challenges faced, admitting that injuries affected the team's ability to fully implement their strategies.

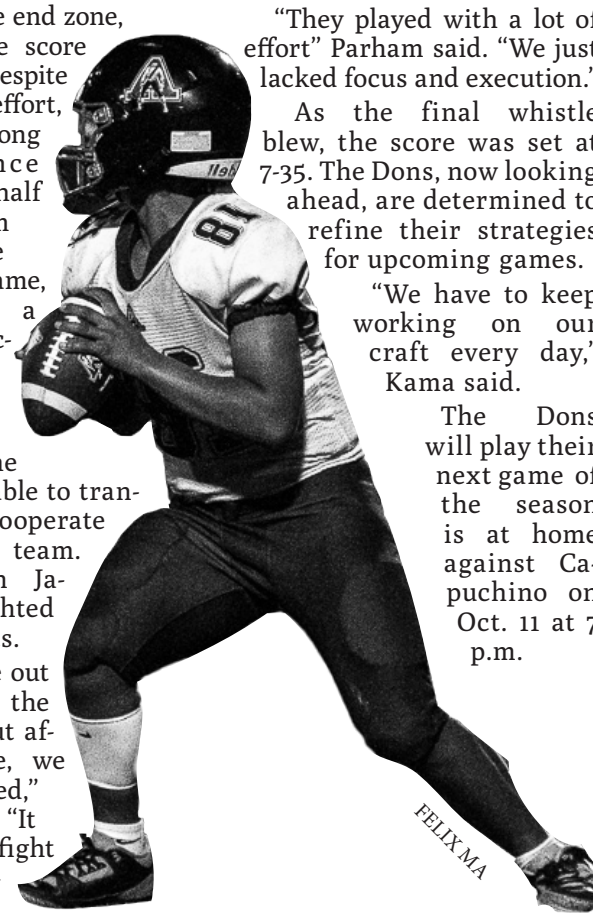
Despite this setback, Parham noted some highlights of the game.

"They played with a lot of effort" Parham said. "We just lacked focus and execution."

As the final whistle blew, the score was set at 7-35. The Dons, now looking ahead, are determined to refine their strategies for upcoming games.

"We have to keep working on our craft every day," Kama said.

The Dons will play their next game of the season is at home against Capuchino on Oct. 11 at 7 p.m.



FELIX MA

recycle your style

at Plato's Closet San Mateo

Follow us here:



get \$10 off

a purchase of \$40 or more

valid at
Plato's Closet San Mateo
41 E 3rd Avenue
Downtown San Mateo

Hours: Mon-Sat 10a-9p
Sun 11a-7p
exp 12.31.2024

we host fundraisers!

contact us:

platosclosetsanmateoca@gmail.com

Brands we love to buy-sell-trade:

Nike, Brandy Melville, J Galt, Adidas, Garage, Hollister, AE, Urban Outfitters, Pacsun, Harley Davidson, Vintage, BDG, Levi's, Aritzia, Aviator Nation, Skims, Essentials, Stüssy & more!



Girls tennis storms past M-A in 6-1 showdown

Advika Singh
SPORTS WRITER

On Sept. 26, Aragon girls tennis (13-3 overall, 7-1 league) celebrated a historic 6-1 win against Menlo-Atherton (5-3 league), their first victory over the league leader in 13 years. Though the team faced last-minute lineup changes with No. 2 singles senior Anna He returning from a wrist injury, the team won all of their doubles and dominated the singles.

The team started their season with a bang; they remain tied with Burlingame with a 5-1 record in the Peninsula Athletic League bay division and look forward to their rematch with Carlmont, last year's reigning PAL champion.

Besides No. 1 singles Ella Teng facing a hard defeat of 0-6, 0-6 against the number one seed in PAL, the singles lineup took decisive victories within the first hour. Freshman Hayley Chong was the first to conclude her match,

winning 6-0, 6-0 at singles No. 4. Minutes later, senior co-captain Lian Wang won 6-1, 6-1 substituting in at No. 2 singles. Sophomore doubles specialist Jessa Williams also rose to the occasion with 6-2, 6-0 victory at No. 3 singles to extend her undefeated league record. Meanwhile, doubles No. 1 freshman Allison Newman and senior Anna He took their match to super tiebreaker, winning 6-4, 4-6, 10-6.

