### **PAGE 7. ARTS**

"1917" was nominated for multiple Oscars that will be announced in February. Read the Midway's review of the two films in anticipation of the Academy Awards.



### PAGE 8 • IN-DEPTH

Throughout the past decade, smartphones evolved from something uncommon to something found in everyone's pocket. Today's teens can't get enough.



### PAGE 11 • SPORTS

Explosive freshman basketball player Xavier Nesbitt has become a team leader, despite his young age. His jump shot and work ethic have propelled him forward.



University of Chicago Laboratory High School

## U-HIGH MIDV

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## To protest, dancers must sit

by ELLA BEISER

NEWS EDITOR

After being told they had to sit or stand rather than kneel during the National Anthem, Dance Troupe members were left feeling silenced by the idea that protecting modesty is more important than political activism.

According to Dance Troupe coach Nichole Magliocco, "Last year it started when we got new uniforms, we have skirts. They are straight and they are short. So, kneeling is not really an option because it is kinda inappropriate because they might show something."

As a solution, Ms. Magliocco and Athletics Director David Ribbens decided it would be appropriate for the girls to sit rather than kneel, starting at the Dec. 10 boys basketball game.

However, sophomore Dance Troupe member Kira Sekhar pushed back on the proposal

"We definitely could've kneeled," Kira said. "There are parts of our dances where we're kneeling or squatting, and we're wearing Spandex, so I don't think it was really about modesty.'

Laboratory Schools Director Charlie Abelmann echoed Kira's sentiment.

"I think it's fine for students not to participate in the pledge of allegiance and to find alternative ways to express their view," Dr. Abelmann said. "I hope that students feel like they can come to the administration to talk about concerns that they might have related to any curtailment of free speech."

During one of the Dance Troupe practices, Ms. Magliocco asked members to write down their reasoning for kneeling or standing and what they were doing to support the cause. Although Ms. Magliocco said the purpose of the exercise was to help her understand both decisions, Kira experienced the exercise differently.

"The way she phrased it was like if we weren't doing something for



MIDWAY PHOTO BY MARIA SHAUGHNESSY

**SITTING IN SOLIDARITY.** Dance Troupe members sit on bleachers during the national anthem before a game Jan. 14. Told kneeling would be inappropriate, dancers sit to protest oppression of people of color.

kneeling or sitting," Kira said. "It felt like much more of a way to single people out for their personal choice rather than to understand our choices and educate herself.'

Mr. Ribbens said the exercise was as much for the dancers as it was for Ms. Magliocco, and the boys basketball team participated in a similar activity the year prior.

Dance Troupe captain Macy Beal said many members were upset following the activity.

We are generally very liberal with these kinds of conversations, the cause then we shouldn't be but the way this was handled just left us very emotional," Macy said. Ms. Magliocco said she conducted the activity this way, so

each member could be heard. "We had them write it mainly because we didn't want a handful of people taking over the conversation," Ms. Magliocco said, acknowledging the discomfort of many dancers with the activity. "We have strong personalities on

that don't really like to talk at all." Ms. Magliocco emphasized that the majority of the team was sitting rather than standing and she

the team, and then there are some

didn't want anyone to feel pressured to sit. According to Ms. Magliocco, multiple students wrote about feeling pressure to sit rather in efforts to unite the team.

Ms. Magliocco stated her concern to the Dance Troupe.

She said, "I wanted the let the whole team to understand this isn't to say you are wrong or right, but this is to let everybody understand there are different opinions on this team and you should never feel pressured one way or another. And everybody should be supportive of each other."

### New course feedback actualized

by ABIGAIL SLIMMON

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

After a year of working through ideas, Student Council conducted test runs of their course feedback initiative in a few classes just before winter break and plan to open the survey to other teachers soon.

"We decided to run the survey through just a few classes to make sure it all works in the way it should," All-School President Ben Cifu said. "We want to know if teachers get actual feedback, if we are asking questions in the right way and even if we are asking the right questions."

The goal is for teachers to use the mid-year feedback to improve their courses.

Each teacher has an access code for each class for the feedback page of the Student Council website. The anonymous survey includes questions such as "How many minutes did you spend working on homework for this class last week?" and "What assignments were most helpful for your learning, which were not?"

Teachers who participated in the test run received the feedback results over winter break. In the future, teachers will receive feedback at the end of the semester.

Chris Janus, a history teacher who participated in the test-run, said that although he likes feedback, the anonymity is unsettling.

"It's great that most of the class has felt they have mastered the material, but who replied that they don't feel comfortable with it at all? How am I supposed to help them if they only feel comfortable expressing their confusion through an anonymous survey," Mr. Janus said after reviewing responses.

Mr. Janus explained that he feels like curriculum feedback like this is important, but he is much more comfortable to make changes if students come talk to him face to

"If a student comes and talks to me about ways they think the class could improve, that is much more effective," Mr. Janus said.

This isn't the first time a feedback system has tried to be implemented into U-High.

Ben explained that in previous years teachers were concerned that multiple teachers taught the same course and that the goal of the feedback initiative wasn't clear. This time around, it is.

"Before, a lot of teachers would ask for feedback at the end of the year, but students felt like it didn't really matter and nothing would happen with it. Now, if we have mid-year feedback, it can actually be implemented," Ben said.

Student Council worked to make sure feedback was standardized and beneficial for teachers.

Ben said, "We also hope that by filling out this survey, students can feel like teachers are being held accountable to actually respond to this feedback and implement it in the classroom because there is still so much time left in the year."

## At MLK assembly, BSA insists on action



MIDWAY PHOTO BY MARIA SHAUGHNESSY

### SHARING EXPERIENCES.

Speaking at the MLK assembly, Dorothy Butler Gilliam shares how courage and resilience are part of black identity. BSA members read an open letter.

### Open letter says we need change

by MADELINE WELCH OPINION EDITOR

You could hear a pin drop in the Gordon Parks Assembly Hall as the Black Students' Association officers read an open letter to the U-High community at the conclusion of the Martin Luther King Jr. Day assembly Jan. 16. The letter delivered a strong call to action for the school to improve its approach to diversity, equity and inclusion.

The assembly followed a racist incident in mid-December where a student shared a meme on social media. The BSA letter referenced the incident, along with past issues about a culture of racial bias at Lab.

"We need to actively work against the many problems we've had regarding racism," Lea Rune-

### Read the letter: uhighmidway.com

sha, BSA president, said.

The theme was "Black is more than a word," and the assembly explored black culture and identity.

Dorothy Butler Gilliam, the first African-American female journalist at the Washington Post, delivered the keynote speech, where she emphasized that Dr. King provided the world with a blueprint to bring about change.

"Black is about resilience. It is about a knowledge that I must be courageous against the odds," Ms. Gilliam said, addressing this year's theme. "It's about what I felt covering stories at the Washington Post when people would humiliate me, or when I wrote stories that people didn't like."

To close her speech, Ms. Gilliam

shared a powerful insight.

"Each of you must define your own strengths, your own culture,' Ms. Gilliam said. "I hope you will always be proud of who you are, but I hope you always use your talents that are not violent, that are not hurtful to others.'

Sophomore Aaron Kim received the student Spirit of Martin Luther King Jr. Award for engaging in challenging and courageous discussion about race. English teacher Sari Hernandez received the faculty award for encouraging her students to engage in activism.

"63 Boycott," a film about Chicago school walkouts that started in 1963 to protest the segregation and inequality of resources in Chicago Public Schools, was shown in three parts throughout the assembly. The film exemplified how interracial groups have fought against oppression.

## FA feels vindicated after arbitration

### Bobo-Jones still able to pursue federal claim

by BERK OTO

ASSISTANT EDITOR

The Faculty Association released a letter Jan. 9 summarizing details about the process and findings of arbitration over the termination of Daniel Bobo-Jones, adding previously undisclosed details and explaining that one claim remains unresolved.

Though the arbitrator's Dec. 20 decision determined that the Laboratory Schools administration did not have just cause to fire Mr. Bobo-Jones and treated him differently from other faculty members, the arbitrator ruled there was no proof that the administration had discriminated against Mr. Bobo-Jones. However, Mr. Bobo-Jones can still pursue individual legal action through the Illinois Department of Human Rights and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

The purpose of releasing the summary letter sent to faculty and obtained by the Midway was to eliminate confusion among the Lab community on the findings of the arbitration and the steps that will follow, FA Vice President Sharon Housinger said later in an interview with the Midway.

Laboratory Schools Director Charlie Abelmann sent a two-paragraph email to the Midway characterizing the FA's summary as "disappointing," "incomplete and misleading." Dr. Abelmann declined to elaborate to the Midway on which portions of the summary he was referring to.

"I think he needs to be a bit more specific about what was misleading or incomplete about the proceedings," FA President Jim Catlett said. "I don't see anything in my letter to the faculty that is misleading.'

Dr. Abelmann's email also mentioned that Mr. Bobo-Jones' dismissal was changed to an unpaid disciplinary suspension and that the arbitrator found no evidence



MIDWAY PHOTO BY MARIA SHAUGHNESSY

**TEAM TEACHING.** Daniel Bobo-Jones explains a concept to Biology student Vincent Zhang Jan. 8. Mr. Bobo-Jones is back at U-High and will team teach four courses alongside Daniel Calleri, Elizabeth Hubin and Zachary Hund for the remainder of the school year.

of discrimination by the Laboratory Schools.

Ms. Housinger said that Dr. Abelmann had highlighted just the points that made Mr. Bobo-Jones look the worst and himself look the best while overlooking the arbitrator's points.

"So his statement is incomplete and misleading," Ms. Housinger said. "He can say that we are wrong all he wants — no one is going to believe him. We stated as a community over and over again that we have no confidence in him."

According to the FA's summary, University of Chicago lawyers and Laboratory Schools Assistant Director Carla Ellis claimed that Mr. Jones' actions and practices in grading student work violated the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act and therefore warranted termination. The FA's response was that the administration was aware of other faculty members with similar grading practices as

Mr. Bobo-Jones and had not objected. The arbitrator sided with the FA in this case.

