

CHICAGO



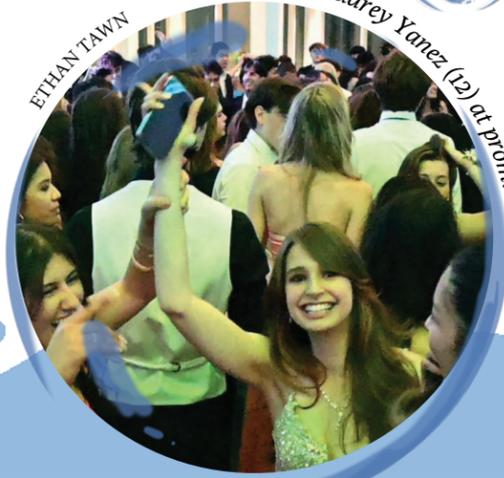
Sophie Rayes (11), Thomas Williams (12), and Samantha Green (11) performing in "Chicago the Musical".



MADLINE ALLEN AND ANNA HE



CONTINUED ON PAGE 5



ETHAN TAWN

Audrey Yanez (12) at prom.

RENDEZVOUS AT THE REEF

Diya Poojary
NEWS WRITER

On May 3, Aragon held its annual Prom with the theme "Rendezvous at the Reef" from 7-10 p.m. at the InterContinental San Francisco.

While the original plan was to host it at the Design Center Galleria, San Francisco, scheduling conflicts caused the Dance Commission to choose InterContinental as this year's venue. However, a more expensive venue meant a more constrained budget, leading to tickets being priced at \$100 and handmade decorations created by the other commissions in the leadership committee.

"A lot of [the decorations] are [made] out of cardboard so that they're freestanding," said senior and Dance Commission Head Ella Taylor. "We couldn't put anything on the walls of this venue, so we wanted things that could lean up against walls or hang on their own."

To decide on the theme for

Prom, the Senior Class Council held a theme design contest, in which juniors and seniors could submit their ideas, with the promise of a free ticket to Prom should they win. "Rendezvous at the Reef" was chosen as the final theme, with complementing ideas from other themes incorporated too.

"With every venue you have to take it and make [it] your own," Taylor said. "We've done the Design Center for as long as most people can remember, so we had to work around [the InterContinental's] floor plan since it was a little less familiar to us."

Despite the unexpected changes, many students expressed their appreciation for the venue.

"I think the venue's great," said senior Sofia Laura. "It can fit a lot of us at one time, and it's not super chaotic and stuffy and gross."



Gemma Albertson and Reika Lam
FEATURES AND NEWS WRITERS

Following the 90-day pause of tariffs on April 9, the probability of a recession hovers around 45%, according to Goldman Sachs. While the future of a recession is statistically becoming less likely, there are still high concerns amongst citizens regarding a possible recession. President Donald Trump's tariff policies

have disrupted trade, the stock market, prices and the overall economic stability of the U.S.

"I don't like the tariffs, I think they're not smart for the kind of goals he has," said junior and president of Economics Club Matthew Hagedorn. "There's a reason why we don't have a lot of the manufacturing he's looking to bring back in the U.S., and that's just simple economics. It's cheaper to produce stuff overseas, so it

Editors' Picks

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DARRA MCCLINTOCK

Charlie Harger (11) and Lola Lewis (12) at prom.



Aragon hosted its Prom on the third floor of the InterContinental. The registration desk and coat check led to the reception area, where the hotel served an assortment of pasta and dessert.

The menu was customized by the Commission and Leadership advisor Lindsay Bussey to provide portobello mushroom ravioli and rainbow rotini pasta, with sides of chicken, mushrooms, plum tomatoes and more. Dessert included fresh fruit tartlets and petit fours. Drinks were also provided.

The reception room opened to the dance floor, where students danced in an energetic crowd and blue and white lights created an energetic, loud atmosphere. Tables were situated at the corners of the room along with large windows overseeing one side.

Students could also play foosball and Jenga in the game room or take a moment away from the hubbub in the quiet room. In the lounge room, people could also watch "The Little Mermaid" (1989).

Many students loved the venue, and its efforts to seamlessly bring the theme to life.

"The atmosphere is really nice," said Zihan Yan, a senior at San Mateo High School. "They're playing The Little Mermaid here. They have curl decorations everywhere. It's so on theme. It's great."

Many seniors reflect on their last high school dance.

"I'm quite sad [that] high school's coming to an end, but it ended with a really good bang," said senior Khushi Parikh. "I wouldn't have it any other way."

allows people in the U.S. to get cheaper goods. Overall, globalization allows for that developed world that we enjoy today."

Trump brushed off worries regarding these tariffs during an April 30 statement, likening the issue to a matter of children getting "two dolls instead of thirty," despite millions of Americans expressing fear over the possibility of a sharp increase in prices. These fears are not unfounded; tariffs pose taxes on imports, and under the Trump administration, the U.S. now faces

increased costs for countless everyday products. While an increase in tariffs doesn't necessarily mean a recession is imminent, they can contribute to economic uncertainty.

Past historical instances of recession can serve as warning signs, or even indicators, for the future.

"When there's certainty, people are going to have jobs," said Economics and Financial Literacy teacher Kevin Nelson. "They have earning, they have spending [and] then they're confident. When uncertainty comes into the realm ... that pushes us the other direction."

CONTINUED ON ARAGONOUTLOOK.ORG

Editorial: good things are happening at Aragon

This editorial represents the opinions of 14 out of 14 Outlook editors.

The Outlook would like to take a chance to recognize positive institutions and policies on our campus.

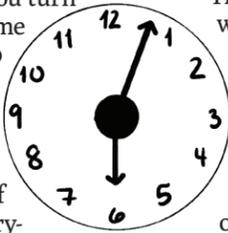
LENIENT DEADLINES

In recent years, many teachers have made their late work policies more lenient by giving majority or full credit for work submitted after the deadline — changes that the Aragon Outlook is deeply appreciative of. We commend the willingness of these teachers to rethink long-standing, strict approaches to work submission.

The process of reformulating policies can often take much deliberation, as it requires teachers to assess how they prioritize certain values.

“At some point ... I realized that my interest was in my students actually doing the assignments,” said history teacher Jayson Estassi. “You just have to get it done and make an honest attempt to demonstrate your understanding. So if you’re trying to do that, why should I deduct points? ... Whether you turn something in on time has nothing to do with your quality of understanding.”

This leniency further allows students to prioritize quality of work instead of worrying about when it should be submitted — helping to greatly reduce stress and improve overall understanding.



Teachers providing more leeway for students also allows them to find their own strategies for managing their time and balancing their workload more effectively.

“I would want [more] teachers to question their policies,” said history teacher William Colglazier. “A lot of us have policies that [our] teachers imposed on [us] when [we were] students, [but] there’s new research and new ideas ... If you want to keep your policy, that’s fine, but have an inquisitive, deliberative process and reasoning for it.”

LEADERSHIP

Raising awareness for environmental protection and mental health has been on the forefront of Leadership’s agenda, and it’s fair to say they delivered with style and creativity. The Relax and Roll event organized in December 2024 had students mix and match different essential oils, customizing their own aromas while allowing them to destress before the winter finals.

“The essential oil event was probably our best [event],” said Claire O’Brien, freshman and Health and Earth Wellness Crew member. “Everyone really liked that and we ran out really fast.”

Most recently, HEW Crew hosted the Rooted in California event, where mini pots of native flower species

were given out to students for Earth day. The Outlook also appreciates the waste-prevention efforts from Leadership, especially with the Homecoming thrift store which collected dress donations and presented them in a thrift store to help reduce waste.

School rallies have long been a highlight for school spirit, and its smooth transitions and eventfulness are testaments to the months of effort and dedication put into planning, from brainstorming to recruiting participants.

“The indoor rallies are definitely my favorite,” said senior and Rally Commission Head Alessandra Hernandez. “One of the first games that I came up with this year was human foosball ... it actually took us two weeks to arrange the PVC pipes for human foosball.”

Overall, Leadership has upped the ante in their efforts to build a healthier community at Aragon, and the Outlook wants to highlight the many different departments and commissions for their innovative approaches towards local and community issues.

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

With over 80 current student clubs and organizations at Ara-

gon, we recognize our school has been doing a wonderful job at representing a diverse range of interests and backgrounds. From cultural to academic, these strong student organizations have produced quality work that benefits not only the club itself, but the school community as well.

“[Being student-led] gives us space to do what we’re passionate about like weekly slides,” said Samirah Field, senior and vice president of Gender and Sexuality Alliance Club. “We do [activities] about whatever we think is important in relation to being queer on campus or being queer in general.”



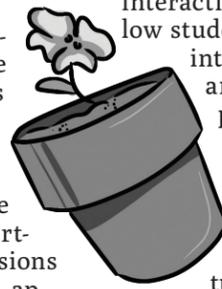
When it comes to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, there’s an abundance of clubs that cover student interests across fields. They host many fun, interactive activities that allow students to gain insights into the field, such as annual research competitions, workshops or even inviting professionals within those fields.

Moreover, there’s an abundance of cultural clubs on campus like Black Student Union, Chinese Culture Club, Middle Eastern Club and much more. These clubs celebrate the diverse community that Aragon has. Representations like these promote respect and appreciation among different cultures.

Students in clubs take strong initiative over these decisions, helping them develop strong leadership skills and allowing students to create more genuine connections and bonds, such as Aragon’s Link Crew program.

“[Link Crew] was very student-led,” said freshman Joshua Wu. “[The] activities are better because I feel more connected to my Link Crew leader than [the] teachers ... [My leaders] have similar experiences to me, so they have my perspective.”

Aragon has done a phenomenal job at making sure a diverse range of students are represented on campus, and at fostering leadership skills that have left an impact on both Aragon and other communities.



Letter: Trump coverage



Meilin Rife
FEATURES EDITOR

I’ve noticed a pattern with every front page this year. There’s always orange. If it’s not fire, then it’s the spray-tanned face of President Donald Trump. This man’s face and name is everywhere I look on the news. And that is precisely what he wants. He wants the U.S. to be at his feet. But that is not the case. There are many organizations and people who are fighting against Trump’s policies, from powerful ones like Harvard to regular Quakers marching against Trump’s immigration policies. We cannot helplessly watch and report on the devastating effects of Trump’s administration without further highlighting the resistance against them.

One of Trump’s greatest strategies is “flooding the zone.” The plan was to overwhelm any opposition by the

sheer speed of the Trump administration’s movements. In just his first week, Trump paused foreign aid, let go of thousands of federal employees, barred asylum across the southern border and issued a myriad of other orders, treating the federal government as his own playground. On one hand, it is important for people to be aware of his administration’s plans so that we do not concede, but on the other hand, the onslaught of information is desensitizing, which is exactly what he wants.

Additionally, as a local news source, the Outlook has a duty to further highlight local issues. Large news organizations are doing enough reporting on Trump. The Outlook needs to highlight the issues in San Mateo happening in our backyards. These are the things that will impact our day-to-day. Trump is currently trying to defund CBS and NPR, which fund thousands of local news stations. When communities are in the dark, they cannot effectively band together for mutual aid. Anyone can talk about national news, but only the Outlook can talk about local news pertaining most directly to our student audience.

My problem is not with the fact that the Outlook and all other media sites are covering Trump. I think the way the Outlook does month-long analyses about his policies is a fantastic way of covering them, if we cover him at all. My problem is that the reactionary shock that frames many of these articles is creating a helpless picture of doom and gloom that gives Trump too much credit.

Student Voices: STUNT



Cecilia Bode
GUEST COLUMNIST

The sport STUNT is a Nation College Athletics Association competitive sport for women that is derived from cheerleading skills. It is played at the collegiate level and offers thousands of dollars in scholarships every year. It is played between two teams with each game consisting of four quarters: partner stunts, pyramid and tosses, jumps and tumbling and group routine. Each quarter allows athletes to get playing time based on their strengths, and gives the opportunity for athletes who can tumble but not stunt, or vice versa, to still contribute and have gametime.

Oftentimes, cheerleaders, myself included, have the sentiment that we are not athletes or that people look down upon us because we only support other sports teams. STUNT removes that barrier. Our athleticism is more than

just a form of entertainment but it becomes its own competition. It gives the opportunity for female athletes who have found their sport to be fully recognized as athletes, something people for so long have tried to take away from cheerleaders.

STUNT opens doors for female students who may not have felt like they had a chance in a sport because they did not start young, or were discouraged from cheer due to its extroverted nature as it is not a performance, nor are there a large number of youth teams nearby. Additionally, it gives a female sport its own spotlight in a school culture that favors male sports. When I cheered for basketball games, crowds were significantly smaller for the women’s team compared to the men’s team — even when times were changed to make women’s game times more accessible. Women’s flag football stands were never full while men’s football attracted hundreds of students.

It stands to reason that our school watches the male athletes more than female ones — but to watch a game of STUNT, attendees inherently support women’s sports without a male option. It gives more than just opportunity for athletes themselves, STUNT helps shift our school culture away from favoring male sports. Female athletes and potential athletes deserve to have a STUNT program. Currently, I am putting together a proposal for the school board and superintendent — if any female athletes are interested in doing STUNT if it is added at Aragon, please fill out the form in the initiative’s Instagram bio @smuhsdSTUNT.

Major Executive Orders

Helen McCloskey and Naomi Kotani
NEWS WRITERS

Since the presidential inauguration on Jan. 20, President Donald Trump has signed over 150 executive orders — directives given by the president to the federal government. This number is more than any other American president in the modern era. Many of these, according to Jodi Short, a law professor at University of California, San Francisco, violate statutory law or the Constitution.

“The president would rather not have to work through the legislative process ... [because] it requires the expense of political capital,” Short said. “[He] knows that the judicial process moves very slowly ... so even if an executive order is unlawful, a judicial remedy may come too late, or it may not come at all. [Trump] is trying to remake our government and remake our understanding of constitutional democracy to allow for authoritarian executive rule.”

As of May 19, there have been over 200 legal challenges to Trump’s executive orders in his second term.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

On March 20, Trump signed an order that aims to shift some of the responsibilities of the Department of Education to the states. The ED, created by Congress in 1979, oversees most of the federal involvement in and aid to education.

Only 8% of funds for elementary and secondary schools across the country come from the federal government, according to the ED. The San Mateo Union High School District is a basic aid district, meaning most of its money comes from local property taxes as opposed to state or national funds. However, it is classified as a Title I district and thus receives some federal funds, but those funds make up less than 2% of the total district budget. Still, other districts that serve more lower-income communities often rely more on these federal resources.

Trump’s order says that Secretary of Education Linda McMahon will be tasked with “ensuring the effective and uninterrupted delivery of services, programs and benefits on which Americans rely.”

“If it means figuring out which states need what, and letting states administer it and making sure they get the resources to do it, then it’s not so much of a problem,” said social studies teacher Jon Felder. “If it’s just cuts to education, then the lower income communities that need more support from the federal government are [going to] suffer more.”

The order mentions that programs receiving federal funding must end practices of diversity, equity and inclusion. It does not, however, address how these will be vetted.

The ED facilitates services providing federal financial aid, but it is unclear how this will be impacted under the order. It does not explicitly say where the funds will be reassigned to, only that they should be returned to “an entity equipped to serve America’s students.”

Although this executive order has gained much pushback, with multiple teachers’ unions filing lawsuits, there is still some support for its intentions.

“Federal unelected officials [shouldn’t] ... influence curriculum,” said junior Arun Yama. “State-level officials are more representative of their constituents than federal and elected officials who act invisibly.”

While the order could affect many of the ED’s functions, the department will not be fully shut down unless Congress approves its closure.

ANTISEMITISM

On Jan. 29, the White House released Executive Order 14188, calling for the government to “vigorously” fight antisemitism with all of its legal power, and to review all college court cases relating to antisemitism after Oct. 7, 2023, when Hamas attacked Israel. It also encouraged colleges to investigate foreign students, who the federal government can deport, and required a review of K-12 Title VI protests related to antisemitism.

Following the Oct. 7 attack, there was a 700% increase in antisemitic occurrences on college campuses from the 2022-23 to the 2023-24 academic years, according to Hillel, a Jewish student organization.

However, some feel that the college court cases relating to the Gaza protests are not truly antisemitic.

“The definition of antisemitism has gotten so distorted recently, with Oct. 7 and the starvation of Gaza,” said junior Emerson Makuta. “People perceive criticizing Israel as antisemitism when that’s not the case. [The executive order is] focusing on college campuses where a lot of pro-Palestinian protests have been happening. And that is not antisemitism. That is protest and freedom of speech, which is our constitutional right.”

