

The ARAGON OUTLOOK

900 Alameda de las Pulgas, San Mateo, CA 94402

Aragon High School



SMUHSD board debates new Phone-Free Act

Ellie Blakely
NEWS WRITER

On Sept. 23, California Gov. Gavin Newsom signed a bill requiring schools to limit or prohibit phone usage on campuses by July 2026. The bill was passed through the state legislature in August as a result of increasing evidence showing that phones can be detrimental to students' academic performance and mental health.

The San Mateo Union High School Board of Trustees met on Sept. 11 to discuss how the district will move forward. The meeting began with a presentation highlighting the absence of phones in schools is shown to in-

crease academic performance, engagement and social interaction among students.

"When you ban phones, you get more face-to-face interaction with students," said Brian Simmons, SMUHSD Director of Curriculum and Assessment, at the meeting. "But there are concerns about limiting digital literacy and learning opportunities."

The presentation was followed by a discussion with Principal Yvonne Shiu of San Mateo High School who spoke about their use of Yondr pouches, a tool that allows students to keep possession of their phones while not being able to access them.

"During non-instructional times, like brunch and lunch, students are Yondred, so ... [they] are talking to each other," Shiu said at the meeting. "I remember a time when students

... would be sitting in a circle, and they're texting each other ... instead of actually speaking."

Many teachers appreciate Yondr pouches because they also relieve them of having to police students' phones.

"If we can have [a] policy that eliminates [phones], it also eliminates me from being the person who has to manage that," said math teacher Chelsea Watson.

Many students are against the idea of implementing Yondr pouches at Aragon. Some students have experienced Yondr pouches and report that they do not ameliorate the issue of phone overuse.

"When phones were banned, people used them more because they felt this need to rebel," said freshman Leah Magliulo. "Once they did get them back at the end of the day, they felt the need to make up for that lost time, so they were on their phones even more."

Many students even found ways to open their Yondr pouches without the teacher's magnet.

"If people want to use their phone, they're gonna find a way around it," said freshman Sienna Kaiser. "If you just bang [the Yondr pouches] against some metal really hard, they'll come unlocked."

Some Aragon teachers have already introduced hanging phone holders in their classrooms, and some say that those are enough.

"We already have those [pouches] that teachers hang on the walls," said sophomore Aaron Lee. "Those work pretty well, [and] I'd say that [finding] a different kind of pouch would be a waste of school funding."

Despite disagreements over how to limit phone usage in schools, many agree that something needs to change.

"What did we do when we knew that tobacco harmed us?" said SMUHSD Board Trustee Jennifer Jacobson. "We put limits on it ... When we know something's addictive and harmful, especially for minors, we need to put limits on it."

The SMUHSD board of trustees has decided to gauge the community's opinion on this topic by including related questions in the annual fall Panorama survey and communicating with student leadership groups and parent organizations. In 2025, they will discuss as a group and come up with a new phone policy for the district.

"As a board, we're all in agreement and understand that there needs to be limits during class time," Jacobson said. "The big question is, do we limit them during passing periods and lunch ... What will [probably] happen is ... we'll have a minimum limit that's district-wide, and then sites can take that further if they want to."

The board is expected to make a decision regarding the new policy in the spring of 2025.

ONLINE THIS MONTH

NEWS

Aragon students simulate mock election



FEATURES

Helicopter parenting: surveillance apps

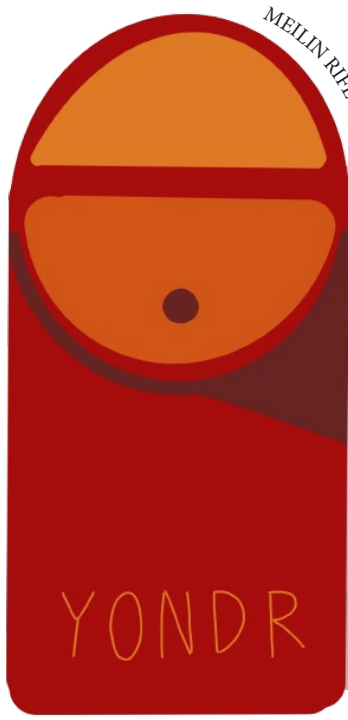


Crawling, squawking, bleating: uncommon pets

Look back: childhood nostalgia



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Yondr is used in **41** states

It takes around **\$50,000** to buy one pouch for every Aragon student

The average US teenager spends **4.8** hours on social media everyday

On the ballot: California props explained

Helen McCloskey
NEWS WRITER

From Oct. 7 to Nov. 5, Californians voted on ten propositions. Put forward by California residents, propositions are voted on in every California general election.

PROP 3

Proposition 3 repeals 2008's Proposition 8, which added to the constitution that "only marriage between a man and a woman is recognized in California." Proposition 8 banned same-sex marriage until the Supreme Court decision Obergefell v. Hodges in 2015, which invalidated the proposition.



Some believe that due to the recent overturning of Roe v. Wade, which had been widely accepted and stood for almost 50 years, Obergefell v. Hodges could also be overturned.

"If taken away, it's another infringement of freedom of choice," said senior Lexi Martin.

"There's a bunch of friends I know who would definitely be affected by this in the future ... It'll limit them from seeing the people that they like and it essentially declassifies them as couples."

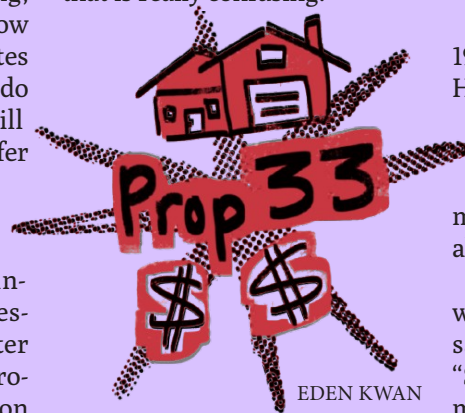
Others believe the proposition could open the door to similar laws in other states.

"California is, for a lot of things, [a trendsetter]," said senior Phoebe Taylor. "If one state starts to do something, other states might follow suit. More conservative states [might] also be inclined to do the same thing, and that will make gay marriage a lot safer in those states."

Opponents claim it would make it possible to legalize child marriage, incest and polyamory. The President of the National Center for Law and Policy Dean Broyles implied the proposition could open the door to human/AI marriage.

However, supporters say that it is unlikely.

"[Proposition 3] is in regards to marriage between same genders," Martin said. "Regarding age or family relations [is] completely out of the question. The fact that they're arguing about that is really confusing."



EDEN KWAN

Supporters of this proposition include Gov. Newsom.

"It's time that our laws affirm marriage equality regard-

less of who you are or who you love," Newsom said in a statement. "California stands with the LGBTQ+ community and their right to live freely."

PROP 33

Proposition 33 revokes the 1995 Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act, which prohibits the local government from limiting rental rates.

Supporters believe it will make California a more affordable place to live.

"People who are not as wealthy need a place to live," said junior Andrew Akkawi. "So the ability of the government [to] regulate rent and prices ... would [make it] more fair ... because [it is] extremely expensive."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Editorial: the student parking lot needs reform

STUDENT

ELLIE MCGINTY (11)

"I've gotten multiple tickets last year for parking in streets around Aragon, but there's nowhere to park except for Alameda, which limits students' abilities to drive to school, especially if they have activities they need to be able to get to after, where they can't carpool with others."

"We have a severe lack of parking spots and of parking tickets, [and] I've noticed they didn't give out as many [tickets] as they did last year."

ADIN BELTRAN (12)

"Especially when leaving school, parents cut students off a lot; they seem pretty entitled. They also wait in places they shouldn't be waiting, [like] in the panhandle, they double park to wait for their kids because they know they're going to be the first ones out. And that's really annoying, because there is a designated way to pick [students] up, but a lot of parents choose not to do that."

This editorial represents the opinion of 13 out of 14 Outlook Editors

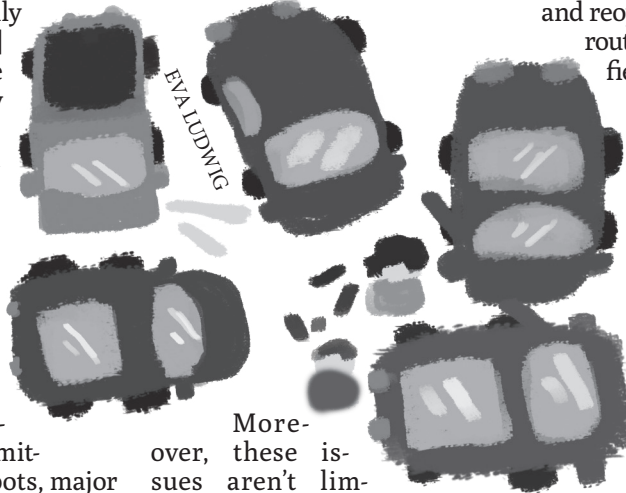
"[Once when] I was parked in the student parking lot ... I came back from practice to a bunch of scratches on the back [of my car]," said senior Janak Bhuta. "The taillight was chipped, a side panel had popped out, and the tires were scratched. It was a couple thousand dollars in damage and [I couldn't] tell the insurance, because I'm really young, [and it would] get raised by twice the amount. So [my family and I couldn't] do anything about the damages unless we were willing to pay out-of-pocket."

This issue is one among many in the student parking lot, with students reporting experiences such as hit-and-runs, non-permitted cars taking up spots, major delays due to parent pick-up and drop-offs and more.

One particularly prevalent issue is students without passes occupying spots meant for permit holders, forcing

them to park illegally on residential streets. This not only subjects them to tickets from the San Mateo Police Department, but also potential tardies, as it increases the time it takes to get to class.

Although Service Commission is tasked with checking for these passes, members can often dodge this chore by simply marking that they didn't see anything, allowing unpermitted cars to go unnoticed.



Moreover, these issues aren't limited to the Aragon community — Baywood parents have exacerbated the scramble for parking by using the parking lot as a drop-off location, both blocking spots for students and creating traffic on their way out.

Students are confronted with more issues at the end of the day, taking anywhere from 10–20 minutes simply to leave the lot, due to the pick-up circle directly blocking entire rows of cars. With the miniscule parking lot brimming with impatience and resentment, some students may experience more road rage while not on the road itself.

But even when drivers exit the lot, the problem persists. In order to get onto the main road, they must merge with a line of traffic coming from Baywood onto Woodland Drive, which backs up traffic from both avenues.

The Aragon Outlook believes the solution is to instate crossing guards both before and after school, have designated spots for students with parking passes and reopen drop-off and pick-up routes along the baseball field and theater.

Upon entering the student parking lot, crossing guards would ensure that only vehicles with passes may park and regulate the flow of traffic — students would be directed to the lot, and parents would be guided to the path along the panhandle leading to the theater. Opening up these alternate paths would streamline traffic, reducing delays for students trying to park in the morning and after school.

Additionally, assigning numbered parking spaces would hold students accountable, enabling students and administration to identify those occupying others' spots.

Tackling the issues in the student parking lot requires both structural changes and a stronger commitment to enforcement. We believe that by prioritizing these changes, Aragon can make the parking lot safer, reduce delays and provide a better experience for everyone involved.

EXPERIENCES

JANAK BHUTA (12)

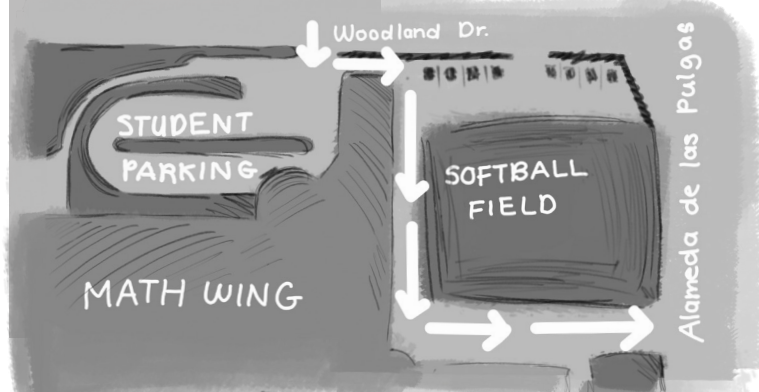
"There was one time where I saw a car hit another in the student parking lot [when it was] pulling into a spot. I've seen this stuff happen all the time [because] people coming in are mostly students who haven't been driving for that long, and [thus] not as experienced."

"[The student parking lot] is the most densely populated area before and after school. So it's going to be hardest to pick up your student there, especially if you have places to be ... There's so many other places to do pick-up. There's the staircase [leading to Hillsborough], and [when I couldn't drive], I always got picked up near Aragon Boulevard on Alameda [and] it's just so much easier."

SEVARA SAIDOVA (11)

"After even days, everyone's trying to get out of the parking lot [at the same time] and people are picking up their kids, so it's insanely hard to get out of the lot. You have to wait 30 minutes before [you] can back up ... I wish the cars picking up [their kids] would pull over more to the right."

"The circle by the blocks [shouldn't be] a place where parents pick up their kids because if you're at any of the spots [directly in front of the pick-up circle], you can't back out."



Student voices: OCD visibility



Pippa Reading
GUEST COLUMNIST

When most people hear "OCD", they picture someone who obsessively cleans or is obsessed with organization. While those are types of obsessive-compulsive disorder, OCD is far more complex, often involving great distress and struggles of self-doubt, which are often overlooked by society. Though seemingly harmless, when people joke around and say things like "omg I'm so OCD" or "you couldn't possibly have OCD you're so messy," it minimizes the deep challenges people with OCD face and makes it even harder for those who experience "taboo" or "atypical" symptoms to reach out for help.

In my own experience, OCD went undiagnosed for years because my symptoms, though

debilitating, didn't fit the stereotype. My rituals included hair pulling, rigid eating behaviors and intense fears of blurting out inappropriate words in public. I had intrusive thoughts that made me believe I was a terrible person; even convincing myself that I had committed some horrible crime that I just didn't remember doing and now the police were searching for me. My compulsions began to consume me, and it became impossible to think about anything else. These rituals started to affect my relationships as well, annoying those around me, and I began to isolate myself from family and friends. I felt too embarrassed to tell them what was really going on, especially when I didn't really understand it myself. Only later when I joined a Dialectical Behavioral Therapy group did I learn I had OCD. Through exposure therapy, coping mechanisms and medication, I've gained tools to manage my OCD. It still affects my life, but no longer controls me.

