

During hybrid learning, many teachers have struggled to find a balance where both in-person and distance learning students remain engaged in class.



Head designer of the sneaker shop Leaders 1354, alumnus Ellen Ma uses her platform to connect Asian and Black communities in Chicago through streetwear.



Check out reviews of three chicken sandwiches from around Chicago. Find out how factors such as presentation, freshness, crispiness and flavor can make or break the taste.



University of Chicago Laboratory High School

U-HIGH MIDWAY

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Editors sign off year of distance

by EDITORS-IN-CHIEF

Dear Readers,
Fourteen months ago, life changed: from classes to clubs to sports. We experienced many changes to how we gather, report and publish the U-High Midway. Today, for the first time since March 12, 2020, the Midway will publish its first full printed edition, continuing a 97-year tradition.

In a year that was nearly completely online, we at the Midway did our best to adapt to the ever-changing circumstances.



Ella Beiser



Amanda Cassel



Nicky Edwards-Levin

We even created two new sections: City Life and Health & Wellness. And, during the first week we returned in person, we published two back-to-school special editions of the Midway printed from our newsroom printer.
Despite the volatile conditions of the year, we are extremely proud of the work we have published: in-depth stories about substance use, stories about the impact of the coronavirus on communities around the city, breaking news about administrative change. In this paper, you will find some of the highlights from a year of our staff's exceptional journalism. In addition to many new stories, we have included some of our best work from the year to present to you in the format we enjoy most: a print paper.
It has been an honor and privilege to serve as editors-in-chief for the Midway this year. We look forward to seeing where the Midway goes next.

Pennington to lead student body

by AMANDA CASSEL
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

This interview took place May 1, the day after the election, and was lightly edited for clarity and space. The extended version is online.

What is your main goal or a couple of your main goals as all-school president. How do you plan to put them into action?

My main goal as all-school president is to make it so that Student Council is capable of accomplishing a lot and to prove to the rest of the school that Student Council can do a lot more.

The first thing that I want to do as all-school president is I want to work with the current executive board and formulate a general document or Excel sheet that lists all the different Student Council "things," responsibilities, events, meetings, so that Student Council are encouraged to start thinking about the different ways that they can change the school.

And then, opening up Student Council into something that can be used to greater effect by all students. In freshman year, I was in a club that essentially fundraised for other clubs and did research on fundraising methods so that it could be shared with other groups. I had originally wanted to integrate that into Student Council and now that I am all school, I'll try and push for that in Student Council, so that we can have students who are not on Student Council doing things constantly.

In your mind, what effect should Student Council have on the student body?

I'll say Student Council should have two separate effects. The first effect should be general spirit and happiness promotion. And



MIDWAY PHOTO BY MALCOLM TAYLOR
NEW LEADERSHIP. Brent Pennington's goals as all-school president include proving Student Council's ability to solve problems, promoting school spirit and increasing communication and transparency.

the second one should be making sure that students are being represented in important changes to the school in general. You have a responsibility. I've been able to contact people like Ms. Noel and someone from the charter school, and they both responded with "of course, let's meet," and it's all because of that fact that I was from Lab and I was on the Student Council. Because not every single person at Lab has that ability, we have a unique responsibility to make sure that with that power, we are completely, constantly using it.

How do you plan to address the division in the student body due

2021-22 Student Council

President: Brent Pennington
Vice President: Kennedy Bickham
Secretary: Peter Stern
Treasurer: Taig Singh
Cultural Union President: Saul Arnow
Cultural Union Vice President: Katie Baffa

CLASS OF 2022

President: Zachary Gin
Vice President: Ardith Huner
Cultural Union: Alma Moskowicz, Alina Susani

CLASS OF 2023

President: Fermi Boonstra
Vice President: Graham Robbins
Cultural Union: Akshay Badlani, Maile Nacu

CLASS OF 2024

President: Zoe Nathwani
Vice President: Kaavya Shriram
Cultural Union: Adam Cheema, Willow Stern

With a relatively low voter turnout this year, do you think Student Council is representative of the entire student body?

Student Council is 23 people representing 610 students. There is no way in the world that Student Council is going to be able to represent that many people with just 23 people, which is why I want to make sure that Student Council is open to having people who either didn't win or just didn't run at all to come on Student Council and represent that level of just any type of idea.

There's no way that I can represent every single person, all the students in the student body, and there's no way that even if I were the rising Senior Class president, I would be able to represent every single person. I would say that the best way in order to make sure that there is that inclusivity is to open up Student Council.

Many students see Student Council as a popularity contest or an ineffective organization. How do you plan on addressing the concerns of these students?

Student Council has a lot more ability to make change than students may imagine. I was able to complete eight separate things this year alone. And when I say things, it's important things like connecting with the charter school, I'm starting a sex-ed forum initiative organization, I filed bill being passed, a bunch of different things that I was really able to do alone. When it comes to that level of engagement, if every single Student Council member was producing that level of work and was going in depth that much, Student Council could literally be the most effective body at the school.

Later start time put up for consideration

by COLIN LESLIE
REPORTER

In the first weeks of May, the high school and middle school will embark on a process to consider adopting a later school start time, a decision that will require input from all members of the Lab community, according to Assistant Director Carla Ellis.

Dr. Ellis and Interim Director David Magill will be reaching out to parents, students, faculty and administrators to join a team dedicated to exploring the possibility of a later start time. These team members will work with representatives from Challenge Success, an organization that helps schools and families implement policies in school curriculum and schedule.

While a later start time is a new idea in the high school, Dr. Ellis said that altering the schedule has been a constant point of conversation at Lab.

"For a few years now, there have been members of the Lab community who have asked about a later start time because the research shows that adolescents need more sleep," Dr. Ellis said. "One way to do that is to have a later starting time and so that's

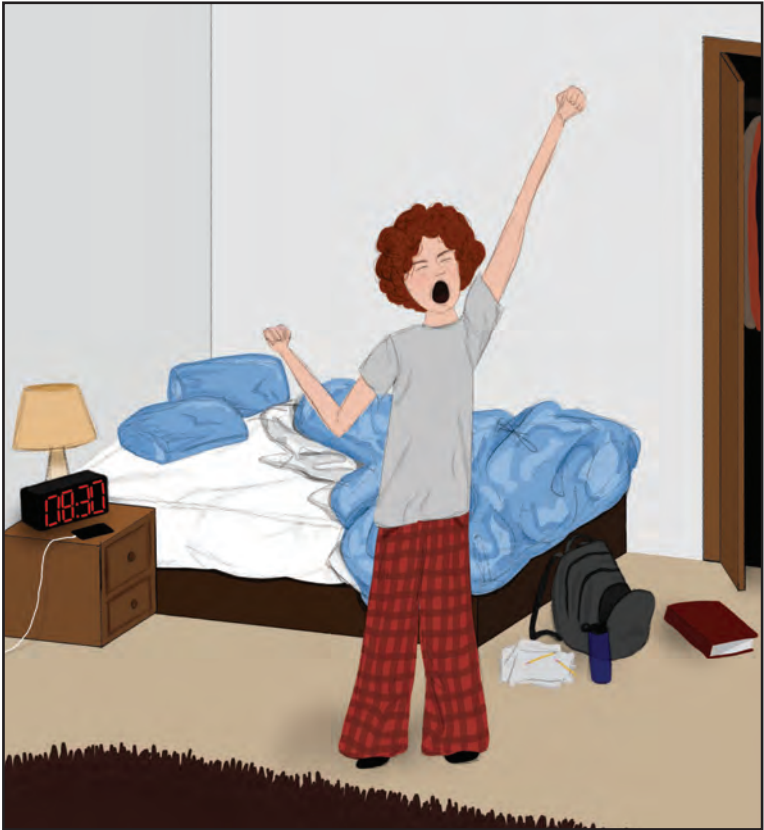
what prompted this."

The initial process of gathering information will continue through the first semester of next school year, according to Dr. Ellis. The plan is for Challenge Success and the advisory teams to recommend the next steps after the first semester.

"As I understand it, they'll talk to people, of course. They'll look at things like transportation schedules. They'll look at athletic schedules. They'll look at state requirements for instructional minutes — in addition to gathering information from students, families, faculty and staff," Dr. Ellis said.

Ninth grader Connor Booth, who lives about 45 minutes away from Lab, said he would appreciate having extra time to sleep with a later start time. However, being on the debate and baseball teams, Connor said pushing the school day back could cause him to get home later.

"A lot of times, I'm getting home sometime around 7 to 8," Connor said. "If school is pushed back later I'd probably be getting home later than that, which would definitely affect my ability to do work on a normal day."



MIDWAY ILLUSTRATION BY ALINA SUSANI

BRIGHT AND EARLY. From May through the first semester of the 2021-22 school year, members of the Lab community will work with Challenge Success to consider a later school start time.

To maintain equity, teachers go extra mile

Teachers work to include students in class, online

by NICKY EDWARDS-LEVIN
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

When hybrid learning was announced in January, math teacher Julia Maguire began to brainstorm how to give in-person and remote students the best possible experience. Her solution: individually drive to each remote student's home and drop off class materials for hands-on statistics labs.

"It's not the same as being able to do work in a small group, but I felt like it was a way for them to feel like they were still doing the stuff that I felt was important to the course," Ms. Maguire said.

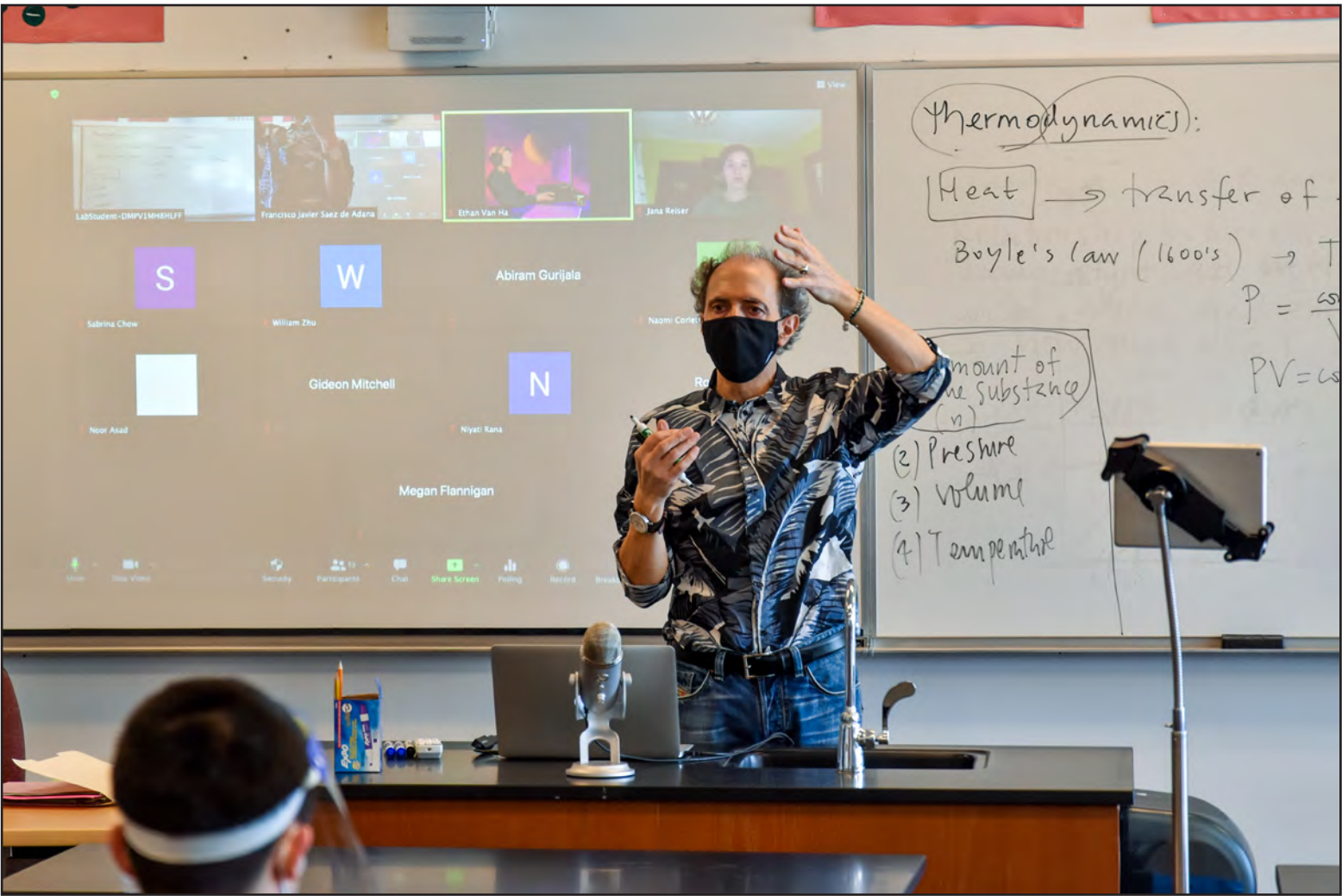
Despite extraordinary efforts, after more than a month of the hybrid program, teachers are finding it extremely difficult to maintain equity between in-person and distance learning students in class.

Efforts to engage both in-person and distance learning students have drastically increased the workload for teachers. Art teacher Sunny Neater said she is essentially creating two lesson plans for each class period.

"Every day, I'm trying to come up with something that will be interesting and engaging and relevant that students are able to do at home that's still tied into the bigger picture of our lesson," Ms. Neater said, "and for students who are in person, what elements of that lesson can we use materials for, that we really only have access to here at school."

Ms. Maguire said that in order to allow remote students to not feel totally left out, she has to curb her instincts to work directly with students.

"The natural thing about teaching is you walk around the room, you look at work, you give immediate feedback," Ms. Maguire said. "That is something I'm still struggling with, because you get in front of students, and you walk around, and you talk to them, and you interact with them, and then all of a sudden you remember, maybe don't walk away from your computer."



MIDWAY PHOTO BY ELLIOTT TAYLOR

BRIDGING THE GAP. Science teacher Francisco Javier Saez teaches to a mix of in-person and virtual students. "By protecting the Zoomers I'm having the video though the iPad, that has the video so you can see what I'm writing on the board," Mr. Saez said.

Ms. Maguire said. "That is something I'm still struggling with, because you get in front of students, and you walk around, and you talk to them, and you interact with them, and then all of a sudden you remember, maybe don't walk away from your computer."

Brian Wildeman teaches Art History, a standard lecture- and discussion-style course. He said he needs put in extra work to make sure his students on distance

learning are engaged in class discussions,

"The people that are in the room are more engaged in discussions than they were when it was fully remote, so that's been good because I actually have slightly more people talking," Mr. Wildeman said, "but the ones that are remote that don't talk as much are able to just sort of not talk as much."

