PAGE 7 • ARTS

"PIF" was nominated for multiple Oscars that will be announced in February. Read 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 unfamiliar 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.

At MLK assembly, BSA insists on action

by ELLA BEISER
NEWS EDITOR

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 the team, and then there are some 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 didn't want anyone to feel pressured to sit. According to Ms. Magliocco, multiple students wrote about feeling pressure to sit rather than to stand and they then are some that don't really like to talk at all.

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in my letter to the faculty that is misleading,” FA President Jim Housinger said later in an interview with the Midway. Laboratory Schools Director Charlie Abelman sent a two-paragraph email to the Midway regarding the arbitrator’s decision. “I am not a party to the arbitrator’s decision. I have no confidence in him,” Mr. Abelman wrote. “I don’t see anything in my letter to the faculty that is misleading.”

Mr. Abelman’s email also noted that the arbitrator’s decision was “a bit more specific about what was misleading,” a new exhibit brought by the FA “is not the best idea.”

According to the FA’s summation, 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 warrant an investigation to determine whether there is a plausible basis for the complaint. The arbitrator acknowledged the line of questioning was “not the best idea.”

Though the arbitrator’s Dec. 20 decision determined that the Laboratory Schools and the IDHR, the U-Highligts Yearbook places first in the world. "It really isn't much different than what we've always done, which is we're always in every others' classrooms and you always know that you've been assigned to one. This is just a more deliberate version of that." — DANIEL BOBO-JONES
DON’T JUST READ THE NEWS. BREAK IT.

No matter your grade or ability, you'll improve your writing. Jump in with hands-on activities. Collaborate with peers to cover important stories on campus and beyond. Challenge yourself with growth, leadership and complex assignments. Be part of the team that makes a difference.

ENROLL FOR 2020-21
BEGINNING JOURNALISM
JSAs 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 attacks. The Anti-Defamation League, for example, released data in 2017 noting a 37% year-on-year increase, the greatest recorded since 1979. While this percentage has decreased since then, the actual number of people injured or killed has increased due to incidents like the 2018 Pittsburgh 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 — is this 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 Zemli, a former member of JSA and was at the Jan. 10 discussion, claims that students are 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 understand and adapting to different cultures because I think a lot of it comes from just pure misunderstanding and not having contact with people who are Jewish when you’re growing up,” 

Rachel Zemli, 2019 ALUMNA

“JSA has hosted talk about anti-Semitic attacks in New York

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Go beyond the classroom to experience a different kind of storytelling, where your work is worth thousands of words. Starting at any skill level, collaborate closely with peers on your team to showcase the truth in visuals. Get involved from a different perspective.
MUSIC MAN

Pure passion spurs love for music
by CALEDONIA ABBEY
REPORTER

Nathan 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've ever done," Nathan 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.

"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. "I remember between them, we're a very musical family."

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

From then on, he and his dad began singing with their synagogue's 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 harmonies."

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 grade 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 musician, Elton John, those types of people.

"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

MUSIC MAN

“Water After All” displays how benefits and drawbacks of H₂O
by AMANDA CASSEL
MANAGING EDITOR

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

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 Akomfrah.

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 aquatic-themed literary quotes lead visitors into the main part 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 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 black and white photos of a march 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 Guillermo 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.

“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.

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.

MCA exhibit shows brutality, elegance of water

by AMANDA CASSEL
MANAGING EDITOR

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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.

**MUST-SEE MOVIES**

**‘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 in anticipation of a gunshot or bomb shell. All is quiet, but they keep tread- ing until they hit the Ger- man trenches.

Slipping through ene- my lines, the two British soldiers go on a critical secret mis- sion that will save the lives of over 1,600 men, includ- ing one soldier’s brother, from fall- ing into a German trap in the mov- ie “1917.” The British were in high spirits because of the full-scale re- treat the Germans had performed, but in reality, the Germans had a plan to bomb the followers from afar.

The film has already won Gold- en Globe Awards for best picture (drama) and best director. “1917” has also been nominated for 10 Academy Awards, including best picture and best director.