OCD isn't as rare as most people think, yet so many suffer in silence. Despite how debilitating it can be, only 30-40% seek treatment, according to the National Library of Medicine. Many, like myself, with taboo OCD symptoms feel too embarrassed to reach out, in fear that others might

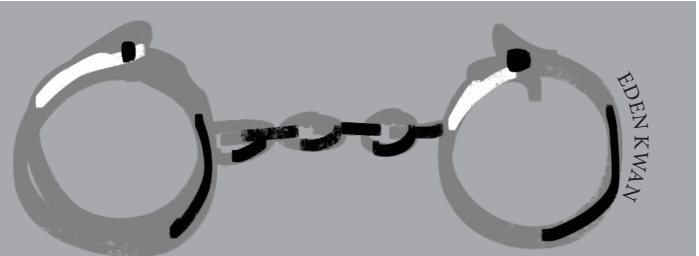
judge or misunderstand. But getting help isn't just possible; it's essential for regaining quality of life.

If you are experiencing OCD, know that you're not alone. OCD isn't "just a quirk" or a "preference for neatness." It's a real mental health condition, and effective support is out there for everyone — no matter what kind of OCD you have. Being vulnerable and talking openly about less understood mental disorders such as OCD is essential for breaking down stigma, creating understanding and encouraging others to seek the help they need. The more we shed light on these unspoken, yet very real experiences, the more we make space for people to feel understood and supported.



THOUGHTS?
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Propositions explained

However, others are skeptical of the proposition.

"It could make things a lot worse for landlords [and] developers, who have to deal with declines of property values," MacMillan said.

The proposition is important for students who want to live in the Bay Area in the future.

"I don't think I [can] afford to live here when I'm older," Taylor said. "It's important for others to be aware of the rent situation and how lucky we are to be able to live here. One day, everyone is going to have to ... pay these prices if they want to stay in the Bay Area."

MacMillan remains hesitant about the proposition.

"[We] should give some time [for the proposition] to develop and see if it works," MacMillan said. "And we should also be open to the idea of repealing it if it doesn't go as planned."

PROP 36

Proposition 36 reclassifies holding some drugs and thefts under \$950, as felony

charges — as opposed to being considered misdemeanors, a more minor crime.

Previously, violators participated in rehabilitation, community service programs or probation.

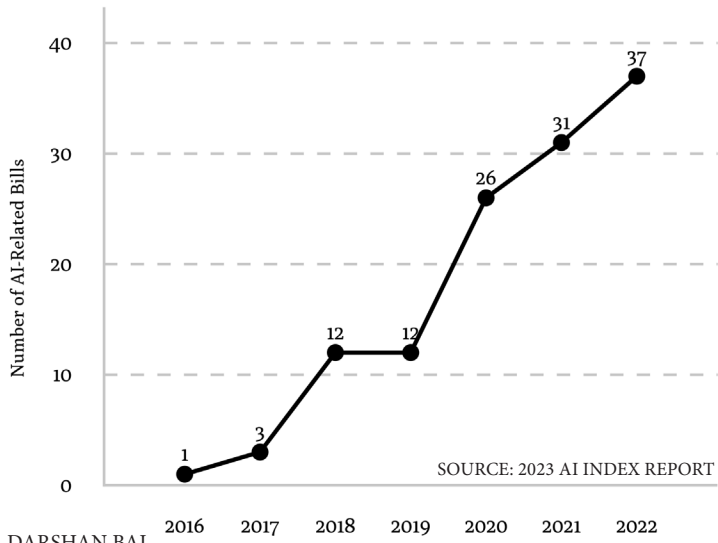
Some oppose the proposition, believing people charged with these crimes shouldn't have to serve jail time.

"Drug addiction is a disease ... and [people are] being criminalized for it," said history teacher Scott Bondurant. "We already spend way too much money on prisons, and this is going to make costs go up by hundreds of millions. Laws like this always disproportionately affect black and brown people from low-income communities, [so] it's gonna put more low-income people in jail who are not really a danger to anyone other than themselves."

According to the National Association to End Homelessness, the proposition will increase homelessness if passed.

Results of the propositions will be available Nov. 5.

Number of AI-Related Bills Passed Globally



DARSHAN BAL

Newsom vetoes AI bill

Diya Poojary
NEWS WRITER

On Sept. 29, California Gov. Gavin Newsom vetoed Senate Bill 1047, or the Safe and Secure Innovation for Frontier Artificial Intelligence Models Act.

This bill would have established state authority to oversee the development and usage of large AI models that require over \$100 million to build. These regulations included written safety protocols, the capability to enact a kill switch and annual examination reports by third-party auditors.

Additionally, the bill provided employee whistleblower protections and could prohibit models from being publicly available if they posed a risk to public safety. It also handed exclusive state authority to bring civil action to developers for violations of the bill.

"It would have forced developers to work around a lot of [constraints] and make it harder for them to develop this software," said freshman Gabriella Pate. "But it would also make it safer to the people and the general public, which is our main priority and concern."

Some think current laws on AI do not prevent it from developing at the expense of public safety, which Newsom defined as "threats to our democratic process, the spread of misinformation and deepfakes, risks to online privacy, threats to critical infrastructure and disruptions in the workforce," in his letter to the California State Senate.

"Tech companies [have] made us the product," said Kris Reiss, Compressed Math 2 and Computer Science teacher. "They mine all of our behavior, our clicks, how long we look at a friend's picture ... AI is no different. If you think what you type into AI isn't being stored for later use, I would ask you to think again. AI companies don't have your back. They're not here for a better, brighter future."

As a result, many believe AI requires more legislation.

"[Because] lawmaking is so much slower than actual technological development, we aren't keeping up [with AI]," said junior Hayden Ha. "California should be leading the nation in this sort of thing because I've seen way too much AI in politics and ... misleading images online and it's important to regulate that."

Newsom also addressed these issues in his letter, writing that the bill did not base its arguments on enough analysis of AI model capabilities and that its strict imposition of regulations would hinder companies. Students also recognized issues concerning the bill.

"[Although] I took the stance [that] it would be better if we had more protections, I understand why it wasn't passed," Ma said. "Given how important California is to AI's development in the world, we wouldn't want to slow it down because then that could have a ripple effect, and ... we don't want to waste time."

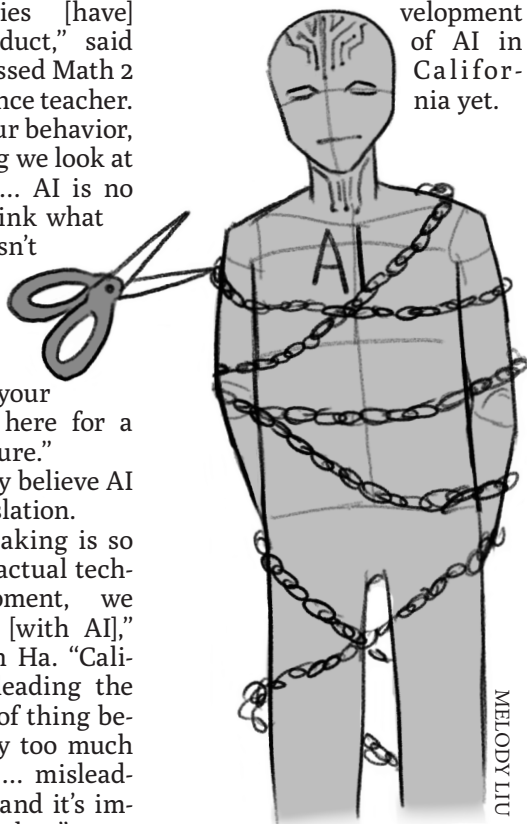
Others were cautious about who supported the bill.

"[It's] interesting how Elon Musk backs it, considering how his Twitter platform is breeding off of misinformation right now," Ha said. "And that's something we should take into consideration when doing this sort of thing."

Some students believe minor adjustments would be sufficient for the bill's approval.

"[Instead of shutting the model] down if it doesn't do its intended purpose ... just restructure it in the right direction," said sophomore Sophia Tiu. "I feel like AI will be the future ... so we shouldn't inhibit it completely, but [simply] let it grow in a controlled manner."

With the veto of SB-1047, there is no existing legislative framework to monitor the development of AI in California yet.



MELODY LIU

Antitrust: crushing monopolies

Reika Lam
NEWS WRITER

On Aug. 5, Google lost one of its two antitrust cases: a lawsuit was filed on Oct. 20, 2020, where the Department of Justice and a group of multiple states accused Google of monopolizing the online search market.

Antitrust laws prevent monopolies from forming by regulating business practices and ultimately promote competition between companies in the industry. One major antitrust case was the 1998 Microsoft lawsuit, in which the DOJ accused the tech company of exercising a monopoly in personal computer operating systems; this ruling set the precedent for future decisions. This led the US District Court to order that Microsoft be broken up into two separate units: one to produce the operating system and the other for software components.

This case called into question whether or not big tech companies had too much power. Recent antitrust rulings from the DOJ and the Federal Trade Commission have

helped diminish the control of these companies and bring back competition.

"Antitrust law says you can't have all the gas stations on one corner get around a table and say, 'okay, today it's going to be \$5,'" said Colin Johnson, College of San Mateo instructor and

Recently, the DOJ also filed a lawsuit against RealPage, a real estate software company whose technology allowed landlords to collectively raise rents. Antitrust rulings like this one can benefit consumers in the long run, allowing businesses to reframe their main goal and incentive.

"Antitrust laws give consumers more options," said junior Erin Finn.

"It encourages lower prices and better products."

Other major tech companies like Apple, Meta and Amazon, have also

been involved in recent antitrust cases. The DOJ filed a lawsuit against Apple in

March for keeping consumers reliant on Apple smartphones

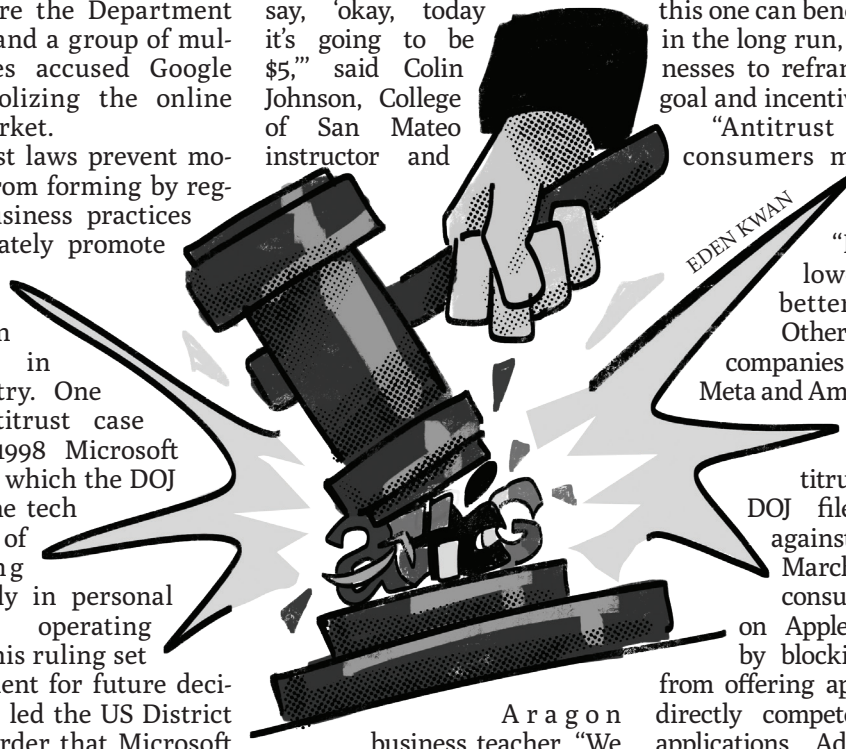
by blocking companies from offering apps that would directly compete with Apple applications. Additionally, the

FTC has filed a lawsuit against Amazon in Sept. 2023 for favoring its own brands over other

third-party sellers, with their trial set for 2026. Although the companies have asked for their cases to be dismissed, all three

are ongoing.

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Calif. bans legacy admissions

Naomi Kotani
NEWS WRITER

On Sept. 30, Gov. Gavin Newsom passed a law banning private colleges and universities in California from practicing legacy admissions and giving an advantage to applicants with donor connections.

Legacy admissions refer to the preferential treatment of applicants who have a relative who is an alumnus of the institution. The practice originally began in the early 1900s as a way to limit the amount of students from marginalized communities in higher education. California is the fifth state to implement a ban on legacy admissions, and the second to do so for private institutions.

Colleges will have to make an annual report to the California Department of Justice, stating whether or not they complied with the law. The names of the schools that violate the law will be posted on the official DOJ website.

"In California, everyone should be able to get ahead through merit, skill and hard work," Newsom said in a statement released by his office. "The California Dream shouldn't be accessible to just a lucky few, which is why we're opening the door to higher education wide enough for everyone, fairly."

Some students agreed with the law.

"The opportunity for education should not be limited to people with more financially well-off backgrounds," said sophomore Nate Wilson.

"The opportunity for a good education should be given to anybody, equally, regardless of background."

Others, however, felt differently. Sophomore Marina Wiedmann reflected on her reaction to hearing about the new law.

"I'm a bit disappointed because I have a ton of Stanford legacy," Wiedmann said. "My whole extended family, other than my dad, went to Stanford ... so I would have had benefits."

Senior Sora Kim-Steiger, who is planning to apply to a school where she has legacy, explained that for those with donor or legacy connections, it can be appealing to use that advantage.

of determining who should get in."

Students spoke about the overall impact of ending legacy and donor preferences.

"It's not going to completely level the playing field, because obviously if you're in a more wealthy area, you're going to have better access to resources that help you succeed, versus if you're an underserved area, it's going to be harder to do as well in general," Wiedmann said. "So although it levels it somewhat, it's not black and white [fixing] the problem."

Mary O'Reilly, Aragon's college and career advisor, commented on the significance of the ban on college admissions.

"There's a lot behind getting into these schools," O'Reilly said. "Making sure that supports are equitable for students ... will be a big factor. I don't think [the ban] will make a grand impact. It might be a step in the right direction, but [there

are] other follow-up things that need to happen as well, [like] equitable services for students."

Many agreed that there is still more to be done to fully eliminate inequity in the admissions process.

"Despite the fact that we are in the modern age, we're still separated a lot by class, race and identity," Makuta said. "Banning legacy admissions [is] just one step into becoming equal."

The law will go into effect in the fall of 2025.



Students march at the rally.

VICTORIA SANTANA, LIAN WANG

Youth Climate Rally

Mark Rumberg
NEWS WRITER

On Oct. 19, the San Mateo Citizens' Climate Lobby hosted its annual Youth Climate Rally. They marched through Central Park and downtown San Mateo, advocating for reducing carbon emissions and preventing climate change. The theme, "Make it Real," emphasized that climate change will affect us in the near future.

About 50 to 70 people attended the rally, with an assortment of teenagers, adults and families. They passed through San Mateo with several chants such as, "Climate change is not a lie, do not let our planet die." Many people joined the rally, picking up the chant.

As the rally marched through San Mateo, many people honked their horns in time with the chant and gave encouragement. Afterward, participants returned to Central Park for presentations by the youth co-chairs, members of the Citizens Climate Lobby, County Supervisor Noelia Corzo and other passionate climate change advocates.