English teacher Maja Teref taught remotely for the first five weeks of hybrid learning. She said

that the differences between distance learning and in-person students was noticeable, even when she taught at home.

"I was conferencing with an in-person student in a breakout room, and I could hear the other students talk in the classroom, and it just made me so happy," Ms. Teref said. "Were they working on their essay that whole time? Maybe not, but they wanted to communicate with each other, and they were able to."

As a remote teacher, Ms. Teref hoped she could make her distance learning students feel that they were getting an equal experience.

"Having been remote, going in person I'll be much more aware of that side of it," Ms. Teref said. "I know it's so easy to be intoxicated by people when you're in the room, but it's really very much on my mind, you know, to strike a balance between the two student groups."

BRAVE conference to be May 12

by CLARE O'CONNOR
REPORTER

Students can sign up for this year's Becoming Racially Aware and Valuing Ethnicity conference that will take place on May 12 through Zoom.

The BRAVE conference is a full day focused on exploring racial and ethnic identity through discussions, workshops and input from guest speakers. This year, the conference's theme is understanding and overcoming internalized and generational racism within ourselves, others and society.

In previous years, the conference had limited the number of attending students to facilitate more intimate discussions between speakers and students. However, this year, there is no student cap due to the online setting.

"The theme keeps becoming more relevant. Just looking at what's happened in the past few weeks, it's clear that there needs to be a conversation about this stuff," ninth grader Katie Williams said.

Katie is one of 13 students on the BRAVE committee who has worked to plan the conference this year. Katie said that she applied to join the planning committee this year because of her experience participating in the conference while she was in middle school.

"I'm always in awe that we have a group of students that can sit down, build their ideas and really put something together," Theodore Stripling, the BRAVE committee faculty adviser, said. "Their work gives the rest of the school a space to talk about these important things."



BRAVE WEBSITE

RACIAL AWARENESS. Attendees of the BRAVE conference will discuss topics including pop culture and recent news events.

Both Katie and Mr. Stripling emphasized that the conference centers around student conversation with the speakers and with each other.

"BRAVE isn't like any other diversity event that I've seen at the school," Katie said. "We really give students the power to learn stuff from each other and sort of learn from themselves. We are the ones impacted by racism in the hallways and the videos and news stories that pop up every week. I feel like we deserve to talk about that and be part of the work to make some progress."

Mr. Stripling said that the student committee is uniquely able to select topics and speakers that are specifically important to stu-

dents. This year's topics will include Generation Z pop culture in workshops such as "The Problem With 'Hot Cheeto Girls'" and recent events in workshops such as "Race, The Election, and The Insurrection" and "Homophobia and Transphobia Within Communities of Color."

While the topics discussed in the conference more directly impact students of color, the committee encourages all students to participate.

"It's a great space to talk and dialogue and listen to perspectives that you don't have access to," Mr. Stripling said. "Issues of race and identity impact a lot of people in our community, so even if you don't personally struggle with race, it is important to be educated."

Families unite around anti-racist advocacy

by WILLIAM TAN
REPORTER

With over 140 families from both the Laboratory Schools and Hyde Park, the new group Families for Antiracism is dedicated to creating an inclusive community where families can come together and advocate for anti-racism.

"We hope to build a strong coalition with the affinity groups that are at the Lab School, the parent, student and educator affinity groups, to really have this united front around anti-racism and thinking critically about how we can contribute to make things at Lab even better than they are now," Bonnie Kang, Lab parent and member of the group, said.

The group has already held two open forum meetings in the winter, and members are using the feedback to refine future discussions and ways to connect.

For instance, many families wanted spaces for dialogue, so members of FAR are looking to hold lunchtime or evening chats or book discussions on literature related to racial issues.

"We have a group of families who are interested in holding the Lab School accountable for the diversity action plan that they've put together. That's really beautiful," said Sam Ozik, Lab parent and founding member of the group.

FAR is also engaging in protest. Members staged a sit-in after the death of Adam Toledo, a 13-year-old Little Village boy shot by police March 29.

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— BONNIE KANG

Others are involved with the Monday marches on the Midway, protests organized by Lab art teacher Allison Beaulieu to get the Lab community involved in fighting for their rights. The marches begin every Monday at 3:30 p.m. at the corner of 60th Street and Stony Island Avenue.

"As FAR members, we want to be supportive of [the Monday marches], and we've been out with her. It's basically a walk along the Midway and all the way back," said Ms. Ozik.

As FAR moves forward in planning for bigger and more inclusive events, it hopes to encourage more Lab families to join its cause.

Ms. Ozik said, "We'd love to have as many families involved as possible... we want families to feel they can be active and join a planning committee to help us do something really big and exciting."

Science lab activities build understanding

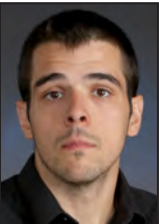
Teachers stress the importance of lab experiences

by **BERK OTO**
MANAGING EDITOR

After a year of distance learning with few laboratory experiences in science classes, science teachers say that such experiences are too valuable to eliminate permanently, even as returning to the double-period arrangement restricts the schedule for some students.

Because of the double period, students typically must devote a quarter of their schedule to science during their first two years of high school to satisfy U-High's graduation requirements.

Chemistry teacher Zachary Hund argues that lab experiences are necessary for students to fully understand abstract concepts.



Zachary Hund

"To do science is to understand science, to understand science is to do science,"

Dr. Hund said. "When you're doing a lab and something goes wrong, that's where the learning happens. All of a sudden, the theoretical concepts you hear in class play out right in front of you, and you have to learn to confront that."

Biology teacher Elizabeth Hubin believes labs help prepare students for real-world situations both within and outside the sciences.

"It's important for students going into science to feel comfortable setting up and executing experiments," Dr. Hubin said, "and it's also important for all students to develop skills that are very important in all aspects of college — and life, like working with peers, being responsible, analytical thinking and contributing to a group."

According to Dr. Hubin, a double period is necessary to conduct many of the labs that represent the staples of her curriculum, especially in her AT Biology class.

"Many of the labs take multiple classes just because the labs themselves take time," she said. "If you're heating something in a beaker, you have to wait until it's



MIDWAY PHOTO BY ELLIOTT TAYLOR

LAB WORK. Juniors Edward Christensen and Eli Frank work on a double replacement reaction lab for chemistry class on April 6. The goal of the lab was to observe products precipitate out of solution after mixing certain compounds. Eli said, "It's a lot better than watching the video because you actually get to see if it has a reaction, and on a video it's really hard to tell."

ready. You can't leave it until the next day or next week because it'll cool down. Labs are live and active, so they take more of a time investment."

Junior Andrew Swinger, who has taken three lab-based science classes, also sees value in labs and is disappointed they weren't able to be included in the distance learning curriculum.

"Labs help with the whole experiential learning part," he said. "If there's something I don't understand in class, I can learn for myself in real time with help from the teacher when I need it. It's definitely something I miss from last year."

Because of the depth students get from U-High's lab-based science curriculum, college counselor Sharon Williams believes college admissions officers give U-High applications a stronger read.

Even though Ms. Williams believes colleges will largely ignore the 2020-21 pause in labs due to the circumstances of hybrid and distance learning, Dr. Hund believes many students missed out on an important part of the science curriculum this academic year.

"I'm not worried, but I am suspecting to see some students who move on to more advanced classes next year with a weaker foundational knowledge and less confidence," he said.

Although Andrew agrees that labs are an important part of the science curriculum, he sympathizes with concerns that the double period limits student choice.

"I get that a lot of people who don't want to spend a quarter of their schedule on science feel like they're forced to because of the necessary science credits and the social pressure to take a third lab

science," he said. "For some students, it doesn't feel worth it to take the science class they're interested in because they have to sacrifice a whole other period when they could take another arts or history class."

Ms. Williams encourages students to take the courses they are interested in rather than bending to social pressures among the student body.

"I hear about this pressure a lot, to take three years of lab sciences," she said. "It's true that a lot of schools recommend this, but it also depends on what you want to study. A student who likes the arts or social sciences is probably not going to apply for engineering at MIT. They can make their courses rigorous in the areas they're interested in and apply to the appropriate schools."

Andrew hopes that in the future, a middle road can be reached to

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— ANDREW SWINGER

provide students with the opportunity to take lab sciences without a double period.

He said, "I feel like that would reach everyone at their interest level. Students who want more in-depth knowledge can take the double period, and others who are less sure can still take a lab science without sacrificing their interests."

Beyond building competitively: Robotics team expands activities to volunteering, inspiring community



MIDWAY PHOTO PROVIDED BY ALP DEMIRTAS

FIT AND FUN. Following his character, junior Alp Demirtas plays RETRO-FIT, a game that fuses typical fitness challenges with adventure, on April 21. The game was one of the few to advance to the semifinals of the FIRST Global Innovation Challenge.

by **CAROLYN GAO**
REPORTER

With the competitive building season coming to a close, the robotics team has been focusing on outreach to inspire others and share their passion for STEM.

Some team members have been volunteering at Girls Who Code, an afterschool program offered at Lab, where they help mentor girls in grades 3-5. Teresa Serangeli, one of the organizers of GWC, reached out to the robotics team last year and offered the outreach opportunity.

A few people have continued to volunteer with GWC during the pandemic, including Lorelei Deakin, who helps out weekly. Lorelei, the team's creativity captain, said that previously activities had been largely based on setting up and showcasing a robot, but this year volunteering has been geared more toward helping the girls on personal projects.

The projects include designing quizzes to ask questions like "What kind of donut are you?" or programming games on Scratch, an online tool for coding.

According to Lorelei, who learned code like Javascript and Python early on, her passion for robotics has inspired her to keep volunteering.

"It's so nice being able to share something that you personally love, with especially kids, who also love that thing, and maybe get them interested in coding in the future," Lorelei said.

The team also directed the 3D Modeling workshop for ArtsFest, where participants used the Tinkercad to make blueprints.

According to Alp Demirtas, captain of team Cache Money, the team had started without much prior knowledge on the topic and had to figure out how to make the workshop a success.

Design captain Sharyq Siddiqi made around 20 YouTube videos to help teach the team after learning the material himself.

The team also hopes to work with outside organizations or places, such as local senior homes, hospitals, and educational programs to spread their passion for robotics and give back.

"We're looking to really branch

"We're looking to really branch our outreach to the community and make an impact in the school, UChicago, and give back to those who have provided."

— ALP DEMIRTAS

our outreach to the community and make an impact in the school, UChicago, and give back to those who have provided," Alp said.

They are planning on working with Metrosquash, a program aimed to help Chicago students in need with a combination of academics and squash.

Both Lorelei and Alp each emphasized the importance of sharing their knowledge and love for robotics and other STEM areas with those around them as a way of showing gratitude for its impact on their lives.

"[Outreach is] something that's really important to us," Alp said, "and honestly it's the best thing we can do to give back to the community."

English teacher brings translation passion

Maja Teref now advises literary translation club

by CAROLINE HOHNER
ARTS CO-EDITOR

Only about an estimated 3% of world language literature gets translated into English: a number well-known in literary translation circles as the “three percent problem.”

Students of English teacher Maja Teref, a longtime literary translator, may recognize this statistic and recall how her eyes light up with excitement as she incorporates the disparity into her hard sell on why they should begin translating.

Through her work in and outside of Lab, Ms. Teref is working to broaden the field of literary translation by sharing the passion for translation she found as a student with her own students.

Ms. Teref was first introduced to translation in the former Yugoslavia as part of her coursework majoring in Language and Literature in high school. But her first real experience in translation came after majoring in English in college. Ms. Teref worked as a translator in the English department at Radio Yugoslavia, where she also DJed her own music show in English.

On coming to the United States to do her graduate work in Applied Linguistics at the University of Illinois at Chicago, Ms. Teref met Steven Teref, a poet, linguist and editor who would become her husband. The two soon began translating poetry from BSC (Bosnian Serbian Croatian) together.

The duo's work soon began to draw attention. Their second project, a collection of translated works by Serbian poet Ana Ristović titled “Directions for Use,” may be familiar to students who have taken Literary Analysis.

Although some of Ms. Teref's colleagues initially expressed con-



MIDWAY PHOTO BY MALCOLM TAYLOR

ENGLISH EXTRAORDINAIRE. Gesturing to her English 2 class on April 30, Maja Teref explains symbolism in “The Great Gatsby.” Ms. Teref works as a literary translator with her husband and advises U-High's literary translation journal, Ouroboros Review.

cerns over Ristović's writings portraying outdated feminism, one poem in particular, “Snow in Your Shoes,” started drawing attention to the collection.

“We were about to abandon the project when ‘Snow in Your Shoes’

was picked up by The New Yorker,” Ms. Teref said. “And then our other translations of her work were shortlisted for the National Book Circle Award and some other big awards. I mean, we really hit it big with her.”

On arriving at Lab four years ago, Ms. Teref was surprised to find a hole in the curriculum: the school had few opportunities for students to discover literary translation.

“We're a STEM school, but we need our students to be more well-rounded, right? So you cannot be a one-trick pony,” Ms. Teref said. “You need to develop your mind in all kinds of different ways.”

Ms. Teref decided to change that. She founded Ouroboros Review, a student-run literary translation journal named after the endless cycle of translating and revising. The first edition of Ouroboros Review included nearly 100 translations from a wide range of students.

According to Ms. Teref, the members of the Ouroboros Review even continued pursuing literary translation this past summer, meeting weekly on a consistent basis.

Over the past year, Ms. Teref and the Ouroboros Review team have been working hard, aided by the University of Chicago's new literary translation department, to put out the second issue, which is set to publish in May.

“The students who are part of the club are learning so much about word choices through translation, how to play with language, how to express themselves,” Ms. Teref said.

Guided by her considerable experience in the field, Ms. Teref mentors the next generation of literary translators working on the review.

“She is really supportive and [is] really pushing us to be the best we can be and making sure that we stay on task,” said junior Penelope Huang, co-editor-in-chief of Ouroboros Review.

Even with teaching, advising the review and living through a pandemic, Ms. Teref still dedicates time to her personal translating endeavors. She and her husband are currently translating the works

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— MAJA TEREF

of 20th century Yugoslav writer Branko Ve Poljanski, which mimic the stylings of German philosophers while mocking the financial system of his country.

While her current project comes with unique difficulties, given that it was printed with descending page numbers and on invoice papers, Ms. Teref said that one of the most common challenges faced by literary translators is working with the poets themselves.