Additionally, the Trump administration has slashed funding to many of the schools it believes has not complied with the executive order, including Harvard University and Columbia University.

Harvard has sued the Trump administration for cutting \$2.2 billion in funding, stating that the cuts to research are unrelated to antisemitism, and thus violate the First Amendment right to freedom of speech and disobey congressional procedures to cut perceived discriminatory funding.

CLIMATE

Trump has produced several executive orders relating to climate, including one that increases coal production and another that reviews energy sources and Environmental Protection Agency actions to determine whether to stop or change regulations on them.

In Executive Order 14162, signed Jan. 20, the U.S. also withdrew from the Paris Agreement, an international treaty to keep the global temperature within two degrees

Celsius of the temperature before industrialization.

“This is [occurring] as prices [for renewable energy] are starting to come down, and

yield a very good outcome in the long term. It might give a short term boost to the economy. It might give some ill-fated hope to people who

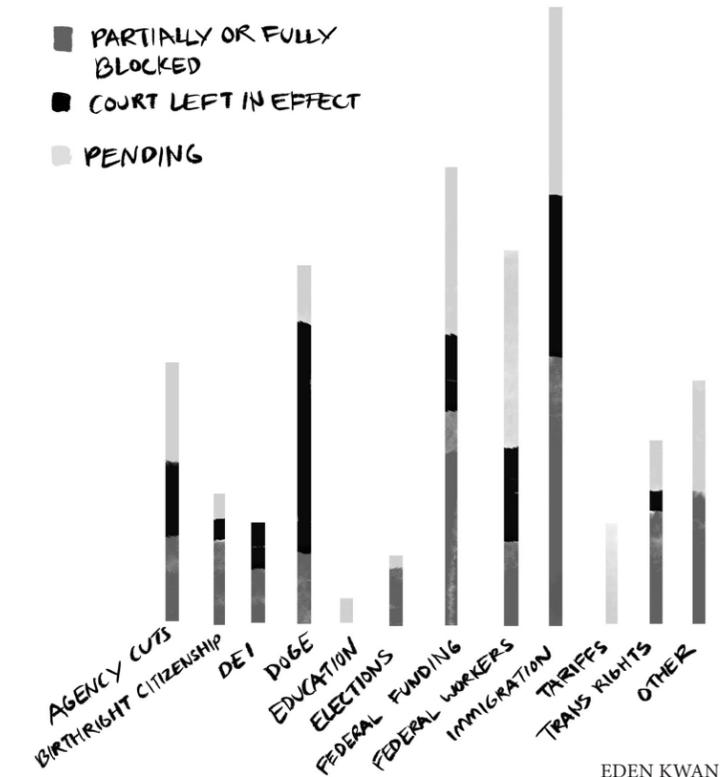
such as the coal industry, while sources of renewable energy would be limited.

“[The oil and coal industries will] feel more emboldened to keep [producing oil and coal] when they need to totally stop and pivot to clean energy,” said UC Berkeley doctoral student Coryna Ogunseitan. “Trump thinks it’s good to have jobs mining coal, when it’s really detrimental to [workers’] personal health and environmental health.”

America’s withdrawal from the Paris Agreement could have implications around the globe.

“It’s not conducive to international cooperation,” Hong said. “So even in international organizations, long-time partners with the U.S., global cooperation is going to break down [with] less trust. At this point, it’s very hard to imagine that we’ll be preventing 1.5 degrees [Celsius] of average temperature increase.”

Executive Order 14260, which calls for the review of climate change laws and their removal if they are deemed unconstitutional, explicitly mentioned California’s Cap-and-Trade program, which limits greenhouse gas emissions for businesses in the state.



EDEN KWAN

as they’re starting to be affordable and more prevalent,” said freshman Jerry Hong. “[These changes are] not very productive, and it’s prioritizing an industry that won’t

think that this is the future, but something needs to be done about it.”

These executive orders could lead to growth in non-renewable forms of energy,

The ARAGON OUTLOOK

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Aragon teacher Gibbons retires after 26 years

Claire Dong
NEWS WRITER

After 26 years at Aragon, Michael Gibbons, Educational Specialist and social studies teacher, is preparing to retire, leaving behind a legacy of quiet advocacy, sharp wit and unwavering support for students.

Gibbons didn't start out as a teacher. In fact, his first career was in restaurants, where he worked as a chef.

"I got tired of complaining about the world and not doing anything about it," Gibbons said. "I had friends who were teachers and they talked me into trying it. So I began as an instructional assistant in the classroom in the East Bay, and then I got my credential in my late 30s."

Since then, Gibbons has mainly taught U.S. History and Economics, always with a focus on making education relevant and meaningful.

"The point is to give students tools to deal with the world," Gibbons said. "The curriculum shouldn't exist in

the vacuum. That's not how I teach it and that's not how I think it should be taught. It should be taught as a way to get students to engage with what's happening now, what they're going to be inheriting and the world they're going to be walking in."

Gibbons is known not only for his sarcastic and witty attitude, but also his different teaching style.

"Our class is structured in a way where we never learn the full implications of an event," said junior Sophie Rayes. "Instead we have to do outside research if we really want to know. It really makes us think deeply about everything and think about the full picture."

He's also understanding and caring towards his students.

"I don't take things personally," Gibbons said. "If a student swears or walks in upset, it's not about me —

said. "Sometimes, he'll pull one of us outside to talk and help us with our problems."

Social Studies teacher Carlo Corti, who has co-taught Government and Economics with Gibbons for the past four years, said this deep sense of care has always defined his colleague.

"He never gives up on people," Corti said. "He is 100% in to help kids succeed in a way that is really admirable. It comes from a deep reservoir of kindness he has."

Gibbons is also known for his quiet advocacy. In addition to teaching, he served as Special Education Department Chair, a role that often kept him behind the scenes.

"He checks in on how students are doing," Corti said. "He also has one-on-one conversations with teachers to

see how they can help a student and give feedback. He also works with counselors to try to get the best possible schedules and placements for students."

Corti described Gibbons' retirement as bittersweet.

"I'm sad," Corti said. "I'm losing a partner, I'm losing a friend, at least at school. He does a lot of things for students and for the school that don't always get seen and recognized. He has incredible responsibilities that he has to deal with at the time, and the school is losing a huge fountain of knowledge that's gonna be really hard to replace."

In his next chapter, Gibbons plans to travel, including a month-long trip to Italy. But even as he steps away from teaching, his message for students remains clear.

"They need to challenge the way things are," Gibbons said. "They should not accept things if they don't believe they're right. They need to do something about it."



Mr. Gibbon receives award.

it's about what they're going through. You have to talk to them, check in, pull them aside. They need to feel like someone cares."

Gibbons' co-teaching model also allows him to build stronger individual relationships with students.

"Gibbons co-teaches my class, which means that he has more time to talk with the students one-on-one," Rayes

Aragon jazz musicians take on the Big Apple

Ellie Blakely
NEWS WRITER

From May 7-11, five Aragon students attended the Essentially Ellington High School Jazz Festival with the Stanford Jazz Workshop Miles Ahead Big Band. The group was one of 30 high school jazz bands from throughout the world to be selected for the festival, which is run by the famous Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra and is revered by jazz professionals.

"[People] consider this particular festival to be the Super Bowl of high school jazz festivals," said MABB director Michael Galisatus.

Part of the festival's prestige comes from the participation of famous jazz musician Wynton Marsalis.

"Anybody who's relatively big in any big band scene knows Wyn Marsalis because he leads the Jazz at Lincoln Center orchestra, which is essentially the most prestigious big band in the entire world," said senior alto saxophonist Dominic Kudzia.

Because of the festival's reputation, the MABB members did not expect to be selected, and many were pleasantly surprised to find out about their success.

"It seems like a far away thing to go to New York and play at this festival with bands from across the U.S. [and] ... international bands," said sophomore and baritone saxophonist Elizabeth Yuan. "I was very excited ... [and] shocked."

At the festival, the bands only played music by Duke Ellington, a famous jazz musician and composer, as a way to pay homage to Ellington's contributions to jazz and to focus on more traditional jazz music.

"[The Essentially Ellington Festival] brings in the best young musicians to carry on the legacy of playing music from the past," Kudzia said.

way that each person plays and breathes and phrases within their sections and within the recordings of these songs that you really have to focus [on]," Kudzia said. "And it's natural ... for stuff that takes place on the recording to not be written out in the [sheet music]. So you just have to hear that and then adapt it into your playing even though it's not written out specifically for you."

Despite the many challenges of playing Ellington's music, the bands that participated in the festival were highly talented and performed their music well, according to the attendees.

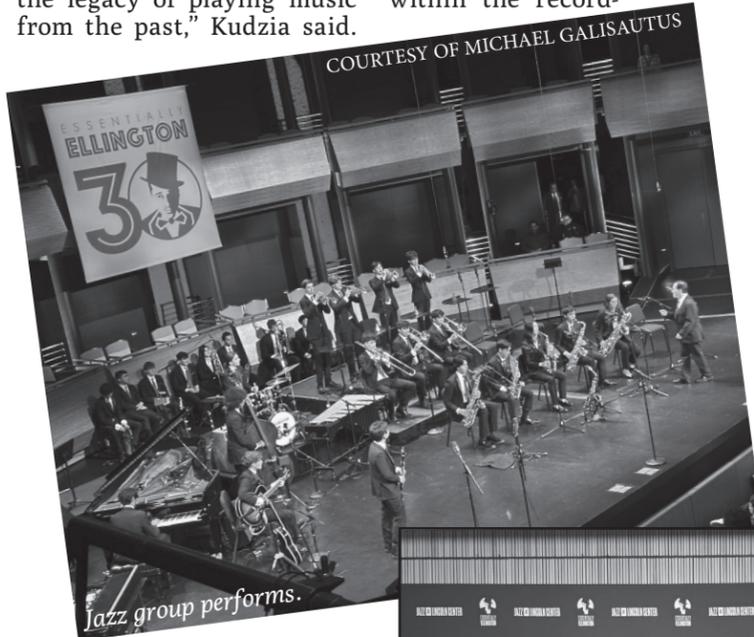
"Every single band I heard was insanely good," said sophomore and baritone saxophonist Brandon Lin.

"That was really cool to see, because I've probably never listened to that many bands in one spot that sounded that good. All the soloists were really good and [it was] great to be exposed to such [a] high level of musicianship."

The bands competed against one another and were judged by professional jazz musicians. While the MABB was not chosen to move to the second round of competition, many still viewed the festival as a positive experience because of the friendly atmosphere.

"It was a competition, but it was more friendship-oriented," Galisatus said. "There was so much camaraderie among the students and the directors. So even though it was competitive, it was really more of an opportunity for students to get to know each other ... and create lifelong friends."

Following the festival in New York, the focus for the Miles Ahead Big Band is now auditions for the 2025-26 school year, and eventually, returning to the Essentially Ellington Festival.



Jazz group performs.

"And that's sort of the whole idea of this festival, especially since we're playing the music of Duke Ellington ... [who is such a] well known composer and probably one of, if not the largest driving force of jazz."

However, playing Ellington's music presented the band with some unique challenges.

"Wynton's idea was to expose high school students to the music of Duke Ellington and to have them perform it as authentically as possible," Galisatus said. "So that's the challenge of the music, is to make it sound authentic, to make it sound like Ellington's band."

Making the music sound authentic to Duke Ellington's style requires both precision and adaptability.

"There's certain stylistic nuances ... in the



Miles Ahead Big Band poses for a picture.



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Samantha Green stars as Velma.



Silhouettes of characters.



Thomas Williams sings "All I Care About is Love."

ANNA HE

Chicago: a show with jazzy style and flair

Christine Choi
NEWS WRITER

On May 16, Aragon's Advanced Drama Program performed in Chicago, a musical satire on the Roaring Twenties. Centered around women in Chicago who have killed their husbands, the musical focuses on two women in particular: Velma Kelly, played by Samantha Green, and Roxie Hart, played by Sophie Rayes. The audience follows these women on their journey through the legal system to find fame.

Chosen by this year's director, senior Andrew McColl, all students in the advanced drama class are required to participate in the show, whether it be through the technical team or by being an actor in the show.

"Every year, we elect someone to be our director and [they] direct the whole musical, so [they] get to choose whatever [they] want," said junior Neeha Kumar, who played Liz Minelli. "Of course we can talk to [them], and we influence [their] decisions a little bit, and we all agree that Chicago will be different."

In terms of differences from past shows, Chicago explores mature themes such as corruption, fame and media control through unique costuming and historical accuracy.

"The costuming is definitely mature, but it's classy, and there's a red and black theme to it," said junior Ash Caballero, who played Mona Lipschitz in the show. "It stands out from other plays because it looks very dark."

Chicago was the last show Aragon Drama performed in this year. Like many other final Aragon Drama shows, it was one night only, and there was little time to prepare.

"There's a lot of work and not that much time," Kumar said. "It's stressful because it's just another thing added on to my schedule: I have to remember to practice these dances and then know how to do

them perfectly on the night of the show."

For future student-led musicals, Aragon Drama is considering changing the one-day-only tradition.

"It's normally one night and that's always the way it's been since it's supposed to be a mini musical," Kumar said. "But [advanced drama students] want it to be at least two nights, so we're gonna see if our teacher can make that happen."

Chicago started out with the cast posing in front of a red lit backdrop with bars, revealing only their silhouettes. The musical began with the song "All that Jazz" and featured many other songs, including "We Both Reached for the Gun," which was made popular on social media.

Many audience members believed the show was a success.

"They did a wonderful, wonderful job," said audience member Sugei Arevalo. "I couldn't believe it was just directed by the students."

Despite the worries about the mature themes of Chicago, audience members believed it was just that which made the show stand out from others.

"I thought it was really good, shocking at some points, but overall it was a great production," said senior Natasha Efron. "It stood out in [the way] that it was more risqué compared to past shows, but overall, the quality was similar to past mini musicals."

For other audience members, Chicago's jazzy style and flair were what stood out the most.

"I really loved the singing and the choreography, it was really funny and engaging," said freshman audience member Chloe Lim. "It was different from other shows, it was more jazzy. It wasn't like the other past musicals like Sister Act."

Aragon Drama will be performing their next musical in fall 2026. Specific details on the show are yet to be determined.

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Thurman visits Aragon for New Trades CTE program

Ellen Li
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

On April 30, California State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurman visited Aragon to ask questions about the Career Technical Education Engineering Technology Trade Multi-Craft Core Curriculum Program at Aragon for National Apprenticeship Day. The program, led by Engineering Technology teacher Arron Apperson, aims to prepare students to join a construction apprenticeship program after high school and gives hands-on training. It is the first of its kind in the district.

"Right now we have a bill, [Assembly Bill 821], in the legislature that would provide more funding for schools to have a hands-on lab, for students to learn about opportunities and trades," Thurman said. "We think about robotics and [Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math] all the time. We're trying to get a computer science graduation requirement in this state. We want our students to have access to all the great careers that exist."

Superintendent Randall Booker, Jennifer Jacobson, San Mateo Union High School District Board Trustee, Queenie Hua, Career Technical Education and Career Coordinator, Bart Pantoja, San Mateo County Building and Construction Trades Council member, the Aragon Administration team, Apperson and various students taking the class joined the meeting to discuss the program.

"We've had the elevator constructors come in; we've had electricians come in, the roofers and waterproofer," Apperson said. "When they graduate from this program, ... they'll have their [Occupational Safety and Health Administration] 10 card, and they'll [know] first aid and [cardiopulmonary resuscitation], which allows them to go on to work sites and start working."

The students explained what they are learning and why the program is important.

"We've gone on a lot of field trips, which I like doing," said senior Brandon Lopez. "We get to meet a lot of people who show us how the job can be in real life."

"We put a lot of time into doing this, but I think there's just so much that students learn from this about collaboration and leadership," Richter said. "We start off on the computer, and then eventually build it into the real thing in such a short time frame."

The meeting then took place in the shop, where they toured the high-technology industry equipment while continuing to talk about the program and the impact trade opportunities can have on students.

"I've got one kid who was on probation," Apperson said. "Now ... he's a plumber who's running crews, and he's got his welding license."

Booker discussed the expanding CTE programs and how many people are working to promote CTEs, including instructors, union representatives, students, faculty and staff.