"All of you are inspiring to me: the fact that you care about our climate, about our Earth, the fact that you make room for these conversations, the fact that you are committed to educating yourself," Corzo said during her speech. "I really believe in respecting our Earth, and I think the way that we see climate change impacting our world is evidence that we haven't been doing [enough] ... We have to act now."

Organizers of the event hope to continue to encourage discussions about climate change.

"Our hope for Make It Real is that we're not just spreading awareness, but spreading new or better emotions surrounding the climate conversation," said co-chair Kayla Ling.

Junior Brody Friedeberg, member of the Citizens' Climate Lobby, participated in the Youth

Climate Rally and helped lead the march and chants.

"I decided to participate in the rally because I'm passionate about enacting new climate policy," Friedeberg said. "[By] getting a community rallied together, we can show our power as one united community for climate reform to the politicians in attendance."

There are more people in our Aragon community who are strong climate change advocates. Advanced Placement Environmental Science teacher Greg Moretti has an entire unit covering climate change and climate science.

"One of the things that students struggle with right now is what they can do about climate change," Moretti said. "It seems like such a big issue, and it's overwhelming."

Climate Change Lobby member Elaine Selinger, who helped plan the rally, believes students hold much power in advocating for climate change.

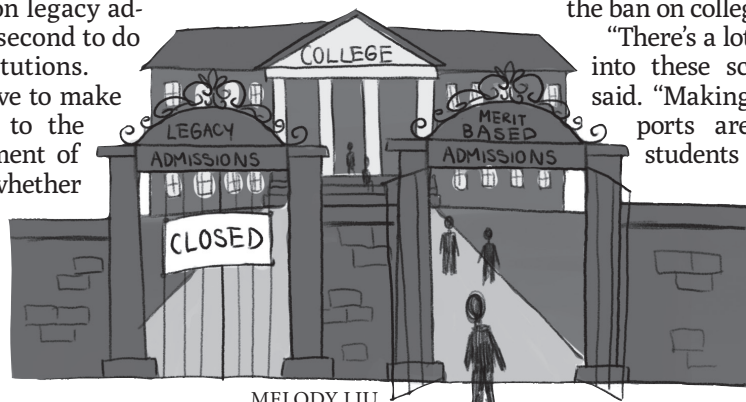
"[You can] go to town halls to talk with legislators ... [and] speak at city council meetings in support of climate [bills]," Selinger said. "20% of childhood asthma is caused by gas appliances in your home — you can talk to your parents and get rid of gas appliances."

Calif. State Senator Josh Becker gave a speech during the rally. He echoed Selinger's belief in the youth to make a difference.

"Start with your own school: sustainability [with] school recycling [and phasing] out plastics," Becker said. "[And] show up at the city council meetings [to] advocate for climate policies."

A large part of the rally was to encourage passing bills and propositions regarding climate change. This includes the upcoming Proposition 4, which would authorize 10 billion dollars for use on climate projects.

The next rally will be held in 2025 by the Citizens' Climate Lobby.



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ETHAN TAWN

New homes wanted for homecoming dresses

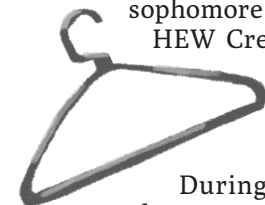
Christine Choi
NEWS WRITER

On Oct. 15 and 17, Leadership’s Health and Earth Wellness Crew hosted the Homecoming Thrift Store to promote sustainability and thrifting within the Aragon community. In the weeks leading up to the event, students donated articles of formal wear to bins in front of the main office and in front of the leadership room.

“[We got] a lot of dresses; our rack was pretty full,” said freshman and HEW Crew member Claire O’Brien. “We also got some dress shirts and pants and ties as well. Some of the dresses definitely fit in the theme [Light Up the Night].”

Students donated a wide variety of clothes, which included many high-end pieces.

“We got a lot of donations [and] some of the dresses were really expensive and from really nice brands,” said sophomore and HEW Crew member



Tahlia Shahani.

During lunch, students were free to pick out one to two articles free of charge.

“I heard about [the Thrift Store] from Live Announcements,” said junior Sarah Walter. “I was really surprised, everything [was] really cute. I saw my friend was walking and she had a cute dress, and I was like ‘wait, there’s some cute options’.

Many visited the store during lunch, with there only being a few pieces left at the end.

Feedback from customers has also been positive, with many enjoying the sustainability aspect of the event, and being able to recycle clothing that is often worn only once.

“It’s creative, and it’s good for the environment as well,” said freshman Chloe Lim. “It might give people new ideas, spur creative thinking and let people get a sense of other people’s style”.

People often buy formal clothing solely

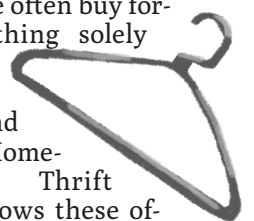
for one event, and the Homecoming Thrift Store allows these often neglected clothes to find a new purpose.

“[The point of] the thrift store was to reuse dresses so that we can reduce the waste in our community and give people dresses that they otherwise wouldn’t have the opportunity to buy,” Shahani said. “We [hoped] that it [would] encourage people to thrift and pass things down to students. We also hoped that [students would] see that you could get really great [formal wear] secondhand.”

Leadership hopes this thrift store will become a recurring event.

“We see this as becoming a tradition in the future, and we’re hoping to do it for [Winter Formal]” Shahani said.

By the end of the event, there were very few items left, mostly consisting of dress shirts. The leftover clothing was donated to a local thrift store in the area. HEW Crew will host the next thrift store for Winter Formal, which will take place sometime in February.



EVA LUDWIG

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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:

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High school party culture: drinking and smoking

Gemma Albertson
FEATURES WRITER

**Names have been changed to protect source privacy.*

"[I was at a party and I] could barely walk through the doorway to get to the rest of the house," said junior Jordan Hosner. "[Like at] concerts or at homecoming, [there were] mosh pits [and] the entire house smelled like weed [and] everyone was so overly drunk ... You could feel the bass in your heart."

Partying culture is commonplace in the typical American high school culture, with approximately 25% of all teens attending high school parties, according to the National Institute of Health. Contrary to what Disney Channel and Nickelodeon have taught, however, high school parties don't consist of dancing and breaking out in song. The actual appeal comes from the sense of community, and the opportunity to relax after a long week.

"I go to parties because I want to socialize with my friends," Hosner said. "It's a little bit of FOMO because if everyone's going to a party and I don't go, I [feel like] I'm missing out. It's also an escape from school, [and] a place where you can just let out stress."

With the high stress and the desire to relieve after a long school week, substances often play a role at parties.

"At every party that I've been to, I've seen drinks," Hosner said. "I would say a good amount of people

go to these parties just to get drunk and to black out ... The first time I've been handed a full glass of alcohol was definitely at a party ... I mostly only see nicotine, but I've also seen ... weed."

Many have first been introduced to drinking at parties.

50-77% of sexual assaults involve excessive alcohol consumption by either the victim, the perpetrator, or both, according to the University of Texas at Austin.

"I remember one time my friends were drinking and smoking a lot one day ... and one of them got a hold of an electric

"[Parties are fun because] I like meeting new people," Sandra said. "There's [always] a bunch of people who I've never met before, and for the most part, everyone there's super nice."

However, parties can be dangerous due to isolated locations or untrustworthy attendees.



"[I drink] because it's fun to do with friends," said junior *Sandra. "[When] walking around with friends, people will just hand you something [to drink]."

The presence of substances, specifically alcohol, can increase one's impulsivity and affect one's judgment. According to the California Office of Traffic Safety, 32% of traffic accident deaths are from drunk driving. In addition,

scooter," said junior *Gerard. "I guess he was gonna go to Safeway ... to get more alcohol, [and] he just completely lost control and got really hurt and had to go to the hospital."

Many parties have open-door policies that allow the host and attendees to invite people to come, allowing many to enjoy the opportunity to meet new people and make new friends.

"If a party is in the middle of the woods, being a woman feels unsafe," Hosner said. "If something happens to you, you're basically stranded, and that's why I really don't go to any parties that aren't ... [at a] place where there's electricity, heating, water [and] access to cell service. There's also certain kinds of people that have a reputation

for being creepy or being weird, [so] I'm gonna avoid those people."

With many known dangers of partying, some parents are stricter when it comes to parties, making many kids have to lie to be able to attend parties.

"[My parents] definitely don't like me staying out that late," said Hosner. "[Most] of [the party attendees], have asked their parents, and if they don't ask their parents, they just go and say they're at a friend's house. So I feel like most people's parents are pretty relaxed about it if you don't tell them the full details of the party."

However, some parents just want their kids to socialize or de-stress.

"They just don't want me to be depressed in my room, so they like that I get out," said junior Ava Sims.

Furthermore, parties are often hosted by students without parents knowing.

"When you host, you want to ... dispose of [alcohol] secretly, so [parents] don't know you have it," said junior *Shane. "[If] you're smoking, ... you want to make sure it doesn't smell, especially in houses. [At one party] this guy passed out and we had to carry them up the stairs and get them on their back and [revive them] because their parents were really mad and they had to come home."

Parties stand in stark contrast to the strict, uptight nature of academia, yet its persistent place in high school culture symbolizes teenagers' needs for independence.

Fetishization and stereotyping of ethnic groups

Ceylon Liu
FEATURES WRITER

While simply practicing her sport, junior Nyla Garrick encountered racist remarks from commonly muttered stereotypes about Black Americans.

"I was swimming [during] water polo, [and] we were warming up, and [this kid] was like, 'Yo Nyla. I thought Black people couldn't swim,'" Garrick said. "In my head, I'm like, 'Damn. Do you know how many kids are out here in this water with me? And you're just gonna say that, and then proceed to walk away after, [like] you didn't say that to me?'"

Remarks like these reinforce harmful stereotypes based on race, perpetuating assumptions about individuals solely due to their appearance or background.

"A lot of first impressions [are] based off of when you first see [a person]," said senior Quincy Romero. "And one of the easiest things to see about people is race, and going off of that, you [might] try to guess what the person is like."

Garrick has been no stranger to stereotypes about her own race that circulate through the media and even from student to student.

"I've heard that Black men are more aggressive and violent,"

Garrick said. "And even that black women are controlling. I've heard that a lot, even though I don't see it within my family."

Garrick has also been privy to stereotypes that are attributed to other groups, but finds them to be true only in some cases.

efforts to include more diverse casting choices. However, when implemented poorly, some find these choices can simplify characters down to one-dimensional walking stereotypes.

tation of the race's culture and heritage. Rather than just having a Black character to have a Black character, they had personality and individuality."

The prevalence of racial stereotypes today, especially in online spaces, has also led

where people have these dreamy versions [of Asian] men."

It can be easy for many to develop an image of a whole race based on a limited amount of information found online. Others may have warped views of a group as a whole because they expect every single person within a group to act a certain way.

"People [might have] Asian fetishes because a lot of Asian people are shorter [and people think they] can control them," said senior Charles McWhorter.

Expecting groups to look a certain way because of pre-existing notions about their race can put pressure on younger people to strive towards unrealistic standards.

"People are expecting Hispanics or Latino people to look [a] specific [way and] if the women don't look like these hot, hourglass copy and paste Latinas, they don't want them," Monzon said. "People often want these really hard to reach [standards] and at a young age, you're already getting put on this pedestal."

As individuals navigate their social life, stereotypes will influence their perceptions in ways that affect everyday interactions, media portrayals and personal expectations, shaping how people view and relate to one another.



"I've heard Hispanic girls are toxic, and they look for fights, [while] Hispanic men are cheaters," Garrick said. "Even though [these] things [might] be true, they're going to be true within the human race in general."

At the same time, many TV shows and movies have made

"There's been an increase in representation in different fields," Romero said. "Sometimes shows or movies have this token minority to be like, 'hey, look, we got a minority. Come watch our movie.' Whereas some are like the movie 'Black Panther,' where it was an actual represen-

many to begin viewing certain ethnic groups as more favorable for dating than others.

"People have specific preferences based off what they've seen off the internet," said freshman Alma Monzon. "A lot of people have picked Asian men now because ... they've seen TikToks

Toughing it out: men's mental health

Oliver Levitt
FEATURES WRITER

“Don't be a pussy, tough it out, stand up for yourself,” said senior Thomas Williams. “There's a perceived notion that a man must always be confident ... and it leads to this feedback loop where men are broken, but they think that if they seek help to improve themselves, they're failing as a man.”

Men's mental health has become a prominent and persistent issue within the Aragon community and society as a whole. Social pressures and personal interactions lead to difficult experiences to share about topics such as toxic masculinity, body image, depression or masculine stereotypes.

Toxic masculinity, for example, can be a damaging trait, resulting from embracing more masculine traits to the point of destruction.

“It's masculine taken to the extreme,” Williams said. “So all the male traits [are] taken to the extreme. Confidence turns to narcissism, self assurance turns to violence and perseverance to the cost of someone else.”

Another form of toxic masculinity can be the impulse to suppress one's own emotions.

In addition, many have faced personal experiences regarding the stigma to suppress emotions.

“I don't like talking about being weak or feeling not enough of a man,” said senior Andrew McColl. “[I share my feelings] really only in very critical moments where I'm under so much pressure that I'm [basically] crying in public. The last time I actually had an extremely honest conversation

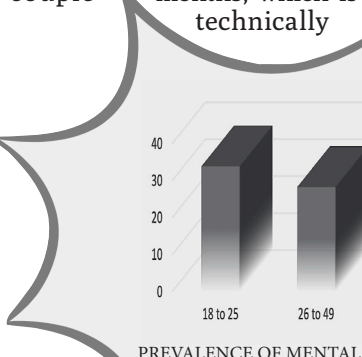
about all of my issues without hiding anything was tech week of Grease, when I was feeling so much pressure and there was a person that was making me feel really weak and not enough of a man. Then [my friend] noticed and I had to tell her about it. Even that doesn't feel right, because she's not going to get it on the same level [as my friends who are guys].”

don't do the things that they should,” Rhodes said. “If [you] really like art or something, I've noticed that people could look down upon you, [saying things like] ‘you're weird’. It's all about ‘I should go to the gym. I should focus on sports. I should focus on money,’ rather than focusing on passions, which I feel are really important.”

Toxic masculinity can also appear in the form of misogyny.

“You can see [it] in the little ways some men talk about women in a romantic or sexual sense,” said junior Leighton King. “It can also just be a general sense of rage. It's really sad, because I think it's an indicator of one of those things where these people are truly just victims of the system in which they

six. I was in such a severe calorie deficit that I lost [about] 40 pounds in a couple months, which is technically



good for your health, but it was bad for my mental health. Once I lost that weight, I would say there was about a year period where I was not comfortable with eating in front of people and it really hurt.”