The FA's summary also included an incident during the questioning of an FA witness, where both Dr. Abelmann and Dr. Ellis were present. According to the summary, the University's lawyer asked the witness whether he spoke with Lab's Title IX coordinator regarding an inappropriate relationship with a student.

Mr. Catlett wrote in the summary that the question was likely an attempt to discredit the FA's witness and that one university representative acknowledged the line of questioning was "not the best idea."

Although the arbitrator ruled that there was no proof that the Laboratory Schools discriminated against Mr. Bobo-Jones, the IDHR, in conjunction with the EEOC, is conducting an investigation to discover whether there is a plausible legal case against the school.

Ms. Housinger said she hoped the EEOC would be able to do a deeper investigation to uncover evidence of discrimination.

Mr. Bobo-Jones said that when the IDHR reached out to him directly last week, he expressed continued interest in pursuing legal action against the administration.

"I've never been the person to say how many dollars can I get. I've always said 'How can this better people? How can I better guarantee that the people I teach will be people I would want to know when they're 35?" Mr. Bobo Jones said.

Mr. Bobo-Jones, who is openly gay, would welcome a ruling from a state or federal agency about his claim of administrative discrimination.

"I would honestly be satisfied if some higher governmental authority said nope — you can't do this. You have to be equitable and fair in your dealings with communities that are marginalized."

## Bobo-Jones returns to classroom

by NIKHIL PATEL

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Following the decision by an independent arbitrator on Dec. 20, Daniel Bobo-Jones returned to the teaching faculty at U-High Jan. 6.

For the remainder of this school year, Mr. Bobo-Jones will teamteach four classes across two courses: three sections of Biology

alongside current teachers "It really Daniel Calleri and Elizabeth Hubin, and a section of Research Methods with Zachary Hund, a chemistry elective in the second semester.

Collaborative teaching in science classes is familiar to U-High students.

"It really isn't much different than what Calleri and I always have done, which is we were always in each others' classrooms and you always knew both of us, even though vou were assigned to one,"

 $Calleri\, and\, I$ have always done, which is we were always in each others' classrooms and you always knew both of us, even though you were assigned to one. This is just a more deliberate version of that."

isn't much

different

than what

- DANIEL **BOBO-JONES** 

Mr. Bobo-Jones said. "This is just a more deliberate version of that."

Community members have been supportive of Mr. Bobo-Jones returning to the classroom. He said he has had a lot of hugs this week.

"The last two days have been very good. I have been getting here early and avoiding passing period, although yesterday I was stuck in the sophomore hallway and had to endure a mosh-pit hug. Which was sweet," Mr. Bobo-Jones said. "The reception by the Lab community has been fantastic.

### Special schedule ends semester next week

by ETHAN SWINGER REPORTER

U-High will have a special end-of-semester schedule Jan. 27-30, giving students more time to study and complete work during a busy finals week. No classes will be held on Jan. 31, but students are expected to attend grade specific programming and community activities. On Jan. 27-30, each class will only meet once that week during its regular 75-minute period, with the exception offor Intro to Computer Science and PE meeting for only 45 minutes.

Eighth period will meet from 1-2:15 p.m. on Monday instead of

On Jan. 31, ninth graders will meet with the school counselors to review course registration and

planning for upcoming years; 10th graders will meet with their service learning coordinator for reflection work on the service learning project; 11th graders will meet with their college counselors; and 12th graders will meet with the May Project coordinators for paperwork and an idea formation from a project, said Asra Ahmed, assistant principal.

### **END-OF-SEMESTER SCHEDULE**

- Monday: 3rd period 9:10-19:25 a.m.; 8th period 1-2:15 p.m.
- Tuesday: 2nd period 8:50-10:05 a.m.; 6th period 1-2:15 p.m.
- Wednesday: 4th period 11:05-12:20 p.m.; 7th period 1:50-3:05 p.m.
- Thursday: 1st period 8:00-9:15 a.m.; 5th period 11:05-12:20 p.m. • Friday: Special programs 10:20-12:20 p.m.; Community time 1-3 p.m.

### **NEWS IN BRIEF**

### Artist-in-residence presents exhibit in GPAH

"Braids," a new art exhibit created by artist Shani Crowe, is now open in the Corvus Gallery in Gordon Parks Arts Hall until March 13. Crowe is the artist-in-residence for the winter, and will be in Gordon Parks Arts Hall teaching students how to braid. The nine photographs in the gallery are portraits of black women with intricate cornrow hairstyles.

Ms. Crowe, a Chicago-based artist, gets her inspiration from the many African cultures with unique hairstyles.

She said her work is meant to promote the community that comes with braiding among people of African descent as well as empower black women and their beauty.

"It's just trying to glorify black women and make them imagine themselves beyond their wildest dreams," Ms. Crowe said, in a pamphlet in the exhibit.

Teachers at the Lab Schools agree on the importance of having an exhibit of this nature in the school for students to view.

Gina Alicea, a lower and middle school art teacher and director of the gallery, said, "I think it is wonderful to have an artist that is bringing our awareness to the beauty of those braids and the beauty of the different patterns that can be created.'

– MEENA LEE

### ASA begins Lunar New Year celebration Feb. 4

The Asian Students' Association's annual Lunar New Year celebration to welcome the Year of the Rat Feb. 4 will be during open time and Feb. 7 during lunch. The location for the events are undecided.

"We think it's important to share our cultures, and the holidays that are important to us with the entire school because it's a good learning experience and a new way to understand another person," ASA treasurer Esha Mishra said.

The celebrations will have activities such as chopstick-eating competitions, food, and movies that center around Asian-American culture and identity.

"The dumpling-eating contest is always my favorite because it's a no-hand-eating one, which is always fun to watch," ASA president Nikita Kumar said.

— ADRIANNA NEHME

### Students can submit SJW workshops until Feb. 17

Students can propose workshops from Jan. 9 through Feb. 17, for Social Justice Week.

Social Justice Week will be from

April 20-25, with an assembly on April 23. Two 40-minute workshops will take place, followed by a reflection within advisories.

Clubs and individual students will host workshops around the theme RESIST, an acronym for Reclaim, Equity, Sustainability, Intersectionality, Solidarity and Taking

"I think that this theme really meets the moment that currently exists in our country," Social Justice Week co-leader Franzi Wild said. "Resistance is really like finding ways to live my life and finding ways to like take action in my life against what I see to be social injustice in the world.'

- TEA TAMBURO

### Yearbook places first in division for IJEA

The 2019 U-Highlights yearbook placed first in its division for the

general excellence in a contest from the Illinois Journalism Education Association.

The U-Highlights competed against schools with enrollment of 400-639 students.

The staff placed first in four of eight sub-categories. Claire Duncan, a U-Highlights editor-in-chief who was 2019 sports editor, said this award was due to U-High's focus on writing. She also praised the great advisers.

"Their leadership is incredible, and they really allow us to take things in new directions, and are receptive to our ideas, which is great," Claire said.

Marisa McGehee, another editor-in-chief who was 2019 clubs co-editor, noted that the small and close staff was also one of the reasons that the U-Highlights yearbook stood out.

- KAJUS NAKAS



## JSA hosts talk about anti-Semitic attacks in New York

by LUCIA KOURI

MIDWAY REPORTER

In light of recent anti-Semitic attacks in New York City and other areas, and to shed light on the national rise of anti-Semitism, the U-High Jewish Students' Association hosted a discussion Jan. 10 about the means by which these acts of violence should be processed within the Lab community.

On Dec. 28, 2019, the last night of Hanukkah, five Jewish people were stabbed at a rabbi's house in Monsey, New York. According to The New York Times, this attack was one of at least 13 anti-Semitic incidents that occurred in New York in December alone.

JSA leaders hosted a discussion on Jan. 10 not only to reflect on these recent attacks but also to talk about the rise of anti-Semitism nationwide. Two videos, shown at the beginning, informed students of a recent increase in anti-Semitic at-

The Anti-Defamation League, for example, released data in 2017 noting a 57% year-on-year increase, the greatest recorded since 1979. While this percentage has decreased since 2017, the actual number of people injured or killed has increased due to incidents like the 2018 Pittsburg synagogue shooting.

"There's never been a time

where it's quote-unquote safe to be in a synagogue, but this type of targeting — attacking Jews kind of at their most vulnerable — this is something that we've been seeing a lot more," JSA President Nathan Appelbaum said.

According to Nathan, the more frequent anti-Semitic incidents become, the more Jews of all ages are forced to live in fear.

"In a big place like Chicago and places where there's a lot of Jews, we can easily say, 'Oh that can never happen to me,' there's hundreds of cities, hundreds of synagogues, but we're starting to feel that it definitely can happen to you," Nathan said.

2019 alumna Rachel Zemil, a former member of ISA and was at the Jan. 10 discussion, claims that education is key to making sure acts of anti-Semitism don't repeat themselves.

"We should figure out ways that we can educate people on how to be more understanding of different cultures because I think a lot of it comes from just pure misunderstandings and not having contact with people who are Jewish when you're growing up," Rachel said.

Similarly, senior Gershon Stein believes that Lab should do more to integrate identity-based education into the school curriculum starting at earlier grade levels.

"I think a lot of it comes from just puremisunderstandings and not having contact with people who are Jewish when you're growing up."

- RACHEL ZEMIL, 2019 ALUMNA

"It all kind of tied together into a very identity-focused curriculum my junior year, and I think that that needs to happen earlier, and it needs to be on a larger scale," Gershon said during the discussion. "That's the only way that you really start to break down bias.'

### CLASS OF 2022 LOCK-IN



**BELT IT OUT.** Sophomore Jaedyn Hudson sings to music alongside Adrianna Nehme at the sophomore lock-in Jan 17. Around 20 students spent the night in the gym building watching "Mean Girls," doing karaoke and hanging out.

### Student Council invites individual students to forums, collects feedback

by ABIGAIL SLIMMON

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Student Council has transitioned to a new method of collecting student feedback: adviser nominations and personal invitations. The new plan has worked better than a series of unsuccessful student forums last fall.