Based on the true story of direc- tor 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 recuper- ate, 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-quali- ty, black-and-white films, which didn’t correctly show how grue- some and dangerous the war was. This film gives an immersive new perspective.

**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 for two Golden Globe Awards.

**Parasite,** set in South Korea, gets 6 Oscar nominations

by NICKY EDWARDS-LEVIN

SPORTS EDITOR

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 on- ly gets crazier.

“Parasite,” which follows a poor Ko- rean family, blends humor, social com- mentary and creepiness into a terrify- ing, thrilling and dizzying two-hour spectacle.

The most compelling part about the movie is the acting, as despite the larger-than-life characters, each ac- tor delivers a truly believable perfor- mance. The hapless patriarch of the lower-class Kim family, portrayed by Kim Ki-taek, illustrates the pain of poverty while avoiding falling into the “failed man” stereotype. The scenes in the semi-basement, while not the most exciting, are actually my fa- vorite. The audience feels claustropho- bic yet also comforted by the familial warmth of the family.

In contrast to the cramped semi-basement is the luxurious estate of the Park family, which the Kims cunning- nishly infiltrate. The windows, look- ing onto the lush garden, make the es- tate seem as if it is situated in Eden, as opposed to the jammed window of the semi, looking onto public utili- tars 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.”

Directed by Bong Joon Ho, the film’s pacing is sublime. The first hour does not seem sprinkled in the least, yet something certainly feels off. Were the film not portrayed as a horror mov- ie, the chaos that occurs in the sec- ond 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 un- warranted, and it feels like an eruption of tension that has built throughout the movie. And just when the audience believes the volcano has finally erupt- ed, it comes back with vehemence and vigor before burning out in a spectac- lar, satisfying blaze.

While the film takes place in South Korea it is fascinatingly westernized. Many of the words in Korean are bor- rowed from English, creating a mix- ture between the two languages. Fur- thermore, the first point of access into the Park household comes from En- glish — the Kim family’s youngest man

ORESTES "THERE IS NO GOD" 1913

Formerly owned by the late Harmon Fish, the painting was discarded as the owner’s health failed. The work’s value was not recognized until it was rediscovered in a Westchester County barn, where it had been stored for 40 years. The painting was purchased by the Metropolitan Museum of Art for $9.25 million in 2014. The museum plans to restore the painting and display it in a special exhibition.

**KOREAN MOVIE CONTRASTS FAMILIES IN RICHES AND POVERTY**

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From a symbol of wealth and status to a part of our culture that is present in every corner of the 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 airwaves. Over the last 12 years, smartphones have evolved from a niche product to a ubiquitous tool in our daily lives. They have become an integral part of our personal and professional lives, enabling communication, entertainment, and access to information.

Smartphones provide users with a multitude of features, from messaging and social media to gaming and streaming services. They have become a focal point of our daily lives, with many people relying on them for both work and leisure activities.

Despite their widespread use, there are concerns about the impact of smartphones on our mental and physical health. There is evidence to suggest that excessive smartphone use can lead to increased stress levels, anxiety, and feelings of isolation and disconnection.

However, there are also positive aspects to smartphone use. They can provide a sense of connection and support, especially in times of isolation or social distancing. Additionally, smartphones can be a valuable tool for learning and communication, allowing for easy access to information and resources.

Overall, smartphones have become an essential part of our daily lives, with both benefits and drawbacks. It is important to be mindful of our smartphone use and to strike a balance between our screen time and other activities. This will help us to make the most of the opportunities that smartphones offer while minimizing any negative impacts.
Co-ed squash program finally gets more girl players

by NICKY EDWARDS-LEVIN
SPORTS EDITOR

I t’s a huddle before tip-off of 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 Xavier 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 guy too,” Hunter said, listing Xavi-er’s contributions. “Great guy to have in the locker room.” Beyond being a friendly face on and off the court, according to Hunter, Xavi-er’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 tell- ing jokes or things like that,’ Xavi-er said.