In addition to living in caloric deficit, men can also end up obsessing over working out in order to combat negative feelings regarding their body image, creating its own host of problems.

“People who go to the gym idealize themselves as their ‘pump body’, which [is their appearance] after they work out and turn bigger, and they set that as the norm,” Williams said. “After that they get body dysmorphia, where they feel small all the time, and that leads to a lot of self esteem issues, but it's the same problem with people who don't go to the gym. They look at themselves in the mirror and they [think], ‘I'm not in shape,’ ‘I'm weak,’ and ‘I'm not living up to what society expects as a man,’ ... so it's

sort of this horrible expectation cycle where people who are on each end constantly reinforce their negativity until they feel terrible about themselves.”

REMEDY

Despite these challenging, difficult thoughts that men face, men can improve their ability to count on one another from a day to day basis.

“I really like the idea of men considering their relationships,” said wellness counselor Max Bernstein. “Seeing how we already support each other. We already know how to rely on our friends, to rely on a sense of trust and support.”

McGuigan had the same message for other men around him.

“If you go to a wellness counselor or a therapist, I guarantee [it'll help because] the first step to figuring things out in your life is telling people about it and figuring out what you're thinking,” McGuigan said. “As long as you are able to talk about it and you don't bottle it up, it's going to help you in the long run ten times over.”

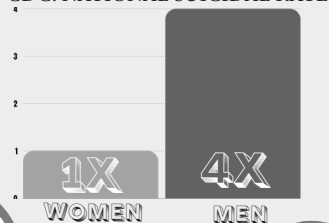
McColl found that opening up to his friends was a very cathartic experience.

“Start of September, I was getting food with [my guy friends],” McColl said. “We had a legitimately open, sobering conversation, and we were able to give each other advice and build upon each other, and they helped point me in the direction of something I needed to do that I really wasn't considering. ... You have to be open about [your emotions] and you have to trust each other and build each other up because everyone's going through the same thing, and it's important for everyone to just heal with each other.”

Williams felt the same way about honesty and open connection.

“It's not just a girl-thing to talk about your mental health,” Williams said. “It should be an every-one-thing.”

CDC: NATIONAL SUICIDAL RATE

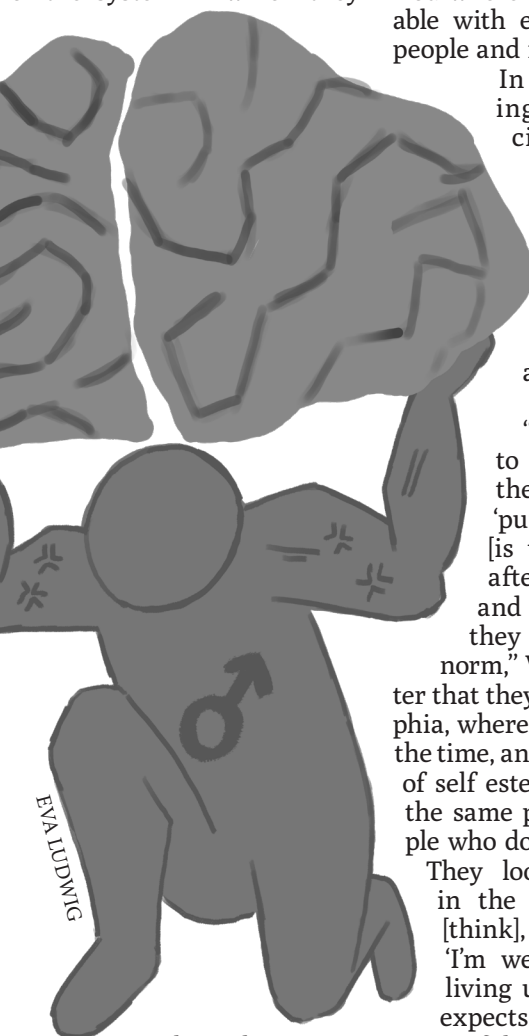


about all of my issues without hiding anything was tech week of Grease, when I was feeling so much pressure and there was a person that was making me feel really weak and not enough of a man. Then [my friend] noticed and I had to tell her about it. Even that doesn't feel right, because she's not going to get it on the same level [as my friends who are guys].”

COPING

The stigma around men sharing emotions with other men can cause built up emotions for men. To manage these pent up emotions, McColl uses music as a coping mechanism.

“I bottle [my feelings] up inside of myself and I just hold it all day ... then I go home, and it just manifests and I listen to Radiohead all night,” McColl said. “Music is something that is so accessible. In three minutes you can compress something [very deep] into this tiny thing ... It makes the emotions stronger inside of me, which



were brought up in. If these people were just taught better, maybe they could have more healthy ideals about themselves and about women.”

BODY IMAGE

Another prevalent issue within the sphere of men's mental health is ideals regarding body image.

“Over the course of freshman year, I lost 60 pounds or so,” King said. “Getting into what society traditionally considers more healthy shape, I think it was an overall good experience. That being said, the way I went about it was not healthy on any level. I would not eat till I got home at

brings me closer to the point that I might actually reveal something to someone.”

Not only can toxic masculinity lead to suppressed feelings, but also the suppression of passions.

“I've seen people too focused on how people perceive them that they won't show their interests at all and they

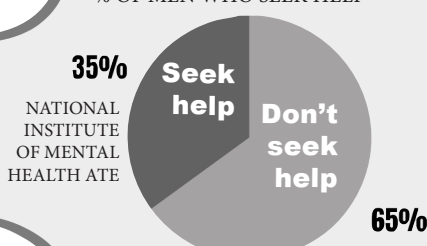
ISSUE

“Normally, as a man, you're expected to not be emotionally affected,” said senior Alexander McGuigan. “Being seen crying is a sign of weakness. If you're having a breakdown, you can be seen as weak or not a man. For example, the cultural phrase: ‘be a man’ represents how a lot of males feel that [they] have to go by the stereotype of being a strong, independent male, otherwise [they] won't make it.”

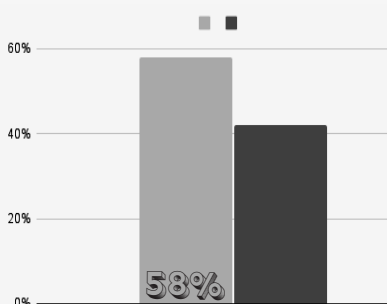
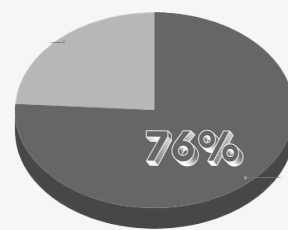
Freshman Julian Rhodes notices a similar pressure for men to hide their feelings.

“I've seen kids that can be bullied for going to a therapist,” Rhodes said. “People think, ‘oh, men shouldn't cry. They shouldn't show their real feelings. They should just deal with it,’ which is terrible. Expressing your feelings to others can really help; hiding your feelings and pushing them back can make feelings worse. People can get anxiety, depression and can't express it because they feel like they'll be looked down upon.”

% OF MEN WHO SEEK HELP



76% of men feel pressured to provide for their families financially.



58% feel society expects them to show no weakness.

BEYOND THE GRAVE

DEATH! Like Benjamin Franklin said, it's the only sure thing in life — besides taxes. Since the beginning of time, death has been a constant source of fear and confusion for all of humanity, and with fear and confusion comes tradition which attempts to explain it away. Within each culture, religion and belief system is a nearly endless set of rituals and ideas to learn about, so read this page before you meet your eternal doom!

(Pssst... for a puzzle that puts the "fun" in "funeral," see page 10!)

The Afterlife!

Each religion has its own perspective on what happens after we die. Although there are too many belief systems to list all of them, here are a few major ones:

CHRISTIANITY: Believes in eternal life or eternal damnation (Heaven or Hell) where the soul persists after death, as well as an ultimate Judgment Day. Some branches of Christianity also believe in Purgatory — a temporary intermediary purification stage for those who have lived imperfect, but not evil lives.

ISLAM: Emphasizes the "Day of Resurrection" in which society is killed before bodily resurrection occurs as everyone is brought before God to be judged if they will go to Heaven or Hell.

JUDAISM: Emphasizes afterlife less than some other religions and the thoughts surrounding it are divided. A few ideas include the soul going on a purifying journey, resurrection or a pleasant rest for the soul.

BUDDHISM: Believes in rebirth with karma, the balance of someone's good and bad deeds, dictating the fate of reincarnations. To achieve final spiritual awakening, people must improve wisdom, morality, and meditation.

HINDUISM: Also believes in reincarnation and karma, but believes the path to liberation includes living virtuously, as well as material and emotional fulfillment.

Copy: Alexa Sterry, Andrew Dong, Chloe Chen, Anna He
Graphics: Hannah Li, Alexa Sterry
Layout: Alexa Sterry

What do you want to happen to your BODY?

"Freeze it!"
Jackson Keane (10)
Cryonics is the freezing of a corpse in hopes of being resurrected years later. It's regarded as pseudo-scientific, but that hasn't stopped around 300 Americans from spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on it.

"Buried [in a] Jewish cemetery."
Jonny Freedman (10)
Burial, the preferred fate for about a third of Americans, is getting less and less common over the years, but continues to be a sacred, even mandatory practice in Judaism, Islam and numerous other religions.

"I [want to] get turned into a diamond."
Catie Wu (9)
Memorial diamonds, which are made from a person's ashes, have been sold since the 2000s. Memorial diamonds are a unique and growing phenomenon.

"Scatter my ashes at the beach."
Madie van Lingen (10)
Of those who get cremated, around a third scatter their ashes. A practice dating back to ancient history, people often choose to scatter their ashes in a place of significance to them or their religion.

"I want to be planted and have a tree grow on me."
Jonathan Wong (12)
In a tree pod burial, a body is put into a pod under a tree in order to nourish and metaphorically become one with it.

In Madagascar, the Malagasy people practice a ritual called "Famadihana" where bodies are dug up every few years and wrapped in new cloth. The name of the deceased is written on this cloth to ensure they will be remembered. After the body's been wrapped in cloth, it is carried and danced with as people celebrate its past life.

In the Russian Orthodox Church, at the end of the funeral, handkerchiefs are thrown away to encourage mourners to go on with their lives. After death, bereaved families put out bread and vodka nightly for the dead. Of course, this offering goes untouched, serving as a reminder that the deceased has moved on to the afterlife.

Tibetan Buddhists practice sky burials, which are when a dead body is put outside and left for animals to eat. The ritual symbolizes the circle of life, feeding animals while letting the soul of the body depart. Sky burials are seen as an act of generosity since they serve to sustain the lives of animals, which is a very important virtue in the Buddhist religion.

In China, sheets of paper meant to symbolize money called joss money or jin zhi are burnt as an offering to the dead. Joss money is burnt to ensure that the deceased is rich and well-provided for in the afterlife. Women in the family wear colored flowers or hairpins while men wear black armbands as an indicator of their relation to the dead.

In the Philippines, the Tinguian people will dress the corpse up, sit it in a chair, and put a lit cigarette in its lips for weeks on end. Similarly, the native people of Benguet blindfold and tie corpses to chairs for nine days. On the eve of a Benguet funeral, elders chant a biography of the deceased. During burial, mourners hit bamboo together to send the deceased to heaven.

"Cremation because that's what [my] religion [does]"
Imme Thanaphothipong (12)
Cremation, the preference of 60% of Americans is important in many religions, like Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism and many more.

Dia de los Muertos is a popular holiday in Mexico with many traditions. People build ofrendas, or home altars, leave offerings at graves and attend parades in costumes and skull make-up. Unlike many events around death, Dia de los Muertos is a time of joy as families remember and celebrate the lives of the departed.

In New Orleans, Louisiana, "jazz funerals" are funeral processions accompanied by a brass band. At first, the band plays heavy, somber music but gradually becomes more upbeat as mourners and passersby dance. Livelier than any conventional funeral, jazz funerals are a way for mourners to celebrate life and death with New Orleans' signature charm.

In Uruguay, bodies are often preserved above ground in mausoleums (buildings containing a tomb) or columbariums (buildings in which urns are stored) rather than being buried underground. After a period of three to five years, coffins are often exhumed and the remaining bones are placed in an urn and returned to the tomb.

In Greenland, the glacial climate has led to special burial tradition. In some particularly cold towns, the ground is too icy and hard to dig through. Because of this, instead of digging graves, bodies are simply put in coffins above ground. Often, these coffins are placed facing the water so that the departed can be look over the ocean for all of eternity.

In the Ivory Coast, the Senufo people bury deceased elders underneath the floors of their homes. In the Senufo people's culture, ancestors are believed to look over and protect their living descendants, so elders are buried under their homes to ensure that they are close by their families and can continue to guide them in the afterlife.



DEATH around the WORLD

DEATH ROW MEALS!

Being on death row leaves you without much free will. However, one sacred choice is given to these inmates — their last meal. Over the years, last meals have ranged from elaborate (like John Wayne Gacy's feast of a dozen deep-fried shrimp, a bucket of original recipe Kentucky Fried Chicken, french fries, a pound of strawberries and a bottle of Diet Coke) to modest (like German murderer, Karl Ludwig Sand, who simply requested "gruel") to straight-up bizarre (like one James Edward Smith, who asked for a lump of dirt). We asked students about their ideal last meals. Here's what they said!

Ruhi Mudoi (12)
– Chipotle's white rice
– Jerk Chicken
– Sour Patch Kids

Laya Saikumar (9)
– Dosa
– Peanut Chutney
– Garlic Naan
– Paneer Tikka

Chloe Yu (9)
– In-N-Out
– Pumpkin Spice Frappuccino
– Bubble Tea

Sophia Goodwin (12)
– 6 pc. KFC tub
– Mashed potatoes
– Ice cream

Joseph Addiego (12)
– Shirley Temple
– Garden Salad
– New York Style Cheesecake
– Prime rib



What's on your bucket list?

- Win a Nobel prize
- Ethan Chang (10)
- Get to smell Rihanna
- Azul Tepeu Illescas (10)
- Go to every continent
- Ananya Bhavanishankar (11)
- Overcome my fear of heights
- Gabriella Sablo (9)
- Go to a Taylor Swift concert
- Charlie Liu (9)
- Hike the Alps
- Marcus Finke (12)
- Become a cheerleader for a major sport team
- Cali McFadden (9)
- Skydiving, bungee jumping and shark cage
- Lia Alves (10)
- Make starting lineup on the tennis team
- Anjali Kalyanakrishnan (10)
- Visit all 50 states
- Catherine Tsao (10)
- Experience the drop of another Frank Ocean album
- Erin Finn (11)
- Ride a hot air balloon
- Keira McLintock (12)
- See all seven wonders of the world
- Zoeya Rahman (9)



To whom it may concern: grammar in society

Allinah Zhan
FEATURES WRITER

When texting Grandma about breakfast, one tiny comma can make all the difference. A simple "Let's eat, Grandma!" turns into a chilling invitation for cannibalism: "Let's eat Grandma!" This amusing yet alarming example underscores the critical role grammar plays in communication.