“Some of them, you know, have their own ideas about how to translate, how translation should happen, and some of them believe it should be very literal,” Ms. Teref said.

Literary translation goes beyond direct translation. As Ms. Teref explained, part of the joy is self-exploration through decisions made on how to translate a word or phrase, like how one word could be translated as cicada, locust or grasshopper, and each choice would hold a different meaning.

“By translating and making all these choices to cicada versus locusts versus grasshopper, you're actually opening yourself up, because the choices that you make are very your own choices,” Ms. Teref said. “See, right, they come from you. And there is a reason as to why you make those choices that say something about you.”

According to Ms. Teref, translators gain insights beyond just that of introspection — there is a much deeper benefit.

“Every subsequent translation offers something new about not just the translator, but the world that we live in.”

Modern female music icons empower in unique way

Despite controversial music, stars inspire young women to speak out

by LUCIA KOURI
CITY LIFE CO-EDITOR

In mid-March, millions of people watched Megan Thee Stallion and Cardi B dominate a stage struck by flashing lights and lined with background dancers as they performed their song “WAP” at the 2021 Grammy Awards, leaving some fans cheering and singing along from their homes, others staring in awe at the intense choreography, and some, no-doubt, shaking their heads in disapproval.

Mixed feelings have long accompanied the work of female rap artists like Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion, known for openly and explicitly speaking about their sexuality. The effects of these artists' music have been felt not only within the bounds of the music industry, but also in crowds of younger generations across the country, leading many females, even in our own school, to reflect on the ever-evolving expectations of women in modern society.

Recent criticism of Megan Thee Stallion and Cardi B's work — particularly for their song “WAP” — is indicative of something deeper than the explicit content of the song itself, according to junior Kennedy Bickham. As Kennedy puts it, explicit lyrics have long been a part of what defines rap,

and given that idolized artists in these genres are overwhelmingly male, criticism of these female artists cannot reasonably be separated from gender.

“Our generation has been growing up hearing a lot of explicit songs from men talking about women's bodies, so I think that it's not a concept that is foreign to us,” Kennedy said. “It's just that people don't expect women to actually speak up and to say those same things that male artists have been saying about them.”

Senior Alexandra Nehme has also noticed a double standard when it comes to female rap artists, one that stems from the long-lived normalization of explicit language with male artists.

“There seems to be a lot more general controversy surrounding some of these songs than I've ever seen when male rappers talk about females and their bodies in a similar way,” Alexandra said, “Almost seems to be more of a casual norm.”

According to sophomore Lauren Tapper, it's important that mainstream media have space for these public figures to exist, for reasons that go beyond just the music itself.

“I definitely respect and look up to artists who are paving the way

for women in the music industry and reclaiming women's bodies and sexuality,” Lauren said. “Especially after so many years of men sexualizing us for their own profit.”

While Alexandra hasn't seen a direct impact of their music on herself and peers, she feels that having figures like Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion in the public eye could lead to long-term shifts in thinking.

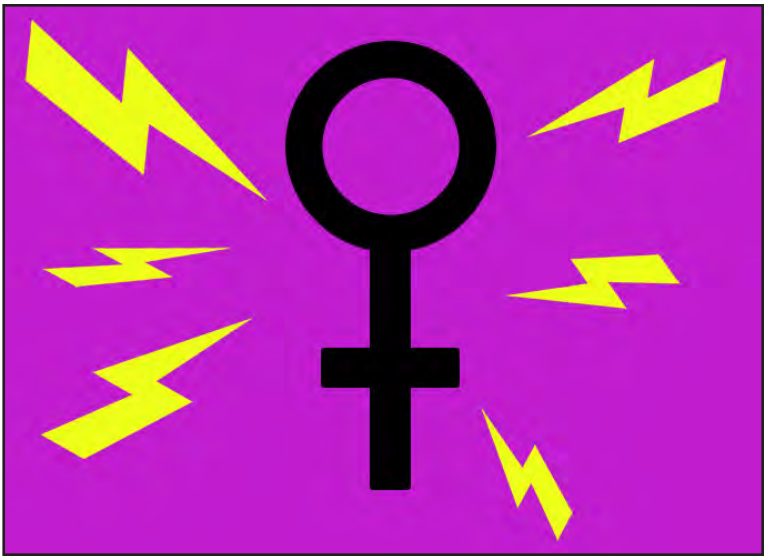
“I'm not sure what the widespread impact in our generation would be yet,” Alexandra said, “but I think that even just the controversy surrounding the songs might cause more people to question this double standard.”

While Kennedy believes promotion of this music could lead younger women to feel more empowered, it isn't always this simple.

“I feel like they're the female rappers of our generation, but at the same time — it's not ours exactly,” Kennedy said.

According to Kennedy, this music is being consumed primarily by young people that are still in their formative years, and is often interpreted in ways that defeat the original purpose of the music, perpetuating pre-existing shame surrounding female sexuality instead of lifting women up.

“Depending on how they grew up and their values, they might feel like, ‘Oh, you know, I'm not supposed to talk about that’ or they might just be, like, shamed in



MIDWAY ILLUSTRATION BY NICKY EDWARDS-LEVIN

GIRL POWER. Fans of artists like Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion have called their music empowering and uplifting. Critics have labeled the music as overly sexually graphic and explicit.

general because there's still a lot of misogyny going on in our world,” Kennedy said.

Kennedy has noticed that deeper, less identifiable biases reveal themselves through the younger generation's reaction to songs like “WAP” as many find its explicit lyrics embarrassing, or end up delegitimizing the artists themselves.

“With Megan, they mostly are not fans of her music, exactly, but are fans of her body and her look,” Kennedy said. “I just think that they think it's a joke. Honestly, I think that they're like, ‘Oh, this

is like female power, right?’ I just don't think it's taken seriously at all.”

While controversy surrounding these female artists will likely not go away any time soon, Lauren says their music is still having a positive impact on many women, and this fact alone indicates potential for long-term change surrounding perception of female sexuality.

“I truly think it's inspiring a lot of young women,” Lauren said, “to love and embrace their bodies and sexuality.”

Marvel-ous Museum

Marvel comics exhibit shares super history of publishing giant

by AMY REN
REPORTER

Crisp but age-yellowed comics, gently lit by warm lights, hang on the walls of a darkened hallway. At the end is a statue of a superhero, and behind it lurks a costume-covered mannequin.

“Marvel: Universe of Super Heroes” is the Museum of Science and Industry’s new exhibit that delves into the history and making of the Marvel comics and movies, as well various facts about critical artists and superheroes.

Tickets must be purchased in advance, and as of April 18, they are sold out until June. The two-part exhibit closes Oct. 24.

Guests must pay an additional fee for the exhibit alongside cost of entrance to the museum: \$18 for adults, \$14 for kids and \$9 for members. The exhibit is sold out through July, but tickets are available through the end of the exhibit.

With original comic book pages, sculptures and many hands-on displays, the interactive exhibit is suitable for all ages. Costumes and props from Marvel’s popular films accompany posters and displays about the origins and histories of iconic characters. Guests can explore how they evolved alongside society over more than 80 years to find their place in modern pop culture.

Scattered conveniently throughout the exhibit are digital displays for users to further explore with well-chosen videos and images. These displays vary in topic depending on the section of the exhibit, ranging from time-lapses of creators inking comics to profiles on superheroes.

Legendary comic book creators like Stan Lee, Jack Kirby and Steve Ditko are honored, and the exhibit also looks at how Marvel has been influenced by and responded to historical events and addressed



social issues like gender, race, religion and disability.

MSI has ensured that visiting the Marvel exhibit is fairly safe. Guests are encouraged to not linger after they are done looking at a part of the exhibit, but sometimes it is not possible to stay the recommended 6 feet apart. However, the design of the exhibit facilitates people to go through it in a linear fashion and

not double back.

Due to coronavirus restrictions, the daily capacity of the museum is reduced, and all guests, including members, must reserve timed-entry tickets online to enter. Spread throughout the museum are posters reminding to social distance from those not in your group and stations with hand sanitizer. Masks are required, regard-

less of vaccination status, and the MSI provides disposable styluses to allow guests to interact safely with screens and buttons.

Parts of the regular museum are open or modified. The Brain Food Court is open and vending machines are available, but food can only be consumed in designated eating areas. Some exhibits and experiences have been modified



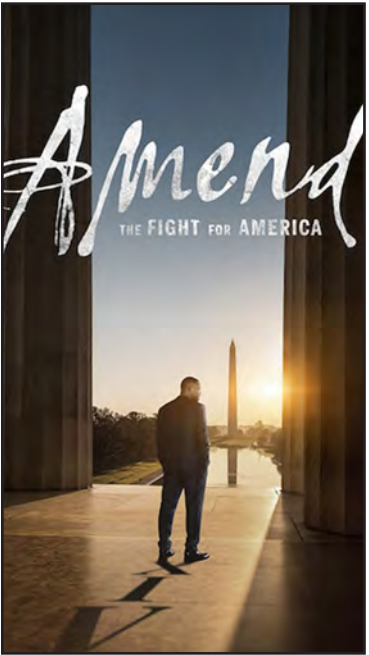
MIDWAY PHOTOS BY AMY REN

KEEP IT SAFE. A sign asks museum guests to interact with the exhibit as usual, but to use styluses rather than bare hands. Since its fall re-opening, MSI has taken measures against the spread of COVID-19, like limiting capacity to under 25% of the museum’s total capacity and requiring face coverings.

HANGING OUT. A model of Marvel’s classic character Spider-man hangs from the ceiling of the Museum of Science and Industry’s “Marvel: Universe of Super Heroes” exhibit. Along with colorful sculptures, the exhibit also features original props, costumes and comic book pages as well as interactive displays.

to encourage physical distancing, increase movement and reduce contact among viewers. A few experiences where these measures are not easily enforced are currently closed.

“Marvel: Universe of Super Heroes” is an enjoyable exhibit for people of all ages, regardless of how much knowledge they have about Marvel and comics.



A FIGHT FOR CHANGE. Will Smith hosts the new Netflix docuseries “Amend: The Fight for America” in a captivating display of American lives touched by the 14th amendment, supported by an in-depth re-telling of the history of the fight for civil liberties.

Netflix series examines 14th Amendment

Will Smith stars in new historical series on fight for civil liberties

by RYAN CLARK
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Today’s civil liberties concerning abortion, same-sex marriage, citizenship and due process have all been determined in no small part by the 14th Amendment — but when was the last time you even thought about it?

The new Netflix docuseries, “Amend: The Fight for America,” presents the history of the 14th Amendment (which guarantees citizenship, equal protection, and due process) in six hourlong episodes and makes a case for the amendment’s importance to the protection of civil liberties. While a closer look at the understanding of the 14th Amendment in a legal context might have improved the show, it excels at telling the stories of how Americans fought for their rights and relied on the courts and

the Constitution to do so.

With Will Smith as the show’s host, each episode examines a different facet of the amendment’s application to issues like marriage and citizenship. The series intersperses interviews from experts and eyewitnesses, Ken Burns-style closeups of archival materials, brief animations and monologues of historical figures’ key speeches. Instead of a single narrator reading text from speeches and letters, contemporary actors like Mahershala Ali and Yara Shahidi deliver them in the style of a monologue on a soundstage.

While other historical documentary series can suffer from slow-pacing or general superficiality, “Amend” avoids both of these defects. It keeps experts’ commentary the focus while cycling through images and monologues that root the viewer in context. The commentators’ attention to the complicated nature of history shines through in its first episode, which details how the 14th Amendment was ratified after the Civil War, when they consider how penal labor and counter-reforms

“Not only does ‘Amend’ persuasively illustrate why the Constitution is so important to civil liberties, it more importantly shows the need for ordinary citizens to fight for and defend those rights.”

undid progress made against chattel slavery.

The real focus of “Amend” is on the human stories that intersect the 14th Amendment. In one scene, the viewer watches a modern-day descendant of Roger B. Taney apologize to a descendent of Dred Scott, in an amazing moment of reconciliation that also displays the show’s vigorous idealism. But the emotional climax comes during the fifth episode, which recounts the history leading up to the decision that legalized same-sex marriage, Obergefell v. Hodges. The plaintiff, James Obergefell, tells of his effort to marry John Arthur, his eventu-

al husband who was dying of ALS. After Mr. Arthur died, Mr. Obergefell dedicated himself to making same-sex marriage a civil liberty, and he succeeded in 2015.

However, the emphasis on historical events and narratives supplants the fact that the 14th Amendment is fundamentally a piece of law. While it acknowledges the debates over the scope of the amendment, it never takes them seriously. How are judges able to find support for new rights over time in the same document? Were these rights always present in the amendment, or are courts empowered to reinterpret law based on the state of the current-day society?

These fundamental questions are not considered, but “Amend” nonetheless succeeds with its excellent pacing, historical depth and showcasing of inspirational and often heartbreaking stories. Not only does “Amend” persuasively illustrate why the Constitution is so important to civil liberties, it more importantly shows the need for ordinary citizens to fight for and defend those rights.

Calm, comfort, community:

Adults and students discover music of different eras

by CLARE O’CONNOR
REPORTER

English teacher Rachel Nielsen greets her class with music — sometimes overly loud music — streaming out through the Zoom. While some students roll their eyes, many nod their heads or mouth a few lyrics in a rare moment of group unity.

A year ago, students would file into decorated classrooms, talking among themselves while sitting down for the period. Now, though, distance learning classes typically start with a teacher giving a few reminders for everyone to turn on their cameras. There’s a silent stretch when teachers click buttons to share their screen while students fix their hair in their cameras or simply stare blankly at their screens — all with a red dash cutting through their microphone icon.

Efforts from Ms. Nielsen and other teachers are helping to form a sense of classroom culture and community through sharing music instead of relying on the connectors that come naturally while learning in person.

In person, teachers have some control over the environment they want to create for their students. Many Laboratory Schools classrooms have posters on the walls or particular desk setups meant to guide students toward the intended feel of the class.

“I think a physical space is important. What I put on my walls sets the tone for the culture of my class,” Ms. Nielsen said. “Because we’re online, I’ve lost so much of that ability to build a classroom environment.”

One way Ms. Nielsen has worked to regain that sense of a “classroom” is by playing music as students join the Zoom meeting and start to turn on their cameras.

Deborah Ribbens, a P.E. teacher, also works to energize students and to create a sense of community.

“I asked my students for song suggestions and made a playlist that I stream while we do our workouts. It’s a lot of upbeat songs

“It’s crazy to hear my students listening to the same music I did when I was still in school. I talk to them a little about their songs.”