Beyond being unfamiliar with team terminology, being a team leader right away has brought plenty of pressure with it, but Xavi-er isn’t worried. “It’s definitely a lot of pressure. I feel, but it’s not something that I can 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, 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 bet- ter ever since preseason and has always been motivating all the other guys in games and practice,” Hunter said. “He’s come up big for us in some games, and every one 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 Chris- tian Grant succinctly calls it, “but- ter.”

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 homework, an extra hour of shooting jump shots, Xavier’s life has gotten extremely busy. “After the final words in their huddle, each player gets ready to begin the battle. Some freshmen may feel nervous, but on the court, Xavier feels none of it. His prepa- ration shows. After a deep breath, 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 play basketball.”

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 women’s tennis at-tire, fights against sexism in athletics have finally reached the world’s stage. Despite activism for women in sports, U-High has seen a mi-crocosm of women’s inequality in athletics in the co-ed squash pro-gram.

After years of being male-dom-inated, the U-High squash team, now with four girl players, has fi-nally 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 said.

Despite being the youngest on the team that season, Sara certain-ly proved herself to the team. A for- mer 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 all saw me as an actual part of the team because I was contributing, so that helped me get acclimated.”

According to Sara, while the dis-parities 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, but that wasn’t really reflected on the Lab team,” Sara said.


Sisterhood 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.

“Sara really is motivating, and that’s something that I can look up to. I know that she’s been there before and she was able to do it.” — SERENA THOMAS

Headed 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.

“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

“Within the first day of practice I had already made new friends,” Serena said. “The team is real-ly funny, and it’s really easy to talk about anything.” Amy Ren and Amelia Zheng are the other two new girls on the team.

With a young, talented group, Sara is optimistic. “Our team got a lot of real-ly 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.”
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

Esports are an explosive growth area for the entertainment business by storm. The best-of-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 take strategy and mental toughness.

"I wouldn’t say it’s [interferes] too much because I’ve got flexibility but it is kind of a commitment," he said. “It’s definitely mentally 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 in-game 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.

by NICKY EDWARDS-LEVYN
SPORTS EDITOR

Cross country skiing offers exercise, break from city

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

Snowy activities:
Distance from school: Big Foot: 1.54 hour drive, Morton Arboretum: 40 minute drive
Price: Big Foot: $10, Morton Arboretum: $15
Hours: Big Foot: 6 a.m. to 11 p.m, Morton Arboretum: 7 a.m. to sunset

Big Foot Beach State Park
Farthest 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 Beach State Park provides the stands and lights gleam across the arena as two teams, locked into their game, fuel the atmosphere with excitement. A hanging jump botton 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 best-of-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.

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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 esports

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A CLASS ABOUT WHAT MATTERS TO YOU

It’s your digital life. How do you understand media influence and navigate the evolving online and social media worlds? Analyze trends and current events. Learn to participate in a culture where you will create, publish and advocate. Equip yourself to engage and express.

ENROLL FOR 2020-21

MEDIA LITERACY & ANALYSIS
To make needed changes at Lab, all people of all races must join forces

As the Midway sees it...

As the Midway sees it... 

“As the Midway sees it…” is a regular column written by MADELINE WELCH who is the Midway’s Features Editor.

In this column, Ms. Welch shares her personal opinions on a range of topics. All of her pieces are carefully crafted to reflect her unique perspective on the world.

In her most recent column, Ms. Welch explores the impact of social media on our perceptions of beauty. She argues that the constant stream of glamorous images and perfect bodies that flood our feeds can be detrimental to our self-esteem and overall well-being.

Ms. Welch begins by highlighting the role of social media in shaping our understanding of beauty. She notes that platforms like Instagram have created a culture of comparison, where users are encouraged to measure themselves against curated and airbrushed images.

She then goes on to discuss the psychological impact of this constant barrage of perfection. Ms. Welch cites research showing that exposure to social media images can lead to feelings of inadequacy and an overall sense of dissatisfaction with one’s own body.

Ms. Welch concludes by calling for a shift in our thinking about beauty. She suggests that we focus on embracing our own unique qualities and celebrating the diversity of human experience, rather than trying to conform to unrealistic standards.