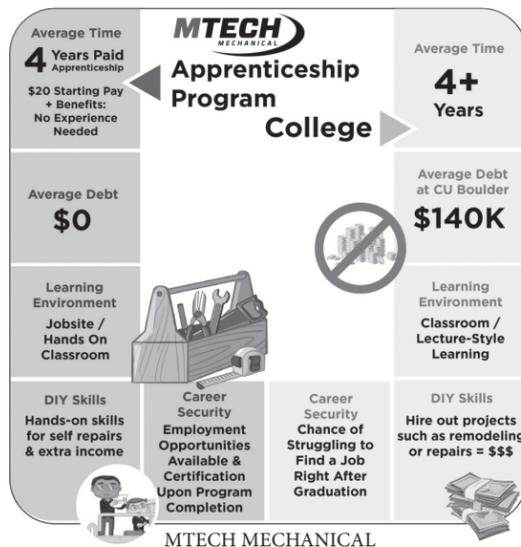
"That's how you make it work with this collaborative

teamwork and real interest and belief that when we talk about this well-rounded student, we're not just talking about [Advanced Placement] courses or Visual and Performing Arts," Booker said. "We want students to have these kinds of opportunities too, to find themselves, find their interests, find their passions."

Hua shared how other schools attempted to start this program but failed, but the program at Aragon managed to survive.

"It happened to be the right time, the right piece, the right passion and the support of the district and the board," Hua said. "We truly believe that it is important and given the recent corporate climate, ... job stability, tuition-hiking, students [need to] evaluate whether they have other better options. By having this program at the high school level, we save students a lot of effort, a lot of time."

The program is expanding from one to two classes next year at Aragon. Apperson and Hua are helping other schools in the district start the program as well.



Members of Aragon Robotics, senior Adam Richter, senior Rocco Lamberti and junior George Tao, spoke about Aragon Robotics' program, the competition this year and demonstrated the robot and its functions.



Aragon Robotics show Tony Thurman their projects.



Aragon students and staff take a picture with Tony Thurman.



Apperson shows off tools.

AANVI GUPTA

Thurman profile: significance of his role in education



TONY THURMAN

Ellen Li
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

What happens if federal grant money stops flowing to California schools?

It would be about an eight billion dollar loss in funding. I'm part of a lawsuit that blocks cutting the federal funding and the courts have already held an injunction against the President's executive orders to cut the federal funds. So right now, the federal funding is protected and we're working with Congress to make sure that they don't vote to close the U.S. Department of Education.

What do you think about ethnic studies not becoming a formal graduation requirement statewide as anticipated?

It is still a graduation requirement, but the implementation of that requirement is in question because it hasn't been fully funded by the State of California. The government budget didn't propose any money in it [this year]. Unless the May budget adds money for implementing ethnic studies, that requirement is in question. I think that's a problem. Students should have a chance to learn about their heritage and the contributions that their ancestors have made to the state.

What can the State Department of Education do to make sure students aren't targeted by the federal government for having critical opinions that should be protected by the First Amendment?

We are sponsoring a lot of legislation that will push back on the federal government. For starters, we have a bill called SP48 that says there should be no [Immigration and Customs Enforcement]-style immigration enforcement on school campuses, and that bill is in the Senate right now. We know that many of our students in the state have parents who are undocumented immigrants, and the disruption from ICE causes students to have challenges academically and socially, which could cost us money because the way our schools are funded is based on our daily attendance. When there are threats of deportation and people don't show up to school, that suppresses attendance and revenue.

Some estimate that we can lose \$150 million just in revenue alone. We've signed on five lawsuits that say schools are within their rights to talk about diversity, equity and inclusion, and that schools shouldn't be threatened ... We think that the president is usurping the rights of Congress with what he's doing, but we've had to go to the courts to block those executive orders, and we'll continue to do that.

Are you willing to go into federal custody if they start arresting state executive branch officers?

Yeah, I've said that before. The president can come and get me. I'm elected by the people. That's who I answer to. I don't have any fears that are gonna make me not do my job, and we're defying these executive orders. We are continuing to say that we will support our LGBTQ+ students, that we will support transgender athletes, that we will stand up for the individual rights and freedoms of our students to go to school and not experience any kind of harassment or discrimination. California law protects our schools, and we're standing on those laws. It's sad that the president's executive order is threatening people because that's not a conducive environment to learning. We want to encourage [students] to continue learning civics and being involved in the community and learning another language. We want them to improve

their reading and their math and we're providing resources to do that, and even though these executive orders have created so much havoc, our message is that our kids still have to get an education. We can't let these disruptions be a distraction.

What are your plans for the future and the rest of your term?

I'm a declared candidate to run for governor in the election in 2026. I see so many similarities between the job I'm doing now and the job of governor to protect education and fund education, but I also want to deal with how we address the homelessness issues in our state. We have 240,000 homeless students in our state and 10,000 of them are unaccompanied minors who are on their own who don't have a place to stay. I have a bill this year that would build housing subsidies for homeless youth and I'm working to build affordable housing. I have a bill that would help our school districts build housing for teachers and classified staff and other police and nurses. Our schools have surplus property. We can build two million units by the year 2030, just by building on that surplus property. Those are the kinds of things that I made my platform on: [to] build housing, address homelessness, improve education, health care and mental health services for the people of our state.

City concern: cell towers

Meilin Rife, Darshan Bal and Emma Shen
FEATURES AND NEWS EDITORS

In fall 2023, nurse and San Mateo resident Irena Mavridis received a letter from the city informing her that a cell tower would be built within 500 feet of her home, and that there would only be a five-day period from that point to appeal the decision.

Small cell facilities are small radio antennas attached to utility poles that are used as a way to deliver 5G mobile service. Mavridis' contention is that these facilities are not used for cell coverage, but rather wireless broadband internet — a service that provides WiFi wirelessly using radio waves. This, she holds, can be achieved through alternative technologies such as fiber-optic internet, therefore rendering small cell facilities futile.

Mavridis thus founded a volunteer advocacy group, No Cell Outs, along with fellow San Mateo residents Lindsay Raike and Kelly Ryerson, garnering hundreds of supporters to raise funds for an attorney and petition the city. Since its formation, No Cell Outs has successfully cancelled the installations of 130 cell towers throughout San Mateo — most recently one in close proximity to Saint Matthew's Episcopal Day School and The Peninsula Regent, a retirement home.

After persistent comments from the community, the city established stricter guidelines for these facilities in November 2024, which included prohibiting placement within 300 feet from schools, residential units and other structures and zones. It made applying for small cell facility applications more restrictive, outlining limits on the height of small cell facilities, requiring shrouding and that all wiring be done underground. The new ordinance was modeled after the City of Encinitas, which adopted a similarly restrictive policy in 2019.

"One of the reasons we wanted to update the ordinance was because the original one was very long, very cumbersome, required a lot of steps and things could fall through the cracks," said Lisa Diaz Nash, one of the San Mateo City Council members. "We've just introduced the ordinance, and since [then], there have been no new small cell tower applications ... when you're doing your cost-benefit analysis, it's probably cheaper to go put in a small cell tower in San Carlos than in San Mateo."

The aforementioned approved application for the cell facility from cell provider Crown Castle, though, was submitted before these new regulations had gone into effect, mean-

ing one of the proposed locations was still near a school.

"This is a place where there are children who play from 7:30 a.m. until 3 p.m., pretty much every day," said Quincey Grieves, Head of School at St. Matthew's. "[It's also] the sacred space of the church ... The proximity of [the cell tower] was concerning, and there was another option that would be a greater distance from the school."

San Mateo City Hall held a public hearing on March 12 to hear appeals from residents, resulting in the Sustainably and Infrastructure Commission voting 4-1 to reject the application. This decision was based on the contention that the proposed location was not the "least obtrusive" possible, as mandated by the San Mateo Design Standards. Levels of obtrusion can be assessed based on appearance, size and location.

The permit was changed so the cell facility would instead be built across the street from St. Matthews and closer to more businesses. However, permits that had been submitted prior to the guideline change remained judged by the older, less strict guidelines.

"There were several applications that had come in just before the new ordinance was passed, and the community was really irked by that," Nash said. "They said, 'Oh, they just shoved them all [at] the end, under the wire.' Yeah, if they were a good business, that's what they would do if they thought the new ordinance was stricter than the old one, so they did totally their prerogative. That's when the appeals started happening."

One of these applications was for a cell tower to be installed at 721 Edgewood Road, which Crown Castle had submitted in October 2024. When the appeal hearing was held on March 26, the Commission voted 4-0 to deny the appeal and uphold the application, based on the grounds that it complied with the original ordinance.

The City of San Mateo is subject to federal law, which prevents the city from regulating small cell facilities on the basis of the radio emissions that they emit. However, the city does have the power to regulate "the time, place, manner and aesthetics of small cells."

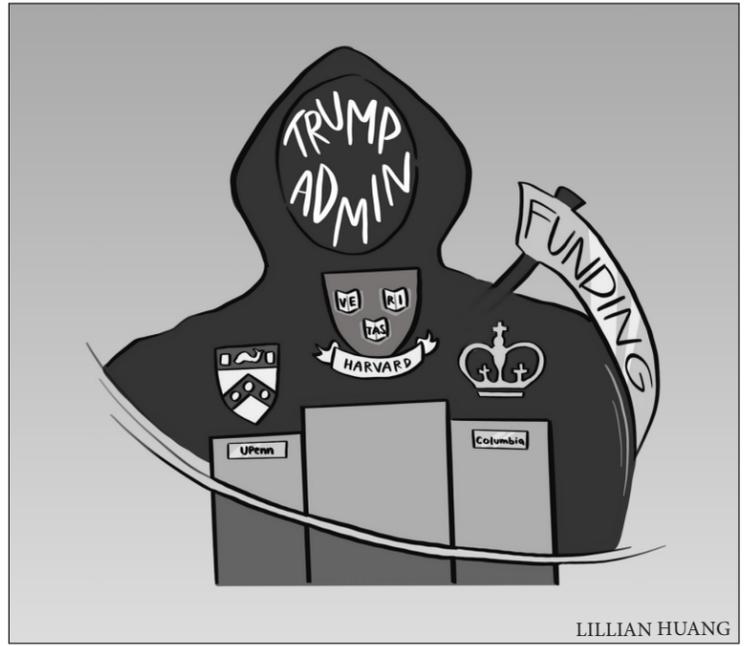
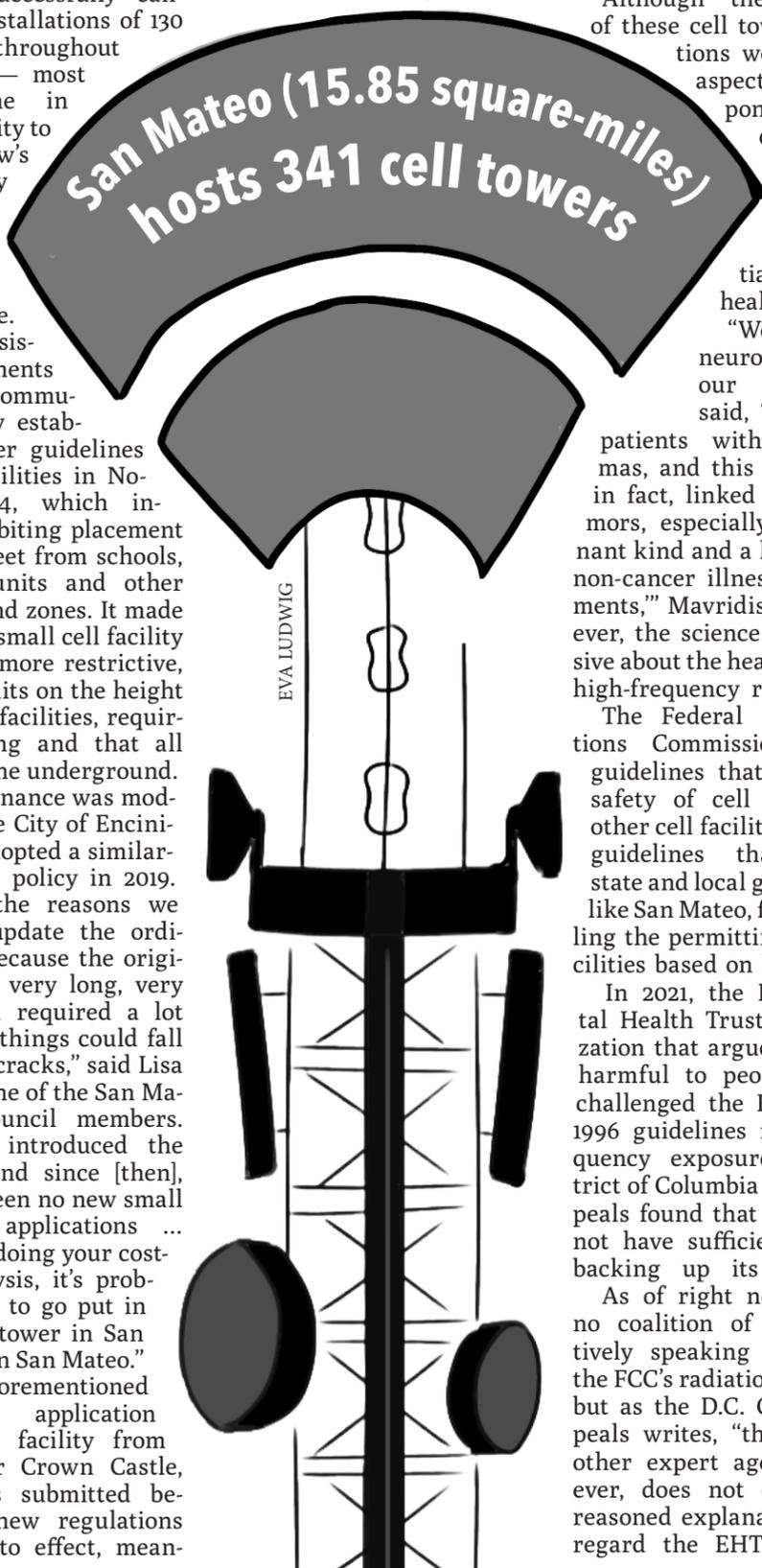
Although the aesthetics of these cell tower installations were the only aspect that opponents could contest, the primary concerns stemmed from potential associated health risks.

"We [have] a neurosurgeon in our group who said, 'I work with patients with glioblastomas, and this radiation is, in fact, linked to brain tumors, especially the malignant kind and a host of other non-cancer illnesses and ailments,'" Mavridis said. "However, the science is inconclusive about the health effects of high-frequency radio waves."

The Federal Communications Commission controls guidelines that dictate the safety of cell towers and other cell facilities. It's these guidelines that prohibit state and local governments, like San Mateo, from controlling the permitting of cell facilities based on health risks.

In 2021, the Environmental Health Trust, an organization that argues that 5G is harmful to people's health, challenged the FCC over its 1996 guidelines for radiofrequency exposure. The District of Columbia Court of Appeals found that the FCC did not have sufficient evidence backing up its guidelines.

As of right now, there is no coalition of experts actively speaking out against the FCC's radiation standards, but as the D.C. Court of Appeals writes, "the silence of other expert agencies, however, does not constitute a reasoned explanation" to disregard the EHT's concerns.



LILLIAN HUANG

Un-free education

Ceylon Liu
FEATURES WRITER

In his first 100 days as president, Trump has threatened to revoke a combined \$12 billion in government funding from some of the top American universities. The money at stake comes most often in the form of grants that go towards valuable research that includes cancer research, drug testing and more.

On March 20, Trump issued an Executive Order calling for the end of the Department of Education, a federal agency that is primarily responsible for the management of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid program that provides prospective and current college students with grants, work-study programs, loans and more. The largest impact this department's dismantlement would likely bring would be on Title I schools and funds allocated for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act because the funding for both are currently managed and distributed by the ED.

Additionally, Trump has attacked education in the form of threats to top universities. On March 7, Trump threatened to withdraw \$400 million from Columbia, and on April 11, his administration sent a letter to Harvard with various demands should they wish to maintain a "financial relationship with the government." Trump's reasoning has been broad, but he has claimed that universities have fostered antisemitism on their campuses. However, Trump has also vocally been against policies encouraging diversity, equity and inclusion policies — policies that many of the top universities currently being targeted have implemented in the past. In late March, Columbia University gave in to Trump's demands, including improved internal security and formally adopting a definition of antisemitism on campus.

"[These grants are] funding things like cancer research that are really beneficial for the American public," said junior Erin Finn. "[Trump is] putting these programs at risk. If [universities have] to pour all of their money into these research programs in order to keep them go-

ing, then they're going to have to remove money from things like art programs and extracurriculars that are really what helps make the [college] experience for a lot of people. I'm worried about things like band programs and 'less important' research topics. They all have value, but you have to think about what will be prioritized if this [grant] money is cut."