— DEBORAH RIBBENS

that I know make me feel energized,” Ms. Ribbens said. “It’s also nice to learn about my students through talking about music. A teacher-student connection is harder now, so it’s really nice.”

Both Ms. Ribbens and Ms. Nielsen remarked that some of their students suggest songs that the teachers remember from when they were younger. Ms. Ribbens said she was surprised yet happy by this musical connection with her students. Students agree that music is a welcome addition to distance learning.

“I think music is totally a way to bring people together,” sophomore Charlie Benton said. “It’s something personal but social, and it works really well online.”

Ms. Nielsen has also included music into her curriculum. She said music is helpful in exploring topics she explores in her English I class. Ms. Nielsen assigned her students to explore music that mimicked the feel or themes of the Odyssey. Her Odyssey playlist includes songs such as “A Sort Of Homecoming by U2,” “Rock And A Hard Place by The Rolling Stones” and “Come Sail Away by Styx.”

“Seeing how different people interpret the book musically is so interesting to me,” Ms. Nielsen said. “I recognize songs and can completely see why the student suggested them. It really helps me learn about some of my students.”

Music is a powerful medium for teachers to communicate and connect with their students during a time of separation.

“When I see people bobbing their head to a song at the start of class or have a student mention the music in office hours,” Ms. Nielsen said, “it makes me feel like I still have some of that connection



MIDWAY PHOTO BY ANDREW BURKE-STEVENSON

MUSIC WITH A PURPOSE. Music is a powerful medium for teachers to communicate and connect with their students during a time of separation.

and culture from before all of this.”

In December, Spotify released “2020 Wrapped,” a list of the most listened-to songs of 2020, and declared the 1980s as the most “thrown-back-to decade” of the 2020 listening year. Additionally, music-streaming services saw a spike of decade-themed playlists created in March 2020.

Within the Laboratory Schools community, students’ appreciation of older music is bringing together teachers, students and parents during a time of division.

Many teachers used this trend when making class playlists toward the beginning of the 2020-21 school year.

Ms. Ribbens includes songs by John Lennon, Michael Jackson, the Back Eyed Peas, Christina Aguilera, The Beatles and B.B. King alongside more modern picks like Beyoncé and Justin Timberlake.

“It’s crazy to hear my students

listening to the same music I did when I was still in school,” Ms. Ribbens said. “It’s really cool to me that I can connect with my students in this honestly unexpected way.”

Lab students stuck at home are also learning about new music from their parents.

“I listen to a lot of old jazz now,” Charlie said. “My friend Audrey and I collect vinyl records, you know, the big circle ones? We go record hunting online together. It’s just a really fun thing to do.”

Charlie shares his record player with his siblings and parents who have been social distancing together since the spread of COVID-19. Charlie’s dad uses a record player to listen to some old jazz records. Charlie found his dad’s music relaxing and has started listening to jazz on his own, learning more about the style.

“I got really into it and now I’ve

found some of these old songs on Spotify, too, so I add them to playlists and stuff,” Charlie said.

Ultimately, students say that older music brings a sense of calm, comfort and community in the stressful present.

“Because everyone is so isolated all the time, we all just feel so lonely, it sounds cheesy, but music makes me feel less alone,” Charlie said. “Having that connection with my dad or with my friends is really important, and music is a good way to get that.”

“I think old music reminds me of when I was younger and things seemed a lot simpler,” Ms. Nielsen said. “Weirdly, it kind of has the same effect on people that never lived through the ’80s or ’90s. I think younger people now still feel that calm, whether it’s from the media, or parents or just the sound that used to be popular.”

First published on March 4, 2021.

‘Nomadland’ shows an earnest view of nomadic life



PHOTO SOURCE: WE ARE MOVIE GEEKS

LIFE FROM A VAN. “Nomadland” reminds people there is no single way of life. Frances McDormand plays Fern, who represents the forgotten stories of the nomadic people of the United States.

by ANNGO
ASSISTANT EDITOR

“I’m not homeless, I’m just houseless,” a woman says to a teenager she knows. She’s just gotten off of her shift at an Amazon warehouse and is hanging out in a sporting goods store. After the encounter with the teenager’s family, who offers her to stay with them, she retires to her van, which she calls Vanguard.

Though “Nomadland” is considered a drama/western film, it functions almost as a documentary by weaving a fictional character into the stories of real people. “Nomadland” isn’t explicitly political but uses intimacy to give audiences an earnest look into living in the post-recession America of the 2010s. The movie, which was awarded Golden Globes for best drama and best direction of a motion picture, can be streamed on Hulu.

“Nomadland” follows Fern, a widow who lived with her husband in Empire, Nevada, where they worked for U.S. Gypsum, but after the plant was shut down, the town emptied along with it. The movie tells the story of how she leaves the town she loved after the death of her husband to travel the country in her van.

Based on the non-fiction book “Nomadland” by journalist Jessica Bruder, the film was adapted by director Chloé Zhao and integrates Fern, a fictional character who

functions as a vehicle, giving us looks into the stories of the non-fictional characters from Bruder’s book.

Nearly all the characters but Fern (Frances McDormand) are people playing themselves.

Like Fern, the nomads have experienced loss and are trying to cope.

Fern’s friend Linda May, whom she met working at Amazon, tried to convince her to meet her at Rubber Tramp Rendezvous, a group of nomads teaching each other how to live on the road. Fern was unable to find another job in the town and decided to drive down to the Arizona desert to the nomads. Sitting around the campfire, the nomads share their stories of loss and healing.

“He told me before he died, ‘Just don’t waste any time, Merle. Don’t waste any time.’ So I retired as soon as I could,” a woman said about her coworker on the cusp of retirement who died from liver failure, never having been able to use the sailboat waiting for him in his driveway. “I didn’t want my sailboat to be in the driveway when I died. So, yeah, and it’s not. My sailboat’s out here in the desert.”

Yet this freedom isn’t as vast as the stunning scenes of the American wilderness Ms. Zhou captures. The nomads still live under the constraints of modern-day society.

When Fern’s van breaks down and needs repairs, she is told it would be best for her to

Oscar Winning:

“**Nomadland**” was nominated for six Academy Awards: best picture, best actress, best director, best adapted screenplay, best cinematography and best film editing. It won best picture, best actress and best director.

Directors Cut: Chloé Zhao became the first woman of color and second woman to win an Academy Award for directing.

sell it. She tells the mechanics she can’t sell the van as it’s her home. Because she can’t afford to repair it, she goes to stay with her sister and has to borrow money for the repairs. This is the first we hear of her sister, who lives a settled life with a husband. Zhao shows throughout the movie how Fern and the nomads are still tethered to society.

“Nomadland” is an honest and beautiful look into the lives of Americans who are looking for an alternative way of living. Zhao highlights the stories of people who are actively trying to make the most of their lives and redefining what it means to live.

“It’s like my dad used to say, ‘What’s remembered lives.’ I maybe spent too much of my life just remembering,” Fern said, quoting her dead father.

“Nomadland” pushes the audience to question the way they spend their lives.

First published on March 8, 2021.

Canvas activism: Alumna bridges gap between Black and Asian American communities

by ANNGO
ASSISTANT EDITOR

As the head designer of Leaders 1354, a Chicago-based sneaker shop, Ms. Ma is using her platform to bridging the gap between Chicago's Asian American and Black communities through streetwear and art.

First established in 2002 in Hyde Park, Leaders 1354 has moved to a storefront in the West Loop. The Chicago streetwear brand has collaborated with Adidas, Billionaire Boys Club, and the Chicago Blackhawks since Ms. Ma started 2016 in her senior year at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

"Leaders was one of the first streetwear brands in Chicago..." Ms. Ma said. "And that started everything."

Leaders 1354 has built a community by teaching business and soft skills to developing artists and entrepreneurs Ms. Ma said.

"All the Chicago youth that you know of have either worked in Leaders or had some kind of affiliation," Ms. Ma said. "Leaders gave all these guys the confidence to do what they want, and it's like a learning place."

The brand recently collaborated with GoodKids MadCity, a group of young activists led by Black and brown youth from the South and West sides of Chicago. The group is calling for an end to violence in the city through increasing community resources instead of policing.

"We thought that GoodKids MadCity, they represent the leaders of the youth," Ms. Ma said. "They've done so much work within the city, and we also want to give back to the community, because that's part of what Leaders does."

Streetwear is a canvas for activism, Ms. Ma said.

"I like how it is rebellious — in terms of fashion, and I guess art," Ms. Ma said. "There's this idea of high fashion — only the elites can wear it, can utilize it — but the idea

of streetwear is supposed to be affordable, is supposed to be for the people."

Ms. Ma sees streetwear as a platform where fashion, art and activism converge. The collaboration with GoodKids MadCity is an example of this intersection.

Ms. Ma wants to use streetwear to connect Asian and Black communities in Chicago, but knows that prejudice and language barriers are obstacles to that goal.

"I feel like there is a lot of, like, fear between the two communities," Ms. Ma said. "I want there to be more understanding."

She also believes the shared sentiment of struggle is something that has the power to bring understanding between people.

"We can relate to the Black community in terms of our struggle. You know, being mistreated but also having a deep-rooted cultural experience," Ms. Ma said.

Experience across the Asian and African diaspora is vast, but commonalities can be found in struggles to survive and adapt.

Ms. Ma was motivated by the lack of representation in mainstream culture to be a voice for the Asian community.

"In middle school I would always say to myself, 'I gotta make Asians look cool, we gotta, I gotta do something about this,'" she said.

Ms. Ma wanted to use her platform to give her parents a voice, and along with that the Asian community to foster understanding about an aspect of the Asian American experience.

Her father, a microbiologist at the University of Chicago, lived through the Great Chinese Famine. When schools began to reopen at the end of the Cultural Revolution, her father took the merit-based entrance examinations and gained acceptance to medical school.

After garnering success in Chi-



PHOTO PROVIDED BY EDDIE RIVERA (ON INSTAGRAM @ELSEROCKONE)

SHOWING OFF STREETWEAR. Lab alumna Ellen Ma shows off clothing from a Leaders 1354 collaboration with Adidas.

na, her father immigrated to Chicago in 1993, her mother following in 1994 with Ms. Ma's sister. None of them knew English.

"They didn't know anyone here," Ms. Ma said. "They literally started from zero. They came here with like \$1,000 — it's like the typical immigrant story. They always talk about that."

Ms. Ma said she wants to showcase the struggle that she and her family endured.

"What it takes to immigrate here, what my parents sacrificed, what they've been through," Ms. Ma said.

Stories of struggle like those of her parents are what Ms. Ma believes can connect marginalized communities that sometimes seem at odds.

"It's a very human connection. Struggle is very human. I feel like that connects people."

Despite only graduating from

U-High less than a decade ago, Ms. Ma has gained prominence and believes she's started making an impact as an Asian designer.

"I feel like just me being around the streetwear scene, the art scene, it's already made an impact," Ms. Ma said. "It's really cool to see that after people started to know my name, that activist groups in Chinatown are saying that they're following my lead."

First published on Feb. 26, 2021.

Show entertains, provokes political introspection

By CAROLINE HOHNER
ARTS CO-EDITOR

An army of muted portraits of old white men stares blankly out from the walls above the stage. Below, the animated features of actress and writer Heidi Schreck light a dim Broadway stage. Ms. Schreck dons a pastel yellow blazer and unwavering smile, armed with her teenage self's equally unwavering faith in the U.S. Constitution.

An engaging blend of comedy and reflection, "What the Constitution Means to Me" provides a good laugh and the tools for an informed re-evaluation of our founding document's role in modern politics at a time when we could all use some of both.

The set of "What the Constitution Means to Me" is a recreation of the American Legion hall in her hometown, where teenage Ms. Schreck would debate the intricacies and wonders of the Constitution. In the show, Ms. Schreck reenacts one such competition, frequently departing from her teenage ideals to discuss, through hilarious and poignant anecdotes, how her relationship with the document has developed.

"What the Constitution Means to Me" did not go unnoticed in awards circles. The show was a Tony Award nominee, along with Ms. Schreck herself, and Ms. Schreck was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. Audiences can now watch the show from home on Amazon Prime. The multi-camera recording offers a cinematic view of a 2019 stage performance, providing a clearer picture of the show than a live showing could lend.

Ms. Schreck's bright personality brings a much-needed balance to nearly two hours of heavy subject matter. Throughout the show, she weaves personal stories about the impacts of the Constitution with witty jokes about Patrick Swayze. As her teenage self, she is "psychotically polite," yet when she



PHOTO BY JOAN MARCUS

SCHREK STUNS. Heidi Schreck speaks to the audience during a 2019 performance of "What the Constitution Means to Me" on Broadway.

recounts her family's generational trauma, her voice fills with pain and passion.

Throughout the play, Ms. Schreck draws on a history of violence against the women in her family to analyze what is and what could be the role of a Constitution. Through a personal narrative, she highlights the historical failings of the Constitution to protect women from violence and explains the concept of negative rights: rights that prevent the government from harming people rather than obligating it to protect them.

In a heartbreaking moment, Ms. Shreck plays audio from the proceedings of Town of Castle Rock v. Gonzales, a 2005 Supreme Court case in which police failed to protect plaintiff Jessica Lenahan's children from her abusive husband, against whom she had filed a restraining order. The police refused to help even after she went to them right-

fully suspecting that her husband had abducted her children. In the audio, Justice Antonin Scalia can be heard debating, with harsh detachment from the case's humanity, the meaning of the word "shall."

It seemed unimaginable how anyone could get lost in the meaning of a word written 200 years ago when considering the livelihood of a woman who had lost so much. The court determined that the police had no obligation to save her children. Ms. Schreck's emotional connection to the case drives home her argument: a document based on what the government cannot do will never suffice to secure the rights of its people.

The show is not all monologue. Halfway through the show, Mike Iveson, the man who plays the American Legion member who lead Shreck's debates as a teenager, sheds his uniform and tough act to share

stories about his sexuality and his relationship with his father. The show ends with a debate between Ms. Schreck and Rosedely Ciprian, a 14-year-old debater, which culminates in a random audience member deciding who won the debate for or against — and with it the fate of the Constitution.

While Mr. Iveson's speech was amusing, it didn't fit with the rest of the show. Ms. Schreck initially brings him center-stage to read notecards on U.S. legislation on violence against women. What could have been a powerful moment linking a history of oppressive rulings to Town of Castle Rock v. Gonzales is lost during an awkward transition to stand-up.