Ms. Welch’s piece is a powerful reminder of the importance of self-acceptance and the need for a more inclusive understanding of beauty.

Instagram hiding ‘likes’ limits online comparison

by GRACE BRADY

Virtual designs on white shirts fall just along the model’s natural lines. They wear checkerboard mini skirts, simple sweaters or cardigans, and patterned blouses. Walking into a Brandy Melville store is exciting, as it’s known for catering to trends while also providing a variety of basic pieces.

Trying on Brandy Melville clothing, however, is a challenge to the face for many girls. A “Brandy girl” is beautiful, photogenic. After posting a photo 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.

However, in December, Instagram began testing a feature to hide the number of likes on posts. This is a positive step in the right direction.

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, which is a major source of anxiety.

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’ interactions.

Since the new rule, I’ve felt more comfortable posting things that I truly believe in. I have considered sharing simply because I’m not scared of reaching a certain number of likes.

While Brandy Melville, one size does not fit all, but small
CREATE SOMETHING LASTING FOR EVERYONE

Working as a team, use your voice and creative freedom to record history for the high school community. Gain and develop skills in writing, design, publishing, communication and leadership. Make the memories people will cherish.

BEGINNING YEARBOOK JOURNALISM

ENROLL FOR 2020-21
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.

Through musical theater, junior hones research skills

by GRACE HOLLE

TWO 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 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 was obsessed and her love only grew from there. As the year went on, she turned in multiple extra credit 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 through out high school — culminating in an independent study regarding its history. The experience allowed Meghan, now a junior, to grow her passion about something she is truly interested in while focusing on a grade. “I’m really getting to personalize exactly how I’m going into this and what we focus on,” Meghan said. “It’s more centered around me.”

Mr. Wildeman 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. Wildeman said. “I try to provide materials and resources and point her in a direction or two, but by and large she is self motivated.” The study has not only given Meghan lots of knowledge about musical theater, she is learning to comprehensively explore an interest. “It’s given me good practice on going out and finding my own research and coming to my own conclusions about stuff,” Meghan said.

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 research Broadway musicals.

“I 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 free- ly and further his interest in designing at the artistic guidance of art teacher Brian Wildeman.

In class we learned about the Mali Empire, and we really do go deep into that,” Sana said, “but to me the independent study has allowed me to go to a deeper exploration beyond what a conventional class could offer. According to Ms. Bender, Sana started her independent study during the second week of the school year after she and her two had a conversation 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 an advantage. “It’s 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 inspi- ration from her solo curriculum.

“Senior finds creative outlet in makerspace projects

by COLIN LESLIE

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“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 RICHARDSON

EVERY Monday at 10:45 a.m., Sana Shahul sits down with her independent study su- pervisor, history teacher Mari- ah Bender. They talk formatting and editing 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, ex- cited to research a topic important to her. Indi- an immigration into Tanzania. For Sana, participating in an independent study has allowed her to go beyond what a conventional class could offer.

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

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LEARNING BY BUILDING. Senior Isabella Gutierrez-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 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.”

MIDWAY PHOTO BY ISABELLA GUTIERREZ-MIRANDA

ISABELLA GUTIERREZ-MIRANDA

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

**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.

“Both tasters agreed that coconut milk is generally a favorite among dairy-free consumers, she also noted that both Adria’s and Natalie’s lists, Frönen was declared worst.”

**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 watery and tasteless. “It tastes like water… It has a really grainy consistency,” Adria said.

**Oaty**
Oat milk
Strawberry

With both Natalie and Adria ranking it number one, Oaty’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 oat milk 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 reported to be the creamiest, 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. “It means it tastes pretty good, but when I first tasted it, I was like ‘wow that’s a lot of sugar,’” Natalie said.

**Ben & Jerry’s**
Almond milk
PB and cookies

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 unpleasing 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 super markets.

**Prices:**
365 — $4.99
Ben & Jerry’s — $5.99
Cado — $6.99
Frönen — $5.49
Nadamoo — $5.99
Oaty — $5.99
So Delicious — $5.99

Pricing may vary by flavor.