Harvard has refused to comply with the demands Trump has outlined for the university. In retaliation, Trump threatened to revoke the university's tax-exempt status. Harvard has since filed a lawsuit arguing that the Trump administration's attempts to freeze their research funding if they fail to comply with demands violates the university's First Amendment rights to free speech.

"On the surface, [Trump's actions] seem like an overreach of power," said Johnathan Felder, Advanced Standing Modern World History teacher. "The idea that a university is able to have its own principles, stand by those and pursue them, makes a lot of sense because they're basically independent institu-



Under Trump's new policy, the share of National Institute of Health funding for university medical research grants

26% -> 15%
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF HEALTH

tions. Mandating [demands], and backing them with threats is a fairly hostile and pretty unproductive approach and it's more likely to just lead to conflict."

Harvard's response sets a precedent for other universities: should they not want to, they do not have to give in to the threats of the Trump administration in order to keep their federal funding. While Trump makes efforts to suppress academic freedom through his threats and demands, the repercussions of these actions are still unknown.

The cutting of research would harm more than just universities and those conducting the research and students may have concerns about pursuing higher education in the future.

Reporting by Kyra Hsieh and Allinah Zhan

NOAH SHEFER: AEROSPACE ENGINEERING

What led you to decide on this path?

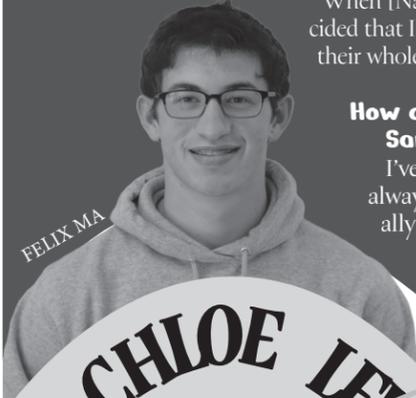
When [National Aeronautics and Space Administration] landed a rover on Mars five years ago, I was watching it and I thought it was very cool. And I decided that I wanted to do something similar to that. [I also found] what SpaceX is doing right now with the reusable rockets and landing massive rockets and their whole Starlink and NASA's Artemis program [very inspiring].

How did you decide on your major and then California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo specifically?

I've always wanted to do engineering. I'm a very math and science person. I thought aerospace was always the coolest of the engineering [disciplines]. For Cal Poly, I just love it. Everyone's really nice, great weather. I love the vibe.

What experiences have you had related to your major so far?

Sailing, technically. Sails are basically wings and [they involve] aerodynamics and drag and all that stuff. [I do sailing in] Redwood City and all around the Bay Area on different types of boats. I've learned about how aerodynamics works, how airplanes work and how you can adjust the shape of the wing to get better performance. Cal Poly has a club team and I'm going to be competing on it.



FELIX MA



WENESSA CHAN

CHLOE LEVADOUX: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



EMMA SHEN

Why did you choose to study abroad?

I've always loved to travel. From the moment I was on a plane at two months old moving to France, I [had] the travel bug. Studying abroad in new places enables you to really gain a new understanding of the world ... I had such a good experience the first time I did a summer study abroad. It was such a liberating experience. It really shifted how I looked at high school and college. It made me very much capable of being independent and operating by myself.

Why did you choose Prague and Buenos Aires?

I chose Prague because I've always adored that part of Europe. I felt like Prague might teach me more in terms of doing something really different, and the logic was the same for Buenos Aires, as it was much further out of my comfort zone because it's in South America, a continent I haven't been on.

Why did you choose international relations?

Currently I am declared as political science, but I will likely be studying international relations, or political science with a focus on international relations ... I love people and I love the human perspective. I really want to do work towards human rights, not only in the U.S. but globally. I want to do whatever I can to enable people to live fully and to have equal opportunity.



COURTESY OF CHLOE LEVADOUX

CAMRYN WALSH: BIOLOGY

Why did you choose to study biology?

I took an [Advanced Placement] Biology class my junior year, and I was super, super interested in it. And it felt like the right path of what I would want to do.

Why did you choose University of Colorado Boulder?

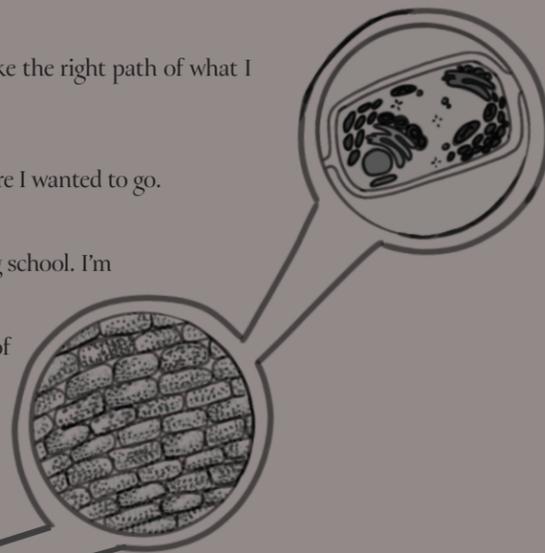
My brother goes to Boulder, so when I visited, I got just like this energy, and I just knew it was where I wanted to go.

What are you most excited about?

I'm just excited for all the new things, like a new state, a bunch of new people, [and] a really big school. I'm excited for the fresh start ... Greek life is really big at Boulder, and my brother's in a fraternity. He loves it. He's totally found his people and has really amazing friendships with them. A bunch of my girl cousins are in sororities, and they loved it. I've always been someone who likes a big group of friends around me, and I think [Greek life] the perfect way to do that.



FELIX MA



EDDIE MARGOLIN: INTERIOR DESIGN

What made you choose interior design?

I have always loved simulation games. And I, as a kid, really loved decorating and playing video games, like Animal Crossing and Happy Home Designer. I played [these games] probably three times over, but it was only until last year that I realized that was a job that I could do. And then I saw the poster for the interior design class this year, so I'm taking the class right now ... At one point [my interest in art] was fashion design, then it cultivated into interior design.

Did others around you influence your decisions and how did they react?

[My mom has] always influenced my passion for the arts, because, [when I was] young, she [encouraged] me to draw ... I only applied to about six colleges, and the two that I was really interested in were [Savannah College of Art and Design,] and [Rhode Island School of Design] because my mom went there ... When I told [my dad] I'm going into interior design, my dad immediately went, 'yeah, that's the thing that makes most sense for you.'



AUDREY WANG



ANNA HE

THOMAS WILLIAMS: BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

What are your plans after high school?

I am planning on going to the University of Toronto in Canada ... I got into this co-op business program, [where] I have a guaranteed job sophomore [and] junior year that pays about 70 thousand working at companies like Google or [Bank of Montreal] ... I'm going to be doing practical [economics] business management, and I'm also planning on dual majoring in biomedical engineering.

Why did you choose business?

My dad and my brother both have chronic hand conditions that prevent them from living their best lives. My dad, from playing volleyball when he was younger, and my brother from playing video games. I thought from a young age [that] I want to help them live their lives to the fullest. And that got into the realm of: "Star Wars, The Empire Strikes Back" [where] Luke got his hand cut off, and then he got a new one, and it was perfect ... I was just transfixed at that moment [and] I was like, "I want to do prosthetics." Then I started thinking about the business side of it, and getting more pragmatic as I got older ... And so I went into business because it is one of the only professions that actually lets you retire young.



FELIX MA



MANA UENO: FASHION BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

What led you to majoring in fashion business management?

I was always interested in fashion ... One of my family members, my aunt, is a very big person in the fashion industry, especially in the business side, and I've been very inspired by her, and I just really gravitated towards fashion all my life.

How did other people around you react?

Going to fashion school and learning about a specific thing in the arts is unorthodox, and it's not the typical college path people would imagine, but my family was very supportive of me. My friends were really proud of me, so I'm really glad that I had support. But, when I tell people that I'm going to fashion school, they assume it's a passion instead of a career, but it's really important to understand that there's someone that has to do the job behind the passion to gear it towards wider audiences. There's somebody who has to do the business in the arts to make it into a functioning system. It's important that I do this as my career, and even though it seems like a passion project, it's an important job ... You can do business even though you're not passionate about it, but there's definitely some aspects that you have to be passionate about in order to succeed. And I'm very passionate about fashion because I can see things from a wider perspective.



EVA LUDWIG



COURTESY OF MANA EUNO

JEREMIAH SANTOS: ELECTRICIAN

Why did you choose this path?

I'm hoping to become an electrician and learn how to apply it to my civilian life afterwards. I always wanted to do trade school or do something that correlates with my hand. I just like being outdoorsy. I just don't want to sit down all day working on papers. That's what I aspire to do — not just become an electrician, but to be comfortable in life.

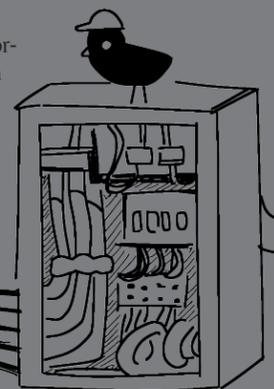
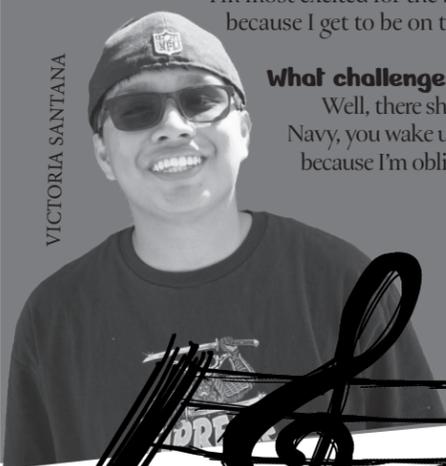
What are you most looking forward to?

I'm most excited for the boot camp because there's going to be a lot of experiences for me. I want to travel around the world because I get to be on the ocean. I'd like to see Spain and Japan. I'm very interested in visiting those countries.

What challenges do you think you'll face?

Well, there should be a lot. One is waking up in the morning. Because in the Navy, you wake up around 4 a.m. and you work till [9 p.m.] I'm going to adapt because I'm obligated to do it, or else they'll just kick me out.

VICTORIA SANTANA



FELIX GEE

NAVEEN SCHWARZKOPF: MUSIC

What are your plans after high school?

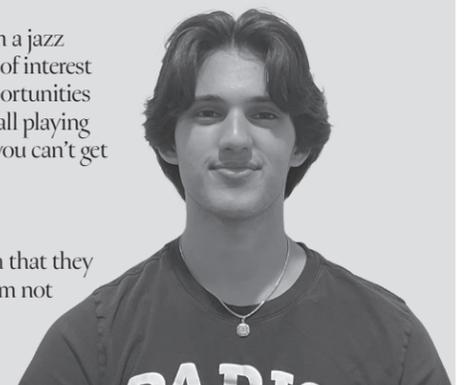
I'm going to Harvard and attending the joint studies program with Harvard University and Berklee School of Music, [which is] a conservatory of music in Boston. The joint studies program is where you are a full time student at Harvard [where] you can major in whatever you'd like ... And while you're at Harvard, you [can] take classes at Berklee School of Music ... So you're getting a taste of that conservatory experience at Berklee while still being a student at Harvard ... I plan on trying out more things and seeing if any other academic subject interests me.

What led you to this decision?

I don't know what I want to explore, what I want to major in or study in academics, and I don't really know what I want to study in music. I'm a jazz saxophone player. But I also play piano, I play a bit of guitar, I sing and I want to get more into songwriting and audio production. So I have a lot of interest in academics and a lot of interest in music. So Harvard, being liberal arts, and having amazing opportunities in academics gives me the most opportunities to explore all those different areas and see what I like. And Berklee School of Music is the biggest conservatory in the world. There's 6000 kids all playing music, so they have so many different possibilities of musical study, like music therapy and music history and all kinds of really niche stuff that you can't get anywhere else. So I like the fact that both of those institutions offer a very large breadth of study for me to explore.

Why not be a professional musician?

It's certainly not an easy career to make a living out of. The people I know that are pursuing that are just doing it because they love it so much that they would just be miserable if they did anything else. And I'm not that kind of a person ... As someone that is interested in a lot of different things, I'm not sure if I have enough dedication to just focus on music specifically and ignore all my other interests.

COURTESY OF
NAVEEN SCHWARZKOPF

San Francisco Bay Area

- Alexander Acosta
- Macen Adams
- Joseph Addiego
- Anthony Aguilar Villalobos
- Kevin Altamirano Peralta
- Angel Altamirano Sosa
- Natalie Alvarez-Lazaro
- Louderes Avila
- Stefan Baldini
- Heidy Batzin
- Janak Bhuta
- Isabella Bianco
- Kendal Black
- Yael Boaz
- Emma Bryant
- Andy Cabeza Alcantar
- Sarah Cadi
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- Brian Cervantes
- Miguel Chavez
- Matthew Cheng
- Kaz Chiao
- Kiera Chiu
- Karla Cisneros
- Arthur Coelho
- Kyle Crawford
- Adrian Cruz Aguirre
- Jordan Dade-Jenkins
- Anish Dara
- Kaleb Del Mundo
- Ramon Diaz
- Jordi Dominguez Orozco
- Steven Dominguez
- Dani Drobot
- Carlos Duran Elias
- Natasha Efron
- Eduardo Espinoza Vasquez
- Michael Exner
- Jessica Falcon Chavarin
- Alonzo Ferraez
- Angie Figueroa Sandoval
- Ziggy Fineanganofa
- Joana Flores
- Antonio Flores
- Priscila Flores Samano
- Joustin Fuentes Fuentes
- Elijah Gabriel Dispo
- Luis Gallego Campos
- Felix Gee
- Lueni Georgievski
- Benjamin Gilfether
- Elan Gomez Cardona
- Jason Gonzalez Alfaro
- Osvaldo Gonzalez
- Sophia Goodwin
- Sean Grant
- Fatima Guerrero Morales
- Aanvi Gupta
- Dustin Ha
- Ramez Hadeed
- Ivan Hager
- Leah Hawkins
- Anna He
- Charlie Henderson
- Brisna Hernandez Jimenez
- Sosaia Hokafonu
- Calista Huang
- Luke Jiang
- Liam Kelley
- Fin Kennedy
- Fatima Khalil
- John Kilic
- Fouad Krayem
- Andrea Kunkel
- Grant Lau
- Matthew Lau
- Sofie Laura
- Jonah Le
- Ethan Lee
- Kevin Leon
- Marcus Leonardo
- Evan Liang
- Kaylin Longueville Marks
- Nellzon Lopez Perez
- Eddie Lopez
- Abel Lozano Nunez
- Andrew Ma
- Diego Marengo
- Avery Marquis
- Brad Martin
- Bridgette Martin
- Alan Martinez
- German Martinez Natividad
- Cris Martinez
- Alex McGuigan
- Kade McKenzie
- Mason Miller
- Nolan Moore
- Savannah Murray
- Max Musaeu
- Janifer Olayo
- Juan Pablo Salas
- Grant Palmer
- Genuine Grace Parico
- Maya Patnaik
- Kira Philpot
- Abby Pineda Corzo
- Moses Pita
- Sender Platero Campos
- Claudia Ponce
- Hanna Quanbeck
- Jessica Raheb
- Medha Rakesh
- Alexander Ram
- Mia Ramirez
- Daiana Ramirez Tapia
- Justin Ramoth
- Adam Richter
- Nico Reyes Sanchez
- Gael Rios Sanchez
- Yaretzi Rodriguez Guardado
- Yahir Ruiz Calderon
- Nahideline Saenz Palos
- Ingrid Salazar Gonzalez
- Damian Samano Ocampo
- Juliya Soultanova
- Jameson Spencer
- Alexa Sterry
- Ethan Tawn
- Gianna Thompson
- MiaElla Thurrell
- Mordecai Tonga
- Monica Lim
- Gabriel Urbina
- Brandon Valle Lopez
- Anapaula Velarde
- Keagan Vigil
- Lucas Villa-McGuffin
- Arnold Villaluz
- Abbee Vue
- Keiya Wada
- Mathias Wigenstam
- Logan Wong
- Aidan Wong
- Ashley Wong
- Justin Wong
- Jonathan Wong
- Tiffany Yi
- Ana Yoc Curup
- Marvin Zheng
- Martin Zheng

Washington

- Amelia Butler
- Ian Chang
- Christopher Chu
- Samirah Field
- Arjun Kadambi
- Chloe Laddaran
- Eric Li
- Bryant Ma
- Stela Pisaro
- Kate Ramseyer
- Tadem Szeto

Colorado

- Audrey Castiglia
- Zachary Floresca
- Harry Gurr
- Jane Hersherberger
- Olivia King
- Andrew Lingenfelter
- Brett Lipton
- Fern Aceituno Medrano
- Pippa Reading
- Miles Rokala
- Sophie Rubinstein
- Cole Sloan
- Evan Thacker
- Camryn Walsh

Minnesota

- Sora Kim-Steiger

Wisconsin

- Samuel Gulchin

Michigan

- Alessandra Hernandez
- Charis Hsieh
- Allison Kim

Indiana

- Charles Birkelund
- Brendan Chi
- Adam Pauling

Ohio

- Lina Cruz Parada

New York

- Garrett Field
- Lucas Nguyen
- Ruhi Mudoi
- Adrienne Nguyen
- Kaz Onuma
- Phoebe Taylor
- Mana Ueno
- Michael Yau
- Howell Zhang

Maine

- Robert Kelley

Massachusetts

- Dragon Cai
- Sophia Hsu
- Chloe Levadoux
- Andrew McCol
- Naveen Schwarzkopf
- Isaac Nagao
- Nicole Thomas
- Quinn Shirley
- Cassie McMillan
- Evan Prock
- Garret Chiu
- Elaina Shao

Connecticut

- Vincent Isola

Rhode Island

- Chloe Cheng
- Spencer Coral

New Jersey

- Chloe Chen
- Tyler Roth

Pennsylvania

- Ellen Li
- Hannah Li
- Darren Lo

Maryland

- Marcus Rife

Washington, D.C.