The debate between Ms. Ciprian and Ms. Schreck, on the other hand, concluded the show effectively, leaving audiences with powerful examples of how to form their own views on the Constitution. Although it may sound clichéd, watching Ms. Ciprian debate made me excited for the current and future impact of the women of my generation. I couldn't help but grin as she clinched her argument for the creation of a new document, proclaiming herself "one of this generation's founding daughters."

The show's arrival to Amazon Prime came just at the right moment. Broadway audiences have been deprived of content and, with the death of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg and the recent confirmation of Justice Amy Coney Barrett in her place, the relationship between the court and the Constitution has never been more relevant.

With many of what should be basic human rights on the line due to originalist interpretations of the Constitution, a reevaluation of the document itself seems well overdue. "What the Constitution Means to Me" offers just this, along with a good laugh.

First published on Nov. 13, 2020.

Soccer team spirit stays strong

Soccer captain
Hunter Heyman
leads through
uncertain year

by **LUCIA KOURI**
CITYLIFE CO-EDITOR

In his first three years on the soccer team, senior Hunter Heyman had a playing experience not unlike what most U-High students would expect. At home games, crowds of parents and students gathered and cheered from the stands. At away games, players crammed into loud school buses.

Outside of games, team members spent time getting to know each other as more than just soccer players. This year, however, five months after the usual fall soccer season, Hunter found himself wearing a mask and playing in front of empty stands — no longer as just a player, but as the captain.

In a year unlike any before, Hunter has taken the lessons that he learned in past years to become a leader who prioritizes team chemistry even in the most isolated of times.

According to Hunter, what defined his early years playing for U-High were team dinners outside of games that allowed him to bond with older players.

“The whole team getting to eat together really bonded and created that family atmosphere that we strive to have on the team,” Hunter said. “That experience has kind of shaped me in terms of how I view my roles on the team as a senior, and then also just how I view the team in general.”

Heading into the season the soccer team had to work harder than usual to foster this sense of community. With limited time outside of practice, and with injured players, the team started the season off on the wrong foot.

“What coach always said before the games was that we had to have heart and we have to play as one,” Hunter said. “I think that was something that our team kind of struggled with a little bit.”

One factor that limited members’ ability to play with heart, Hunter said, was the fact that no spectators were allowed to watch the games from the bleachers.

“What coach always said before the games was that we had to have heart and we have to play as one.”

— HUNTER HEYMAN

Hunter said the players missed it. “I think the fans coming out is criminally underrated,” Hunter said. “The U-High chants every year and even just the school shouting up one player when they make a big tackle — that kind of excitement just coming from the fans is something that we really missed.”

The solution to this problem, Hunter said, required the team to find motivation from each other, rather than from external sources.

“One thing that we tried to do to support the team, especially these last two games, was our bench becoming our biggest fans and our teammates becoming our biggest fans,” Hunter said. “A kid goes into a tackle hard and you’ve got the whole bench riled up, and it’s exciting.”

According to Hunter, the team learning how to play with heart simultaneously taught them how to play as one.

“Team chemistry was kind of an issue coming into the season, but nearing the end, especially after spring break and after the second Latin game, I think we really kind of meshed as a team,” Hunter said.

Hunter’s skills as a captain also strengthened this team chemistry, according to senior teammate Julian Mondragon.

“I think the biggest quality of his that stood out, this season especially, is his passion for the game and for his teammates,” Julian said. “We always say that the soccer team is a family, and Hunter really brought that out in the team this year.”

Similarly, junior player Philip Kellermeier said Hunter is a very humble leader and that Hunter did a particularly good job at making new players feel included.

“We had a whole new team this year. He welcomed and supported many younger kids that may have been intimidated by high school soccer,” Philip said. “He would make these amazing saves that keep us hopeful of winning.”

As a captain, Hunter leads by ex-



MIDWAY PHOTO BY MIRIAM BLOOM

SOCCER SUBSISTS. Soccer captain Hunter Heyman practices on Jackman field March 3. The team struggled as coronavirus regulations restricted their schedule and left them without spectators.

ample, encouraging the team to find purpose in their playing.

“That was something I saw last year a lot from Miles Rochester,” Hunter said. “He wasn’t always the most talkative on the field, but he would just work all the time, and I was like, OK, if I can just be the

hardest worker on the field, that’s what everyone will see and everyone will respond to.”

Moving forward, Hunter believes his time on the team will stick with him, especially thinking back on such an unusual year.

“Coach [Josh] Potter tells us all

the time about his soccer team in college, and how they see each other all the time — how they take care of each other,” Hunter said. “Developing that social group — that close-knit connection — is something that I’m going to take away and plan to focus on later.”

Despite distance, online chess builds community

Chess unites
in-person,
online students

by **ANATHEA CARRIGAN**
OPINION EDITOR

When junior Andrew Razborov was 4 years old, he began playing chess with his dad. In first grade, he began to play with friends via the chess club at Lab, remaining a part of the club well into middle school.

As he progressed to high school, he played less frequently, until he watched a collaboration on Twitch, a streaming platform, between the esports gamer known as xQc and professional chess player Hikaru Nakamura.

Over the course of the pandemic, some students have discovered online chess to be a fun, stimulating and slightly competitive game they can play with friends.

Watching the livestream piqued Andrew’s interest in playing chess again.



MIDWAY PHOTO BY MALCOLM TAYLOR

QUARANTINE’S GAMBIT. Junior Taig Singh plays a game of chess from his laptop. “I just open up lichess.com whenever I’m in front of my computer and want to take a break,” Taig said.

“I guess from there I got really back into chess and started playing a lot over the summer, both

online and with my dad,” Andrew said.

Like many others, Andrew

doesn’t consider there to be a difference between playing online or in person, often choosing to play whichever is more convenient.

“So considering the pandemic, online chess has become the go-to for a lot of amateur and world-class chess players,” Andrew said. “I think the practicality of online chess and the ability to face opponents of your own level at any time of day has encouraged me to play chess a lot more.”

Junior Taig Singh similarly finds online chess appealing because of its adaptability.

“I never plan for it and dedicate time in my day just to play chess,” Taig said. “I just open up lichess.com whenever I’m in front of my computer and want to take a break from whatever it is I’m doing.”

The opponent varies from person to person. Taig most frequently plays against a stranger, as it takes just a few seconds to find a game. He can also send a link of his game server to his friends if he wishes to face competition he may be more familiar with.

Since the start of hybrid learning, Andrew had been playing more with his friends during passing periods, lunch or after school.

“Most people play with friends, which is how I personally prefer to play, regardless of how talented they are at the game or how much experience they’ve had,” Andrew said. “Literally anyone can play because the rules are simple, and it’s very engaging.”

Both Andrew and Taig find that chess differs from other activities such as sports or video games in that it is exclusively a mental game.

“The only real thing that you do when you play chess is think about the next move,” Andrew said. “Even when you are watching the game, or even when the game might not go as you wanted it to, you still manage to mentally engage in it.”

Taig values the amount of mental stimulation in a game of chess.

Taig said, “It’s purely mental, and I never have to think ahead as much in other activities as I do in a game of chess.”

Driven: Competitive spirit separates golfer from field of opposition



ABOVE PAR: Senior Emily Chang stances up, preparing to swing at a golf ball at the Jackson Park Golf Course Oct. 14. Emily placed first in the ISL conference championship before the golf season came to an abrupt end. She credits her success to her high standards and competitiveness.

MIDWAY PHOTO BY CHLOE MA

by **COLIN LESLIE**
REPORTER

In Emily Chang’s first golf tournament, she came in last place. She was 12 years old.

“I was thinking for so long that I was so good,” Emily, now a senior, said. “Playing with these girls who were beating me by, like, 30 strokes, I was like ‘Whoa, OK, that’s what I want to do.’”

Competitiveness caused Emily to take golf seriously, but it has not compromised her ability to be a good teammate, even as her senior season was unexpectedly cut short.

U-High golf coach Marco Fajardo said Emily’s competitiveness when golfing is obvious to those watching her.

“She’s super competitive, not just amongst her peers, but just amongst herself,” Coach Fajardo said. “She strives to achieve the most out of her abilities, and she feels that she can achieve more.”

Emily said her high expectations for herself can cause her to feel internal pressure when she golfs.

“If I don’t play well I feel like I’m kind of letting myself down because I know how good I could be,” Emily said. “I’m not going to step out onto that golf course and not give it my best for every shot on those 18 holes because you never win that way, you never feel good about yourself that way.”

“I’m not going to step out onto that golf course and not give it my best for every shot on those 18 holes because you never win that way, you never feel good about yourself that way.”

Emily is approachable and relaxed around teammates according to junior Aaron Kim, a member of the golf team.

“She’s definitely the leader of the team,” Aaron said. “She’s the best

player by far, but she’s always, like, bubbly and talks to everyone.”

According to Coach Fajardo, watching Emily interact with her teammates and coaches gives no indication of how good of a golfer she is. He said she is very down-to-earth.

“She brings a lot of great energy, a lot of positive attitude, great competitiveness and she is just the most ideal teammate you could have,” Coach Fajardo said.

Emily’s season was shortened this year, winning her only competition, the conference championship, before all four girls from the U-High team set to compete in regionals made individual decisions not to play. According to Emily, they were experiencing mild sickness, but she said that they all later tested negative for COVID-19.

“It’s definitely not the ending to my high school career that I was hoping for,” Emily said. “[The Lab golf team members] spend a lot of time together usually, but only seeing them once a week now because we only practice on Wednesdays as opposed to, you know, basically every day after school has been kind of tough. We don’t have the team bus rides listening to music or just talking and hanging out.”

Emily said there is no better feeling than winning a golf tournament and holding the prized trophy over her head.

A couple of years after finishing in last place at her first local golf tournament, Emily won her first national tournament.

Emily said, “That was the moment when I was like, ‘I love this,’ and this is something that I want to keep working towards forever, honestly.”

First published on Oct. 6, 2020.

Teens build PCs for personalization, unique connection

by **BERK OTO**
MANAGING EDITOR

Starting from several small boxes of seemingly random parts from a multitude of brands, senior Sean Zhang tries to build his first computer. After hours of careful wiring, screwing and unscrewing parts into place and fitting hardware into his computer case, he plugs in his computer to his monitor for the first time.

Success! The computer posts, listing the parts it’s able to detect, the same ones he meticulously picked out and carefully assembled in the days leading up to this moment.

“It’s simultaneously one of the most exciting and relieving feelings to see your computer post for the first time,” Sean said.

Sean is one of several students who have opted to build their own personal computers, choosing greater customizability over the convenience and tech support of pre-built computers, known as prebuilts. They often cite social pressure and the creation of a special bond with their hardware as main reasons.

Because he plays a lot of video games, Sean needed a powerful computer, and he felt pressure from the gaming community to build his own.

“I built my computer to get the best gaming performance for the money I was willing to pay,” Sean said, “but I’d be lying if I said that I would have done it if my friends hadn’t pushed me. There’s a surprisingly big tech community out there, and they are die-hard for getting you to build your own computer. I could’ve still bought one, but it’s like



Sean Zhang

“It’s simultaneously one of the most exciting and relieving feelings to see your computer post for the first time.”

— SEAN ZHANG, SENIOR

a part of them just dies when you pay money for a prebuilt.”

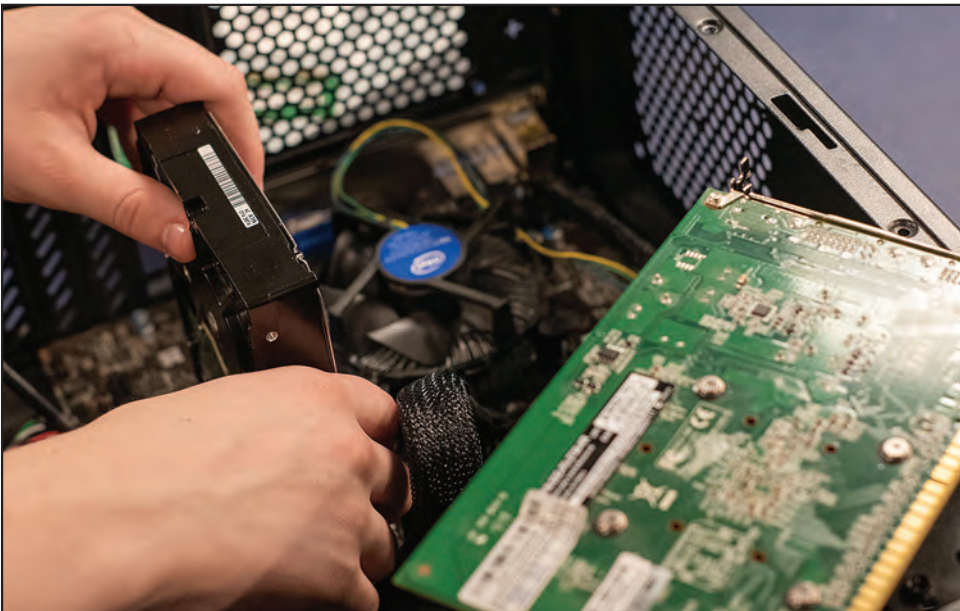
Building a computer has challenges, so prebuilt PC companies are able to take advantage of the difficulty of building a PC by charging significant fees for building the computer and often selling low-quality hardware.

“If you pay for a prebuilt, you’re paying more money for low-quality components,” said junior Brandon Bousquette, who also built his computer. “Instead you could invest that service fee into upgrades that will significantly improve your gaming experience.”

According to Brandon, these upgrades could include a faster graphics card that makes games feel smoother and more immersive.

Aiming to make PC building and upgrading more accessible, computer hardware channels have sprung up on YouTube, like Linus Tech Tips, which boasts 12.5 million subscribers, and Austin Evans with 4.8 million subscribers. Sean not only learned how to build his computer by watching these videos, he also discovered a surprising side of PC building.

“Before I just thought about it as a smart move financially, but watching videos showed me the geeky fun of being really focused on building the computer,” Sean said. “There’s some excitement in having so much control over your experience, and I definitely went through a phase after build-



MIDWAY PHOTO BY ANDREW BURKE-STEVENSON

CIRCUITS AND WIRES: A student constructs part of a personal computer. He is one of many students who have taken to building their own PCs for a greater challenge rather than buying one prebuilt for a high price.

ing it when I was keeping up with hardware news just because it was really exciting.”

Part of this greater control includes the ability to customize, upgrade and fix individual parts to fit a theme or color palette. Even RGB lights, which can illuminate up to 16.7 million colors, are a common edition to PC hardware and allow users to further customize the look of their computer.

“My first priority was functionality and price, but I was also willing to spend some money on looks — I wanted it to complement the aesthetic of my room with some cool accents like RGB,” Brandon said.