"If you know the basic rules of grammar, it's easier for you to organize your thoughts," said English teacher Gregory McGarry. "Being persuasive [verbally] requires a working knowledge of conjunctions. When it comes to written language, organizing your thoughts in English requires a knowledge of grammar and punctuation so that people can keep track of your argument."

Grammar creates a smoother, more efficient flow of communication. With shared rules, misunderstandings

are minimized and ideas are more easily understood.

"It's not that without proper grammar people can't understand you," said sophomore Katherine Lu. "It's that proper grammar helps people understand you better

... If people all follow [the standards], less active thought [is required] when it comes to interpreting what people are trying to communicate to you. If someone says 'Him and me go to the park yesterday,' you would have to actively think and parse what that says. If someone says it in a more standard way, then you would understand it [faster]."

While grammar helps ensure clarity, it's not necessary to adhere to the rules strictly all of the time. "One of our jobs as English teachers is to try

to help students understand that the best choice of wording or the best choice of structure is what's appropriate to the task," said English teacher Holly Estrada. "If we're writing an essay or producing some

text that's going to be published, grammar is very important. It creates ethos. But in a text, I don't care if someone abbreviates a word. We want to make sure to have the register and the grammar match whatever the purpose of the text is."

Additionally, grammar is heavily influenced by one's cultural roots and their background. "People who have one language as their mother tongue might have grammatical aspects from that language that influence their speech in a different language," Lu said. "For example, in Chinese, the words for turn off and close are the same. A Chinese person might say, 'turn off the window' instead of 'close the window.'"

Because speaking is such an integral part of human interaction, people are often judged by their usage of grammar. "Ironically, sometimes, I've seen politicians give speeches, and sometimes people lament that their structure is more sophisticated," Estrada said. "They'll say that they wish that the person were a little more informal and a little less intellectual, ironically."

The perception and its role in society is further complicated by the natural evolution of language itself. English thrives as a living language with over one billion speakers worldwide. It constantly adapts with cultural shifts and societal changes. "We shouldn't strive to maintain traditional rules because grammar evolves at a slow pace," Lu said. "It's not like the evolution of grammar will lead to a completely new, unintelligible language. For example, in the past, it was

standard not to end sentences with prepositions or split infinitives or begin sentences with conjunctions. Now it's more accepted, especially in spoken language and also in written language."

This understanding of grammatical evolution highlights the delicate balance between tradition and innovation. As it changes, educators must also evaluate these shifts and adjust accordingly. "Let's make sure [grammar] evolves in a way where it's still helpful and useful," McGarry said. "We lose some meaning sometimes. We need to be intentional, as educators, about [explaining] what we're losing and why we might not want to lose it. But we can't really control this. Language is more powerful than any individual or even any government. Language has a tendency to shift and adapt based on social reality."

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FAM

HELLA

BUSSIN'

Y'ALL

FINNA

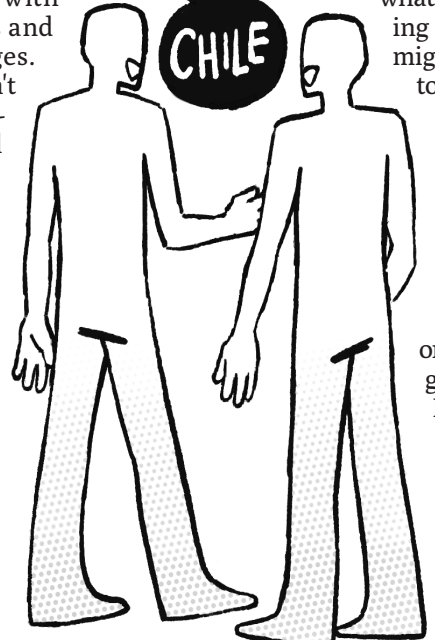
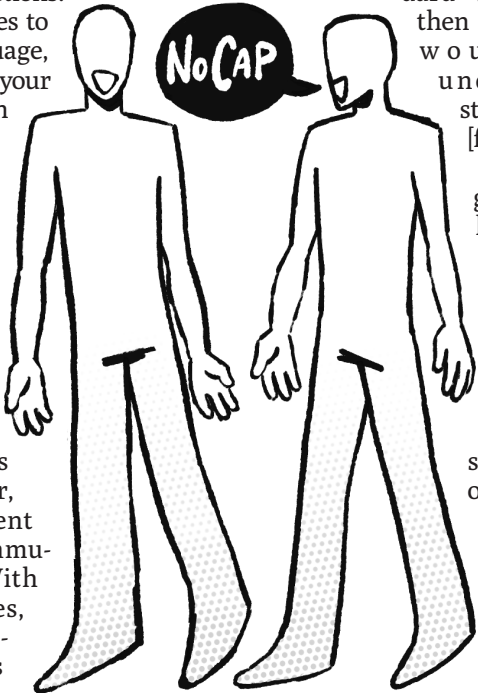
NoCAP

LOW-KEY

SLAPS

CHILE

BOUTTA



DEATH Crossword



Scan the QR code here to get the key!

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ALEXA STERRY

Across:

- Term of address for a man
- Contraption with a comical name
- Bees spreading life not death
- Skater slang for "cool"
- Cocktail name: Mai _____
- Aragon's wonderful mascot!
- Little Rock's state, abbreviated
- SLBM death by the _____
- A drink with jam and bread, according to Julie Andrews
- Battlefield non-death
- To you, in spanish
- What scalpers sell
- Scenic Van Gogh
- Pronoun with "them"
- Show where Mr. Schue covers "Thong Song"
- Not IQ, but _____
- A rank above ensign, abbreviated
- Places with exhibits and gift shops
- Prefix followed by "-structure" or "-red"

Down:

- Spanish "score"
- Too c_____ for sch_____
- Morbid part of a newspaper
- Word after Tang or Qi
- What to be careful for when wearing all white
- Defunct NYC transportation system
- Algerian genre inspired by rock
- Fatherly physique: dad _____
- "No Chill" rapper, abbreviated
- Hilton who coined "that's hot"
- A way to say "understood"
- Name for a male sheep
- Cancel/veto
- Electric company with ampersand
- First word of band names
- Throat clearing noise
- In catholicism, Masses held to commemorate deaths
- Rapper Nas's debut
- Whatever Lola wants, Lola _____
- Symbol for element Tin
- _____ Trinket of Hunger Games
- _____ So Gay, single off Katy Perry's debut album



INTERSCOPE RECORDS & CMG THE LABEL

GloRilla: let her cook

Kyra Hsieh
FEATURES WRITER

On Oct. 11, Gloria Hallelujah Woods, more commonly known as GloRilla, released her debut album "GLORIOUS." Best known for her hit song "FNF (Let's Go)," which was nominated for Best Rap Performance in the 2023 Grammy Awards, GloRilla creates empowering messages for her fans while also showcasing her own life experiences in her 15-track album.

Beginning with "INTRO," GloRilla immediately sets up who she is as a person and artist. Her mindset that she "loves criticism" sparks admiration in many.

In an interview with Apple Music published on April 3, 2023, she addresses haters.

"[Internet trolls] make up a lot of lies about me and that's where I get mad," GloRilla said. "... Anything else they say about how I look, how I sound; everybody got an opinion ... I really don't care."

This attitude is reflective of one of her main purposes of the album: to address haters and tell them that she doesn't care what they think. For example, the fourth track "TGIF" claps back at her haters with lyrics like "60 thousand fans came to see me do my dance," similar to "HOW I LOOK (feat. Megan Thee Stallion)," where she responds to critics by flaunting her Grammy nomination with clever lyrics like "How I look? Ask the 'Gram."

"STOP PLAYING" is the sixth track on the album and has a much more unique production style in comparison to other songs on the album which can sound repetitive. The background of the song doesn't have the heavy beats that characterize the majority of the album and stands as a stark contrast to her sharp rapping. The message of the album isn't as unique as its production, but it remains powerful because it speaks about never settling for less than you deserve. Meanwhile, she addresses her fans saying "I'm doin' this for all the baby Glo's."

One of the greatest strengths of the album is the sheer number of features of other artists, seen in the next track "DON'T DESERVE (feat. Muni Long)." Singer Muni Long's ethereal voice is opposite of GloRilla's and adds much-needed variability to the album.

Although Muni Long's feature is great for the album, the most vital feature on the album is in

"RAIN DOWN ON ME." The song features four different artists: Kirk Franklin, Maverick City Music, Kierra Sheard and Chandler Moore. This is by far the most unique song on the album because it is a gospel song at its core, which GloRilla grew up on. The song is a prayer to God in thanksgiving and asking for protection. The song is characterized by gospel riffs, a piano and even some pop influences, and yet remains true to GloRilla's rap style.

"I really liked 'RAIN DOWN ON ME,'" said junior Leah Chinn. "It had artists I've never heard about before ... and I think it sounded different; maybe because of all the different artists."

"GLO'S PRAYER" immediately follows "RAIN DOWN ON ME" and has the same gospel motif. However, she has no features on this song, so her own style is able to shine through while still expressing her roots. The song is about asking God to help her get a guy, who is a walking red flag, off her mind.

Unfortunately, the next few songs on the album are extremely repetitive. The lyrics, meaning and sound have little variation between all the songs. The only notable mention is the title of the thirteenth track, "LET HER COOK," which is a widely known slang phrase coined by Gen-Z. GloRilla has had some popular hits on TikTok like "F.N.F. (Let's Go)" and "Yeah Glo!" so she may be trying to create another TikTok hit by appealing to its young users. Yet, the actual content of the song feels extremely repetitive. The only thing that helps to differentiate between songs is the featured artists.

"QUEEN OF MEMPHIS" ends the album and pays homage to her hometown of Memphis, Tennessee. It closes up the album with a neat bow because GloRilla addresses haters and speaks on her personal experience of gaining fame. She emanates confidence in her abilities with lyrics like "I knew I was a chosen one when I made it out."

Overall, I would rate the album 3.5 out of five stars for its repetitive sounds and message, clever use of featured artists and tribute to GloRilla's roots and home.

OUR OUTLOOK
★★★★☆

Partying hard; hardly partying

Zack Li
FEATURES WRITER

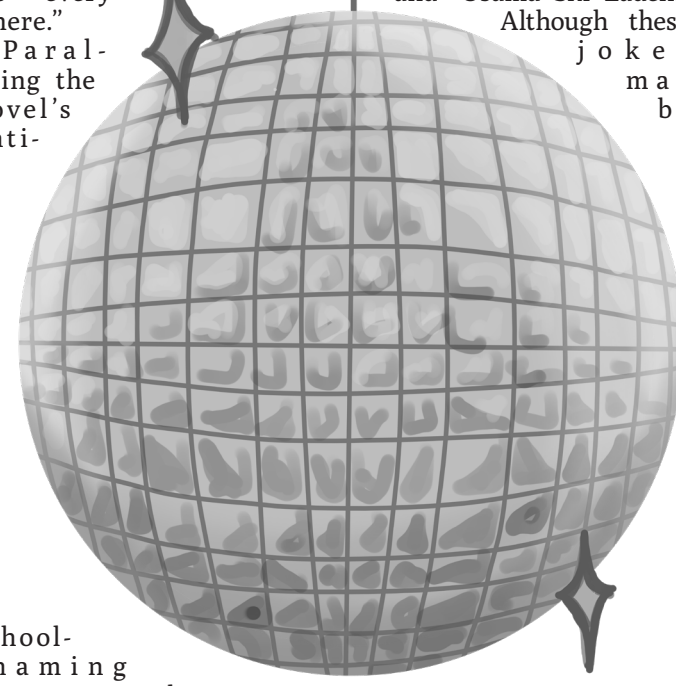
"Think about it ... a world with no college sweatshirts," said Jon Hart, the author of "Party School," "How would the world be different?"

With college application season in full throttle, the pressure to attend a prestigious, high-ranking college is making its rounds on applying seniors. Hart aims to expose the often downplayed but detrimental culture of school shaming in his coming-of-age fiction "Party School." The book follows Dylan Mills, an unremarkable student navigating his freshman year at North South University, a college notorious for its party culture and widespread weed usage.

Hart establishes his stance on college ranking hierarchies almost immediately through a particularly curt categorization of schools; there are "it" schools, schools everyone wants to go to, "wannabe it" schools such as North South, and everything else in between. Finding it difficult to accept his place at a school that's looked down upon by the prestige-grubbing elite of his hometown Castleton, Dylan grows distant from his girlfriend Rosemary, an "it" school student

"I thought it was an odd thing to say. [School shaming] happens subtly. It happens overtly. It's everywhere."

Paral-
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novel's
anti-



manages to make multiple Taliban jokes, giving one of his characters the nickname "The Taliban Kid" and "Osama Ski Laden."

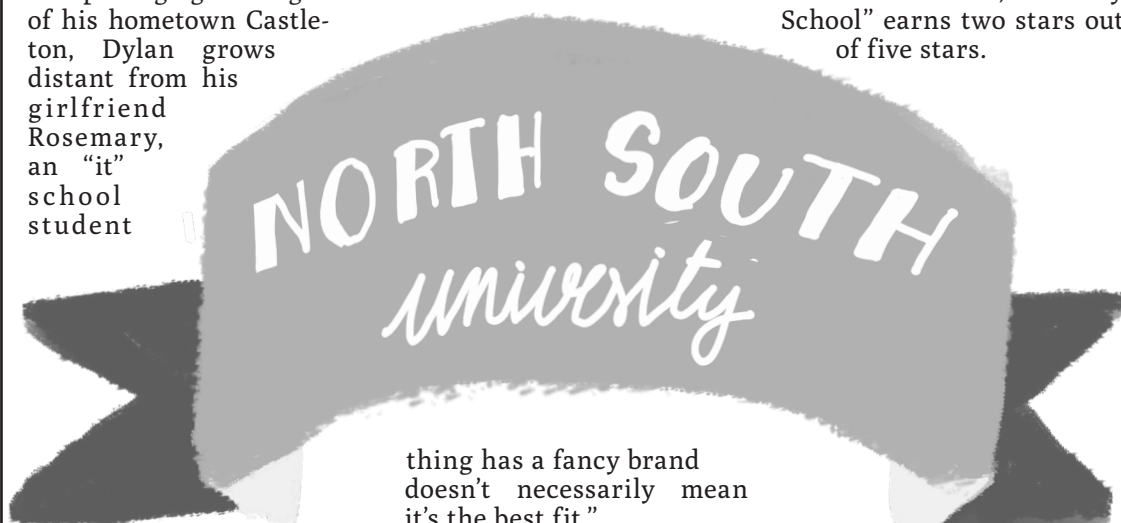
Although these
jokes
may
be

school-
shaming
message, Hart also
argues that college rank-
ings do not represent a stu-
dent's individual compat-
ibility with the school.