"At the beginning of the year we held a few forums that had practically no turnout and overall just didn't go well," All-School President Ben Cifu said.

Ben explained that he thought there was a low turnout because people weren't aware of the purpose of the forums: to hear feedback from students and address their issues on topics such as homework load.

Sophomore Kira Sekhar said that although she cares about the topics being addressed, they didn't

"At the beginning of the year we held a few forums that had practically no turnout and overall just didn't go

—BEN CIFU, ALL-SCHOOL PRESIDENT

seem worth attending.

"I respect Student Council a ton, and I think they do a great job. I just don't know how much power they actually have to make a real change," Kira said.

Starting in December, Student Council has taken a new approach. Advisers nominated students they thought were passionate about some of the issues being addressed and Student Council randomly emailed 100 of those students across all four grade lev-

els inviting them to come be a part of these forums. So far, two meetings using this new format each yielded about 20 students in atten-

"The first was really productive. We talked about midterm comments and what's useful in them and what's not," Ben said. "The second one was more about the new semester schedule and got a little sidetracked, but overall they both went really well and we think that model of sending out an email to specific people but then making it clear that they can bring friends works really well."

After the semester ends student leaders plan to have another forum including the faculty organizing the switch to semesters, so they are able to hear students' thoughts about how first semester went and what could be better.

## 20 courses expand Program of Studies as registration nears

by CLARE O'CONNOR

REPORTER

A list of all classes available next fall — including 20 classes across seven subjects that are either new or reconfigured to fit a semester schedule - will allow students to consider their class selections before they submit class requests Feb. 10-12.

The Program of Studies is posted to Schoology before students are to begin requesting courses. According to Assistant Principal Asra Ahmed, advisers will meet with students to discuss prospective courses, aiming to create a schedule that is individually catered to each

student's needs. Once all requests have been submitted, team of Lab faculty will work to create a course plan that accommodates student.

master

Ahmed

schedule is made through an extensive process including in an attempt to satisfy each student. Last year approximately 97% of class requests were met according to the registrar.

Parents of current 8th, 9th and 10th graders will have an optional information session where they can learn about the various opportunities that Lab students can incorporate into their schedules.

Students will also be informed about scheduling options in an assembly on Jan. 23 and in a 9thgrade student information session on Jan. 31.

For the first time, students will have the opportunity to participate in a wider variety of semester-contained courses with new classes in computer science, fine arts, history and science. Each of these courses will run for a single semester and count for a half cred-

The fine arts department will offer three new entry-level courses focusing on things like printmaking and ceramic wheel-thrown

"I really love print-making and we are really encouraged as teachers to bring what we are passionate about to our students," fine arts department co-chair Sunny Neater-Dubow said.

She explained there was an interest in printmaking in her Mixed Media classes last year, so they wanted to try it out as a semester-long course.

According to Ms. Ahmed, "You

"You can mix and match. so if you still have a credit requirement for art, you might be able to do a Mixed Media class and a traditional art class to fill it."

> ASRA AHMED, ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

### **NEW COURSES**

### **Computer Science**

- Advanced Programming: Python (Fall)
- Robotics (Spring, Must take Adv Prog: Python first)
- Web Applications Frameworks I (Fall)
- Web Applications Frameworks II (must take WAF I first)

### Fine Arts

- Ceramics Wheel Throwing
- Introduction to Printmaking (Fall)
- Introduction to Photo-Based Printmaking (Spring)

- AT Compartive Politics and Global Relations I (Fall) and II (Spring)
- Modern World Religions (yearlong) Herstory: Gender, Power,
- Politics (Fall or Spring) The Holocaust (Fall)
- Genocide Studies
- (Spring)

### Journalism

· Advanced Photojournalism

- Evolution of African-American Music Traditions
- Symphony Orchestra

### Science

- Electronics (Fall)
- Cosmology (Spring) Biomedical Ethics (Fall)
- Environmental Science (Spring)

### World Language

Intensive Spanish

can mix and match, so if you still have a credit requirement for art, you might be able to do a Mixed Media class and a traditional art class to fill it."

Ms. Ahmed explained this new policy by highlighting her belief in the importance of proving Lab students with different activities that can enrich each student's life.



## MUSICMA

### Pure passion spurs senior's love for music

by CALEDONIA ABBEY

REPORTER

athan Applebaum is no stranger to performing, but even after years of experience, it can still be nerve wracking.

"When you're up on the stage, and you're nervous and scared, you revert to the highest level of practice that you put into that," he said. "You go off your natural instincts, and when that instinct comes from hours and hours of practice, that's how you put on a good show."

He began teaching himself how to play the piano at the age of 5, trumpet at 9, guitar at 10, and singing all the while. Since then, he's been a part of various music groups in and outside of U-High, and has attended rigorous summer programs. Nathan's wide range of instruments and musical influences pushes his playing beyond genres and quite eclectic.

"I've been doing music since pretty much the very beginning," Nathan said.

Growing up, music was constantly playing in the house. His parents both wanted to expose him to music from an early age.

"My dad was in an a capella group and plays guitar, and my mom has a great ear," Nathan said. "Between them, we're a very musical family.'

He'd sing alongside his dad's guitar playing to old folk rock like Simon & Garfunkel and Crosby, Stills & Nash.

From there, he and his dad began singing with their synagogue



MIDWAY PHOTO BY KATHY LUAN

**BUGLE BOY.** Ever since he was little, singing and playing music has been a huge part of Nathan's life. He learned piano when he was 5, trumpet at 9, and guitar 10 - all while playing with his family and even at his synagogue.

"I'd sing at the holidays. I knew all the tunes and I became a natural harmonizer," Nathan said. "My dad would start with the melody, and I'd sing along with the harmo-

After he started singing, instruments naturally followed. When he first started playing piano, Nathan quit after two lessons because he didn't like the teacher. That didn't stop him from coming back and learning how to play on his own.

But self-teaching isn't as glamorous as it sounds.

Nathan said, "When I first started I would just mash on the keys until something sounded good."

It's a far cry from classical and rock pieces he can play today.

He didn't pick up guitar until age 9 or 10 but was nonetheless inspired by his dad to do so.

"I was like 'this is a great instrument.' My dad taught me the first few chords and then I learned the rest for myself," he said.

Nathan likes guitar because he can play it and sing at the same time, and he can play it with other people, something that he hadn't been able to do too much before.

In 4th grade he played the trumpet in his school band and by 7th his skills had exceeded his school's limitations and began studying at the Merit School of Music.

Last year, Nathan played in the school jazz band alongside fellow "When you're up on the stage, and you're nervous and scared, you revert to the highest level of practice that you put into that."

— NATHAN APPLEBAUM

trumpet player Max Polite.

"Nathan was more classically trained," Max said. "He had all the technical skills and just had to apply it to the jazz setting. There were definitely parts that I had trouble playing that Nathan could cover for our section."

He went on to become the only junior in the Senior Jazz Combo, where he performed at several school events and the Hyde Park

Aside from jazz, he plays genres including classical when he's training at Merit, and his favorites of country and classic rock when on his own.

"I love old sounds like country rock and classic rock," he said. "Billy Joel is by far my favorite musician, Elton John, those types of people."

At Lab, he enjoys collaborating with other students and playing music together. After school, he can be seen hurrying to the practice rooms with other students for casual iam sessions.

While he didn't have experience as an actor, he picked it up as swiftly as his instruments, playing a leading role in "Mamma Mia!" using his musical background and support from the cast and crew to make it happen.

He's been composing music in his free time and hopes to stay engaged in the music scene as he goes on to college and beyond.

## MCA exhibit shows brutality, elegance of water

### 'Water After All' displays how benefits and drawbacks of H<sub>2</sub>0

by AMANDA CASSEL

MANAGING EDITOR

Water. We couldn't live without it, yet too much of it and we're drowning.

A new exhibit at the Museum of Contemporary Art, "Water After All," explores human interaction with water from great successes like prospering civilizations and successful migrations to tragedies such as the transatlantic slave trade and water contamination.

The exhibit is anchored by the video "Vertigo Sea" by artist John

Although the exhibit requires a serious dedication of time to soak up, it is well worth the devotion, as the exhibit juxtaposes thousands of years of history through the influence of water.

The exhibit opened in December and closes June 14.

Wood boards bearing aquaticthemed literary quotes lead viewers into the maze of the exhibit. The theme of water is used as both a literary element of necessity and hazard. This illustrates the basic direction of the exhibit—we find ourselves connected with "Water After All."

Anchoring the exhibit as its centerpiece is "Vertigo Sea," a video by John Akomfrah. Mr. Akomfrah has established himself as an artist and videographer, particularly exploring post-colonialism, memory "'Water After All,' explores human interaction with  $water from\ great\ successes$ such as prospering civilizations and successful migrations to tragedies such as the transatlantic slave trade and water contamination."

and temporality.

The 48-minute video spans three screens and juxtaposes imagery of the brutal whaling industry with that of intercontinental migration throughout history.

"Vertigo Sea" is a mix of archival and new footage and material and readings from classical sources. With brutal descriptions through footage, narration or illustration of both whaling and transatlantic slave trade, the film is jarring and meant to be. In contrast, the film also includes positive stories of migration and influences of water.

Well worth the dedication of time, Akomfrah elegantly evokes pain and compassion in his audience while also motivating them to correct the mistakes of the past and work to help the world.

Aside from the video, the exhibit displays several pieces illustrating influences of water on human life. One particularly painful piece has



SOURCE: MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

**UNDER THE SEA.** Artist John Akomfrah compiled old and new footage for his film "Vertigo Sea," which plays on three screens side-by-side to compare waters positive and negative effects.

black and white photos of a marsh surrounding a poem telling the story of men who sailed across the ocean to be sold into slavery, but upon arriving, turned and walked back to the water saying "the water brought us, the water will take us away."