Both Brandon and Sean feel a special connection to their unique builds from over-

coming the daunting and personal experience of building a PC.

“I definitely feel a sort of bond every time I turn on my computer,” Brandon said. “It’s a combination of pride and accomplishment since it’s turning on because of me, and I see the proof of that on my monitor.”

Brandon especially appreciates this feeling now, when most of his daily activities have transitioned online.

“Especially during remote learning, my ability to go to school, do work and play games are all tied to this unique computer that only I know the details of,” he said. “It’s really a magical feeling.”

First published on Dec. 14, 2021.

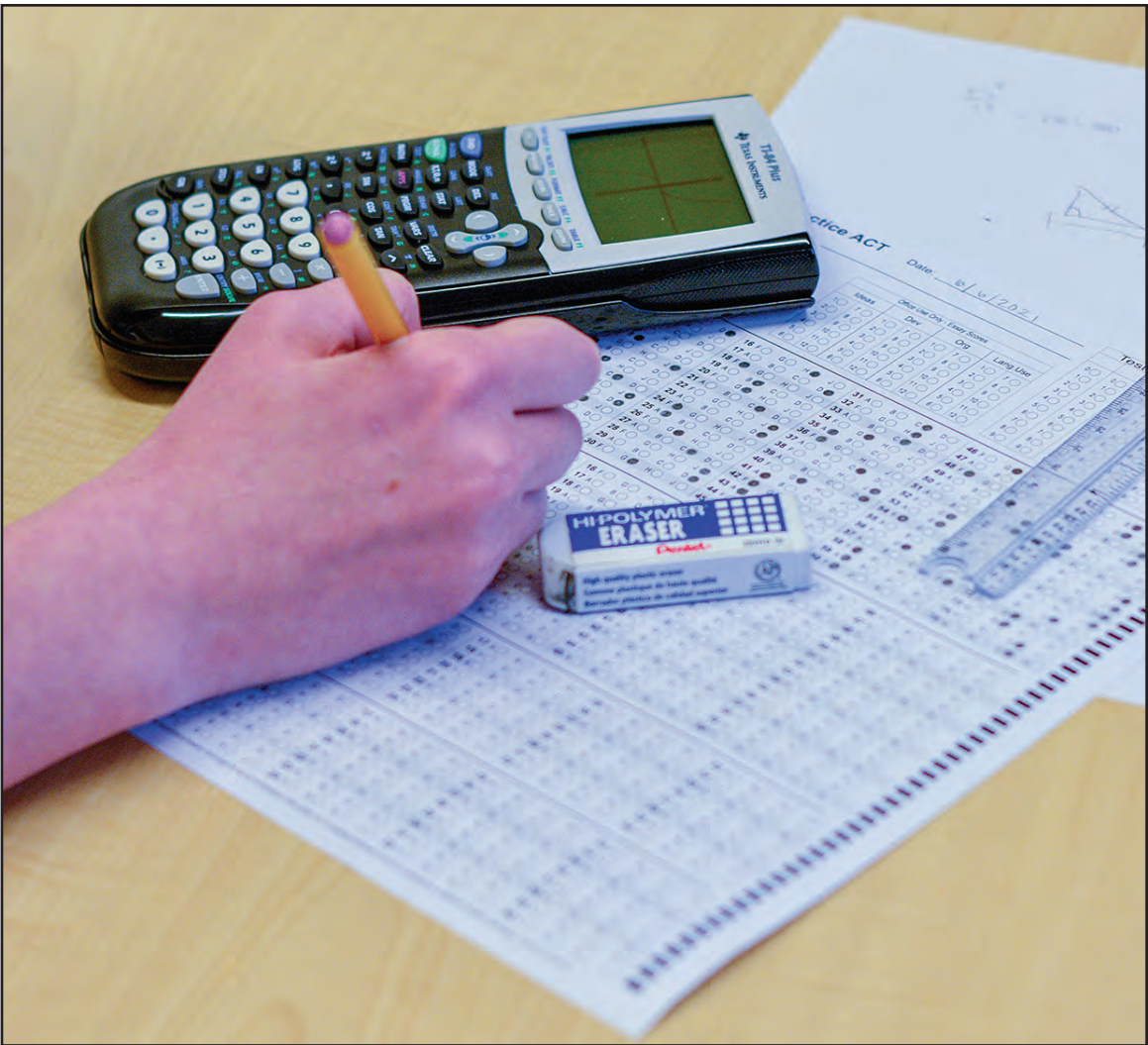
Given inequities, finals should not be administered

As the Midway sees it ...

With 23 weeks of distance learning, a sharp pivot and seven weeks of hybrid learning, the 2020-21 school year has been an experiment in establishing academic equity and anything but typical. Although some departments have already abandoned their plans to conduct formal final exams, some teachers may still be considering administering a high-stakes exam testing the totality of the academic year or semester's curriculum. To maintain equity and academic integrity, increase learning and show compassion toward student experiences, cumulative course exams should not be administered this year. Despite the best efforts of faculty and administrators, inequities remain between the experiences of remote and in-person students. For example, it is not possible for remote students to participate in most in-person laboratory activities, so many are forced to watch as in-person students get the full classroom experience. Activities such as labs are the backbone of U-High's experiential curriculum and without the ability to participate in them, remote students would be put at a disadvantage for a final exam. Even if a class is taught similarly for each group, in-person students benefit from face-to-face instruction while remote students suf-

“Although axing final exams may seem like yet another cut into an already lean curriculum, it is far more important for teachers to prioritize equity, academic integrity and the student experience.”

fer from Zoom fatigue and online distractions just a few clicks away. These factors put remote students at a disadvantage for any synchronous test, but the effects are especially pronounced for a test worth a high percentage of a student's grade, like a final exam. A final-like exam would also almost definitely lead to significant cheating, especially among remote students. Although teachers have ways to administer tests or use technology to limit opportunity for cheating, nothing is as effective as the watchful eye of a teacher in the testing room. Administering such a high-stakes test with some students remaining remote would skew the results and potentially boost the grades of remote students substantially, making the test unfair for any student giving the test an honest effort. This academic year, nearly all teachers have had to scrap parts of their class' curricula to fit into the block schedule. Because several U-High classes build off of the curricula of their prerequisites, it is important for teachers to de-



MIDWAY PHOTO BY MALCOLM TAYLOR

TESTING TIME. Teachers should focus on finishing curriculum rather than administering finals. Fair testing has proven to be a problem this year, as there is no way to ensure equity among in-person and remote students.

vote their precious class time toward getting through as much course material as possible (while prioritizing student mental health of course). Maximizing this year's curriculum would make next academic year much easier for students by decreasing the amount of catch up. Beyond the time needed to take the test itself, a final-like exam would necessitate review periods and incentivize students to spend the last weeks of their academic year reviewing past work as

opposed to covering new material that may help them succeed in future classes. Finally, it is necessary to acknowledge that students have had wildly different experiences in the last year. While it is true that there are several students whose mental and physical health was largely unaffected this year, there are also many who have lost family members to COVID-19, experienced the illness themselves or had an otherwise rocky experience braving the

pandemic. Expecting students to recall the full curriculum of such a tumultuous academic year would be unempathetic and inconsiderate to the diversity of experiences within the student body. Although axing final exams may seem like yet another cut into an already lean curriculum, it is more important for teachers to prioritize equity, academic integrity and the student experience. For all these reasons, teachers must not administer a final-like exam this year.

Mask restrictions still needed

by **WILLIAM TAN**
REPORTER
Citing vaccine advancements and recently lower COVID-19 rates in his state, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott rescinded his state's mask mandate on March 2, joining six states which have just recently rejected President Biden's strong advice to wear a mask. At the moment, any state's choice to lift mask restrictions can potentially strain the already-overwhelmed vaccine rollout and sets an irresponsible precedent for other states with higher reported COVID-19 rates.



William Tan

While Texas's COVID-19 state positivity rate is under 10%, only 12% of Texans were fully vaccinated at the time this article was published. Additionally, only 15% of

the population of Indiana, which is slated to rescind its mask mandate on April 6, have been fully vaccinated. With such low rates of complete vaccination, these states are not in the clear yet, and there's still a genuine risk of COVID-19 resurgence in the future, especially with a rise in dangerous variants such as the B.1.1.7 variant and the P.1 variant. Signaling that masks aren't necessary for a specific state suggests that regions across the country are in the clear, a dangerous assertion for those in policy fields and for irresponsible citizens. This is illustrated by a significant drop in testing rates in Texas, as citizens are increasingly encouraged by the prospect of vaccination. It also strains the vaccine rollout by perpetuating an urgency to fulfill the desires of people like those in Texas who are ignoring safety measures like testing in hopes of receiving the vaccine as fast as possible. This can have catastrophic consequences such as

“Signaling that masks aren't necessary for a specific state suggests that regions across the country are in the clear, a dangerous assertion for those in policy fields and for irresponsible citizens.”

nationwide vaccine shortages if supply cannot keep up with demand. Putting people at higher risk by exposing them to the virus when only less than 15% of the nation is fully vaccinated is jumping the gun. Only maintaining disciplined and responsible measures like mask-wearing will take us out of the pandemic and into safety. President Biden sums it up perfectly, calling Texas's decision, “Neanderthal thinking.”
First published March 31, 2021.

Instagram should not remove sharing feature

by **KRISHITA DUTTA**
CITY LIFE CO-EDITOR
Once Instagram announced in late January that it was considering disabling the ability for users to share posts from their feed into their stories, users and activism accounts began to express concerns because so many small businesses, creators, artists and organizations rely on growing their platforms when followers reshare their posts. Instagram must comply with its users' wishes and allow them to continue resharing posts to their story. Disabling this feature is harmful to businesses and other individuals who rely on organic sharing of posts, especially since most small platforms can't afford to pay



Krishita Dutta

for advertising. Instagram has also recently turned into a platform to spread awareness about movements and to educate people on issues primarily through the function of resharing informational posts to stories, which would come to a halt if this feature were to be disabled. If Instagram gets rid of the feature, the spread of petitions, informational posts, and activism accounts would slow down. Many small platforms heavily rely on their followers to promote their accounts, and getting rid of this feature would not only put them at an unfair disadvantage but would hinder Instagram users' ability to gain information from the app. Instead of disabling the feature to decrease the spam on stories, Instagram should set a limit on the number of posts that can be up on a person's story at a time.
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EDITORIAL POLICY & MISSION:
In a time when the press is criticized, the
U-High Midway seeks to inform, educate
and serve the community of University
High School. The Midway is developed and
managed by students, for students.
In every story we write, the Midway should
give a voice to the experiences of people
at U-High. We will report on the people,
activities and thoughts that make our school
unique, striving to include the voices we
haven't heard yet.

For communal inclusion, focus on adoptees

Current focus on single identifiers isn't enough to represent adoptees

by **TÉA TAMBURIO**
CONTENT MANAGER

In seventh grade, I attended an Asian Students' Association meeting. Discussing what it's like being Asian American, the topic was how we see ourselves fitting into the Lab community.

However, I withheld a key part of my identity. I was adopted from Hunan, China, and I had attended this meeting with the goal of meeting others who identify as Chinese adoptees.

It's not that I didn't want to share this about myself at the meeting, but I would've been the only one discussing multiple identifiers around balancing two cultures. Being raised in a white family that I'm not biologically related to, I want to maintain a tie to my native culture but also partake in the traditions of my adopted family, thus balancing two sides of myself: the Chinese and the American. In that moment, I convinced myself that race and adoption didn't belong in the same conversation since they weren't cultivated simultaneously in discussions.

As a school, we need to expand

"Since adoption isn't incorporated into discussions, I often question whether being adopted is a valid identity."

— TÉA TAMBURIO

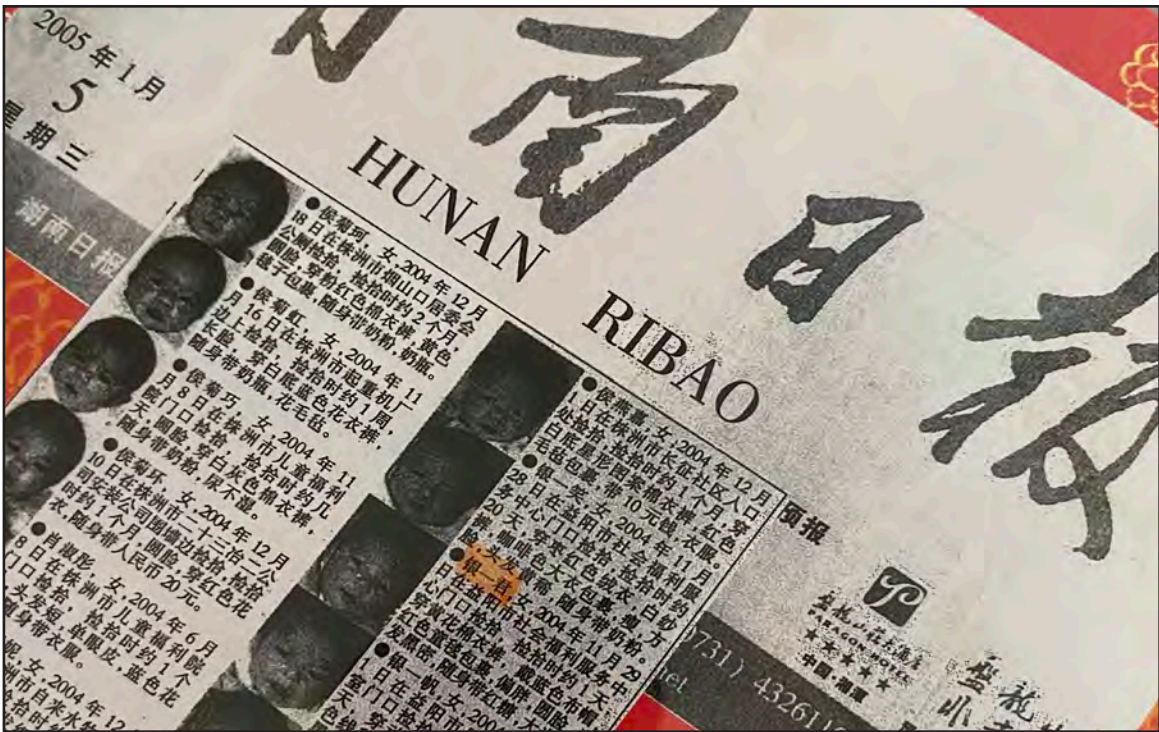
our dialogue around diversity, equity and inclusion to represent and include those from adoptive families. Focusing on single identifiers, such as race and gender, isn't enough to make adoptees feel included in the DEI movement and sets back the goal of communal inclusion.