"We persevered, we were very consistent, we had a good energy, we pulled through," Newman said. "And we won! That was great."

Even outside the court, the girls' passion for tennis grows. The team looks forward to their season ahead

with vigor, training harder and harder on the court.

"It's my favorite part of the day," Newman said. "I'm in a classroom and then it's just like 'Oh, there's tennis!' and it's just so much fun. I've improved a lot, created so many friendships and really grown as a player as well."

While their success on the court remains tied to their skill level and hard work, the team attributes it to their bond on and off the court.

"One of our strengths is definitely the connection we have," Teng said. "We're all friends and we sometimes hang out outside of tennis too."

When playing doubles, team chemistry is essential for success. The players play off each other's strengths to create a powerful pairing that can dominate the court. While the doubles lineup struggled with tight matches in previous seasons, their growth is evident in their performance this year. At No. 2 doubles, senior Kat Russell and junior Taylor Lee won 7-5, 6-4 with extensive rallies while senior Mana Ueno and junior Meilin Rife gained momentum with a 6-4, 6-0 victory.

However, strategy is also a key aspect when thinking of winning; in doubles, it is important to remain aware of the opponent's weaknesses.

"I always tell my players, there's always a stronger player. And in a big point or whatever, you should always target the weaker player," Owdom

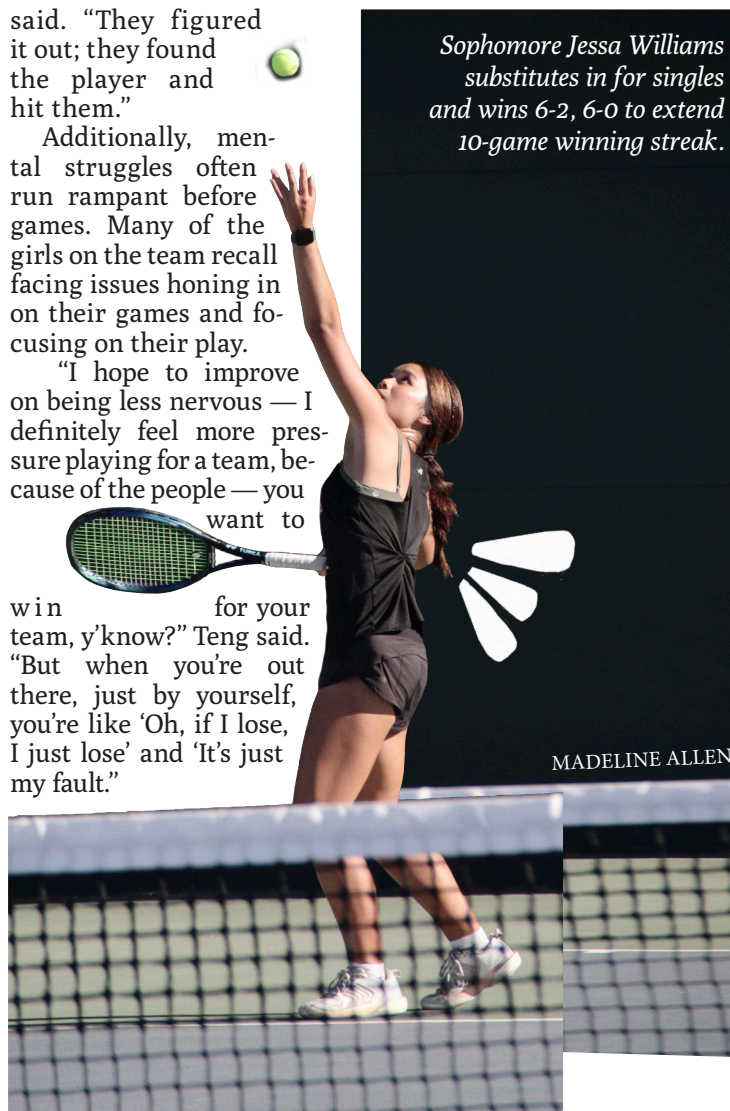
said. "They figured it out; they found the player and hit them."

Additionally, mental struggles often run rampant before games. Many of the girls on the team recall facing issues honing in on their games and focusing on their play.