Across the exhibit, screen prints of music composed by sound artist Guillernmo Galindo hang on the wall, representing the objects converted to instruments and inspiration Mr. Galindo gathered from a humanitarian organization that worked with water tanks on the United States-Mexico border.

The MCA Website states the exhibit is meant to evoke "poetic awe and horror of humanity's relationship with water." On that message, it certainly rises to the occasion.

*Information:* Location: Museum of Contemporary

Dates: Now through June 14

Art. 220 E. Chicago Ave.

Admission: Suggested admission is \$8 for students and free for MCA members

# MUST-SI

Despite a record number of women nominated, the Oscars saved the majority of the nominations for movies starring white male actors. The two films reviewed below illustrate surprising cinematic techniques, costumes and director choices.

## '1917' brings audience back to story of World War I

by JULIAN INGERSOLL

REPORTER

As two young British lance corporals make their way through the No Man's Land between France and Germany, mud and blood squish out from under their World War I army boots. They keep their

heads down = pation of a gunshot or bombshell. All is quiet, but they keep treading until they hit the German trench-

Slipping through enemy lines, the two British soldiers go on a critical secret mission that will save the lives of over 1,600 men, includ-

low-quality, black-andwhite films, which didn't correctly show how gruesome and dangerous the war was. This film gives an perspective."

ing one soldier's brother, from falling into a German trap in the movie "1917." The British were in high spirits because of the full-scale retreat the Germans had performed, but in reality, the Germans had a plan to bomb the followers from

Lance Corporal Blake and Lance Corporal Schofield must walk through death and destruction to achieve their goal, but would they succeed?

The film has already won Golden Globe Awards for best picture (drama) and best director. "1917" has also been nominated for 10 Academy Awards, including best

antici- "Previously,  $World\ War\ I$ could only be portrayed in immersive new

> Based on the true story of director Sam Mendes' grandfather who fought in the British army, "1917" is a powerful representation of World War I that tests the sanity and bravery of the characters and

> the audience over one continuous shot of chaos and war.

> "Stories are nothing unless your emotionally engaged," Mendes said in an interview about the film style with IMDB. "The one-shot technique allows you to, I think, to live with them and breathe ev

ery breath."

The director's choice to make the film appear as one continuous shot engages the viewer and gives the audience no time to recuperate, thus making the experience more realistic for the audience. Since you feel like you are there with the soldiers, you also feel as if you need to be quiet, alert, scared and brave.

Previously, World War I could only be portrayed in low-quality, black-and-white films, which

didn't correctly show how gruesome and dangerous the war was. This film gives an immersive new perspective.

The sounds are either climactic, non-existent or used strategically to build tension within the plot. In most movies, the conversations drive the plot, but in "1917" the director relies on the setting to convey the importance and time consuming trek the soldiers embarked on. Though throughout the movie dialogue is light, the film never allows the audience to be bored.

"1917" gives the audience a new perspective of the war, sparking curiosity to learn more about these soldiers and how they affected the tides of the war. The director was able to create this film just by studying his past, so what will you discover?

OK. This should never be used as a precedent, this a shameful part of American history and there is so much we need to learn from our past mistakes."



**WORLD WAR.** Directed by Sam Mendes, "1917" tells the violent and chaotic story of World War I in vivid colors. It was released Dec. 25, 2019 and received 10 Oscar nominations and two Golden Globe Awards.

picture and best director. Korean movie contrasts families in

### 'Parasite,' set in South Korea, gets 6

Oscar nominations

### by NICKY EDWARDS-LEVIN

As a man smashes his head against a light switch, blood streaming down his forehead, desperate to communicate in Morse code, one thing is clear. What was once a charming story about a desperate, lower-class family has gone absolutely crazy. And from here, it only gets crazier.

"Parasite," which follows a poor Korean family, blends humor, social commentary and creepiness into a terrifying, thrilling and dizzying two-hour

The most compelling part about the movie is the acting, as despite the larger-than-life characters, each actor delivers a truly believable performance. The hapless patriarch of the lower-class Kim family, played by Kim Ki-taek, illustrates the pain of poverty while avoiding falling into the "failed man" stereotype. The scenes in the semi-basement, while certainly not the most exciting, are actually my favorite. The audience feels claustrophobic yet also comforted by the familial warmth of the family.

In contrast to the cramped

riches and poverty semi-basement is the luxurious estate of the Park family, which the Kims cunningly infiltrate. The windows, looking onto the lush garden, make the estate seem as if it is situated in Eden, as opposed to the jammed window of the semi, looking onto public urinators and fumigation gases. The Park house feels more like a museum than a home, making it all the more clear just how out of place the Kim family is when "visiting."

pacing is sublime. The first hour does not seem sinister in the least, yet something certainly feels off. Were the film not portrayed as a horror movie, the chaos that occurs in the second half would be a total surprise. So when chaos comes — and be sure, it does — it is that much more gripping and entertaining. The chaos feels unwarranted, and it feels like an eruption of tension that has built throughout the movie. And just when the audience believes the volcano has finally erupted, it comes back with vehemence and vigor before burning out in a spectacular, satisfying blaze.

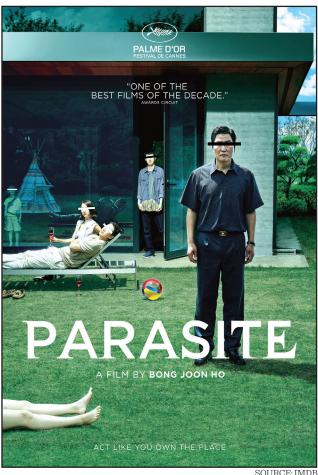
While the film takes place in South Korea it is fascinatingly westernized. Many of the words in Korean are borrowed from English, creating a mixglish — the Kim family's youngest man "The use of a foreign language creates what I saw as a sort of imposter in the film itself – a language which didn't really belong, worked itself into a  $completely\ separate\ language$ in ways that become almost unnoticeable."

takes on the job of tutoring the Parks' youngest girl in English. The use of a foreign language creates what I saw as a sort of imposter in the film itself a language which didn't really belong, worked itself into a completely separate language in ways that become almost unnoticeable. It gives the English audience a meta form of experiencing the movie, as it is unclear whether English has invaded the Korean language,

"Parasite," a perfect blend of scary and funny, artistic and accessible, provides a unique take on class, language and cinema.

While it is still in theaters, the film is available to buy on Amazon from \$14.99. It's up for six Academy Awards the first ever for a Korean film — including best picture, best director, best foreign language film and best original screenplay.

If you haven't seen it yet, it is well worth the \$15.



**FOREIGN FILM.** In addition to six Oscar nominations, "Parasite" received a 99% rating by Rotten Tomatoes.

Directed by Bong Joon Ho, the film's

ture between the two languages. Furthermore, the first point of access into the Park household comes from En-



## Democratizing clout

### Social media apps create online tension between real and ideal

### by AUDREY MATZKE

When he joined the video-sharing app

TikTok in October, Zach Leslie wasn't looking for clout. In TikTok, he said he saw a platform for his creative and somewhat ran-

Over Thanksgiving break, senior Zach Leslie filmed himself drinking five glasses of chocolate milk while CeeLo Green's "F\*\*\* You" played in the background. Soon after, he uploaded it to the video-sharing app TikTok, and it blew up, amassing 3 million views and gaining 3,500 new followers.

Zach's brush with fame from the viral video was an added bonus.

"It only really takes one, and all of a sudden you have thousands of followers, whereas in the past you may have had 100 or something," Zach, a senior, said.

tivate a reliance on public recognition — a fact that users and platforms alike are beginning to address.

Instagram user Emily Zhang said the obsession with social media was about something much deeper than vanity. Instead, she wanted to refine her entire lifestyle. Instagram, she said, encourages users to show only their best selves.

"I would want people to see my page and think: 'Oh, she's living a nice life.' I liked posting pictures where I was with my friends or ers

'these are my best moments.'"

Not everyone has a perfect life to show. Emily said, "There are definitely instances where people feel like they can't come forward with things that they're struggling with, in certain areas that might not be pic-

ture-perfect."

This fall, Instagram began hiding like counts from users in an effort to stamp out the platform's culture of comparison. For Emily, the change was a good one, as she would often feel discouraged when her posts didn't get the level of engagement she'd hoped for.

Since the beginning of this school year, Emily, a senior, has cut down significantly on her use of the platform, citing college applications and increased academic pressure as major, time-consuming factors. Before then, she said, Instagram had her trapped in a validation loop — wherein the more likes ever." she got on one post, the more she needed to feel happy with the next.

"There's always that feeling of wanting more, you know. After I reached my first post that made 100 likes, it was great for a little bit," Emily said. "But then it was like, 'OK, now I have to increase my following and followers, then get to the next [milestone]."

portunities to be both authentic and popu-

On the app's "for-you page," a somewhat randomized feed of video clips, fame is not a prerequisite for inclusion, and TikToks from lesser-known users are often promoted to the same degree as those from famous us-

has democ-

ratized clout. "One of the things makes it cool is it's fairly easy to, like, see content from people you ly seen it from before," Zach said. "On YouTube, it's harder to find lesser known people who make videos, whereas on Tik Tok for-you page even if you have 10 followers or what-

According to Emily, In stagram has the potential tic experience, one wherein humor and refinement are equally venerated. Wistfully, she remembers how, back in middle school, people used On TikTok, Zach said there are more op- to post spontaneous photos and silly challenges without worrying about how much engagement they'd get. Removing likes, she said, might bring some of that back.

"When I saw that this update had happened, I thought it was a step in the right direction," Emily said. "It was a point where enough people had realized this was From budding comedians to teenage an issue, that this could be very damaging.

FULL FOLLOWING. Senior Emily Zhang's Instagram page and senior Zach Leslie's TikTok profile are two examples of the lifferences between the social media types. Zach and Emily struggle with walking the line between maintining trends and staying true to themselves.

# Swipeandscroll

From a symbol of wealth and status to a part of our culture that is present in every corner of life, smartphones have evolved over the last 12 years to become the new normal.