"You want the right fit," Hart said. "The journey is important, and [so are] the relationships you [form] and the knowledge you pick up. Just because some-

made in the name of social commentary, it comes off as insensitive and obtrusive, especially due to the lack of similarly satirical nicknames for other ethnic groups.

Overall, for its lackluster writing and comedy but easy-to-appreciate themes and characters, "Party School" earns two stars out of five stars.



thing has a fancy brand doesn't necessarily mean it's the best fit."

Hart attempts to deliver this message through the quirky cast of characters Dylan meets in his first few weeks of college who force Dylan out of his comfort zone and help him realize the agency he holds outside of his relationship with Rosemary. I found these characters, while occasionally cliché and over-the-top, to still be quite memorable and complex.

While Hart originally set out intending to

and the one who calls all the shots in their relationship.

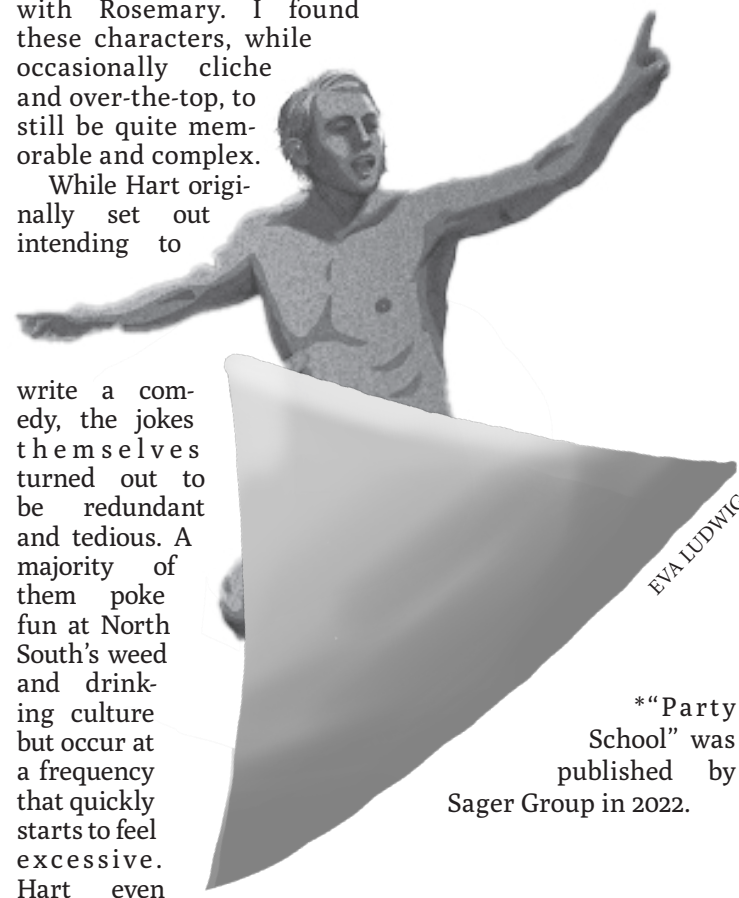
This frustrating generalization of colleges as either snobby and rich or idiot and stoner-infested does nothing to push the moral of not school shaming, especially since it comes from Dylan himself. The comment comes off as more of a direct person-to-person message from the author to the reader instead of integrating into the book as part of the conflict. The pompous it-school and stupid bad-school association is also never fully resolved; none of the characters ever come to reject this pigeonhole, so the ending leaves one feeling a bit defeated.

Despite this, Hart's anti-school shaming message still manages to come through. He accomplishes this by developing a variety of characters in Dylan's hometown who directly reflect school shaming and the toxic competitiveness of the college admissions process.

"A relative [once] school-shamed [my partner] and said that I could have married someone who went to a better school," Hart said.

write a comedy, the jokes themselves turned out to be redundant and tedious. A majority of them poke fun at North South's weed and drinking culture but occur at a frequency that quickly starts to feel excessive. Hart even

OUR OUTLOOK
★★★☆☆



*"Party School" was published by Sager Group in 2022.

Dueling opinions: Phone-Free School Act

On Sept. 23, California Gov. Gavin Newsom signed the Phone-Free School Act which mandates that all California school districts create a policy limiting smartphone usage by July 1, 2026. Proponents of the bill claim that it is meant to mitigate mental health issues caused by phone use and increase participation in class settings. The bill maintains that students must be allowed their phones during an emergency, yet opponents of the bill are still concerned about student safety. Should school districts embrace the Phone-Free School Act?

YES

NO

Ashley Tsui
FEATURES WRITER

Staring at the numbered pouches on every classroom wall, I unconsciously gripped the phone in my pocket tighter. I couldn't explain the attachment I felt to my phone — just that it was there and overwhelmingly so.

Yet, as time went on, I felt more comfortable relinquishing the device during class, barely noticing that I didn't have it. I never used my phone while actively learning in the first place.

The Phone-Free Act states that all schools must develop a policy that limits usage of cell phones — it doesn't specify how intense said policy has to be, nor does it quote a particular restriction method.

Among students, a great concern of the act and its terms is the potential use of Yondrs: bags that store phones that can only be opened using a magnetic lock. However, because it takes valuable time for each student to individually unlock a Yondr pouch, they would arguably be highly troublesome in a time of crisis, making them incompatible with the terms of the bill, which states “a pupil shall not be prohibited from possessing ... a smartphone ... in the case of an emergency.” The safety of students comes first and foremost, and it would be most logical to choose the option that can best guarantee their comfort and security.

At Aragon, phone pouches have been proven to work and receive few complaints from students, as the approach is less extreme than Yondrs. By choosing to use wall pouches as the standard phone limitation method, the change is far easier to adapt to and is more realistic than purchasing hundreds of costly Yondrs.

Students may view this bill as proof that administrators don't trust them and want to punish them. However, exerting authority over youth is not the intended purpose of the bill. Instead, the act hopes to improve the mental health of teens, assist them in their learning experience and best take advantage of class time.

Research shows excessive phone usage to

be linked to mental health issues such as anxiety and depression. Administrators at Aragon also observe stress and other issues stemming from phone usage — likely due to the overuse of addictive social media.

“A lot goes on under the surface [as] more students go to see wellness counseling,” said Advanced Standing Modern World History teacher Jonathan Felder. “I do remember a couple instances where I would question a student and they said they've been experiencing some bullying. A lot of times, things are happening that I [as a teacher] don't know about, whether it's mental health challenges or bullying or other problems related to social media or phone usage.”

Rather than try to demoralize students, the act aims to encourage youth to decrease their screen time and connect with others outside of the digital world. By spending less time on phones, students will be able to decrease the toll excessive phone usage takes on their mental health and form bonds by personally interacting with peers.

Considering all the negative impacts of Yondrs, it doesn't make sense for the district to use them, especially when Aragon already has a working alternative.

Eliminating the possibility of Yondrs makes the act appear less intense — because it is. Few students have noted even using their phones in class, meaning there would be little change to their daily routine, especially if the administration chooses phone pouches as their token limitation method.

Many times, the absence of phones is a net positive that allows students to have the capacity to focus on lessons to 100% of their ability.

“The Phone-Free Act could work out well for

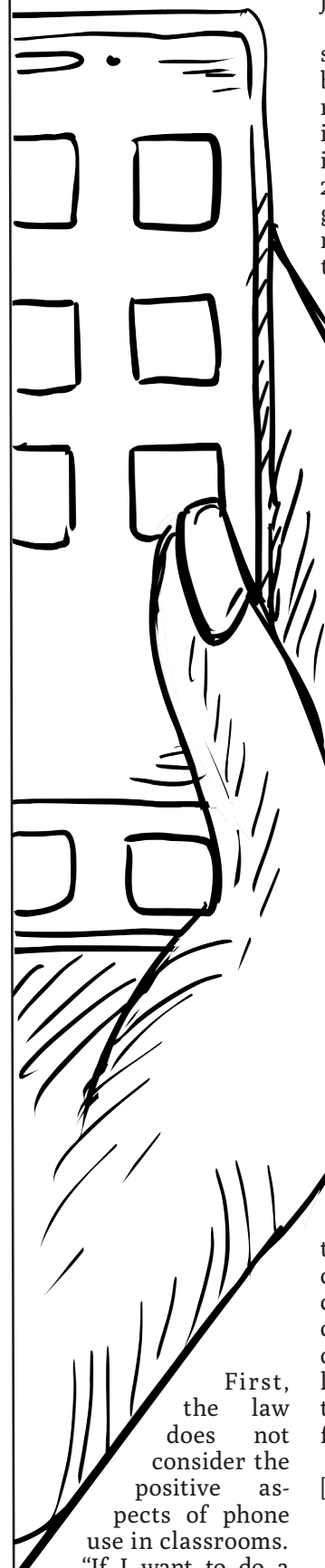


education,” said sophomore Saurab Gulati. “This shouldn't affect most classes, though I see many students use phones to take pictures of lectures or for other academically oriented purposes. But I do believe that attention in class will be increased without the use of phones, provided that students don't fall asleep in class.”

Though the act may seem pointless to Aragon students as phone restriction strategies have already been implemented in some classes, this is likely not the case for other schools throughout California. As the bill aims to decrease mental health issues among millions of youths, it may affect other schools more than it affects Aragon. It's logical to support this act, as it will help better the health of students who need it.

Antonio Mangano
FEATURES WRITER

It's hard to imagine the Phone Free School Act will benefit the education and social system in California. The act attempts to solve a key issue in California's education and social system: the usage and distraction of smartphones in class. However, Newsom's newly-signed legislation doesn't cover all of the important aspects.



like 80-year-old people, they take a while to start up, and they take a while to get going.”

Newsom's legislation is met with lots of concern from parents. According to the National Parents Union, the majority of parents, 56%, want their children to have access to their phones during the school day.

“Parents are [creating] backlash because they want to be able to contact their kids in the case that something happens,” said junior Noel Padilla.

According to the CNN school shootings database, the number of annual school shootings in the United States has increased by 112% since 2021. With this staggering statistic, it only makes sense for parents to be concerned.

“God forbid there is an emergency, and kids need to contact home, and their phone is locked in a [Yondr] pouch ... it can get frustrating,” Von Euw said.

The Yondr pouch is a device that magnetically locks a student's phone in a pouch. Though they aren't the only option to abide by this legislation, the act indirectly encourages schools to consider the pouches as a viable choice. Some will inevitably make the switch.

Though the bill mandates that phones be accessible in the case of an emergency, it will be very difficult to guarantee this. Due to the limitation of time and other circumstances that come with the threat of danger, having 35 students individually unlock a pouch to access their phones seems ineffective and dangerous.

“If people can't get [the Yondr pouches]

open the normal way, they're gonna break them open,” Padilla said. “And breaking them open proves you have to an extra and unaccounted step just so you can have access to your phone in the case of an emergency.”

Phones are a prominent and possibly hazardous aspect of society, yet, the state strives to treat the symptom with this legislation rather than the disease: phone addiction.

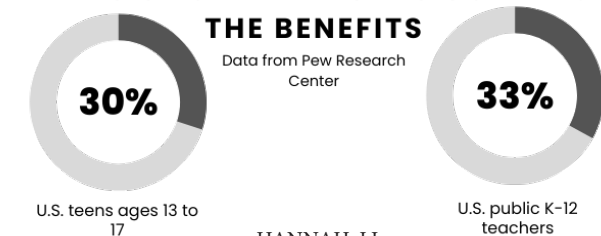
“If you teach a kid early on that a phone is more of a tool rather than a piece of entertainment, it could be really beneficial because they can learn how to regulate [phone usage] on their own,” Padilla said.

The country has started to address phone addiction by cracking down on predatory social media. On April 24, President Joe Biden signed a law that will potentially have TikTok banned under certain circumstances. The usage of TikTok has proven to be harmful to child development as the app is constructed to be addictive. However, this legislation isn't an outright ban on TikTok, and the ban will only happen if terms are not met by January 2025. Though this is a step in the right direction, more effort has to be put in to solve phone addiction.

Due to the lack of effectiveness of Newsom's legislation, it's important to consider other possibilities that will resolve the issue of phone being a distraction in a more efficient and safe manner.

Though the idea is well-intentioned, the Phone-Free School Act's execution needs to be overhauled. From the minor inconveniences of not having access to phones in class, to the major concerns of child safety from parents, it is evident that the Phone-Free School Act is in need of substantial changes and revisions.

% OF RESPONDERS WHO SAY THE HARMS OF SMARTPHONES OUTWEIGH THE BENEFITS



HANNAH LI

Too hot to handle? Practicing in the heat

Phoebe Harger
SPORTS WRITER

Over the summer, California passed new laws that updated the guidelines schools must follow regarding athletes participating in sports in the heat. As per California State Law Assembly Bill No. 1653 and California Interscholastic Federation Bylaw 503. K, all member schools must abide by the CIF Heat Illness Prevention and Heat Acclimatization Policies. The key aspect of these policies is the extreme heat procedures, which limit the amount of physical activity athletes can engage in depending on the temperature.

The new guidelines are divided into five “wet bulb” temperature categories. Since wet bulb temperatures are equivalent to the temperature when the humidity is 100%, the actual ceiling temperatures are usually higher than stated. In the green category, below 76.1°F, athlete activity is unrestricted. The yellow category, 76.3°F to 81°F, requires caution with intense exercise, and coaches must provide three breaks of at least four minutes each hour. The orange category, 81.1°F to 84°F, limits practices to two hours with four breaks of four minutes each, allowing football players to wear only helmets, shoulder pads and shorts. In the red category, 84.2°F to 86°F, games are allowed with hydration breaks, but outdoor practice is limited to one hour without conditioning or protective gear, including 20 minutes of rest. Finally, the black category, above 86°F, prohibits all outdoor practices and competitions.

While these guidelines are

unlikely to affect winter sports or spring sports until late in the season, their immediate impact was felt during a recent heat wave that struck the Bay Area in late September and early October. With temperatures soaring into the high nineties, coaches were forced to either reschedule their practices or cancel them altogether.

One of the many teams affected was Aragon’s cross-country team, who had to modify their practice for over a week.

“Our practice got canceled once and we kept having to move our practices to later in the day,” said junior runner Dahlia Anapolsky. “There’s been a lot of times when instead of doing a long run or a track workout, we’ve had to do a shorter practice. So it’s definitely affected us in the way that we can’t practice as hard or train as much.”

While only a few teams have had to cancel their practices, having to change practice times on short notice can be challenging for players and coaches, disrupting their personal schedules and leading to logistical difficulties and overall affecting team preparation.

Though the new laws have their downsides, as many recognize the law as helping to protect the health and well-being of high school athletes.