- Kenzo Lam
- Audrey Yanez

Virginia

- Sou Matsumoto

Tennessee

- Layla Adle

Georgia

- Sarah Klein
- Ella Margolin
- Aditya Shankar
- Charlotte Wohlwendner

Florida

- Carolina Appellbom

Louisiana

- Nalanie Davis

Alabama

- Vincent Ragone

Texas

- Andrew Dong
- Kaia Smith

Arizona

- Iris Daily
- Alyssa Fox
- Trevor Kawamura

Nevada

- Saya Quiroz

Orange County

- Shannon Bullard
- Julia Del Mundo
- Augusten Goldman
- Samarth Hegde
- Calvin Hong
- Emily Huynh
- Rocco Lamberti
- Annika Liu
- Jack Lum
- Akilan Paramasivam
- Khushi Parikh
- Bella Cames Pask
- Mia Spencer
- Katie Yue

San Diego

- Georgia Bayley
- Melody Chen
- Jenna Jee
- Catalina Dulcey-Nguyen
- Jordan Kiaaina
- Isabel Koror
- Ceylon Liu
- Melody Liu
- Anthony Martinez
- Sora Mizutani
- Luuk Danger Nicolas
- Ella Taylor
- Clint Wilson
- Aiden Yan
- Jasmin Yip

Central Valley

- Andrea Lazo Cruz
- Abhik Singh

Inland Empire

- Gavin Baquiran
- Tyson Ching
- Eliza Shih

Central Coast

- Advik Bommarreddy
- Colby Bruckner
- Camille Childress
- Luana Denniston
- Sofia Dioli
- Kasey Dorsa Guerra
- Alex Jiang
- Seth Kantor
- Tyler Kennedy
- Dominic Kudzia
- Ethan Kurebayashi
- Caitlin Lien
- Jeremy Lim
- Alex Pate
- Sam Pirzadeh
- Kat Russell
- Noah Shefer
- Bridget Stewart
- Jayden Tang
- Alex Zhao

Los Angeles

- Matthew Auyeung
- Rhea Bhatia
- Krystal Black
- Danielle Blushteyn
- Kieffer Chan
- Miller Elliott
- Marcus Finke
- Shreya Gandhi
- Theon Gardiner
- Jack He
- Russell Yee
- Joshua Jacobs
- Nicholas Ke
- Katya Kleinhenz
- Anthony Leong
- Izzy Lew
- Erika Moskewicz
- Thomas Nie
- Michela Peccolo
- Pouyan Sheikh
- Imme Thanaphothipong
- Sierra Troy
- Lian Wang
- Taylor Wiedenmann

United Kingdom

- Jaelah Miller
- Haruki Takeda

Italy

- Shastha Suresh

Taiwan

- Noe Peretz

Spain

- Triana Khalil-Sanchez

India

- Ziv Rapoport

Canada

- Tyler Hamilton
- Keira McLintock
- Thomas Williams

Military

- Ryan Navarro
- Jeremiah Santos
- Jerry Schwab

DONS IN FULL BLOOM! SENIOR MAP

Copy and Polling: Alexa Sterry, Darren Lo, Meilin Rife, Darshan Bal
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Read our editorial on why we chose to uphold our policy of not publishing institution names with this QR code:



The dire issue is not wolves: reviving extinct animals

Zack Li

FEATURES WRITER

Their names are Romulus and Remus: the story-tale twin brothers who founded the millennia-enduring empire of Rome. But they are the last thing one would expect: a pair of snow-white pups, already measuring almost 80 pounds, about 25% larger than the average wolf pup at only seven months old. Their howls are the first howls of the dire wolf to break the silence of over 13,000 years of extinction.

In April, Colossal, a Dallas-based biotechnology company, publicized their birthing of Romulus, Remus and their four-month-old sister Khaleesi from grey wolf surrogates. Colossal insists that they are not creating one-to-one genetic copies of dire wolves. Using CRISPR gene editing technology to isolate and tweak certain grey wolf genes, the company has created modified grey wolves that will live in the same habitat and hunt the same prey as the dire wolf did. While it may be just an opportunity for scientists to play God with the idea of fantasy television series “Game of Thrones”-inspired beasts, the science has serious implica-

tions in fields of environmental conservation. The company plans to do the same with the woolly mammoth and the dodo, emphasizing the potential of these species in restoring biodiversity to their previous habitats.

The premise is certainly promising — in the Arctic, woolly mammoths and dire wolves were once keystone species, species that have a significant positive effect on their ecosystems disproportionate to their population size. For instance, the mammoths’ trampling behavior allowed for a more diverse host of grasses to sprout in the flattened patches while also tightly packing together snow to keep the permafrost from thawing and releasing the carbon trapped in the frozen decay.

However, it’s unlikely we can even sustain a healthy and independent population of mammoths or dire wolves. Our current ecosystems are a far cry from the Ice Age biomes they thrived in over 12,000 years ago, and introducing new species to an ecosystem requires delicate planning that rarely results in a healthier ecosystem. For example, the carefully monitored return of the grey wolf to Yellowstone National

Park in 1995 is heralded as a wildly successful conservation effort. The reintroduction of an apex predator restored the ecosystem’s biodiversity through a chain reaction of trophic interactions. However, many other well-intentioned species introductions, such as the cane toad to Australia in the 1930s and the Asian carp to the Great Lakes in the 1970s, spelled ruin as the species became invasive and began to overrun the local ecosystems, threatening native species by outcompeting them for resources. Whether or not these long-extinct species will be welcomed back as pests or saviors is still unclear.

Furthermore, our capacity to protect revived populations is also dubious, considering the current scale of conservation efforts. Colossal recognizes that well over 30,000 species go extinct every year, and it’s common knowledge that many of these extinctions are and will be caused by human activity. Focusing on species revival as a one-size-fits-all conservation solution will only act as a treatment for the symptoms of the issue, not the cause of human disturbance.

These are just a few concerns with the techno-optimism sparked by the revival

technology used to bring forth Romulus and Remus, which presents itself as a tempting technological Band-Aid to the scars we have inflicted upon ecosystems worldwide. However, there are still many reasonable applications to this kind of technology. For species that have only recently gone extinct, reviving them in the context of existing habitat restoration and conservation efforts will provide second chances that are concretely backed. In fact, this was explored back in 2003; Celia, the last Pyrenean ibex, died in 2000, and scientists implanted DNA from her cell samples into the eggs of domestic goats. Tragically, the only ibex that was successfully born died three minutes later from a common symptom of animal cloning — lung collapse.

But the return of the dire wolf is still an assuring testament to the feasibility and potential of revival techniques. Like the grey wolf surrogate used to birth the pups, conservation organization Revive and Restore has used surrogate cloning with much success in restoring the endangered black-footed

ferret population. Their first clone, birthed from a domestic ferret surrogate, Elizabeth Ann, became a mother to two in June 2024, marking history for conservational biotechnology.

Similar to how Colossal changed the gene for fur color in grey wolves to white for the dire wolf, scientists have isolated genes in coral that are responsible for heat tolerance. Coral is especially sensitive to changes in temperature and the heat-resistant coral developed in 2020 could be the next step to undoing the effects of climate change.

Although reviving extinct species is an exciting topic of the present, our focus should be on preventing more human mistakes from causing environmental harm as of now and leave the extinct past to the eventual future when we are to undo our mistakes.



LILLIAN HUANG

The unjust detention of Mahmoud Khalil

Jannah Nassef
NEWS WRITER

On March 8, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents seized pro-Palestinian activist Mahmoud Khalil at his home. Without a warrant or any criminal charges, ICE agents proceeded to throw him into a car and threatened to arrest Khalil’s eight-month pregnant wife, stating they were following State Department orders.

Khalil’s green card and student visa were revoked by Secretary of State Marco Rubio, and he was thrown into detention in Louisiana. Immigration judge Jamee Comans ruled that Khalil was eligible for deportation due to his presence in the

U.S. causing “potentially serious foreign policy consequences.” Even his

request for temporary release to witness the birth of his first child was denied.

“I’m disappointed how they treated this man,” said freshman Serena Jabri. “It’s unfortunate because he was trying to promote Palestine and he should be able to do that. If other people are able to support Israel and get no backlash, why should he get reprimanded?”

Comans’ ruling is problematic for multiple reasons. First, what does it mean to pose a threat to foreign policy? Nearly any political statement criticizing the American government can fall under that blanket statement. In this case, Khalil was a head negotiator for Columbia University Apartheid Divest — a student group that attempts to convince Columbia to divest from Israel and calls for a ceasefire in Palestine.

But disagreeing with the government’s decisions should never be a means of incarceration; those living in America, the supposed land of the free, should have every right to criticize politicians and institutions, citizens or not. We are the ones affected by our government’s deci-

sions, and we should be able to criticize it to make our lives better — not because we hate our country, but because we deserve to live here without feeling the guilt of our tax dollars funding the bombings in Palestine and Yemen. We should not apologize for fighting for our rights. We should not be afraid of advocating for the thousands killed by the Israeli government and occupation forces, and Palestinians should not have to audition for mercy. Yet, we remain afraid.

“I know someone who was advocating and protesting for Palestine, and [someone] held a gun to their head for it,” said junior Rama Haddad. “And [that] really affects the way they live their life after that.”

The actions taken by the government throughout this case set an incredibly dangerous precedent for our legal system. It was absolutely unnecessary for Khalil’s case to take place in Louisiana, especially since there is an immigration court in New York, where he lives, and one can rightfully suspect it

was moved due to the higher chance the judge would have conservative views. Third, one can not help but wonder if this happened because Mahmoud is Palestinian, and doesn’t share opinions with the current administration. It’s clear that the government is trying to scare anyone with opposing views into silence; this oppression and injustice against Khalil exemplifies that and it is unacceptable. This is not just an attack on the pro-Palestinian movement; it is an issue that can affect immigration and economic welfare.

Further, no evidence was provided by the government — other than Marco Rubio’s memo, which did not cite evidence of, or accuse Mahmoud of any criminal activity, but rather, cited the government power to deport people for beliefs. The memo stated that allowing Khalil to stay in the U.S. would threaten current attempts to combat antisemitism. But supporting the liberation of Palestine, the rightful return of Palestin-

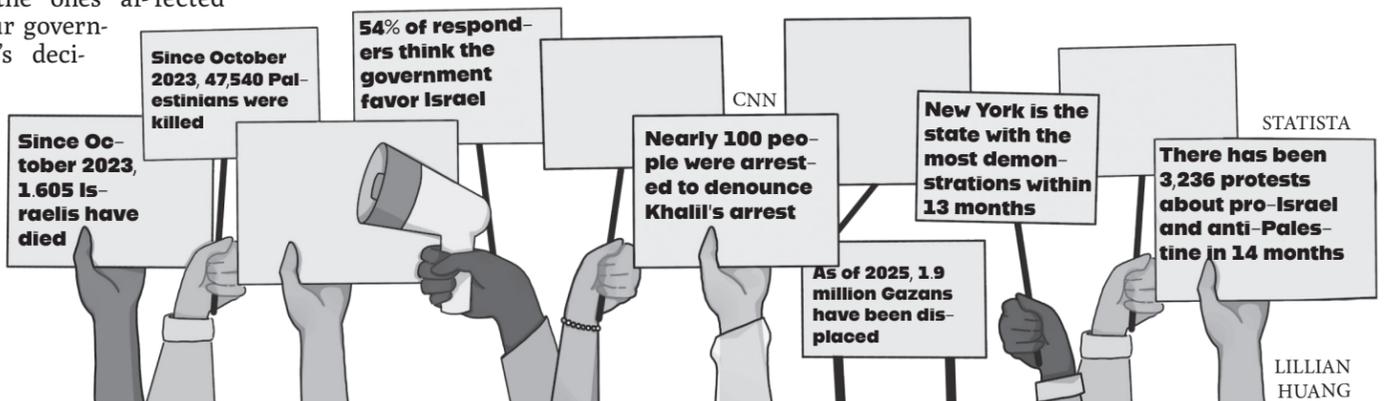
ian land and the end to an occupation is not antisemitic. This has nothing to do with hating people for their ethnic identity, and everything to do with calling to an end of a genocide.

“It’s unfair ... to send someone to court ... [when there’s] lack of evidence,” Haddad said. “The reasoning of making others feel uncomfortable [is unfair as well] because they didn’t get to question other people’s feelings [towards Khalil]. There needs to be more [understanding of] the other side, instead of just sending someone to a court over assumptions.”

The hypocrisy of the U.S. government, and the bias against Muslims, people of color and pro-Palestinian voices has been made evident, as is the attempt in silencing those voices. This movement will continue to advocate for the release of Khalil, and we will continue to pray to Allah The All-Mighty to release him, grant him patience, give him his due justice and reunite him with his family.

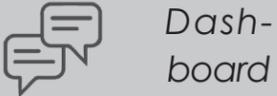


COURTESY OF JACOBIN





Account

Dash-
board

Courses



Groups



Calendar



Inbox



History



Studio

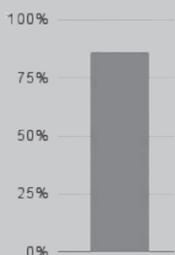


Help



Statistics

Students and their relationship with parental pressure

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF
MEDICINE

87% of students experience high perceived parental pressures.

Dueling opinions: parents and online grades



Seona Srivastava
Features Writer
Grade: 11
PRO

My Canvas finally loads and my stomach drops. A grade I didn't expect sits there on the screen, waiting for a reaction. Most of us know that feeling — the jolt of anxiety, the scramble to remember if we turned something in, the sinking realization that this number might mean more than just points off.

But in moments like this, knowing my parents have access to my grades is reassuring. They're not waiting until the end of the semester to notice something's wrong: they're already in the loop, ready to help me figure out where I went off track.

Some students hear "parent access" and immediately think of pressure, nagging or a lack of privacy. However, when used thoughtfully, real-time grade access can create a partnership rather than a power struggle. Rather than standing over their children like a watchdog, parents can step in as allies — checking in without being asked and being proactive when their child might not be.

The ideal scenario rests on one essential element: trust. Without it, the very access that is meant to be helpful could easily become a source of stress, even inadvertently deepening the divide between parents and their child.

"It gets really tricky when a student is doing well and a parent or guardian sees the grades and thinks it's not high enough," said academic counselor Erica Cerles. "Ultimately, the answer isn't taking away access to grades [but rather] addressing the deeper expectations within the family unit."

But even with these challenges, there is immense value in allowing parents to stay informed. According to the National 4-H Council, 45% of teenagers say that they attempt to ignore their feelings or isolate themselves when dealing with mental health issues. Whether it's fear of disappointing their parents, the shame of not meeting expectations or simply not knowing how to ask for support, many students try to manage on their own.

But school isn't always predictable. Mental health, personal challenges, even just a tough week, can send our grades slipping. Waiting for a progress report or final grade can mean missing the chance to fix a problem early. When parents can see these changes as they happen, they can step in and help before things spiral.

Additionally, the structure provided by parental involvement can be especially beneficial for students who struggle with organization. Parents aren't micromanaging their work, but they're helping stu-

dents establish routines and maintain organization by helping their child create a clear study plan, stepping in to organize overdue assignments or even by checking in with teachers about extra credit or missed work. For those balancing extracurricular activities, part-time jobs or family responsibilities, a timely reminder from a parent about a due date can make all the difference.