## Smartphones encourage teen presence online

Once dominated by television and radio, smartphones now rule the free time among Generation Z

and AMANDA CASSEL

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, MANAGING EDITOR

At any grouping of people, one thing is always present: cellphones. Whether they're out to kill time in an uncomfortable family situation or to share information, the faint blue glow of the screen is hard to miss.

Mobile devices are quickly becoming the leisure device of choice. According to NPR, 84% of teenagers own their own smart-

phones. For most, social media is the became 2019's trendiest app is Tik- Tok.' Tok, which consumed 68 billion

hours of users' time last year. Senior Eli Hinerfeld said he of his day on his phone, mostly spending time on social media apps, including a lot of time on ly sending you plain face pics," she

"The appeal of TikTok for me is the endless entertainment that it provides," Eli said. "I can consume hours of content without even knowing which definitely has its pros and it's cons — definitely

Before he used his phone quite as much, Eli filled the time through pursuing other hobbies.

"I definitely spent more time either playing video games or mak- hear almost anytime, and I can ing music," Eli said. "My screen time increased by almost an hour main purpose. One platform that and a half per day after I got Tik-

Staying in touch with friends via messaging, games or social media are other popular uses. Sophspends about four and a half hours omore Natalie Hultquist said she uses her phone four to five hours

with her friends via Snapchat.

connect with many of my friends. It has this constant energy to it, where there is pretty much always someone on Snapchat, which can be a little exhausting if they're on-

Natalie also

mon music in-

connects with friends via comterests on Spo-

tify, I love that I can organize my

music, play the music I want to share the music I listen to with my

Phones help keep teens organized, too. Senior Charles Chen uses his phone for about 90 minutes daily, mostly to keep track of

"Most of the time it's the Gmail app, WhatsApp for swim team

"I can consume hours of knowing which definitely has its pros and it's cons - definitely more of the

> - EMILY ZHANG, SENIOR

stuff, Schoology or Reddit," he According to Statista, 42% of in-

ternet users between the age of 14 and 24 use Reddit, making it the sixth most popular website in the

Similar to Eli, Natalie and Charles, sophomore Alina Susani uses her phone to keep in touch — both with her friends and the world around her.

Alina Susani said, "My phone helps with communication across the world, and I don't think I could hold the relationships with my long distance friends the way I do without social media."

FRIDAY, JAN. 24, 2020

U-HIGH MIDWAY • UNIVERSITY HIGH SCHOOL, CHICAGO

brand new or greatly expanded a user base in 2019. Here are the top apps in year-by-year user increase from 2018 to 2019.

Retail: Amazon, eBay, AliExpress, Walmart Grocery,

Social Media: TikTok, Yolo: Q&A, Life360, Hily, Profundly: Anonymous Chats

Games: Mario Kart Tour, Color Bump 3D, Call of Duty: Mobile, aquapark.io, Run Race 3D

 ${\tt Venmo, Chime-Mobile}$ Banking, Experian Video Streaming: Hulu,

Finance: Cash App, Zelle,

Amazon Prime Video, ESPN, Netflix, Pluto.tv

## 2019 by the numbers...

average hours spent on a mobile device

billion app downloads on iOS, Google and Microsoft.

billion dolllars spent on apps in those app

lars spent on mobile

shopping on mobile

on Black Friday.



More than four of five teens in the United States own a smartphone, according to tional Psychology found that students in a 2019 report released by Common Sense classrooms that permitted non-academic Media. Smartphones provide access to es- use of devices such as smartphones persentially unlimited amounts of information, but they can also distract students information over time than students in from school work. Senior Vivi Corré said classrooms not permitting such device she sees students using their phones in use. The policy had a classroom-wide efclass but does not respond.

"I often feel like at this point it's just benot actually use a device. come so widespread that it's hard to say it to everyone," Vivi said.

In monitoring phone usage in class, teachers vary in their policies. Spanish teacher Suzanne Baum requires students in her classes to leave their phones on a rack at the beginning of the class, while other teachers including science teacher Sharon Housinger prohibit them from being out and let students regulate them-

Brian Hewlett, Lab's director of innovation and technology, said, "It's up to the instructor to know the students in the class phone whenever it is out. and what they think will best allow them

Outside of schoolwork, there are a variety of facts and fictions associated with detrimental to learning.

TRUE: A study published in Educaformed worse on exams and retained less fect and even impacted students who did

Ms. Housinger said smartphones can be psychologically rewarding and activate pleasure pathways in the brain that distract students and reduce their ability to

MYTH: Phones are only a distraction when students actively use them.

**FALSE**: The distracting potential of smartphones is not limited to when users are actively engaged with them.

Science teacher Daniel Calleri said part of the brain is engaged with the smart-

Indeed, the presence of a smartphone can cause "brain drain," reduced cognitive capacity, according to a study published in the Journal of Association for Consum-

TRUE: According to the National Sleep by delaying melatonin release, increasing alertness, and altering the body's biological clock. The result is less sleep or lower quality sleep with less REM. One solution is to shift to red and yellow lights that do not damage sleep.

"Your brain has evolved to know that more blue light means noon and more orange light means sunset," Ms. Housinger

**MYTH**: Phones can benefit learning at

**TRUE**: Despite their ability to distract users, smartphones can contribute to learning when facilitating activities such as Kahoot! or Quizlet Live.

However, Spanish teacher Suzanne Baum, who sometimes uses these programs in her classes, said they have little pedagogical value.

Smartphones also allow students to play music while working.

"It helps me tune out all other distractions around me. When it's silent, I feel like I get a lot more easily distracted," sophomore Tyler Nava said.



### U-HIGH MIDWAY • UNIVERSITY HIGH SCHOOL, CHICAGO

## Starting fresh Leading by example, ninth grader Xavier Nesbitt has shown remarkable dedication and talent to become a young leader

by NICKY EDWARDS-LEVIN SPORTS EDITOR

n a huddle before tip-off, the five starters for the varsity basketball team put their arms around each other. Each starter says a few words, preparing himself and his teammates for the upcoming battle. Finally, the starters turn to freshman Xavi-

er Nesbitt, the starting guard. Leading by example, Xavier has excelled, showing a remarkable work ethic, raw leadership and undisputable talent.

According to Hunter Tyndall, a junior who also played varsity when he was a freshman, Xavier is one of the team's primary assets.

"He's really motivational—when we're playing, he's always talking to the other guys on the team, doesn't really make that many mistakes, always focused, on time, funny



**Tyndall** 

guy too," Hunter said, listing Xavicontributions. "Great guy to have in the locker room." Beyond being

a friendly face on and off the court, according to Hunter, Xavier's knowledge of

the game makes him an especially important teammate. Hunter said that Xavier's knowledge of basketball makes him almost coach-like.

"He knows the game really well, so when he sees something he knows on the court, everybody's gonna listen to him," Hunter said. "Everyone tries to do what he does and follow him, so the more he talks the more everyone else starts talking, and things run smoothly.

But regardless of his abilities on the court, Xavier said that becoming a leader has required a learning curve. Not being familiar with team customs — from team meetings to joking in the locker room has been a challenge, but nothing throws him off.

"In regular talks as a team, I'll have to ask 'What does that mean,'

or like when something should be taken more seriously, I won't get the message and I might be telling jokes or things like that," Xavier said.

Beyond being unfamiliar with team terminology, being a team leader right away has brought plenty of pressure with it, but Xavier isn't worried.

"It's definitely a lot of pressure, I feel, but it's not something that I can't handle. I feel like it's just a responsibility that I have, and it is what it is," Xavier said. "I kinda just cope with it, I guess, and face the fact that if you want to be good, if you want to be a good leader, if you want to play in college, this just comes with it."

It isn't just during drills that Xavier pulls through, though. According to his teammates, the guard has become an essential member of the court.

"He's been really consistent in his playing. He's been getting better ever since preseason and has always been motivating all the other guys in games and practices," Hunter said. "He's come up big for us in some games, and everyone knows what he can do on the court."

Xavier too takes pride in his abilities on the court. According to him and his teammates, once he gets warmed up, his jump shot turns red hot. According to Ben Meyer, it makes their coach "reach inner nirvana." Or as junior Christian Grant succinctly calls it, "but-

Nothing about Xavier's game not even his famed "jumper" came easy, though.

Despite an overflow of talent, it is without a doubt that Xavier has pushed himself as hard as anyone else. With two hours of practice after school, plus, depending on the amount of math homework, an extra hour of shooting jump shots, Xavier's life has gotten extremely

After the final words in their huddle, each player gets ready to begin the battle. Some freshmen



**HEADS UP.** Freshman Xavier Nesbitt dribbles the basketball against a Francis Parker defender. Both he and his teammates consider him a leader on the team. According to captain Tolu Johnson, Xavier is one of the leaders on the team. A regular starter, Xavier has been one of the team's top scorers.

Xavier feels none of it. His preparation shows. After a deep breath,

may feel nervous, but on the court, Xavier gets ready to go to work. As captain Tolu Johnson said, "He didn't care how big peo-

ple were, how fast they were, he just wanted to come in and

## Co-ed squash program finally gets more girl players



MIDWAY PHOTO BY MACY BEAL

SISTERLY STRATEGY. Serena Thomas and Sara Thomas discuss a squash point. Serena and two other girls joined Sara on the squash team after Sara spent two years as the team's sole girl.

### Team atmosphere has become more inclusive, welcoming to new girls

by NICKY EDWARDS-LEVIN

SPORTS EDITOR

From the United States women's national soccer team's fight for equal pay, to Serena Williams' fight against womens' tennis attire, fights against sexism in athletics have finally reached the world's stage. Despite activism for women in sports, U-High has seen a microcosm of women's inequality in athletics in the co-ed squash pro-

After years of being male-dominated, the U-High squash team, now with four girl players, has finally become less homogenous and headed to more success.

Sara Thomas, a junior, has spent the previous two seasons as the sole girl on the squash team. In 2017-18 she was the only ninth grader on the team — boy or girl. She said she felt intimidated and isolated on her first days.