Having completed training at the district office over the summer and now overseeing the implementation of the guidelines at Aragon, athletic director and

former head football coach Steve Sell believes these laws are essential for the safety of athletes.

“I know not all coaches agree with me, but I think the laws are a good thing,” Sell said. “When it gets to a certain temperature, I just think about how when I was a coach, I wouldn’t have wanted to be out there. So I can only imagine how the players feel having to run around and practice in their pads and helmets.”

Sell emphasizes that the safety of student-athletes takes precedence over the desire to practice and win games.

“Coaches sometimes need to get creative,” Sell said. “Maybe one day you have to do a walk-through in the gym, or you have to watch film. It’s okay to not be on the field hitting every single day.”

While the guidelines were put in place to protect players from heat exhaustion, not all coaches are fully in favor of them. For instance, football head coach Ashley Parham believes that the guidelines could hinder his players’ ability to acclimate to playing in the heat, leaving

them unprepared for games in high temperatures.

“The rules are a little too restrictive,” Parham said. “I believe kids aren’t going to be as prepared and more likely to face severe or adverse effects from the heat because they’re not conditioned to playing in them.”

Sell acknowledges these concerns, but stays firm in his opinion of the laws.

“Sometimes coaches are going to get frustrated,” Sell said. “But it’s important to remember why California has this rule. Kids have died from playing in the heat.”

In addition to heat guidelines, the state is also prioritizing emergency preparedness through mandatory automated external defibrillator training. Because of this, Sell and athletic trainer Daniel Walker have taught all fall

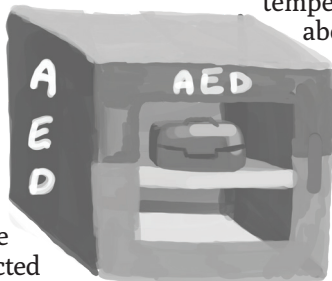
sports teams how to operate an AED, as well as how to react in the case of a cardiac emergency.

“The training is great in my opinion,” Sell said. “The reality of it is that the AED thing is most likely going to impact the coach. But also, if you have a team of thirty kids, that’s thirty kids who we’re sending out into the world who now know how to save a life.”

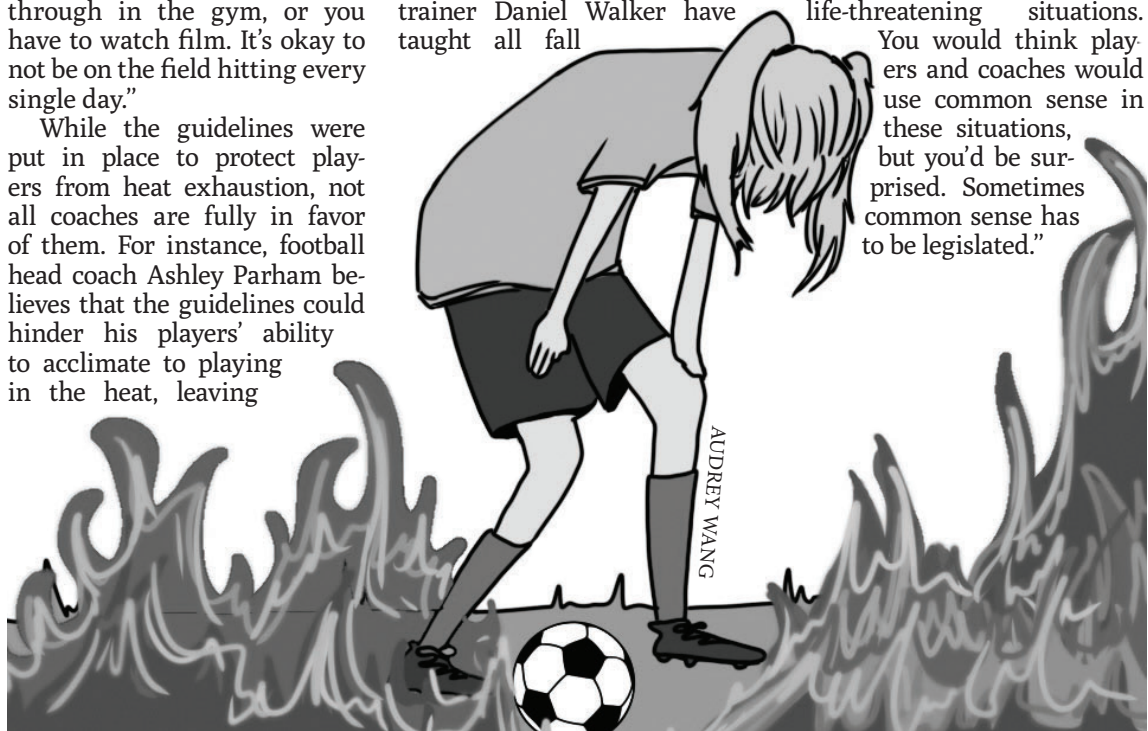
The state believes that education and training are crucial in fostering a culture of safety in high school sports. Going forward, Aragon hopes to eliminate the threat of any heat-related crises, as well as prepare athletes to handle emergency situations.

“Overall, it’s not about the coaches, it’s about player safety,” Sell said. “These rules protect kids from potentially life-threatening situations.

You would think players and coaches would use common sense in these situations, but you’d be surprised. Sometimes common sense has to be legislated.”



EVA LUDWIG



AUDREY WANG

World Series strengthens historic baseball rivalry

Charlie Henderson
SPORTS WRITER

The Fall Classic was one to remember this year, as two star studded rosters battled it out in an extremely close series. The series was much tighter than the Dodgers 4-1 victory may suggest, as many games came down to a couple plays or even a couple pitches. With Game One being decided in extra innings, and Games Two and Three both being two-run victories by the Dodgers.

The Bay Area is filled with die-hard Giants fans, so not too many people in this area were happy about seeing the rival Dodgers in the playoffs, especially with them being in the World Series. Rivals or not, the Dodgers played an entertaining brand of baseball all postseason. Through the heavily contested series with the San Diego Padres in the National League Division Series, it seemed like the Dodgers were must-see television whether people wanted to see them win or lose. Teachers and students at Aragon shared negative sentiments about the Dodgers’ run in the playoffs.

“I was rooting for anybody against the Dodgers,” said physics teacher Steve Ratto. “For many MLB fans this series was like choosing the lesser of two evils.”

The Yankees and the Dodgers are two historic MLB franchises that people love to see lose, but of course around here the Dodgers are just hated a little more.

“I hate the Yankees and Dodgers so I wasn’t rooting for anyone [since] my Giants weren’t in the playoffs,” said senior baseball player Josh Jacobs. “I hate the Yankees just a little less than the Dodgers.”

The Yankees-Dodgers rivalry is historic, dating back to the days when the Dodgers played in Brooklyn. The Yankees dominated the rivalry, winning eight out of their twelve World Series meetings with the Dodgers. Baseball fans here at Aragon appreciate this historic matchup.

“It’s just a historic rivalry, with the Yankees always being in the World Series, and the Dodgers being dominant as of late,” said senior Osvaldo Gonzalez. “It was great to see this next generation of stars

carry the legacy of two of the biggest brands in baseball.”

The final game was a near perfect summary of the series: the Dodgers always had a little more in the tank. In Game Five, the Yankees got off to a hot start at the plate with back to back home runs by Aaron Judge and Jazz Chisholm in the bottom of the first inning. Judge’s two run shot and Chisholm’s

the Yankees, the game fell apart. The Dodgers had no quit and thanks to a couple of errors by the Yankees defense they were able to tie the game at five runs in the fifth inning.

The manner in which the Yankees blew their lead shocked a lot of fans.

“It’s crazy. You saw small mistakes turn into a bunch of runs that wouldn’t have happened if the Yankees just made routine plays,” said senior baseball player Dalton Kane.

The Yankees were eventually able to score and take a one run lead as the game progressed, but this lead quickly dissolved and they eventually lost the game by one run, 7-6.

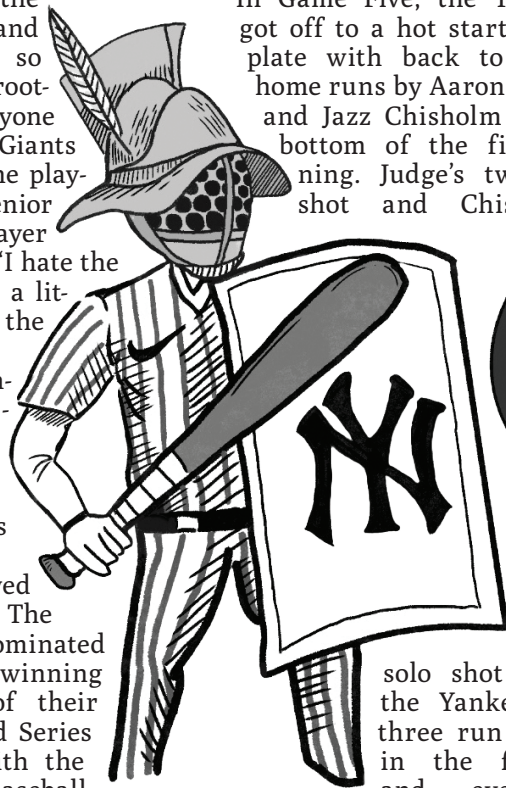
This year’s series was filled with drama, record breaking

performances and amazing storylines, from Freddie Freeman’s historic performances to Aaron Judge’s postseason struggles. At Aragon, baseball fans loved to witness these stories unfold.

“My favorite story line is that Shohei Ohtani gets to play in the World Series,” Ratto said. “He went to the Dodgers to compete for a World Series, and he’s in the World Series. That’s good for baseball as a whole.”

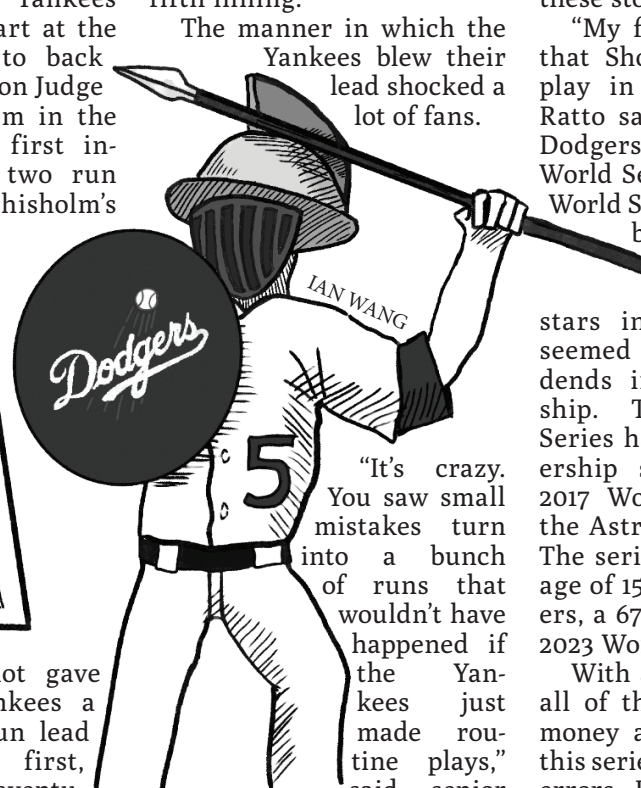
Having Ohtani and so many other stars in the World Series seemed to have paid dividends in terms of viewership. This year’s World Series had the highest viewership since the dramatic 2017 World Series between the Astros and the Dodgers. The series amassed an average of 15.8 million U.S. viewers, a 67% increase from the 2023 World Series.

With all of the story lines, all of the drama, all of the money and all of the stars, this series came down to basic errors. Baseball is poetic in that way: the simplest things have the biggest consequences. Players can be in the right position, have the strength, have the speed, have the money, have the fans, have everything a player could ever ask for — but they still have to make the plays.



solo shot gave the Yankees a three run lead in the first, and eventually

they built this lead up to 5-0 by the third inning. It looked like the Bronx Bombers were primed to make history, as they had the chance to be the first World Series team to force a game six after facing a 3-0 series deficit. When things seemed up for



IAN WANG



The girls water polo team huddles for a cheer.

MADELINE ALLEN

Water polo suffers 5-14 loss to M-A

Adya Tewari
SPORTS WRITER

On Oct. 23, Aragon girls water polo (5-5 overall) played Menlo-Atherton (10-0 overall) in their senior night game, losing 5-14. With the Bears undefeated, the Dons anticipated a challenging matchup going into the game.

"[Our] goal going into this game [was] to just do our best," said coach Arman Zahabi. "This is a big game, but it's also our senior night. We want to play the seniors as much as possible."

Menlo-Atherton had a dominant start to the game, scoring four goals in the first quarter.

However, despite the early setbacks in the game, the Dons managed to make it onto the board, with freshman Akira Snyder scoring in the first quarter. The Dons headed into the second quarter 1-4, with the Bears carrying on their momentum. Snyder scored another goal in the second quarter, ending the half 2-7.

Menlo-Atherton's forceful start to the game put the Dons on the defensive, with senior and team captain Kasey Guerra-Dorsa stepping up to make critical saves as goalie. Guerra-Dorsa later moved to play in the field, allowing senior Alex Pate to take over in goal.

"Our team has gotten better as we learned each other's strengths and weaknesses," Guerra-Dorsa said. "In the beginning, we had a lot of girls who had never played together before, so it was difficult to find an effective playing strategy. We definitely improved on this throughout the season and are now able to work well with each other."

The Dons continued to fight in the second half, with Snyder scoring her third goal of the day in the third quarter. The Bears continued to score, with the Dons ending the quarter 3-12.

Energized by Snyder's momentum, Aragon persisted. In addition to limiting the Bears to only two goals in the fourth quarter, junior co-captain Emerson Makuta and senior Keira McLintock each scored a goal in the fourth quarter, bringing the score up to 5-14.

In spite of the loss, the Dons took pride in their development this season.

"I loved watching our team improve throughout the season," Makuta said. "I especially think that we improved with passing communication."

The Dons took pride in ensuring that all team members had time in the pool, regardless of the final score.

"It was really important to me that we got our seniors in to play, so that was definitely new," Makuta said. "We normally focus on starters, but playing with a different mix of teammates each time is definitely a fun experience."

Team members also reflected on learning points throughout the game, with sophomore Lizzie Yuan highlighting the difficulty of breaking through Menlo-Atherton's defense.

"I think the most challenging moments were just getting movement on offense to score, as well as scoring in general," Yuan said. "We did our best ... to run plays and get movements, and as the game progressed we took more and more shots, leading to more goals."

However, she also was also proud of the team chemistry despite the loss.

"We worked well against a really strong team that we knew would be difficult to beat," Yuan said. "We managed to get everyone or almost everyone some playing time. The score isn't always a reflection of how we came out of the game feeling."

Moving forward, the team hopes to improve their performance in the CCS playoffs by building on the success they've had so far as a team.