Instead of asking, "Why didn't you tell me you're failing Spanish?" they can say "Hey, I saw your test grade — want to go over the material together?" It shifts the conversation from conflict to collaboration. When approached with empathy, grade access can strengthen relationships.

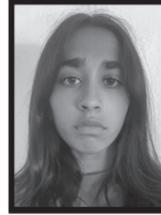
"My parents aren't very strict on my grades, and they know I try my hardest in school," said senior Jessica Raheb. "I'm actually completing my assignments, so they have the trust in me to keep myself accountable."

At the heart of it, parents just want their children to succeed — whether that success happens independently or with their involvement. A recent survey by the National Parent Teacher Association revealed that "parents want more information gathered and shared with them so they can be part of the solution supporting their child's mental health."

"I'm always looking at grades," Cerles said. "If I see something amiss, then I work with the student and the teacher. Parents can do the same thing ... [Students] can't just be thrown to the wolves to learn it on their own ... The best path is for a parent to be involved, but to do that through a loving, supportive lens."

Parent involvement also prepares students for real-world accountability. Adult life is full of oversight — whether it's in the workplace, college or personal finances — and learning how to receive and respond to feedback is an essential life skill.

Just like a good coach provides feedback on an athlete's performance without taking control, parents having real-time access to their child's grades fosters a partnership, offering support, setting expectations and promoting accountability that will benefit students long after high school. To grow as individuals and as a society, learning how to navigate constant feedback is an essential life skill. Platforms like Canvas offer the transparency needed to teach responsibility while ensuring students receive the support they need during tough times.



Anushka Punjabi
Features Writer
Grade: 10
NEG

Grades aren't like the stock market.

They shouldn't be tracked in real time, analyzed like fluctuations in the NASDAQ composite or cause havoc when they dip by 0.2%. Yet platforms such as Canvas have turned academic performance into a 24/7 surveillance mechanism. While some argue that this helps students stay accountable, it infantilizes students, compromising mental health and creates a generation of high-achieving burnouts.

Real-time grade access, sold as a tool for "parental involvement," blurs the line between encouragement and control. While some argue it helps students stay accountable, it feeds into an obsessive culture of micromanagement, both from students and parents. Students, in particular, are becoming less focused on the process of learning and more fixated on the fear of disappointing someone.

Additionally, according to a study by Scientific Reports, increased stress leads to heightened levels of dishonesty and cheating amongst students. Stress, in general, is frequently attributed to external pressures, particularly from parents who may impose high expectations or have extremely demanding expectations toward academic success.

"My parents are a little old-school [and] they're immigrants, so they think ... the teacher won't allow any mistakes," said senior Medha Rakesh. "They assume the school system is rigid."

This experience isn't uncommon. Many students report feeling as though their academic lives are under constant scrutiny, where there's no room for mistakes, growth or simply how exhausting the end of the day can be. The moment a grade drops, it isn't a personal concern, but a family issue.

This constant oversight doesn't just hurt students academically — it affects their sense of independence.

"[At first] my grades were a little chopped, but [my parents] were like, '[They're] never

going to go up,'" Rakesh said. "It's like, 'Bro you need to stop pestering me about it.'"

For many, academic performance is not just a reflection of ability, but of one's character and discipline.

"Parents assume that if you work hard and study a lot, it'll be fine, which is true," Rakesh said. "But sometimes a teacher sucks, or the environment does. They can't actually see how you're doing in school ... There are other factors ... for grades."

But Canvas doesn't leave room for benefit of the doubt. Parents and their devices constantly remind students of their shortcomings. The numbers are always there.

"Trust is letting go of control," said sophomore Aidan Wong. "Parents should have trust in their students' academic abilities ... their honesty and responsibility."

This results in emotional fatigue that comes with students constantly being monitored, especially when students already face pressure from honors, Advanced Placement courses and standardized testing. According to a 2020 study in the *Journal of Adolescence*, excessive parental pressure contributed significantly to anxiety, burnout and academic dishonesty. Constant evaluation leaves little room for failure, yet failure is where learning happens.

"[Parental interference is] honestly the opposite of motivating," Rakesh said. "I can take care of myself. It seems helpful, but it makes you want to do [the opposite] of what your parents tell you ... teenagers are rebellious."

Although parents get real-time updates through Canvas, these grade updates don't show everything that accounts for a student's grade. It doesn't show when a student is dealing with personal struggles, when a teacher's grading is inconsistent or growth and effort. These notifications and constant surveillance promote a data-driven reaction rather than a human conversation, which harms students and the learning process.

Separating the art from the artist

Seona Srivastava
FEATURES WRITER

"I'm a little bit sleepy tonight but when I wake up I'm going death con 3 On JEWISH PEOPLE," said Kanye West in an October 2022 tweet.

That sentence — erratic, hateful and unmistakably dangerous — should have been a breaking point, but it wasn't. Kanye's music kept streaming and his fan-

base still stayed large. His cultural relevance, though shaken, still endured. Kanye West is a troubling reminder that when it comes to artists, society still makes room for forgiveness if the soundtrack is good enough. After all, in the words of devout Ye fans: "he made Graduation."

Kanye is hardly an isolated case.

CONTINUED ON
ARAGONOUTLOOK.ORG



Characters Smoke and Sammy witness a critical scene.

COURTESY OF WARNER BROS. PICTURES

Perfect sin-ema: Sinners

Oliver Levitt
FEATURES WRITER

“Phenomenal” is the first word that comes to mind whenever I think about “Sinners.” Within minutes of its start, I was absolutely captivated, and I remained that way for its entire run time of two hours and seventeen minutes, absorbing what I can only define as a cinematic masterpiece. For the first time in my life, this film left me sobbing as I processed it.

“It made me feel triumphant,” said senior Quincy Romero. “[At the end], my favorite song in the whole thing [started] playing and I couldn’t stop crying. I was sitting in the movie theater chair while people were [going] ‘time to go.’ And I was just like, ‘I can’t get up. That was phenomenal.’”

Set in 1930s southern America, the film follows twin brothers Smoke and Stack, played by Michael B. Jordan, and their nephew Sammy on their quest to set up a juke joint — purchased from white Ku Klux Klan members — with the purpose of making a profit and providing entertainment to their black community.

As they reach the climax of their night of bluesy celebration, several white vampires arrive to crash the party, hoping to steal Sammy’s incredible spiritual talents for blues music. As vampires, they must request entry into the joint, forcing the characters into challenging predicaments of trust. Eventually, the vampires have a full-scale invasion of the joint, killing many of its members and leaving only Smoke and Sammy standing in the end.

A tattered Sammy chooses to hold onto his music, despite all the pain it caused him and against his father’s wishes, and a broken Smoke decides to take one final stand, killing the KKK members that sold him the joint under false pretense and seeing his family on the other side.

What made this already complex story more fascinating were its themes of assimilation and culture. The vampires are physically stripping the black community members of their ethnic background because they are sucking blood out of them, but the vampires

are also figuratively trying to strip them of their black culture by taking their musical abilities for themselves, really slamming in the overarching point of assimilation.

As much as these themes of assimilation initially present themselves in 1930s Mississippi, the film’s messaging can still be extrapolated to the current day.

“If it’s coming out today, it’s commenting on things that are happening today,” said senior Andrew McColl. “Because it’s set in the past, it just makes a stronger point of this has always happened, and this is going to continue to happen ... It’s all about staying true to yourself, breaking the rules and rebelling.”

Even the smallest details of the film are used to reinforce the message that assimilation is a vicious cycle, with the main vampire’s Irish background playing a part in the metaphor.

From the vampires to the KKK dealings, the white characters in the film work tirelessly against the aspirations of the strong, black characters in the film. McColl observes how the twins’ different approaches are used to depict different messages.

“Smoke doesn’t conform and he ends up having a genuine death, but he gets to see his wife and his daughter on the other side,” McColl said. “Even though it’s tragic, he still has the better ending in the film, compared to Stack, who’s more charismatic and more materialistic, and he seems to have a much happier time, but he becomes a vampire. And sure, he’s allowed to live [forever] technically, but the question is, if he really is living — he’s assimilated.”

Sammy, on the other hand, actually finds true success at the end of the film, when he becomes a famous Blues star, returning to McColl’s idea about the strength of music against assimilation.

“Sammy sticks to his music despite pressure from his father and pressure from the vampires for him to give it up or give it to them,” McColl said. “Sammy sticks with music because music is all we have, and music is the strongest form of rebellion we have. You either conform or you can break the rules and make something generational, like Blues music.”

Beyond its themes, the film’s overall quality is certainly a high point, with strong acting performances all around, with Jordan — a lead and marketing point for the film — acting as both Smoke and Stack with immense precision.

“Seeing [Jordan] act as two different people was phenomenal,” Romero said. “It felt like two different people down to the way that they walk, their attitude, their facial expressions, the way they dress.”

Though Jordan was the selling point, Miles Cayton’s performance as Sammy was another acting highlight.

“This is his first film role ever,” McColl said. “He says so much without saying anything at all. A lot of the scenes, you can just watch his eyes and see how he’s feeling in that moment, and he’s really just a powerhouse that he becomes the covert lead of the film.”

As for the cinematography, the movie has impressive shots, some of them leaving me and others floored by the scene’s creativity. The “I Lied to You” scene in particular left me baffled as the screen panned around the ancestors in the juke joint.

“I love that scene, not because of what it means [to the story], but how it’s shot,” Romero said. “It really gives you the feel [that] you’re in the juke joint walking around and seeing everything.”

The final scenes of the film, in particular, left a lasting impact, leaving the audience with a satisfying conclusion to a fascinating story.

“When Smoke got to see [his dead wife] Annie and his child on the other side, that was phenomenal,” Romero said. “That was heart-wrenching. And then hearing Sammy singing the credits, I couldn’t stop crying after that.”

This movie’s thematic strengths and high quality has left many entertained and deeply affected: raving about it with friends, discussing its plot and rethinking about its messages, even beyond all that was mentioned above.

READ EXTENDED VERSION
ON ARAGONOUTLOOK.ORG

VECTOR BY VANESSA CHAN

OUR OUTLOOK



Step into a Great Big Beautiful Life

Ashley Tsui
FEATURES WRITER

Imagine spending over two endless months searching for a famously secretive widow, Margaret Ives, to interview her, find her, manage to set up a time to meet up and maybe even landing the job ... only to realize there’s competition against an acclaimed and award-winning author for the exact same position.

This is the exact situation Alice Scott, the protagonist of Emily Henry’s newest release “Great Big Beautiful Life,” finds herself in.

Emily Henry, a giant in the romantic comedy genre, is no stranger to hit books, such as the rom-coms “People We Meet on Vacation” and “Beach Read.” Both have sold over 2 million copies since their releases in 2021 and 2020, respectively, following unique characters and love stories.

Her newest release follows Scott, a social butterfly and journalist hoping to write a biography of the elusive Ives. She’s hopeful to get the job, but is deterred when she realizes she has competition: Henry Anderson, a Pulitzer Prize-winning writer who stuns Scott in more ways than one.

The storyline is well presented and has a decent balance of romance, side plot and pacing. The journalistic and storytelling aspects feel natural and realistic, and the introduction of the famed widow doesn’t feel forced or awkward to read about.

“The pacing of this book was pretty good,” said sophomore Aubrey Leao. “There were one or two times where I felt [events] just happened, but for the most part, Emily’s writing makes sense, and she doesn’t leave out anything important or focus too much on details. That’s something I really liked about her writing in this book particularly.”

From the beginning of the book, readers understand how important Scott’s job is to her. One of the first scenes is the journalist introducing herself to Ives after months of searching for her. By beginning with an investigative side of the story, Henry fleshes out Scott as her own person, rather than just a flimsy, personality-less main character who only serves a romantic purpose.

Moreover, Henry’s decision to include a secondary storyline that focuses on Ives sets “Great Big Beautiful Life” apart from traditional

romantic comedy books by highlighting not just the relationship between the two love interests, but also broader interpersonal connections and the difficulties of differentiating between truths and lies.

As more is explained about Ives’ family and lies told by paparazzi and magazines are dispelled, the audience understands Henry’s ideas on how

fame, egos and betrayal affect family relations. Lies are maintained for years and grudges are never resolved, and even though the Ives seem perfect, Scott’s interviews show how emotionally broken and complex each family member is. Henry dives into how an individual’s upbringing affects their parenting style and discusses the never-ending cycle of generational trauma.

Henry’s creativity is undeniable, but due to the contrast of both topics, at times, it does feel like two different story ideas were simply combined into one. The transition between interviews with Margaret and developing the romance between the main characters can feel abrupt or random at times, again affecting the realism and overall flow of the book.

“[The Ives side plot] wasn’t something I wanted to keep reading, [but] it’s different [from] how other stories are written,” Leao said. “That’s what makes it nice, but at the same time, that also makes me disinterested, because it’s not what I’m used to.”

Additionally, the beginning of the romance aspect felt a bit rushed and the initial character development seemed too fast. The male romantic interest, Anderson, was introduced as a stoic and serious person, yet dropped this stern attitude after about two days, interrupting the realism of the book.

Evidently, Henry’s newest release strays from the typical structure of a romance novel. This choice is rather double-edged — it draws in more fans, but also takes away from the central romance. However, overall, this new experimentation allows Henry to explore larger themes and different styles of writing, which is admirable. Though the execution can be shaky at some points, the overall plot keeps readers intrigued and curious, earning it a four stars out of five stars for its creativity and unique premise.

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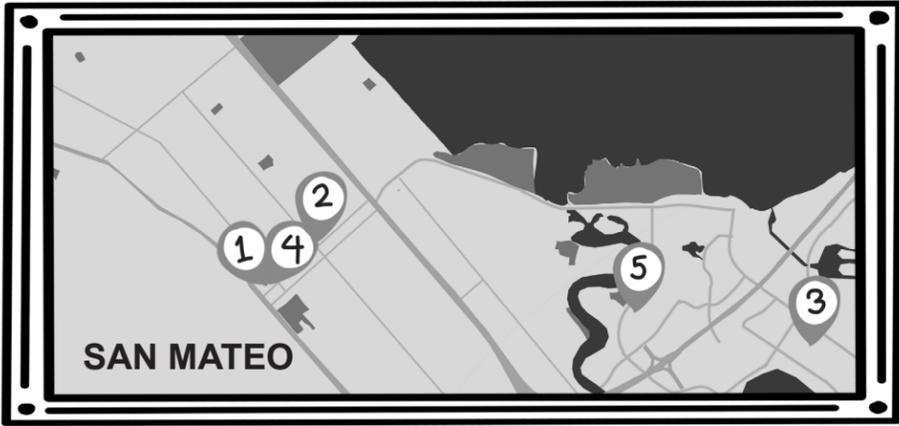
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OUR OUTLOOK



COURTESY OF PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE

NEW RESTAURANTS IN TOWN



MEILIN RIFE

Udon Mugizo

opened April 14

★★★★★
written by Leah Hawkins

Upon walking into the restaurant the entire staff welcomed us, creating a warm atmosphere that was maintained throughout the meal with good service and a well-thought out menu.

For their appetizers, I tried one of the chef's recommendations which was Corn Tempura. It was sweet, but a little soggy and consisted of what seemed like excessive tempura batter.

Udon Mugizo is mostly known for their Tonkatsu and Cream Udon dishes as main dishes.

However, as a pescetarian, I instead opted for their Tempura Udon, which came with chewy udon noodles and a broth that was mild and slightly salty, tasting just like traditional udon. The dish came with three pieces of shrimp and vegetable tempura on the side, which were sweet and crispy. It was probably one of the better dishes of tempura udon I've had, though nothing particularly special or unique.



HANNAH LI

The menu has strong variability, with both rich and lighter udon types, as well as warm and cold, making the restaurant suitable for almost all seasons and moods. In addition to udon, there are many appetizers and rice dishes to choose from.

Considering the other options for Japanese food downtown, the prices were comparable, ranging from \$19 for more basic dishes to \$22 for more premium dishes.

The biggest downside to the restaurant is how busy it is. On Fridays and weekend nights, the line to get a seat is typically over an hour almost as soon as the restaurant opens. Even during the week, there is almost perpetually a line, with no opportunity to make reservations in advance.

Overall, because of the high quality food, pleasant atmosphere and only slightly pricey menu, I give this restaurant a solid four out of five stars.

1

Toast in Town

opened March

★★★★★
written by Ellen Li

Funky spiral lights, modern paintings, plants and teacups line the walls at Toast in Town. Though the wait time during brunch on weekends is around 30 minutes, the quick and friendly service makes up for it.