"I hope to improve on being less nervous — I definitely feel more pressure playing for a team, because of the people — you want to

win for your team, y'know?" Teng said. "But when you're out there, just by yourself, you're like 'Oh, if I lose, I just lose' and 'It's just my fault.'"

Sophomore Jessa Williams substitutes in for singles and wins 6-2, 6-0 to extend 10-game winning streak.



MADELINE ALLEN



Senior co-captain Anna He joins freshman Allison Newman at No. 1 doubles; both remain undefeated in league.

While celebrating their win and achieving milestones, the team looks forward to their season up ahead.

"[This is] the best season we've had for a while in the

girls program," Owdom said. "Things are looking up for Aragon Tennis."

Their next home game will be on Oct. 16 at 4 p.m. against Half Moon Bay.

Volleyball denies San Mateo in straight sets

Sora Mizutani
SPORTS WRITER

On Sept. 24, the Aragon girls volleyball team (9-13 overall, 4-3 league) took a three-set victory against San Mateo (0-19 overall, 0-6 league).

This is the Dons' first head to head against San Mateo, who were brought up a league into the Bay Division this season.

"Going into the game, we felt like we needed to do our best," said senior outside hitter Natalie Huang. "No matter how they played, we needed to play our game."

The Dons scored the first point of the set, but as the game continued both teams traded points with neither gaining a big lead. Then, Aragon made its first move with sophomore setter Devyn Lee's aces and serves, bringing the lead all the way up to 12-4. In the first set, Lee had an impressive total of 16 points out of serves. Later, San Mateo struggled with inconsistent returns: double touches, hitting errors (outside the antenna), and overhitting. The first set ended 25-6 in favor of the Dons.

"[After the first set,] we all... needed to continue the same mindset,"

Huang said. "We couldn't overlook that we just beat them [25-6]. We just had to be like 0-0: a completely new start."

The Dons scored the first two points of the second set, but San Mateo gained momentum even as Aragon led 11-5. Despite this, the Dons were able to quell the momentum thanks to senior outside hitter Sophie Rubinstein's powerful kills and skillful tips against San Mateo.

"[As a senior,] I just want to spread what I've learned over these four years to the... underclassmen," Rubinstein said. "[I want to] show them what it's like to be a leader; how important it is to be the voice of Aragon volleyball, and ... keep everyone together."

Around the turning point of the second set, the Dons had some hiccups—service errors, overhitting, and hitting into blocks, which decreased the lead down to 15-11. Nevertheless, Aragon quickly turned around the tide finishing strong at the end of the second set with freshman middle blocker Poppy McKenzie scoring



Freshman Poppy McKenzie spikes down the middle.

ETHAN TAWN

off a corner shot, and the set ended with a score of 25-15.

"Poppy is our freshman starter," said Assistant Coach Diean Hala'ufia. "She has been a great addition to our team. She plays middle and has great energy."

The third set was the most tightly contested with San Mateo yet again building up their momentum.

"They finally came alive, and they did do a lot of good things," Hala'ufia said. "They're just a very young program that will eventually get there."

San Mateo took their first lead in the game at 1-2 after a line out by Aragon. Aragon had a solid defense, but the same can be said of San Mateo's offense, with strong kills that made use of Aragon's mis-

communication errors. The San Mateo bench continued to agitate the Dons by hyping up their team, bringing the lead all the way up to 4-8.

"We always have stuff to work on," Huang said. "Challenges were some miscommunication here and there, and some drop balls."

Aragon got back to their rhythm with senior right-side hitter Andrea Kunkel's direct kill from a soft hit, and an ace by Rubinstein, tying the score to 8-8. Although Aragon kept building the lead, rallies were getting longer, and players were fighting with fatigue in the third set. Aragon kept going with a laser beam hit by another senior all-rounder Shannon Bullard, and kills that froze San Mateo: 20-13.

The game point was a long rally that San Mateo kept holding onto, but Huang finished off with a strong kill, ending the set with 25-14.

Head coach Annette Gennaro-Trimble hopes to become the Central Coast Section champion third year in a row, with the previous two years going back-to-back.

"We have eight new players this year, but we still have our core that was on the CCS finals team last year," Gennaro said. "They know what the expectations are for my program, and they know how to get those eight new players ready to go before we hit CCS."

Up next, Aragon will take on Carlmont (7-7) on Oct. 15 at 5:30 p.m.