When discussing identity, it's easy to focus only on certain identifiers and how these define our self-perception. However, doing this allows space for only those identifiers to shine through, disregarding intersecting identities that don't fall into neat categories. Personally, my centering identifier is being an international adoptee, so pushing conversations around DEI that disregard the intersection of race and adoptive status leaves out the intersecting identities of those in the adopted community.

Adoptees should feel welcome sharing their experiences and utilizing their perspectives to advance the DEI movement at Lab. Because adoption is not addressed and the adoptee community is



Téa Tamburio



MIDWAY PHOTO BY TÉA TAMBURIO

CHERISHED COLLECTIBLES. Sophomore Téa Tamburio keeps a photocopy of the ad that ran in the newspaper the day after she was left at the orphanage in China.

small, this defining identity can easily be overlooked and overshadowed, thus silencing the voices of adopted students.

Since adoption isn't incorporated into discussions, I often question whether being adopted is a valid identity. During group discussions, I stick to discussing ties to my Asian background, rather than opening up about international adoption, due to a fear of alienation from my peers. Omit-

ting adoption from the discussion makes us question if the only valid part of our identity is race and creates a fear that our intersecting identities are not valid.

International adoptees often do not look like their parents, basically putting on display that they were adopted. This makes the identity of "international adoptee" public and prominent.

Race is interconnected with international adoption in this way,

making international adoptees balance systemic racism and feelings of not fitting into their adoptive families.

These identity conflicts are complex, so they should be included in discussions about the impact that family structure, race and self-identity has on us as a community and as individuals. When we do this, we can truly create a more inclusive environment.

First published on Oct. 28, 2021.

JUST A THOUGHT

Choice feminism ignores key issues

by **AN NGO**
ASSISTANT EDITOR

American women have lost a disproportionate number of jobs due to the pandemic, having lost 5.4 million jobs since last February, while men have lost 4.4 million jobs.

The burdening of job losses on women perfectly illustrates why choice feminism, an ideology that has risen in popularity in recent years and focuses on celebrating choice, fails to address the underlying issues that have contributed to women quitting their jobs.

Through the lens of choice feminism, it would be an inherently feminist action for a woman to choose to stay home for her children. The issue with this is that it doesn't consider how a lack of public or affordable childcare, the gender pay gap, occupational stratification and cultural beliefs about gender roles have all but eliminated her power to choose.

Furthermore, choice feminism fails to address how some women have more autonomy in making their choices than others. While white women have made significant recoveries in employment rates, women of color have not only been hit the hardest but are making slower job gains.

President Joe Biden's coronavirus relief bill, which includes a \$3,000 child tax credit and direct payments to children, is a step in helping women rejoin the workforce. Steps like these that help tackle economic inequality and the burden of child care may be a starting point for a fundamental and institutional dismantling of the inequities that existed before the pandemic.

Choice feminism stops us from thinking critically about what liberation really looks like. We won't find liberation unless we tackle the issues that drive inequality considering factors of race, ability, sexual orientation and class.

First published on March 16, 2021.



An Ngo

Female musicians deserve more respect

by **CALEDONIA ABBEY**
REPORTER

For years, rock musicians have been idolized for subversive and reckless behavior, becoming a quintessential part to the genre.

Jimi Hendrix set his guitar on fire, Kurt Cobain regularly broke his instruments, as did Paul Simonon of "The Clash," with one instance going on to become the iconic cover of their "London Calling" album.

On the Feb. 6 episode of "Saturday Night Live," 26-year-old Phoebe Bridgers, accompanied by her band dressed in Halloween-store skeleton costumes, finished a performance of her song by smashing her guitar on stage and was met with criticism from the public and inside the music community.

This has revealed a double standard for female musicians in the industry, and we must stop criticizing women for acts men are revered for.

Acts like this are intended to spark anger — rock 'n' roll extremities are not everyone's cup of tea — and Bridgers' was no exception.

On the night of the performance, Twitter lit up with hundreds of responses not from the usual enforcers of the status quo but rock purists lamenting Bridgers for perceived inauthenticity or mocking her for not breaking the guitar enough.

It's hard to imagine that David Crosby of "Crosby, Stills & Nash," would choose to call the performance "pathetic" if Bridgers wasn't a young woman.

Whether or not the so-called "smashing" was perfectly executed is beside the point when most of the issues with it are rooted in misogyny.

Before taking to social media to criticize something unfamiliar, true fans of the genre should consider that rather than an insult, Bridgers' performance was an homage to countless legends before her, and should give rising female musicians the same consideration.

First published on March 5, 2021.



Caledonia Abbey

U-High should keep the block schedule

by **LUCIA KOURI**
CITY LIFE CO-EDITOR

Heading into the 2020-21 school year, U-High transitioned from an eight-period schedule to a block schedule, with each class meeting just twice a week and leaving Wednesdays open for assemblies and office hours.

U-High should permanently replace the old and outdated eight-period schedule with a block schedule that is receptive to the mental wellbeing and academic needs of students.

A study conducted at Brown University finds that students focus more attentively in class and retain information for longer when classes are spaced out throughout the week and less material is taught in greater depth.

With later starting times and without the pressure of completing assignments for as many as eight classes every night, students could adapt to healthier sleep patterns, which plays a crucial role in enhancing cognitive skills while also improving student mental health.

When teachers see fewer students per day, time for individualized instruction increases, and with designated time for office hours, students are given the opportunity to develop stronger interpersonal relationships with teachers and to ask for help when needed.

The in-class time taken away through the adoption of a block schedule is not time wasted but instead time that contributes to the overall quality of learning — time that alleviates stress, decreases sleep deprivation and enhances opportunities for personalized instruction. As a school that will already be facing great change upon returning to in-person learning next year, now is a better time than ever to adopt a class structure that will be in the best interest of the students moving forward.

First published on March 15, 2021.



Lucia Kouri

To help restaurants, relax restrictions

by **LIAM SEILER**
REPORTER

During the coronavirus pandemic, regulations were put in place to reduce the spread, but that closed some small businesses and drove others to bankruptcy. The restrictions on indoor seating capacity hurt small restaurants with small margins that depend on in-person diners to stay afloat.

With coronavirus case numbers on the decline and vaccines the government should relax restrictions to save small business owners from bankruptcy and to protect the economy.

Interviews with small business owners by the International Trade Commission reported that 55% said restrictions strongly affected their business, and according to Bloomberg, more than 110,000 restaurants nationwide have closed.

According to Statista.com, the restaurant industry is in an "economic free fall" and 87% of full-service restaurants have had a 36% sales decrease.

The activist group Rally For Restaurants urges people to support their local eateries before they close and disappear forever.

More increases in seating capacity should be allowed, and additional aid measures should be taken by local governments in order to preserve local commerce and protect small-restaurant owners.

Although the American Rescue Plan was recently passed and will allocate \$28.6 billion to a "restaurant revitalization fund," immediate aid is needed on a more localized basis to preserve the hard work of small restaurant owners and their families. Some establishments do not have the financial stability to last until the larger national aid hits.

First published on April 5, 2021.



Liam Seiler

Social media laws require change

Protections must be lifted for companies with harmful content

by **CAROLINE HOHNER**
ARTS CO-EDITOR

Are social media platforms publishers? Current legislation says they aren't, meaning content posted on a site is completely out of a social media company's hands. Yet if they were, they wouldn't be able to grow because they could be sued over tweets, posts and updates.

Blanket protections granted by Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, the 1996 statute that resolves platforms of their liability for their content, against harmful content are no longer enough to protect against the modern abuse of social media. However, if platforms are completely stripped of these protections, it would be impossible for competitors to enter the social media industry. There has to be a middle ground.

Given the massive consumer bases of these companies, the demonstrated effects of allowing false information and the incitement of criminal activity to circulate, these companies should be held liable for the harm their platforms play host to.

Christopher Cox, a former congressman responsible for the creation of Section 230, said that the original purpose of the statute has been warped and that "Congress should revisit the law."

Former President Donald Trump's tweets drove the insurrection at the Capitol last month. The eventual de-platformings on Twitter, Facebook and various other sites were voluntary, but the individual guidelines of these companies are not reliable in preventing catastrophe.

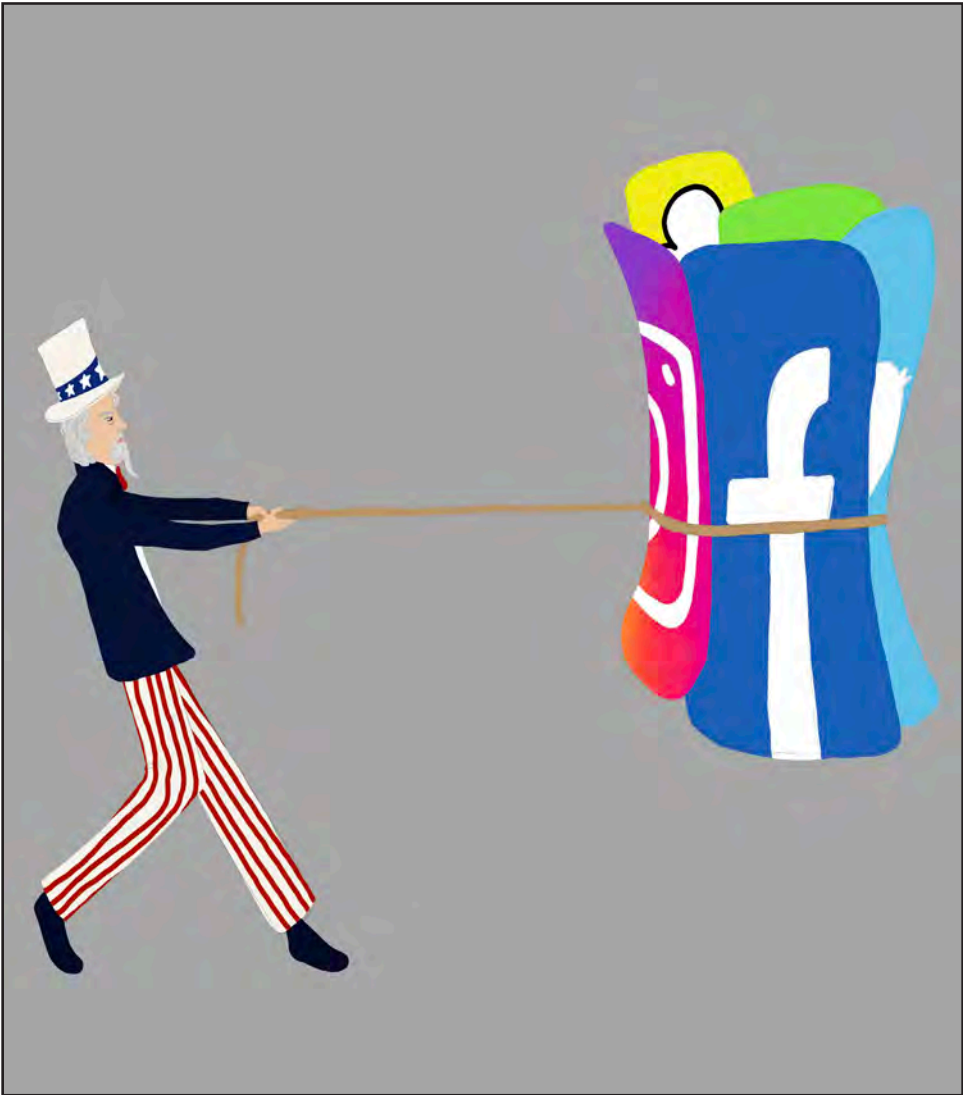
This instance of social media content leading to criminal activity is the latest in a long line of disasters in the discussion of Internet liability.

A 2018 NPR article detailing the history of the statute and the tech industry's changing positions on it described an incident in which the website backpage.com promoted advertisements for child sex trafficking.

The trafficking victims lost to the web-



Caroline Hohner



MIDWAY ILLUSTRATION BY ALINA SUSANI

site in court, which defended itself with the broad protections of Section 230. The incident ultimately lead to restrictive amendments to the statute directly related to liability for sex trafficking.

In this instance, companies were stripped of their protections when it came to hosting illegal activity. This process can and should be applied more generally.

Amending Section 230 would create company liability for hosting illegal activity and false information and give these companies financial motivation to crack down on such content. It would also mean the victims of harmful posts or ads would have the opportunity to fight for reparations without being shut down immediately. It would work to-

ward cleaning up the darker sides of social media without necessitating government censorship. When it comes to government involvement in social media, it can be difficult to think of legislation that doesn't encroach on citizens' First Amendment rights, but allowing those hurt by malicious content to directly argue their cases provides a framework for accountability without doing so.

Section 230 should not be an impenetrable shield against taking responsibility for criminal activity and misinformation. The statute needs to be amended to hold social media platforms liable for harmful content produced on them.

First published on Feb. 22, 2021.

ASL should be part of school curriculum

by **JULIAN INGERSOLL**
ARTS CO-EDITOR

At the Inauguration on Jan. 20, firefighter Andrea Hall recited the Pledge of Allegiance in American Sign Language while speaking into a microphone for 10 million deaf, hard of hearing and able-bodied American people to experience before Joe Biden was sworn in as president.

American Sign Language should be initiated as a language course in the Laboratory Schools curriculum at an early age to expose young students to a wide range of communication people rely on.

Since its establishment in 1887, ASL has helped deaf people around America to communicate in their daily lives, and the Laboratory Schools should validate them by making it easier for them to communicate in the community.

When ASL became an autonomous language in 1960, schools made an effort to introduce this language to younger students, so they could communicate with deaf people around America. Why should the Laboratory Schools be any different?

Like any other language, ASL takes practice and dedication to master, so implementing the language for K-12 students to develop would be beneficial to engage with a new group of people who communicate differently than them.

As large as the deaf and hard of hearing community is, Lab should be giving ASL a larger platform than it had through small clubs over the years.

Teaching ASL would also help students who are deaf or hard of hearing feel more welcome at Lab. Knowing ASL would allow for able-bodied students and deaf people at Lab to communicate, creating a stronger more inclusive community.

It is Lab's responsibility to equip students with a large array of communication skills. With ASL, we can engage with more people and possibly build empathy and connections with those in this community.

First published on March 11, 2021.