"Eventually I found my place, but that first part was tough," Sara

Despite being the youngest on the team that season, Sara certainly proved herself to the team. A former tennis player, she was a con-

sistent scorer on the team, which led to a stronger bond with her teammates, as well as improved

squash skills. "I ended up being between third and fourth on our roster. So, since I was always going to tournaments and always playing with the top seven, I got to know them pretty well," Sara said. "The people also saw me as an actual part of the team because I was contributing, so that helped me get acclimated."

According to Sara, while the disparities in squash participation are easily observed at U-High, it isn't a unique problem.

"I know that it's a kind of male-dominated sport and more girls are starting to get into it," Sara said, "but that wasn't really reflected on the Lab team. There were, like, no girls that wanted to participate, even for fun."

Now, thanks to a growing team and a better program, the squash team will participate at the U.S. Squash National Championships in Washington, D.C., Feb. 21.

With a more cohesive and diverse group, Sara said the atmosphere has noticeably improved.

"I know that it's a kind of male dominated sport and more girls are starting to get into it, but that wasn't really reflected on the Lab team."

SARA THOMAS

"Everyone's really friendly. Coach does a great job of bringing people together. Éveryone talks together and hangs out together,"Sara said.

This sentiment is echoed by ninth grader Serena Thomas, one of the three new girls on the team. Serena said the team community has been very welcoming.

Within the first day of practice I had already made new friends," Serena said. "The team is really funny, and its really easy to talk about anything." Amy Ren and Amelia Zheng are the other new girls on the team.

With a young, talented group, Sara is optimistic.

"Our team got a lot of really good players who are freshmen who have been playing for a long time, which is really exciting," Sara said. "We'll be going to nationals with a lot of great high schools, so that'll be a really cool experience."

## SPORTS SCREENS

Esports, a competitive form of gaming, has taken the world by storm. With a billion-dollar market and a growing audience, they may be the sports of the future.

### by CHRISTIAN GLUTH

ASSISTANT EDITOR

ans pack the stands and lights glare across the arena as two teams, locked into their game, fuel the atmosphere with excitement. A hanging jumbotron closely displays the action for the audience, while an announcer follows the match in great detail.

Each player's slight movements and mental strategy, perfected by hours of practice, is the largest difference in the contest.

This is a championship match being displayed to over 100 million viewers across the world — more than the Grammys, Emmys and Oscars combined. This isn't the Super Bowl. Not even the Champions League. This event is the 2019 League of Legends World Championship final.

Over the past three years the rise of competitive gaming, known as esports, has taken the entertainment business by storm. The bestof-the-best from all varieties of video games from first-person shooters to user-controlled basketball games — are able to compete in esports tournaments, leagues and other in-game competitions.

U-High sophomore Leo Mehring-Keller competes with Atlas, a team that participates in competitive "Overwatch" tournaments nearly every weekend. He said that although it doesn't get in the way of his priorities, esports takes strategy and mental toughness.

"I wouldn't say it [interferes] too much because I've got flexibility but it is kind of a commitment," he said. "It's definitely mentally really draining," Leo said.

Many tournaments are broadcast on online streaming services, with Amazon's Twitch and Microsoft's Mixer being the most widely used platforms. The Overwatch League is among the more popular leagues. It and other video game competitions have even made their way into national TV, with the majority of their coverage coming from ESPN.

Esports revenue has also grown exponentially as of the last few years, with no sign of slowing. Business Insider Intelligence projects esports revenue to surpass \$1.5 billion by 2023, while investments into competitions went up to \$4.5 billion in 2018 from \$490 million the year before, showing a dramatic increase in overall esports business reliability.

Chicago's Robert Morris University, along with a growing amount of colleges around the United States, give scholarships to a number of esports competitors. In 2014, RMU was the first college to hand out scholarships to League of Legends players.

Multiple game-specific teams of players and coaches comprise the RMU esports roster. They compete in competitions that are held in a range of locations, including Wintrust Arena which can hold over 10,000 spec-

Arenas dedicated to esports, complete with a large jumbotron and seating areas for players, have also become expensive, popular

Atlanta, a city popular in the esports community, is opening a 13,000-square foot esports arena in the Mall of Georgia.

Despite its large popularity among younger people, 75% of adults don't play or watch competitive esports, according to The Washington Post. Adding to these numbers, 78% said they'd rather watch a live sporting event than a live esports event.

Senior Kendrick Xie plays "Fortnite" with a designated duo partner through different competitions that are offered in-game almost every month. He said esports didn't need to be labeled a sport to continue to thrive.

"I would consider it competitive," Kendrick said. "The viewers are there still. There was a 'DOTA 2' final that had more viewers than the NBA finals. It doesn't have to be considered a sport to be taken seriously."

While 10 years ago video games may have been considered no more than a casual pastime, now their competitions fill arenas with thousands of fans. From its wild popularity to the potential to earn millions of dollars, esports has transformed video games from a pastime to an opportunity to showcase unappreciated talent.

### 100 million

amount of viewers who watched League of Legends World finals

### \$1 billion

revenue created globally by esports in 2019

## \$34 million

prize money for the winner of the Dota 2 World Championships

14%

average increase per year in esports viewership

### 300 million

annual viewers of esports in 2019

75%

amount of adults who are not aware of eports

> SOURCE: VARIETY MAGAZINE IMAGE SOURCE: GOODFREEPHOTOS.COM

## Cross country skiing offers exercise, break from city



SOURCE: BIG FOOT BEACH STATE PARK

WINTER WONDERLAND. Big Foot Beach State Park, which lies in Geneva, Wisconsin, has options for snowshoeing as well as cross country skiing.

### by NICKY EDWARDS-LEVIN

SPORTS EDITOR

Spending so much time in an urban environment, it is often easy to forget that nature does indeed exist. We are in fact able to venture beyond the concrete jungle of Chicago into nature - nature that lies beyond Scammon Garden. If you are craving snow that is not exhaust-infused sludge, or grass that hasn't been placed by a truck, consider these proximate options for an hour, morning, or day of cross country skiing.

### Big Foot Beach State Park

Furthest away from U-High lies Big Foot Beach State Park, a lengthy two hour drive just over the border in Wisconsin. The destination, though, may just be worth it. Occupying a sizeable 271 acres, the park boasts six miles worth of trails, groomed for those looking for a classic cross country skiing experience. A delight for both experienced and beginning skiers, Big Foot Beach State Park has a 3-mile trail for those looking for a longer, more hilly endeavor, as well as an easy 1.5-mile trail with some slight rollers. Situated on the edge of Geneva Lake, Big Foot

### Snowy activities:

**Distance from school:** Big Foot: 1:54 hour drive; Morton Arboretum: 40 minute drive; Northerly

Price: Big Foot: \$10; Morton Arboretum: \$15; Northerly Island: \$5

Hours: Big Foot: 6 a.m. to 11 p.m; Morton Arboretum: 7 a.m. to sunset.; Northerly Island: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Beach State Park also has options for snowshoeing, for anyone weary of the more technical cross country skiing.

### Morton Arboretum

For a closer but still secluded option, try driving 40 minutes west to the Morton Arboretum, a beautiful, scenic and hilly nature preserve in DuPage County. The flat trails on this massive 1,700-acre destination are few and far between, so make sure you are prepared for some cardiovascular exercise upon arrival. That said, the 16 miles worth of trails

are unmatched in the city, and the dozens of trails to choose from provide plenty of options, from an easy ski-stroll to a sweat-inducing workout. The arboretum is also convenient for anyone who wishes to explore the snow, offering snowshoe and ski rentals at the visitors center. For \$15, explore the beautiful trails to your heart's content from 7 a.m. until sunset, or until skis run out.

### Northerly Island

To the surprise of many, Chicago has its very own cross country skiing trails. Located on Northerly Island (the man-made peninsula connected to the Adler Planetarium), a 15-minute drive from Lab will bring you to a unique cross country skiing course, complete with views of the Chicago skyline and Lake Michigan. While the mileage is limited, the convenience of this destination is certainly worth noting. Snowshoeing, which is also offered at Northerly Island, requires very little mileage for a great experience, so when the snow piles up beyond three inches, take the short trip along Lake Shore Drive to give this activity a shot. More information can be found at chicagoparkdistrict.com.



## We must fight racism on all fronts To make needed abangag at 1-1

### To make needed changes at Lab, all people of all races must join forces

fter the community was notified about a racist meme that a student published on social media Dec. 13, the Editorial Board had a plan for this edition. We published an editorial on Jan. 10 suggesting that the community not "cancel" the student. Last week, history teacher Naadia Owens submitted a letter in response, and we attended the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Assembly. Ms. Owens' letter is published on the Midway website, and below we share with you a new opinion.

At the Jan. 16 assembly, the Black Students' Association leaders delivered an open letter to the U-High community in response to the December incident and problems with racism and intolerance. They emphasized that the black community cannot be the only group fighting for diversity, equity and inclusion at the Laboratory Schools. The Midway staff strongly agrees with this sentiment.

As the BSA called for in their letter, non-black students need to stand up and fight against an-

### As the Midway sees it ...

ti-black racism. Marginalized groups should be able to count on allies in the fight against discrimination. Historically, minority rights have been achieved through majority efforts.

Bias and discrimination are cyclical phenomena. Everyone has a certain identity or culture, hence we need to come together to fight racism and ignorance whether we are — or could be — a target.

The Lab community needs to realize that racism is not only a problem for marginalized groups. Nonblack students need to go beyond the role of supporting the fight of others and push for institutional transformations.

This may sound like an obvious argument, but due to December's racist incident, we felt it needed clarification.

People who wouldn't label themselves as "racists" can still do racist things. Even people who consider themselves as allies in the fight against racism can be unaware of



their biases. We still believe that we can't just cancel or cast aside the people who engage in this behavior. The BSA said it best in their letter: "We believe that every student should be given a chance to redeem themselves and that incidents like these are prime teaching moments.'