There are a variety of options for both drinks and food. We ordered the well designed Strawberry Yuzu and Bluebell Vine Lemon drinks. The Strawberry Yuzu was the perfect mix of sweet and tart and contained real strawberries and orange peels on the bottom. The Bluebell Vine Lemon was a pretty ombre from purple to white and tasted vaguely of hawthorne berry.

As for the food, we ordered the Timeless Benedict and the Chicken Croffles. The Timeless Benedict included crispy and toasted bread with



ELLEN LI

a thick slab of bacon, tomato and an egg with a side of salad and potatoes. The potatoes were flavorful, though they could be crispier, and the salad had a sour vinaigrette that complemented the rest of the dish well. The Benedict itself had a perfectly poached egg and a rich and lemony hollandaise sauce.

The Chicken Croffle came with a sweet chili sauce and syrup on the side and was plated professionally and aesthetically. The croffles were very difficult to cut with a knife, but were nice and sweet, though a bit doughy.

The chicken itself was crispy and juicy. The dish had a perfect mix of sweet, spicy and salty.

Overall, though the food is a bit more on the expensive side and the wait can be long, the good portions, nice plating and flavorful food make the restaurant worthy of four and a half stars out of five.

4

ETERNA PRIMAVERA

opened February

★★★★★
written by Angela Nguyen

Eterna Primavera specializes in Guatemalan food and offers a plethora of orders and options.

From the vibrant walls to decorated tiles on the ceiling, Eterna Primavera has great warmth and a homey ambiance, creating an immersive authentic experience. The vibrant pink wall along with the matching table set had an aesthetic appeal that also matched with the themed decorations.

We ordered Carne Asada Tacos, Tamales and Guisado de Pollo, with all of the portions being very generous. However, there was a lack of flavorings for all of the dishes. Especially with the Tacos and Guisado de Pollo, which instead of having a variety of flavors from the different components of the dish, had the

tomato sauce overwhelming everything else.

Along with the lack of flavors, the texture was mushy for the Tamales.

It felt heavy instead of being light. On the other hand, the Guisado de Pollo's rice and beans were quite enjoyable with its variety of textures. The Tacos' textures were also nice, especially with the Carne Asada along with the chewiness of the taco's shell.

The dish prices were very reasonable — \$3.75 for each Tacos, \$5.25 for Tamales and \$16.25 for the Guisado de Pollo. This makes Prima Eterna a reasonable location for night out with friends.

Overall, the food and atmosphere is worthy of two and a half out of five stars.



MEILIN RIFE

2

Mala Town Express

opened April 14

★★★★★
written by Angela Nguyen

From the greenery on the wall to the greens in the make-it-yourself station, Mala Town Express feels fresh.

The ambience is very warm with lots of decorated plants as well as having a set color scheme of green shades. The restaurant has a corner with sauce, water and a trash can for customers, which was very nice. The staff there were also very nice, providing help whenever needed.

Moreover, the customizability of the restaurant was a big plus. Customers can choose vegetables, meat, noodles and broth. Specifically, the Signature Beef Broth was excellent — there was an obvious meaty flavor and it also had a little kick. However, some of the toppings felt as if they were fro-

zen items and not very fresh, such as the soup Beef Ball. But all of the vegetables were very fresh, especially the green onion.

However, it was unusual that the malatang was in a plastic container instead of a normal bowl. This made it difficult to open the container and it didn't help when the broth itself was extremely hot. These containers were also put into an insulated bag for everyone, which was a pleasant surprise. But the bag was one time use, making the boxes and the bag not being environmentally friendly.

Despite having weird packaging, the price was extremely reasonable for the amount of food, making Mala Town Express worthy of three point five stars out of five stars.



ANGELA NGUYEN

3

Little Late Bird

opened December

★★★★★
written by Meilin Rife

Little Late Bird is a cafe that serves coffee, boba, breakfast, sandwiches, rice bowls, just about anything someone could be craving. It is located in a corporate park near Mariners Island Park, making it a little out of the way.

Immediately walking in, we were greeted by a well-lit interior filled with flower arrangements, vintage posters, a motley collection of seating and even a dog treat jar. The restaurant layout and design made it feel like a welcome place to sit and hang out for a couple of hours with friends. Even on a Sunday afternoon, people were lining up to order.

For drinks, we ordered the Ocean Latte, Banana Boba Tea and Strawberry Boba Tea. The Ocean Latte had a blue base that looked pretty, but did not add much complexity to the

drink. The Banana Boba Tea, which I was looking forward to because of its uniqueness, tasted simply like banana milk. However, the strawberry had a nice incorporation of strawberry chunks and syrup that made for a pleasant drink.

For lunch, we got the Veggie Bibimbap, Bird's Bagel and Strawberry Croffle, or croissant waffle. The bibimbap and bagel tasted very simple and standard, like a good home meal, but the croffle tasted exquisite with a cinnamon sugar base and a flaky texture. The food was very reasonably priced, ranging from eight to fifteen dollars.

For its design and assortment of food and drinks, we give Little Late Bird three and a half stars out of five.



ELLEN LI

5



Sophomore Melina Hays attempts the pole vault. DARRA MCLINTOCK

Track and field at PAL

Claire Qi
SPORTS WRITER

On May 10, the Aragon track and field team ranked second, with a score of 86, for girls (4-3 league, 6-3 overall) and fourth, with a score of 70.5, for boys (3-4 league, 5-4 overall) at the Peninsula Athletic League championship meet.

Before the meet, they hoped to rank high and set some personal records. However, they did not feel that ranking first was realistic.

"We've [had a lot of injuries] this year," said senior Noah Lin. "I'm not sure if we'll be able to win PAL ... but I know we can [still] do well."

Athletes also expected good individual performances.

"My first goal would be to qualify for [Central Coast Section]," said senior Elaina Shao. "And then another bonus would definitely be [to] PR, because I would also like to build on the record."

Shao broke the school record during a recent meet, and she aimed to update her record at championships.

After ranking high in several field events during trials, the results made the team more confident.

"[Trials] went really well," said pole vault coach Norm Bennett. "We took second and third [in the boys pole vault]."

During the finals, the team followed up with similarly excellent performances. In pole vault, Shao took second place, senior Fern Aceituno took fourth and junior Ashley Alvarez came in fifth. Sophomore Mina Hwang tied for first in the girls long jump.

"The girls did outstanding," said head coach Greg Alvarado. "We had tremendous efforts by them."

On the boys' side, sophomore Nikitas Telfer-Mantouvalos came in second in the triple jump and tied for fifth in the long jump. Junior Jayson Liu won fourth place in the discus throw, achieving a personal record twice in the same meet.

When asked about the reason for his great performance

this meet, Liu mentioned concentration as a key factor.

"[There will be] a lot of things happening around you and a lot of distractions," Liu said. "But the best way to throw ... [is] just think about [your] own technique and ... focus."

Regarding field events, Hwang won two more individual first place medals in the girls 100-meter dash and 200-meter dash, winning by only hundredths of seconds in the 100-meter. Junior Madison Ketcham came in second place in the girls 400-meter. In the girls 4x100 relay, Aragon's team took first place, pulling ahead early on and maintaining their lead. In the girls 4x400 relay, Aragon came in first, leading by almost two seconds.

In both relays, the girls missed the school record by a narrow margin. They were half a second off in the 4x400 relay and only two tenths of a second away from the 4x100 relay record.

"Our exchanges in the four by four relay for the girls ... wasn't too good," Alvarado said. "We're gonna work on those things for next week."

However, they did break the school record in the boys 400-meter. Junior Charles Harger achieved a personal record by almost a full second and broke Aragon's record despite coming in second overall in the race.

"I did almost everything that I was capable of doing," Harger said. "And I definitely pushed myself farther than what I thought I was going to do."

Adding on to the track achievements, senior Marcus Rife won first place in the 110-meter hurdles and second place in the 300-meter hurdles. Senior Miles Rokala took third place in the boys 800-meter run and sixth place in the 1600-meter. In the 4x400 relay, Aragon boys came in fourth place.

Overall, it was a rewarding day for the track and field team. Many athletes made the CCS championships, where they successfully competed in the semi-finals on May 17 at Gilroy High School.

Boys tennis triumphs over Mitty

Adya Tewari
SPORTS WRITER

On May 7, Aragon boys tennis (13-1 overall) defeated Archbishop Mitty (11-6 overall) 6-1, winning the Central Coast Section playoff match and advancing to the next round.

The CCS matches prove to be a lot different from league matches.

"It's the top 24 teams from the whole section, from San Francisco to Monterey to Salinas to Gilroy," said head coach Dave Owdom. "The competition is what makes it a lot tougher."

Senior Akbar Beg, Aragon's No. 1 singles player, won his first set in a tiebreak, 7-6. He was able to carry the momentum from winning the first set to dominate the second set, winning 6-3.

"I felt pretty confident and I believe I did well preparing," Beg said. "I prepared a lot for CCS individually, as well as in practices."

Beg had a noteworthy season, proving to be a very reliable and valuable player for the Aragon team.

"My number one has only lost one match," Owdom said. "He won the singles title for the second year in a row this year."

No. 2 singles and junior Veraaz Khan fought hard during his match, but ultimately lost in straight sets with a score of 3-6, 4-6.

However, despite the loss, Khan also displayed many dominant performances throughout the season.

"My number two guy has lost to nobody so far," Owdom said before the match. "He hasn't even lost a set."

In addition to Beg, many other players, both singles and doubles, clinched the wins

necessary to allow Aragon to win and advance.

Junior Darrin O'Brien and senior Keiya Wada both won decisively in singles No. 3 and No. 4, respectively. O'Brien shut out his opponent completely, winning both sets 6-0. Wada followed suit, winning 6-1, 6-0.

Seniors Thomas Nie and Jack He secured another win for Aragon in doubles No. 1, winning in straight sets 6-4, 6-4 and claiming the match for Aragon, bringing the team's score to four.

"I wanted to end my senior year with a bang," Nie said. "So I played really hard in my matches."

Doubles No. 2, which consists of junior Max Gan and senior Ziv Rapoport, fought hard and won in a super tiebreaker. They started the first set out strong, winning 6-1, but fell short in the second set, losing 2-6. After an intense match, they won the tiebreak 10-5.

"On Wednesday, [my goal] was pretty much just to win," Rapoport said. "You just need to play really good doubles."

Aragon's No. 3 doubles senior Justin Wong and freshman Adam Beng closed out the match strong, winning in straight sets with a score of 6-3, 6-0.

The Aragon team had a lot of experience on their side, as many of the previous players returned for another year of play.

"We only had one senior from the starting lineup leave last year, so we retained all our good players," Nie said. "We got the championship last year, and almost no one left, so we only got better."

Each player on the team contributed to Aragon's dominant victory.

"Everyone's win is just as important as everyone else's," Akbar Beg said. "We all need to come through for [the team] to win."

Beyond the strong lineup, the team had to ensure they were prepared to play such a high stakes match.

"There's a lot going on, and it's hard for them to focus sometimes," Owdom said. "They've been pretty tough mentally."

Even with the dominant performance and the many successes, players still felt they had areas to improve their game.

"My serves have been really solid, and my net game is pretty good," Rapoport said. "But what I need to work on is ground strokes and longer consistent rallies."

Players also reflected on what went well for them during the match.

"My forehands and serves have been on point," Akbar Beg said. "I've been more able to stay focused and patient when playing."

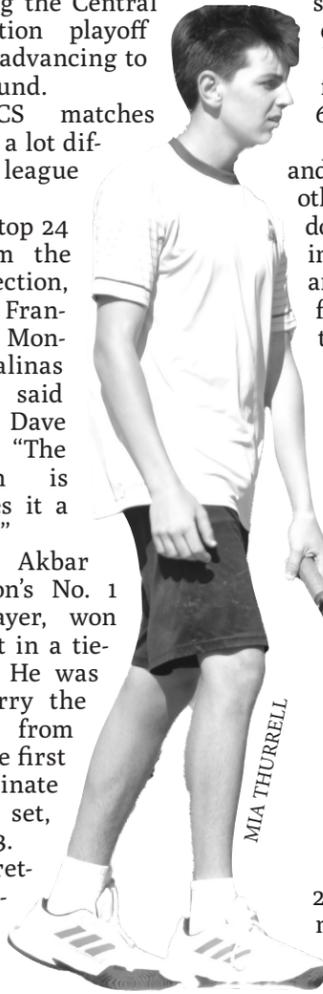
Despite the immense pressure to win, the team is able to support each other.

"The chemistry and connections we have with each other definitely helps us," Akbar Beg said.

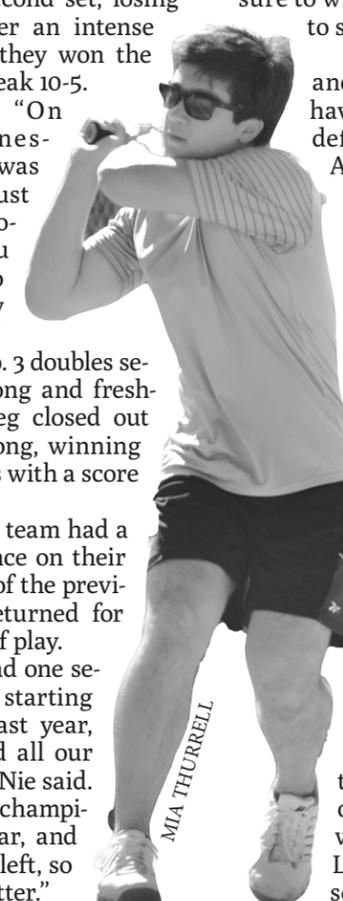
This helps to bring out the best in players and is reflected not only in their performances but also in their mindsets as teammates when they go on the court.

"We hold expectations for each other," Nie said. "That makes us want to play better for the team and personally."

With this win, the boys tennis team advanced to the second round of the CCS playoffs, where they lost to Lynbrook and their season ended.



MIA THURRELL



MIA THURRELL



Senior Thomas Nie prepares to return a serve against Archbishop Mitty.

MIA THURRELL

MIA THURRELL

Softball falls to Hillsdale in tense 2-1 rivalry loss



Players gather for a meeting on the pitcher's mound. MADELINE ALLEN

Quinn Shirley
SPORTS WRITER

On May 9, Aragon softball (9-17 overall, 5-9 league) battled it out with their longtime rivals, the Hillsdale Knights (16-9-1 overall, 8-6 league), in a competitive night of softball. The annual rivalry game went into extra innings, with the Knights coming out on top, winning 2-1 over the Dons.

Aragon freshman pitcher Makayla Hafoka shut down the Hillsdale offense in the first inning, preventing any runs from scoring. Hillsdale senior pitcher Lexi Kuka, did the same, leaving the score 0-0 at the end of the first inning.

"I felt I pitched an amazing game as a freshman," Hafoka said. "People not having a clue who you are and then pitching eight shutout innings is something that is very good."

In the top of the second, Hillsdale found more success, getting a runner on second with two outs. However, a clean infield play by the Dons off a grounder resulted in the third out, leaving the slate clean heading into the bottom of the second. In their at-bat, the Dons struggled to find success, having one walk but no runs scored.

The teams continued to fight to be the first on the board, getting numerous runners on base, but to no

avail. Hillsdale came close in the 5th inning after a triple left a runner on third with two outs. However, a great catch of a line drive by sophomore shortstop Taylor Workman held the run from scoring. Aragon also came close in the 5th when two back-to-back singles left freshman Aliyah Adle and Workman in scoring position on second and third with two outs. However, Hillsdale cleanly fielded the next grounder for the third out.

The game went into extra innings as the score remained 0-0 in the 7th inning. By the 9th inning, both teams had stranded a combined 10 runners on base and were still yet to score. However, this changed when Hillsdale had a breakthrough in their offense when two grounders in a row put the Knights up on the board. They added to their lead shortly later, when a third hit had the second runner making it home.

Aragon came out fighting in response, finding themselves with runners on 2nd and 3rd with only one out. It was at this point Aragon scored their first of the night off a ground out. Yet Hillsdale held off the Dons, and ultimately a pop fly catch ended the game with a score of 2-1.

"I don't think I've ever been in such a tight softball game going overtime into nine innings," said junior and catcher Destiny Garcia. "The energy and the excitement is what I pictured the game to look like."

Despite the loss, the Dons were proud of the result, as they were anticipating a challenging game and were pleasantly surprised at how close it was.

"I think the team did fantastic," Hafoka said. "We had little to no errors in the field, our energy was phenomenal, Hillsdale managed to hit a few balls into gaps which caused them to get a few runs in."

Adle, Aragon's left-fielder, agreed, highlighting the team's high spirits throughout the competitive play.