"We've gotten to know our teammates and their playing styles, and use it to our advantage," said sophomore Kira Partridge. "We're definitely a much stronger team than we started as, and it shows through the scores."

Currently ranked third in PAL Bay Division, the Dons hope to finish their season strong and secure a spot in the CCS playoffs.

MADELINE ALLEN



Junior Hannah Lin goes for a chip shot.

LIAN WANG

Girls golf qualifies for CCS

Quinn Shirley
SPORTS WRITER

On Oct. 22, the Aragon girls golf team (9-1-0) took down Mills (6-4-0) in a Central Coast Section qualifiers match, ending with a score of 211 to Mills 233. The match took place at Poplar Creek golf course, where the two teams battled it out over the front nine holes for a spot in playoffs.

The Dons, tied for first in Peninsula Athletic League with Carlmont, were hoping to bypass the qualifying round altogether, but ended up having to compete due to Carlmont's lower differential in league, which landed them the top seed and a bye into CCS. Taking the challenge in stride, the Dons ended up beating the Vikings by 22 strokes, improving upon their previous win of 13 strokes against Mills a week before.

"For the team, we did really well," said junior Hannah Lin. "We got the lowest score ever of the season."

The top scorers for each side, Aragon junior Kate Chong and Mills junior Angelina Chen, ended in a tie, both scoring a 39. However, Lin, Aragon's No. 1 golfer for the season, finished with a 43, three strokes below Mills's Kayli Tsang's score of 46, putting the Dons ahead after the first foursome.

"I think I did okay," Lin said. "I usually score better than that, but it wasn't the worst outcome."

The Dons' second foursome also came out on top, with Aragon senior Sofia Dioli and sophomore Autumn Ogawa scoring a combined total of 89, eight strokes lower than their Mills opponents.

After a great shot on hole seven landing her on the green,

Dioli was able to earn the par in two strokes.

"I started focusing on the putt, which way it was gonna roll and how fast I thought it was going to be," Dioli said. "There was a lot of excitement because usually that never happens, but focusing on the next shot is something that I've been trying to work on."

It wasn't just her own performance that made hole seven stand out.

"Everybody in the foursome actually got on the green on

coach Mike Loy prioritizes compatibility over skill, striving to put together players who perform well with each other. However, this season he felt he could pair any two players together for a good result, a reflection of the camaraderie and closeness of the team.

"We all get along really well," Lin said. "Especially for our Carlmont Games, everyone gets really stressed, and so we're really good at making sure everyone's feeling okay."

Moving forward, the girls shift their focus to individual PAL qualifiers.

"I'm definitely working a lot on my short game," Dioli said. "That's where I lose a lot of strokes, but again, also working on my confidence and no matter what the outcome is, trying to be proud of how I played."

Like Dioli, Lin also wants to work on her short distance game, in addition to improving her overall accuracy.

"I want to try to be more consistent," Lin said. "Lately I've been having [some] good shots, and then, the next one would be really bad, and I'm having a hard time telling what's going wrong."

The girls golf team competed at PAL Championships on Oct. 29 at Poplar Creek Golf Course.



LIAN WANG

Girls volleyball celebrates senior night despite loss

Olivia Mukherjee
SPORTS WRITER

On Oct. 29, the Aragon girls volleyball team (17-16 overall) celebrated their senior night after losing in straight sets to the Menlo-Atherton Bears (23-7 overall) in a Bay Division Peninsula Athletic League match.

The score didn't reflect the competitive nature of the match, but the night was ultimately a celebration of the senior players and their contributions to the team.

The gym was filled with supporters, including family, friends and members of the JV team, all there to commemorate the seniors.

Head coach Annette Gennaro expressed the importance of recognizing the hard work and dedication of the graduating players.

"[It's essential] ... to celebrate our seniors who have invested so much time and effort into this program," Gennaro said. "They've set an example for the younger players and helped lead our team this season."

From the outset, the game was close between the two teams, with the Dons briefly overcoming Menlo's consistent lead in the third set.

The result of the match was 0-3, with the Bears winning by seven, six and nine in the first, second and third sets respectively.

As the final whistle blew, the focus shifted from the score to the celebration of the seniors. The night concluded with a heartfelt ceremony, where each senior was honored with a sign and a small gift from the team.

Despite the loss, senior Sophie Rubinstein reflected on the significance of the night.

"Even though it was our last league game, it felt really good to have this much support from the crowd," Rubinstein said. "It makes me emotional [and] really happy."

This year, girls volleyball had five seniors on the team: Shannon Bullard, Sophie Rubinstein, Andrea Kunkel, Natalie Huang and Cassandra McMillan.

This celebration was bittersweet as underclassmen reflected on the seniors leaving.

"It's definitely sad, and I'm going to miss them on the court just because they're such a big part of the program," said sophomore Caitlyn

Robertson. "We really wanted to celebrate them and make this night special for our seniors."

Junior Gabriella Xiao echoed these feelings, reflecting on memories and experiences with the seniors throughout the years.

"We wanted to win because it was senior night," Xiao said. "They contribute a lot to the team, so I'm definitely going to miss them."

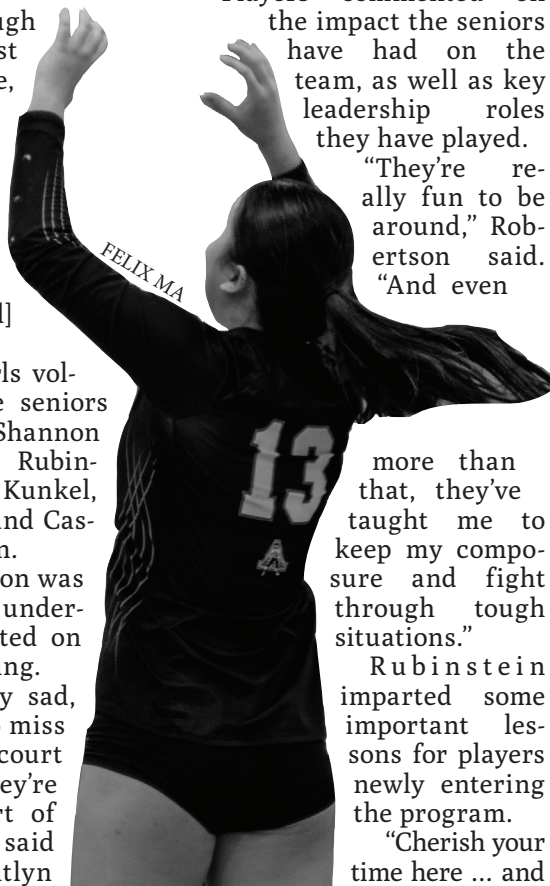
Players commented on the impact the seniors have had on the team, as well as key leadership roles they have played.

"They're really fun to be around," Robertson said. "And even

more than that, they've taught me to keep my composure and fight through tough situations."

Rubinstein imparted some important lessons for players newly entering the program.

"Cherish your time here ... and



Senior Natalie Huang receives post-game recognition.

FELIX MA

play your heart out, because it goes by in a flash," Robertson said. "Be grateful for your coaches, like Gennaro, Deane, Christy and Wu, because they really care about this program and the players in it."

Aside from leadership roles and practical skills, this group of seniors have grown stronger in character and resolve over their past four years at Aragon.

"They've truly learned those extra qualities [like] dedication, leadership, supporting your teammates," Gennaro said. "I am proud of the skills they've learned on and off the court, and how they've developed throughout the program."

The Dons played their first Central Coast Section playoff game on Nov. 5 against Willow Glen.

Cross country performs at PAL

Claire Qi
SPORTS WRITER

On Oct. 16 at the second Peninsula Athletic League meet, Aragon's varsity boys cross country team placed fifth out of 15 teams with a score of 148 while the varsity girls placed sixth out of 11 with a score of 117.

The coaches and athletes had optimistic expectations prior to the meet, aiming to place in the top half of the PAL. This would allow them to qualify for the CCS championships.

"[We] always have high expectations," said assistant coach John Abrams. "We'll be hopefully healthy and ready to go and do our best on Wednesday."

The Crystal Springs course is heralded as one of the most challenging in the entire country, known for its long initial downhill and a super steep incline dubbed "Cardiac Hill" nearing the finish. However, athletes were not nervous about running it, as meets were frequently located there, and the team had already had a meet there this season.

"I was pretty nervous when I did [the course] for the first time," said senior Lina Cruz Parada. "But I've gotten used

to the course, so I know what to expect."

Cruz Parada has been doing cross country for three years, starting from freshman year. She is always aiming to update her personal record, like many other athletes on the team.

"It's been a really long time coming because I [had not] PR[ed] on this course since around last year this time," said senior Joshua Fu. "The last time we ran this course, I was not able to run a fast lap."

All athletes had been focusing on preparing themselves mentally as well as physically for the meet. Abrams emphasized the amount of resilience cross-country athletes need.

"The grit and the endurance and the mental fortitude these athletes demonstrate on a daily basis is very impressive," Abrams said.

This run in particular was a challenging one. Many athletes mentioned struggling with the terrain and many steep hills.

"I felt great at the start," Cruz Parada said. "And then once we got to the Cardiac Hill, I slowed down a bit."

However, the team is satisfied with its performance.

"I did pretty good," said junior Dylan Lee. "This race is probably my best race out of the whole season."

Lee beat her goal of running 19:40 and finished with a time of 19:35, achieving a season record.

Many of the varsity boys also got personal records after this PAL meet. This includes Fu, who ran 17:44 and beat his previous record.

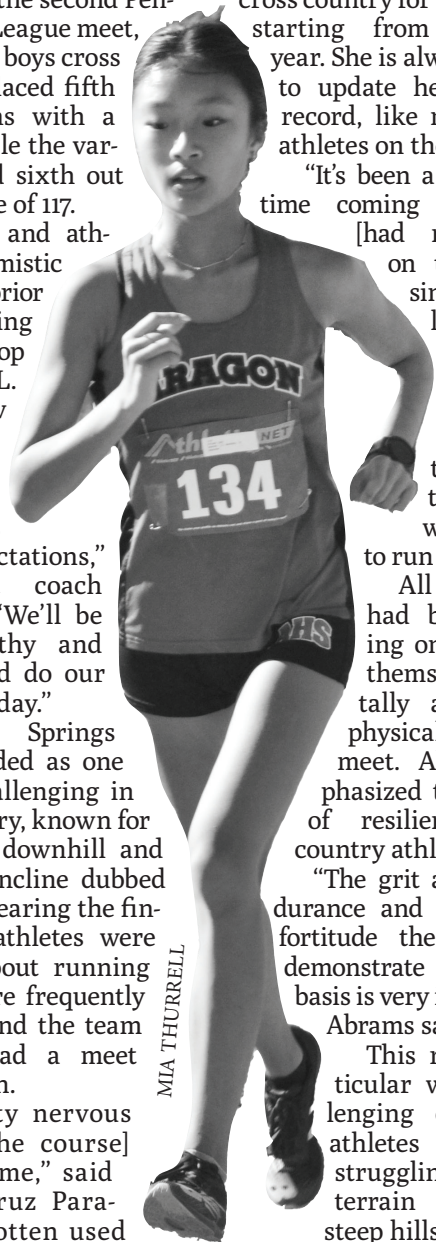
"It felt fun to go out a lot faster than usual," Fu said. "We've been doing a lot of longer distance training, so I was more confident about getting further before dying out."

Other athletes also feel that the training during practices has been very helpful.

"[Practice] definitely not only helps strengthen my ability, but I think it's very important to run anyway," Cruz Parada said.

The team had been focusing a lot on stamina during recent practices, and coaches plan to have the team working hard during practice before the next meet. They will focus again on endurance, as well as work on their speed and prepare for hills.

With building momentum, the team looks towards the stretch run of the season, beginning with the PAL Championships on Nov. 9.



MIA THURELL

Aragon Scoreboard

As of November 5, 2024

1 Football Record: **1-7** Homecoming Game: Nov. 9, 12 p.m. vs. Hillsdale

2 Girls Volleyball Record: **17-16** PAL **9-5** CCS First Round: Nov. 5, 7 p.m. vs Willow Glen

3 Flag Football Record: **7-7** PAL **6-5** Last game: Nov. 2, 44-20 loss to Archbishop Riordan

4 Girls Tennis Record: **18-6** PAL **12-4** PAL Team Finals: Oct. 30 loss to Burlingame

5 Girls Water Polo Record: **6-2** PAL **2-2** Last win: Oct. 21, 10-2 win over Half Moon Bay

6 Girls Golf Defeated Mills 211-233 in CCS qualifier, Oct. 22 at Poplar Creek

7 Boys Water Polo Record: **0-12** Last game: Oct. 23 loss to Menlo Atherton 13-5

8 Cross Country PAL #3 at Bedwell, Oct. 30
Boys Varsity: 4th out of 14 teams
Girls Varsity: 4th out of 13 teams

ANDREW DONG

sophie rubinstein (12)

kasey guerra-dorsa (12)

COURTESY OF IVAN HAGER



sou

matsumoto (12)

COURTESY OF IVAN HAGER



MADELINE ALLEN



Cross Country

Placed in top 10% for 2/3 October meets

"Sou is one of the most liked people on the whole team ... he's not a team captain, [but] that doesn't mean he's not a leader ... [Instead,] he leads by working hard and obviously proving himself in the races."

Frank Hunt, XC head coach

Girls Volleyball

98.5 serving percentage

"Sophie is very even keeled. She can get an unbelievable kill, and her face will look the same as when she makes a mistake ... for a volleyball player that's important because you don't want a bunch of highs and lows."

Annette Trimble-Gennaro, girls volleyball head coach

Girls Water Polo

101 season blocks and counting

"Her position as goalie ... means that she is our last line of defense, arguably one of, if not the most important person in the pool. She is the leader of our defense, and she has been instrumental in our success this season."

Rachel Downall, girls water polo head coach

ATHLETES OF THE MONTH

Boys Water Polo

Lead goal scorer for Aragon, drew most exclusions

"He played almost every minute of every game over the season. Our offense is centered around him, and he would take five meter shots for us. He developed as one of our strongest hole sets on the team."

Carly DeMarchena, boys water polo head coach

Girls Tennis

21-3 overall, 15-1 league, No.1 doubles in PAL

"She has been my swiss army knife, where ... if somebody can't make it, then I have to pull her up for singles, but she is the best doubles player in this whole league. When she's at the net, there's nobody any better."

Dave Owdom, girls tennis head coach

Cross Country

First runner for Aragon in all October meets

"She leads her team in each one of the workouts that we do. She just pushes herself, and [is] well liked by her teammates. She leads by example, and that's the best kind of leader you can have."

Frank Hunt, XC head coach



ETHAN TAWN

kieran moorhead (9)

dylan lee (11)



COURTESY OF IVAN HAGER



LIAN WANG

jessa williams (10)