Furthermore, the responsibility to educate people should not always fall on students of color. As the BSA suggested, we need to come together as a community and clearly state in the handbook the consequences for these

actions. Change occurs when a diverse community bands together and demands it.

It is time all students of all backgrounds ask more from the administration and faculty to stop future acts of bigotry from happening.

## Instagram hiding 'likes' limits online comparison

by MADELINE WELCH

OPINION EDITOR

"Do you think this picture will get enough likes?" I ask my friend as I show her my picture while

mindlessly scrolls through Instagram feed.

After scouring over my photo for imperfections consulting my friends for help with a caption, I

finally hit "post." In the moments following, I impatiently check my lock screen, waiting for notifications of comments and likes. I track the number of likes incessantly. If my selfie receives enough likes from friends and strangers, then I will feel beautiful. If it



doesn't, I will delete the post out of embarrassment and self-hatred.

My story is relatable for millions of young people on Instagram. Users seek validation with each like they receive. Many people equate the volume of likes to be how well they are liked as a person.

In November, Instagram began to hide likes from users in the United States, as the company previously did in Canada, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Brazil, Australia and New Zealand. Users can still see the amount of likes on their own posts, but not on others'.

The removal of likes from Instagram takes away a method of comparison and attempts to make the app less detrimental to users' mental health. By easing the pressure for users to post solely for a likecount, Instagram will be used more for personally meaningful images.

'The idea is to depressurize Instagram, make it less of a competition," Adam Mosseri, the CEO of Instagram, said at the Wired 25 conference in San Francisco on Nov. 8, 2019.

According to a survey by the Royal Society for Public Health, Instagram is the worst social media site for youth mental health. The research project, called "#Statu"The removal of likes from Instagram takes away a method of comparison and attempts to make the app less detrimental to users' mental health."

sOfMind," surveyed almost 1,500 people aged 14-24 about the mental effects of social media platforms. Participants noted that some of the issues caused by Instagram were anxiety, depression, poor body image and bullying.

I have also experienced some of these symptoms. I've spent countless nights shame-spiralling through influencers' and models' pages, training my brain to think that their Photoshopped images with millions of likes are the measure of beauty.

While getting rid of Instagram like counts won't solve all of these problems, it is a positive step. Stopping users from numerically comparing themselves to others will limit the compulsive checking of Instagram exemplified in my story above. A study done by Michigan State University study says this compulsive behavior is a large part of social media addiction.

Removing likes will affect the way social media influencers track their engagement, but this is a worthwhile tradeoff. Influencers can use other quantifiable data, such as comments, to evaluate their followers' interaction.

Since the new rule, I've felt more comfortable posting things that I previously wouldn't have considered sharing simply because I'm not scared of reaching a certain number of likes.

## At Brandy Melville, one size does not fit *all*, but *small*

by GRACE BRADY

REPORTER

Vintage designs on white shirts fall just along the model's naval. They wear checkered mini skirts, simple sweaters

or cropped patterned blouses. Walking into a Brandy Melville store is exciting, as it's known for catering to trends while also providing a wide



Trying on Brandy Melville clothing, however, is a smack in the face for many girls. A "Brandy girl" is beautiful, blonde, thin. After putting on a crop top or bike shorts,

I take one look into the mirror and realize that I am not a "Brandy girl.'

The Italian clothing brand, Brandy Melville, isn't just selling trendy clothing to young women; it is selling teenage girls the idea that thin bodies and white skin is the epitome of beauty.

The brand opened a store location in Chicago's Gold Coast neighborhood Dec. 7. With over 3.9 million followers on Instagram, the opening prompted excitement from many Chicago customers and has the potential to increase its already prevailing popularity.

I was introduced to the brand three years ago by my friends. While making my first purchase, the "one-size-fits-all" policy didn't seem to bother me. In fact, I felt happy that I didn't need to choose, even if the "one-size" was almost always small. I still refused to even look at bottoms, as the pit in my stomach told me that those items weren't made for me. I knew the feeling of opening a package, trying something on, and not seeing the image in my head would only strengthen my refusal.

Brandy Melville models are, without much exception, white girls with willowy arms, thin legs and a small waist.

Though the brand has faced backlash about its lack of body and racial diversity for years, they have put little to no effort into meeting people's requests.

Meanwhile, other companies

have made efforts to diversify images of beauty on social media, such as Aerie, including models of all shapes, colors and ability, and Sports Magazine, which included plus-sized model Ashley Graham on its cover.

As more companies shed light on the beauty of diversity, Brandy Melville's popularity seems like a step backward in terms of understanding that beauty is not a single image.

The brand's target audience is teenage girls. Brandy Melville's lack of increase in diversity, despite its increase in popularity, add to the current beauty standards that teenage girls face every day and encourages teenage girls to crave a change in themselves, since the brand promotes one conventional idea of beauty.

Though teenage girls may not be able to control many societal pressures that urge them to lose weight or make them ashamed of their skin color, teenage girls have some control over the brands they

By not shopping at Brandy Melville and showing support for brands that emphasize diversity, teenage girls could learn to understand once more the beauty of individuality. People should support brands that support them no matter the size of their body or the color of their skin.

Beauty isn't one size, and teenage girls shouldn't strive to be one, either.

### U-HIGH MIDWAY

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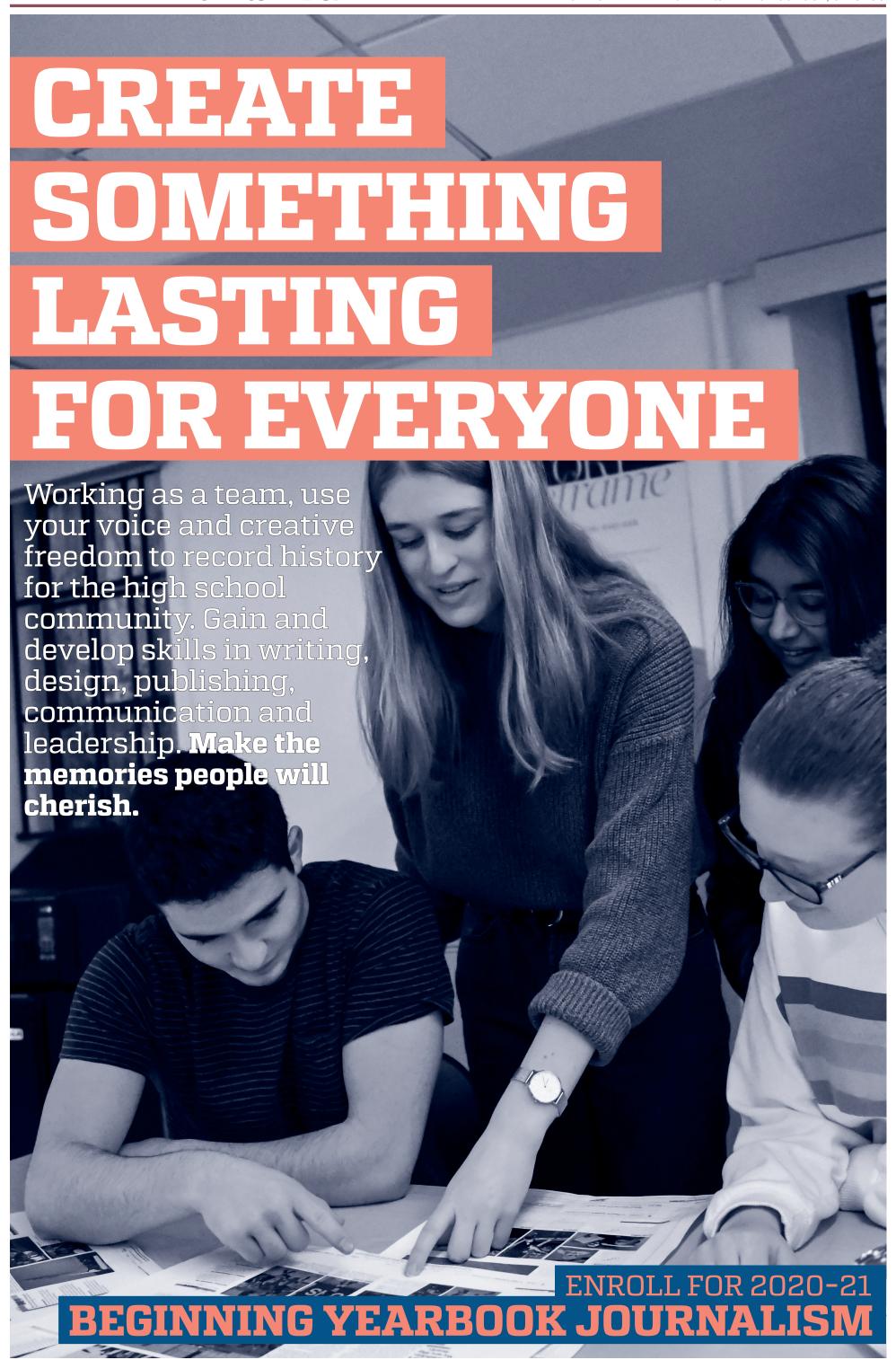
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### CORRECTIONS

### ISSUE 4, Dec. 12, 2019:

- Page 3: Kara Xu is the vice president of Sara's Circle.
- Page 11: Debbie Ribbens' name was misspelled.



## Independence days



As of the 2019-20 school year, the administration switched independent studies to a pass/ fail grading system, ensuring they couldn't be used to pad a student's GPA. In spite of this, enrollment has hardly decreased, attracting a passionate group of students in the process. For them, persuing a subject they love while working with an adult they trust is enough of an incentive on its own.

## MIDWAY PHOTO BY ISABELLA KELLERMEIER Senior finds creative outlet in makerspace projects

by COLIN LESLIE

**LEARNING** 

Marcelo Gutierrez-

BY BUILDING. Hands full, senior

Miranda works to exercise his

passion for design in Lab's

Makerspace. "As an artist,

designer, you're always looking for

ways to validate or rationalize

"It's much harder to justify the

projects that I do than it is to justify

going to class every day."

the time and work that you're

spending," Marcelo said.