"We just had really good energy throughout the whole game," Adle said. "I think without the energy, we would have flopped."

However, there was definitely space for improvement, and Hafoka felt the Don's offense was lacking that same energy.

"Our bats could have been more alive," Hafoka said. "We managed to get runners on base but never managed to score."

Nerves also affected the large number of underclass-

men on the team, as for many of them, it was their first time playing before such a large audience.

"I was very excited, but also nervous, because it was my first big game," Adle said. "I tried to go into it [as] just another game."

That being said, Garcia was proud of the team's performance under pressure.

"Something we did really well is not let the crowd or minor errors affect us," Garcia said, "There were situations where Hillsdale had girls in scoring positions but we were still able to finish the inning without any of them scoring."

Being in the building stages of the program, the girls ultimately had a positive outlook of their season.

"From the beginning of the season to now, it was such a big difference," Adle said. "We improved so much as a team, and we also created a really strong bond between us."

The team looks forward to improving on their success next year.

"Overall being a young team comes with its struggles, and we often beat ourselves in games," Hafoka said. "But I think this was a very good season and I am excited for what's to come next season."

Well done: The Final Crossword

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- DOWN**
- 1 Units for Trump's wealth
 - 2 Foot shackle
 - 3 ___ Mugizo, new restaurant downtown (See Pg. 15)
 - 4 "Little ___," Viral MGMT song with lyric "Just know that if you hide, it doesn't go away"
 - 5 "___, the witch is dead!"
 - 6 "Without further ___"
 - 7 Abominable Snowman
 - 8 Chairman Mao
 - 9 "Tryna strike a chord and it's probably ___," Kendrick lyric
 - 10 Adele lyric: "___ on me, baby/ I was still a child"
 - 11 Drink daintily
 - 12 Label for Regina, Gretchen, or Karen in "Mean Girls"

- 16 Opposite of 'neath
- 21 Singer Del Rey with album "Ultraviolence"
- 23 Iconic baby from baby food brand
- 25 Welfare agency
- 26 Mark's "dead" wife in Severance
- 28 Adjective for a marshmallow or a cozy room
- 29 Aquarium gunk
- 34 Taylor Swift song where she admits that she's the problem
- 36 Anticipated
- 37 Destructive tide, as portrayed in Hokusai's "The Great Wave off Kanagawa"
- 38 Viral Megan Thee Stallion and Cardi B hit in 2020
- 39 One subject taught by Mr. Gibbons, for short (See pg. 4)
- 40 Got clean

Have a great summer **DONS!**

- 42 "Vogue" and "Material Girl" singer
- 43 Drake's son, named after Aphrodite's lover
- 44 Dr. Jones's school before Aragon
- 45 Friends, in Spanish
- 49 Gossip, slangily
- 52 Singer Lady ___ who had her own line of oreos, performed at Biden's inauguration, and wore an iconic meat dress to the VMAs
- 54 Greeting card sentiment: "Get well ___"
- 55 Aragon student... or what's hidden in this puzzle's circled letters?
- 58 "I've been working like a dog. It's been a hard day's night, I should be sleeping like a ___," Beatles lyrics

ACROSS

- 1 DVD alternative: ___-Ray
- 4 1944 battle also called the Normandy Landings or Operation Overlord
- 8 Zig-___
- 11 Spotted with one's "little eye"
- 13 Assistant
- 14 Genre for Panic! At The Disco and My Chemical Romance
- 15 Moana's "How Far ___"
- 16 "Ready __ ____, here I come!"

- 17 Reach 0%, like an uncharged chromebook
- 18 Alaskan ex-governor Sarah played by Tina Fey on Saturday Night Live
- 19 Cardiology test, abbreviated
- 20 Olympic rugby player Maher who was recently on "Dancing With The Stars"
- 22 "Baby Got Back" rapper, ___ Mix-a-Lot
- 23 What a senior becomes on May 29th
- 24 Years, in Spanish
- 25 Classic comedy trio

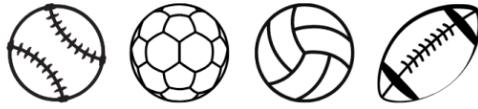
- consisting of Moe, Larry, and Curly: The Three ___s
- 27 Flew off the handle
- 30 Recent Michael B. Jordan film, "___s" (See pg. 14)
- 31 Millie Bobby Brown detective movie: "___ Holmes"
- 32 Appliances that cool, abbreviated
- 33 Business degree, abbreviated
- 35 "When the chile is tea but the finna is ___"
- 36 Enthusiastic slang acronym

- 39 Correct, as text
- 41 Savory Indian pastry
- 43 Alone at a restaurant?
- 46 Rip to pieces
- 47 "___ arigato, Mr. Roboto"
- 48 ___-bitty
- 50 Lion's home
- 51 In debt
- 53 Minecraft tool alongside the sword, axe, and pickaxe
- 54 Lyric from Katy Perry's Ur So Gay: "You're __ ____, maybe you should try a happy meal"
- 56 Counterpart to aff. in a debate

- 57 ___ Sterry, crosswords
- 59 Another, slangily
- 60 UN workers' agcy.
- 61 Vice President and climate change activist Al ___
- 62 ___ a million
- 63 Launch vehicle for Nasa, for short
- 64 Kanye West lyric: "What's a king to ___? What's ___ to a non-believer?"
- 65 Grandmother, to a Brit

Find answers at bit.ly/454cD5x

ALEXA STERRY



FUTURE

Quinn Shirley (Soccer)

Why did you decide to commit to Wellesley College?

I really connected with the coach when she called me. She sounded really enthusiastic about having me on the team, so that was a big motivation for me, because I wanted to go somewhere where I felt welcomed. Also, on my visit, I loved the campus and the team dynamic. The girls were super welcoming from the start, so it just seemed to be a really fun place to spend the next four years.

What did the recruitment process look like?

I always knew I wanted to play in college, but I started taking it seriously in freshman year. I started reaching out to coaches; obviously going to showcases and ID camps. I started getting traction, though, my sophomore and junior year. Then, Wellesley reached out at the end of my junior year spring. So I got on call with the coach ... after I went and visited the school ... we were talking for a while, and

then she actually gave me the verbal offer.

What were some of the challenges you faced?

The recruiting process was really stressful, and it takes the fun out of the sport sometimes. When you're writing all these emails and then maybe not getting responses, or not getting the response that you were hoping for. But I just found my time on the actual field to just be motivating in every practice. It reminded me why I was doing the process and why I wanted to play another four years.

What are some of the things that help you become the player you are right now?

COVID-19 actually really helped because when I was home with nothing to do, me and my friend would get on FaceTime and we would just touch the ball and play for two hours a day. Also, treating every practice as an opportunity to get better and push myself and

always striving to be the best I can, both on and off the field. Always giving my best effort, or before a game, preparing a good night's sleep.

Does playing soccer help you in any way outside of the sport?

On the field, I can let go of a lot of worries and stress. It's a space where I get to just be with my teammates and have a good time and not have to worry about school or anything else going on in my life. It's always been an escape from problems and stress.

Who has supported you the most in your life?

My family. From the time I was in second grade, I've been going to travel tournaments for soccer. So the constant traveling, and driving me to games and practices three times a week. Throughout the recruitment process, they were there to help me navigate emailing coaches or getting on the call.



Senior Quinn Shirley steals ball.

COURTESY OF QUINN SHIRLEY



Senior Jordan Kiaaina running in a game.

ANNA HE

Jordan Kiaaina (Baseball)

What is one message to anyone that wants to be like you?

Go all in, chase your dreams and don't let anyone else tell you what you can and can't do. Because if you let someone else tell you what you can or can't do, you're going to limit yourself. At the end of the day, only you can tell yourself what you can and can't do.

What are some of the things that helped you become the player you are right now?

Committing my time to the sport a lot. I was lifting four times a week, throwing every day, hitting every day, before and after practices for a club, even high school too. Also, just being disciplined, not taking days off when I know I don't have time because this game goes by pretty fast. Just committing my time to the sport and putting in lots of hard work is what separates me.

Who has supported you the most in your life?

My parents. They were always there for me when I was struggling, and they always encouraged me to keep going [and] to never give up. They say [how] once you give up, that's when you really fail. They've always supported me in my journey, and inspired me to go play college baseball. They realized that that was what I wanted to do, and they put all their effort into helping me achieve my dream.

What are you looking forward to in your college and sports career?

Making memories because baseball comes and goes, but those lifelong friendships, those will last forever. Those would be my best friends for life and right now it is. Because you don't always remember every play, but you remember all the memories you make and all the bonds you create. So that's something I look forward to.

What were some of the challenges you faced?

A lot of adversities. It's baseball. You're going to fail a lot, and just knowing how to handle that failure is something I pride myself in. Some challenges [include] being inconsistent with my hitting. Hitting has always been my biggest weakness. It's probably why I'm not playing at a four-year right now, and it's something that I will always have to overcome. I'll never have a perfect swing. I just have to keep battling every day, keep finding ways to improve.

What is your favorite memory in your career?

I had a home run [against] rival [school] Hillsdale, and we won that game 1-0 because of my home run. I blacked out after the hit, so I don't remember what happened after, but all I know is I was losing my mind. I was so excited.

Ava Goh (Diving)

What did the recruitment process look like for you?

After the [California Polytechnic State University San Luis Obispo] team got cut, [the school I was originally committed to], I didn't think any colleges would be able to take me because it was so late. So, I reached out to all the old colleges that I talked to before and asked if they had any open spots. There were a few others who had some spots, but [University of California, Davis] was probably my favorite in terms of academics and diving, so [I] was able to [get] a spot.

Why did you choose to pursue diving as a sport?

I mainly got into diving because I quit gymnastics. All my gymnastics friends went diving because it's easy to translate, [but] it was [still] a big switch for me because I did gymnastics for a long time. I wasn't used to trying something new, and it is very different in a way, but I liked how it was a little more relaxed and more fun.

What are some of the things you did to become the player you are right now?

I was enjoying learning [and] practicing every day. Also, not rushing at the same time, so trusting the process and trying to progress consistently.

Who has supported you the most in your life?

My teams were the most important, because when I joined, they'd all been diving for a really long time, so they were able to help me walk through [the transition process] and made [diving] a lot easier.

Does playing this sport help you in any way outside of the sport?

It just helps me stay responsible in terms of managing my time and also being on a team. [It] helps you to work with people and be supportive of others.



Senior Ava Goh at diving practice.

COURTESY OF AVA GOH

ATHLETES



Reporting by Sora Mizutani and Advika Singh



Senior Sierra Troy dribbling soccer ball.

IVAN HAGER

Sierra Troy (Soccer)

Why did you choose Claremont McKenna College?

I was talking to a couple different schools, but after going on a visit there and realizing how prestigious their economics and accounting program was, and meeting the team and seeing how welcoming and inclusive they and the coaching staff were, I realized that it was the right fit for me.

What were some of the challenges you faced?

During recruitment, there was a lot of pressure when you know that a coach is at one of your games and they're watching you from the sidelines. You want to play your best, but in those situations I would just remember that I love playing soccer and it's not about always playing my absolute best in front of the coaches and just having fun.

What other colleges were you looking at during the recruiting process?

I went to a lot of tournaments and showcases. I also did a couple school-specific camps. I was talking to Johns Hopkins University and I did a visit there, and then I was also talking to a lot of other Division III schools. [Massachusetts Institute of Technology], I did a visit there, and then I was talking to Washington University in St. Louis for a little bit.

What are some of the things you worked on that helped you become the player you are today?

During COVID-19, I feel like that's where most of my development happened; I would go out on my own every single day, get almost a thousand touches on my soccer ball in my backyard, and I would practice different skills and touches every day and try to improve each one. And then I saw that when I went back to soccer games, it really helped me improve my footwork and technical skills when on the field, which I think helped me become a better player.

Josh Jacobs (Baseball)

Why did you choose Claremont McKenna College?

Claremont has a lot of good academic opportunities in terms of resources and good facilities, and also job opportunities after college — they really help you with that and prioritize that throughout your college career. And then also the opportunity to play baseball that they gave me, which was awesome.

When did you decide that you wanted to play in college?

I didn't really know if I was going to play college baseball until maybe junior year, because I wasn't the best, but something clicked for me going into that year, and I was like, 'I wanna do this.' I would say it started in spring of last year, at the start of the season, just emailing coaches — most of them don't show interest in the spring, but during the summer, it was in full swing.

What did the recruitment process look like?

It started off with a lot of emails to coaches and I went to a lot of showcases to meet them. I got a few looks and interests, but there were only a few colleges where I was able to pursue and reach out. There were a lot of things in the unknown, and it was pretty stressful. I ended up seeing the Claremont coach at a showcase and we were already in contact before that just from an email; him seeing me play in person solidified his interest in me, and I learned about the college a little more, got a little interested in it and then things just took off from there.

What is your favorite memory from your career?

This summer, the moment between me and my parents in the coach's office when he offered, it was kind of like a dream

come true. Just getting the offer, knowing somebody wants me and that I have a secured spot to play in the future.

Who has supported you the most in your life?

My dad. Aside from taking me everywhere and paying for all of this, he has supported me, going to the cages with me and helping me practice as much as he can. When I ask him to, he never says no. And my coaches were really prevalent during my younger years; they gave the foundation for the player I am today.

What are your plans with baseball after college?

My goal is to play as long as I can — it's really hard to play after college, not a lot of people do it, but I'm not closing the door on it. I'll play however long I can and whatever that means, I'll do it.



Senior Josh Jacobs walks onto the field.

COURTESY OF JOSH JACOBS

Lina Cruz Parada (Track & Field and Cross Country)



Senior Lina Cruz Parada running at meet.

COURTESY OF LINA CRUZ PARADA

Why did you decide to choose Bluffton University?

The coach told me that it's a very small community and that is what I look for in a college. Also, since it's a small school, my times are very similar to the other people's times currently at Bluffton, so [the transition] can be easy for me.

What is your favorite memory in your career?

The award ceremony that we always do at the end of every season. It brings another goal of joy and memories and we look back on all the hard work we've put through throughout the season. Giving out awards shows how hard work is paid off.

What were some of the challenges you faced?

There were times where I didn't feel confident in myself, and I doubted my abilities as a runner. To overcome that, I talked to my coach. He was very honest, and gave me a lot of advice and pointers on what I should do to become a better athlete overall. Recently, I talked to him about how I wasn't getting good enough times, struggling this season to [get a personal record]. He basically told me to not put pressure on myself, especially since this is my last season.

Who has supported you the most in your life?

My mom always supports me with everything. Whenever I tell her that I'm having a hard time, she'll encourage me and cheer me up. She goes to every meet, so she's always there, cheering me on.

Athletes of the season

Smirnoff leads the team in kills per set, aces per set, serving aces, and assists. "He brings the energy for our team and leads us really well."
-Teammate, Isaac Nogoo

Santiago Smirnoff (11)

Senior Mason Miller currently leads all of the Peninsula Athletic League Ocean division with the lowest earned run average at 1.44. Miller commands games with his pace, accuracy on the mound, and ability to put pressure on batters by keeping his pitches down.

Mason Miller (12)

"Ava's the first ever diver to win [Central Coast Section] from Arago. She's also the first ever diver to win CCS from our entire school district."
-Assistant coach Justin Sell

Ava Goh (12)

"Darrin won all twelve matches he played in league play only giving up one set out of all those matches. His work ethic at practice and his determination as a player make him well deserving of this honor."
-Head coach Dave Dwdom

Darrin O'Brien (11)

"She runs the point, there are a few girls who really take charge and are good decision makers. She's very accurate in her shots, she's a very skilled player."
-Head coach Ash Parham

Elena Adractas (10)

Doubles partners Kong and Liu secured the team's first-place league finish after clinching a key win over Carlmont. Their victory helped the team complete its first undefeated season in thirteen years.

Chin-ray Kong (11)

"She's a great team leader and she just has such a deep love for the game. You see her playing out there and she's just fun to watch."
-Head coach Liz Roscoe

Taylor Workman (10)

Melody Liu (12)

"Chin-ray and Melody are both great team leaders and they just help out everywhere."
-Assistant coach Martin Chan

"Wiles is a fighter from the very beginning. He's extremely talented in distance running and he's a great team leader."
-Head coach Greg Alverado

Miles Rokala (12)

The boys lacrosse athlete of the month is senior Matthew Auyang. Auyang has been a standout player this season, leading the team in goals and consistently delivering high-impact performances on the field.

Matthew Auyang (12)

"He's really calm, the pressure doesn't get to him. He always keeps his composure."
-Head coach Jim Daniel

Conor Reidy (12)