MIDWAY REPORTER

Think most people go out to find independent studies, but for me the independent study found me," senior Marcelo Gutierrez-Miranda said.

His interest in 3D printing started well before he got to U-High.

Marcelo said he appreciates his Makerspace Art independent study because it allows him to create freely and explore his interest in designing at the artistic guidance of

who use the Makerspace room, as well as Mr. Wildeman, are free to explore projects that interest them as well as their school assignments.

"I do a little bit of private, for-myself proj-

ects, but mostly I help the students



MarceloGutierrez-Miranda

Brian Wildeman

Mr. Wildeman said his involvement with and the expansion of the Makerspace machines was sparked by

Marcelo. Marcelo

an independent

study regarding

its history. The experience al-

lowed Meghan,

now a junior, to

grow her passion about something

she is truly in-

terested in with-

out focusing on

conventional

Accordingto

class could offer.

Ms. Bender, Sa-

na started her In-

dependent Study

during the sec-

ond week of the

school year af-

ter the two had

conversation

taught me as much how to use the printers as I taught him," Mr. Wildeman said. "I guide him more

Marcelo has explored the topic with Mr. Wildeman for four years but only received credit for Makerspace Art as an independent study for one. Marcelo is still thankful that he could turn his unique interest into a class.

"As an artist, designer, you're always looking for ways to validate or rationalize the time and work that you're spending," Marcelo said. "It's much harder to justify the projects that I do than it is to justify going to class every day."

Mr. Wildeman has helped the

dents in the Makerspace.

"One of the things that the Makerspace is great for is a crossover from things like science and math to art and back and forth," Mr. Wildeman. "They inspire each other in this space."

Mr Wildeman said, "When [Marcelo] came to this school, he was looking for an engineering class, and there wasn't one. Since that time, he has become much more of a designer, and I think that just was

## Through musical theater, junior hones research skills

by GRACE HOLLEB

MIDWAY REPORTER

wo years ago in Brad Brickner's music history class Meghan Hammond enjoyed learning about music history but had a special interest in musicals. In total, Meghan has seen 17 musicals. This interest was sparked after her friend got a "Hamilton" CD and would regularly sing the songs when he was with her.

When the singing wouldn't end, Meghan became annoyed and eventually made a deal with him. She would listen to the album and if she liked it, they could enjoy it together, but if not, her friend had to quit it. After listening, she obsessed and her love only grew from there.

the year went on, she turned in multiple extra cred-

it write ups on Broadway musicals she attended, but would have happily done them without the credit.

A passion for musical theater has stuck with Meghan throughout high school — culminating in



Brad Brickner

a grade.

"I'm really getting to personalize exactly like how I'm going into this and what we focus on," Meghan said. "It's more centered around

Mr. Brickner completely agreed. He said he has enjoyed seeing Meghan explore a topic she loves.

"This has been the perfect independent study because she does the vast bulk of the work," Mr. Brickner said. "I try to provide materials and resources and point her in a direction or two, but by and large she is so self motivated."

The study has not only given Meghan lots of knowledge about musical theater, she is learning to comprehensively explore an inter-

"It's given me good practice on going out and finding my own research and coming to my own conclusions about stuff," Meghan

Within the next few weeks, Meghan will be a guest speaker and present to two sections of Mr. Brickner's music history and music explorations classes and possibly a few other high school classes. The experience has come full circle for Meghan as she is scheduled to present to the class where she first began to researchBroad-

Megan said, "Overall, It's just a fun thing to spend my time on, and I really like doing it.

## Junior takes time to explore, studying migration, heritage

by BEN RICHARDON

MIDWAY REPORTER

very Monday at 10:45 a.m., Sana Shahul sits down with her independent study supervisor, history teacher Mariah Bender. They talk formatting and citations for a paper Sana will write as the cumulative project for independent study.

Before the period ends and it's time for Sana to go to Biology, Ms. Bender suggests a new reading and for Sana to finish her intro-

duction and conclusion by their next meeting. Sana agrees and steps out of the history office, excited to research a topic important to her: Indian immigration into Tanzania.



Meghan

Hammond

For Sana, participating in an independent study has allowed a deeper exploration beyond what



MariahBender

about Indian immigration into Tanzania after the class had a discussion on a similar topic.

And they were off. The pair only meet once a week, mostly to check Sana's progress, but she sees this as

"In a regular class you have nightly homework that's just checked every day, versus this where I have to do it over the course because there's just so much I have to cover," Sana said.

It might be a lot of work, but Sana is excited for the challenge. She finds the style of learning especially enjoyable because as a first-generation Indian-American, it's a topic close to her heart.

"In class we learned about the Mali Empire, and we really do go deep into that," Sana said, "but to be able to go really deep into a topic that you're really interested in learning about I think really has a different vibe to it."

Despite what might seem like a dry course of citing and formatting the same paper, Sana found inspiration and excitement from her solo curriculum.

## Here's the



## on dairy-free desserts

### Frozen desserts from dairy-free substitutes can taste better than regular dairy ice cream, according to two seniors who sampled seven

### by BERK OTO

ASSISTANT EDITOR

he \$1 billion threshold will be met by the dairy-free frozen desserts industry by 2024. Traditional stereotypes of dairy-free substitutes, like blandness and overall mediocrity, are starting to be dismantled as a result of its popularity.

Seniors Natalie Bakwin and Adria Wilson sat down with Midway reporters to taste test dairy-free desserts from seven companies: So Delicious, Cado, Oatly, Frönen, Ben and Jerry's, Nada Moo, 365. Each brand used a different dairy-substitute, from cashew milk to bananas and even avocado, but some tasted better than others.

The brands ranged from \$5-7 per pint. Natalie is vegan by choice, so she has also had dairy ice cream before, whereas Adria nearly always eats dairy ice cream.

"I would not be able to tell that those were not dairy but the rest tasted vegan," Natalie said pointing at Ben and Jerry's and Oatly.

While those two brands were at the top of both Adria's and Natalie's lists, Frönen was declared worst.

The company was started by two University of Chicago undergraduates who wanted to find the best dairy-free, gluten-free ice

According to Natalie, there are a few telltale signs of vegan desserts.

"A lot of vegan sweets compensate for the fact that there are no eggs or dairy by using a lot of sugar," she said. "Oatly and Ben and Jerry's were able to preserve both taste and texture, so there's definitely no excuses for



MIDWAY PHOTOS BY MIRIAM BLOOM

**CLINK!** Seniors Natalie Bakwin and Adria Wilson clink spoons before sampling their bites. Of the seven, Oatly Strawberry was their favorite.

### Frönen

### Bananna mush Strawberry

According to the Chicago-based company's website, Frönen's mission is not only to create a strong dairy-free ice cream substitute, but a remarkably healthy one, too. With only four ingredients, none of which are added sugars, they certainly seem to have met this goal, but for Adria and Natalie, sacrificing taste wasn't quite worth it. "It does feel like wet sand... I do like that it's not too sweet, but other than that it's really gross," Adria said. This was the least liked flavor overall out of the seven.

### Oatly Oat milk

## Strawberry

With both Natalie and Adria ranking it number one, Oatly's strawberry oat-milk ice cream seemed to do exactly what any good dairy substitute should do - taste almost exactly like the real thing. According to Adria, who's tried oatmilk in the past, the milk substitute tastes closer to real dairy products than almost every other substitute on the market. "I think it tastes like regular ice cream," Adria said "[It] really does have a milk flavor to it."

### So Delicious

### Cashew milk Caramel cluster

So Delicious' Caramel Cluster was reportedly tasty, yet completely missed the mark in terms of replicating dairy ice cream. It was loaded with sugar, presumably to compensate for the cashew milk's overwhelmingly nutty flavor. This, Natalie said, didn't detract from the taste, but made the treat needlessly unhealthy. "I mean it tastes pretty good, but when I first tasted it, I was like 'wow that's a lot of sugar," Natalie said.

### 365 Almond Milk Vanilla

Unlike So Delicious, some brands don't do anything to compensate for the flavor lost through milk substitution — making for a dry and utterly bland tasting experience. Both tasters said 365's almond milk Vanilla Bean was downright waterytasteless. "It tastes like water. ... It has a really grainy consistency," Adria said.



### Ben & Jerry's

### Almond milk PB and cookies TOP PICK

For both tasters, Ben and Jerry's Peanut Butter and Cookies was another flavor that managed to transcend the flavorless, watered-down standard that's come to define so attempts at dairy replication. While, according to Natalie, the brand is generally a favorite among dairy-free consumers, she also cited the flavor choice as a selling point. "I'm a sucker for peanut butter. Every vegan loves peanut butter," She said. "I still find that classic Ben & Jerry's taste in this even though it is vegan. We have been trained to think that vegan must taste dull, this is proof that companies can do better."

### Nadamoo Coconut milk

Mint chip

Both tasters agreed that coconut milk is generally hit or miss - whether poured into your morning coffee or served as a frozen treat. Natalie and Adria declared the flavor to be bland, unimpressive and mediocre overall. "This one's definitely not the best. It doesn't really have a lot of flavor. It's just Beta, whereas Oatly is Alpha" Natalie said. On the plus side, neither of them detected any coconut milk aftertaste which they both learned to expect from any coconut milk product.

### Cado

### Avocado fat Deep Dark Chocolate

Cado's deep dark chocolate was, in a word, surprising. Given the unorthodoxy of avocado as a dairy substitute, the testers expected the ice cream to taste a lot weirder — a prediction which, aside from an unpleasent aftertaste, did not come true. "It's a good consistency. It's not Oatly-level, but it is creamy," Natalie said.

### *Information:*

Location: All of the flavors reviewed can be found in the frozen desserts aisle of any Whole Foods Market and other supermarkets.

### **Prices:**

365 - \$4.99Ben & Jerry's - \$5.99 Cado - \$6.99 Frönen - \$5.49 Nadamoo - \$5.99Oatly - \$5.99

So Delicious — \$5.99

Pricing may vary by flavor.