Julian Ingersoll

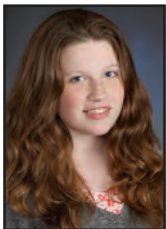
In hybrid, maintain student connections

by **CLARE O'CONNOR**
REPORTER

After almost a year of distance learning, on March 8 some U-High students will begin a hybrid learning system that will bring each hybrid-learner to the campus for two days every two weeks along with the other hybrid-learners in their grade. Other students are making the difficult choice to opt out of this long-awaited opportunity, remaining in distance learning due to health concerns or other personal reasons.

These separate learning models will create further division, which is why students must work together to continue communicating with classmates who are on other sides of the hybrid/online divide.

Optional hybrid learning puts the student body into two separate groups as in-person students have more time to spend with each other and less time to be on their computers talking with friends in between classes or after school. This arrangement will result in a second wave of social isolation for students continuing distance learning.



Clare O'Connor

Since the start of distance learning, 42.9% of Lab middle and high school students feel that they are performing worse than they usually do, according to Lab's January "All School Survey." While the hybrid option is meant to remedy some of this decline, the social separation that damages focus and mental health will increase for many students, especially students who remain online as they watch from their homes while their peers interact in person.

While this challenge seems insurmountable, students have been persistent in finding creative ways to stay connected during online learning — such as making online game nights or setting times for study session calls — and will be able to continue supporting each other even as the partial return creates more separation.

Lab students should seek out friends who might feel isolated and commit themselves to communication goals, such as calling three online friends a week or talking to three hybrid friends about class. Communication has always been hard for teenagers, and right now there are ever-growing challenges that make connecting with peers even harder. Losing social connection is harmful and students need to fight to keep communicating despite new barriers.

First published on March 3, 2021.

SNL joke plays into falsehood

by **NOA APPELBAUM**
CONTENT MANAGER

"Israel is reporting that they vaccinated half of their population, and I'm going to guess it's the Jewish half." Michael Che, role-playing as a news anchor for Weekend Update on "Saturday Night Live," uttered these now infamous words on the Feb. 20 episode. Following the studio audience's sparse laughter after the remark, critics flocked to social media to share their opinions, reposting the video and commenting on their concerns. Israeli leaders expressed disapproval, as did the Jerusalem Post and members of the Anti-Defamation League.

Mr. Che's comment, while perhaps intended lightheartedly, is contributing to America's rising anti-Semitism and misconceptions around Israel, and reflects the deep-rooted stereotypes and prejudice many have toward Jews.

As a Jewish person, I am well acquainted with not only the prominent anti-Semitism on the internet and social media, but also of the rising hatred toward Israel and Jews portrayed on the news. While comedic platforms like "SNL" resort to Jewish jokes for perhaps an "easy" laugh, Mr. Che's remark is different. Instead of exaggerated



Noa Appelbaum

tropes that many can distinguish from reality, it plays into false and dangerous misconceptions that many people already have.

Che's comment drifted into the dangerous "middle ground" territory. Rather than making an exaggerated statement, Mr. Che played into misleading information already heavily circulating the internet and social media. I see it on Instagram often, as classmates or acquaintances repost that Israel, the country with the highest vaccination rates in the world so far, has refused to vaccinate Palestinians. However, it is not that simple, as Israel has faced a delay and many legal questions on whether they have the authority to vaccinate Palestinians outside of Israel's borders. Mr. Che's one-sided sentence does not even begin to unravel the complexities of the issue. This will create more negative feelings toward Israel and the Jews who reside there.

Mr. Che's comment reflects the stereotype that Jews are selfish. Mr. Che didn't say he thought it was the "Israeli half," but rather, the "Jewish half." This implies that the Israeli government only cares about Jews. It suggests that Jewish people and the government are in agreement with one another. This is false. Many Israeli Jews are critical of the government's policies. Mr. Che's comment also suggests that only Jews reside in Israel, further associating the entirety of the Jewish population with Israel's actions.

When Mr. Che said he's "going

to guess" it was the Jewish half, he highlighted his internalized prejudices — he heard a fact about Israel, and he immediately jumped to the conclusion that the Jews will only protect themselves. This again construes negative stereotypes and prejudice toward Jews that are already deeply-ingrained in our society.

I encourage viewers of "SNL" and other comedic platforms to be critical, both of the show's content but also of their reactions. It is easy to be influenced by others' biases, and comedy shows like "SNL," while entertaining, are even more threatening, because the fine line between exaggeration and reality is blurred. We need to do further research before taking what "SNL" says too seriously, and I encourage everyone to examine their internalized biases.

"SNL" is known to cross the line with their broadcasting of stereotypes and one-liners, yet Mr. Che's joke is not an obvious exaggeration — instead, it reflects very real biases many have. With "SNLs" millions of viewers, many are sure to have viewed the Feb. 20 episode as confirmation to their existing biases or perhaps were even persuaded on a topic they knew nothing about. While I wish for a future where we can poke fun at stereotypes without people taking them to heart, I am well aware that today, jokes like Mr. Che's have the opposite effect.

First published on March 4, 2021.

Deconstruct fetishization of Asian women

Recent hate crimes expose racism, misogyny

by **MEENA LEE**
CONTENT MANAGER

On March 16, I opened my phone to the headline: “Eight Dead in Atlanta Spa Shootings.” As I continued to look into the news I saw more headlines like, “Six of the eight victims were women of Asian descent.” Immediately, I attributed the shooting to the anti-Asian bias that has been on the rise since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic. However, as I read more, I noticed the bias was even more deeply rooted.



Meena Lee

It was reported that the shooter told police he had a “sex addiction” and had targeted these spas in order to get rid of his “temptation.” This hate crime exposed the intersection of misogyny and racism that Asian women face and sparked necessary conversations about the importance of deconstructing the fetishization of Asian women.

The portrayal of Asian women in the media is rooted in colonization and further promotes sexual stereotypes. This objectification reduces Asian women to only having sexual, docile or subordinate traits leading to bias, discrimination and violence.

If they are ever discussed, Asian fetishes are often spoken about in



MIDWAY ILLUSTRATION BY AMON GRAY

a very casual way. However, there is a long history of American legislation and media that have connected Asian women with sexualization, and understanding this history is an important part of unlearning.

In the 1850s, an influx of Chinese immigrants to the West Coast led, unsurprisingly, to an anti-Chinese sentiment, which grew as immigrants were perceived as a threat to the racial purity of white America. Chinese women in particular were perceived as a sexual threat. They were stereotyped as prostitutes and accused of spreading sexually transmitted diseases. This scapegoating of Asian people in relation to disease demonstrates an eerie parallel to today

“The mere statement that the victims were temptations for the shooter highlights the need for everyone, regardless of race or gender, to examine who they are attracted to in order to deconstruct fetishization.”

with the coronavirus pandemic.

Then, in 1875, the Page Act was passed. Seven years before the Chinese Exclusion Act, the Page Act was designed to outlaw “the importation of women for the purposes of prostitution.” In practice,

it left an individual’s immigration to be decided by the consul at port cities and was used to restrict the immigration of all Asian women. This furthered the stereotype of the connection of Asian women to sex work.

Additionally, the strong presence of the U.S. military in Asian countries in the 1900s has contributed to many tropes of Asian women’s bodies existing for American soldiers. These tropes were popularized through productions such as “Madame Butterfly” and “The Toll of the Sea,” which created both hypersexual and docile representations of Asian women. These stereotypes are continually found in the media today. For example, the anime industry por-

Fast facts:

The Chinese Exclusion Act passed in 1882. It prohibited immigration from all Chinese laborers, and often immigrants from other Asian countries.

3,800 anti-Asian racist incidents reported from March 19, 2020, to Feb. 28.

145% increase in anti-Asian racist incidents from the previous year.

68% of anti-Asian racist incidents are perpetrated against women.

Asian women are preferred by straight men of all other races.

SOURCES: CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF HATE CRIMES AND EXTREMISM, THE CUT, QUARTZ.

trays hyper sexualized Asian women. While it’s predominantly made by Japanese creators, it has been consumed readily by Americans.

Returning to the Atlanta shootings, the problem becomes even more strikingly evident. The issue has been recognized on the national level, with the Senate passing an anti-Asian hate bill on April 22, but that is just a start to combatting the systems of racism that Asians face in America.

The mere statement that the victims were “temptations” for the shooter highlights the need for everyone, regardless of race or gender, to examine who they are attracted to and what media they consume in order to deconstruct fetishization.

Police reformation is necessary on nationwide scale

by **AUDREY MATEI**
REPORTER

As The Black Lives Matter movement has gained traction this year following the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Daniel Prude, so has anti-police thinking. After being shown time and time again the flaws of our current police system, many people have begun to question police policy and demand



Audrey Matei

“Police reform should occur on a nationwide scale, in such a way that police weapons and tactics are demilitarized, training is improved to handle mental health crises, and police funds are reallocated.”

change. Police reform should occur on a nationwide scale, in such a way that police weapons and tactics are demilitarized, training is im-

proved to handle mental health crises, and police funds are reallocated into communities to help prevent crime before it happens.

Police departments nationwide should be demilitarized. Since the 1990s, initiatives such as the 1033 program, a project providing law enforcement second-hand equipment from the Department of Defense, have allowed police to spend \$6 billion on military-grade equipment. Such equipment includes armored vehicles, machine guns, bayonets and grenade launchers. Additionally, the ACLU reported SWAT teams and other drug-related task forces have been losing

popularity and usefulness, costing departments thousands of dollars a year and leading to avoidable civilian death.

Police need to be better trained and equipped to handle mental health issues. Police training ranges from 10 to 36 weeks, and inevitably this has led to inexperienced officers with insufficient training for complex situations and the escalation of high pressure situations. According to the Treatment Advocacy Center, mental illness is involved in at least 25% of fatal police shootings, and this number could be lowered with additional preparation.

Finally, police funds should be reallocated into different programs. According to The Cut, redirecting police funds into the community programs like schools, medical centers, rehabilitation centers, housing, and food deserts can actually help deter crime. Government-funded after school programs have been reported by youth.gov to increase the grades of 40% of students by giving children the opportunity to stay in schools and escape poverty and crime.

Police mismanagement and misconduct has gone on too long, and it’s time to demand major changes through legislation.

Executive action not enough for immigration reform

by **CLARE O’CONNOR**
REPORTER

On Inauguration Day, as notifications popped up on my computer detailing the slew of changes President Biden made on Day One, I felt relief. It was uplifting to think that so many changes I supported could become true with a simple signature. One was a pause on most deportations of undocumented immigrants for 100 days, while the new administration built plans for changing current immigration policies.



Clare O’Connor

When this decision was immediately met with a lawsuit from the State of Texas, my optimistic confidence wavered. Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton claimed Mr. Biden’s order would be too ex-

pensive and breach an agreement President Trump made only weeks earlier, promising to consult Texas on any plans for immigration.

This lawsuit — just two days into President Biden’s term — illustrates perfectly the failure of the last 12 years of immigration policy and makes me worry that President Biden might continue the same mistakes as his predecessors.

While Mr. Biden’s decision to use executive action to carry out immigration reform is designed to protect a large group of vulnerable people, the U.S. government needs to stop relying on executive directives to change immigration policy. The people whose lives are affected deserve to have a comprehensive and reliable system protected by law.

We need congressional change because executive action lacks the complexity and input required to truly address immigration. Immigration is a com-

“The U.S. government needs to stop relying on executive directives to change immigration policy. The people whose lives are affected deserve to have a comprehensive and reliable system protected by law.”

plex topic with myriad intricacies that must be addressed by a comprehensive policy, not a succinct directive focused on a single change. Legislation, unlike executive action, would provide a detailed framework to address the many contingencies, situations and consequences. Executive actions are useful for an immediate straight-forward change, but they cannot create the systemic reform warranted by the current broken immigration system.

Executive action is admitted-

ly easier to enact than legislation, which has to pass through both houses of Congress. Due to this growing divide, Congress has failed to pass laws to reform and modernize immigration policy, causing American leaders to resort to executive action. Congressional legislation is hard to pass but also hard to undo, which ensures stability for the people and businesses who rely on legal structures. Executive action is vulnerable to being challenged in court and easily changed or removed with any shift in executive leadership. For example, President Obama used executive powers to enact the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals policy. Later, the Trump administration tried to reverse the policy with their executive powers, leaving many “dreamers” unsure of their future. This instability continues in the Biden administration, which has already reversed Mr. Trump’s reversal. Now, real people are caught up in the le-

gal battle as federal and state governments argue in court. Officials released thousands of incarcerated migrants without considering where they would go, while the state of Texas is working to stop these releases.

Reliance on executive action results in an incomplete, fragile policy that leaves defenseless the tens of millions of people affected by immigration law. Young people must show our government that the current legislative stagnation on immigration does not reflect the changing values of America. Even in Democratic states, representatives benefit from tangible evidence that constituents want immigration reform, so they can push their own leadership to prioritize the issue. President Biden proposed a new immigration bill that will be put before Congress. Reach out to your congressional representatives, and tell them immigration reform is a priority to you.

First published on Feb. 17.

Shared spaces

Families come to understand distance learning, work lives

by **CAROLINE HOHNER**
ARTS CO-EDITOR

Just a year ago, the work lives and school lives of parents and kids existed separately. To parents, school meant quick hugs and goodbyes in the early morning outside Earl Shapiro Hall and gleeful pickups as classes ended. This hasn't been the case since last March due to restrictions during the coronavirus pandemic. Now, the work lives of parents and remote learning for kids happen just rooms away.

While working in close proximity to young kids is not without its difficulties, parents have discovered a silver lining to working and learning from home: distance learning allows them to better understand what their kids do all day, and vice versa.

U-High physics teacher Matt Martino spends his days fitting parenting and teaching into one schedule. His fourth-grade son and first-grade daughter are both attending Lab remotely.

"It's very hard to balance the attention that [my daughter] needs during her school and in between her sessions of school with the time that my wife and I have to, you know, to give it to her," Mr. Martino said, "and we're relatively fortunate because we were able

to schedule our actual, you know, synchronous class instruction so that it didn't overlap."

Melissa Steger, a lower school counselor, said sharing spaces can be stressful for both kids and parents. She would know, as she regularly balances working with third graders with her responsibilities as the parent of a second grader and a 3-year-old nursery student. "It's wonderful to be able to be present and more involved and have more time with kids. But it's also challenging because both kids and parents aren't getting the autonomy that they're used to," Ms. Steger said. "No one is kind of getting that space that they need."

U-High English teacher Christine Himmelfarb's two older daughters are attending school in person at Lab, while her youngest, a 2-year-old, stays at home. Last year, while her older daughters were still learning from home, Ms. Himmelfarb was able to learn more about her daughter currently in Nursery 4 while helping her with her schoolwork.

"That part was a really nice thing, where I feel like I started seeing my daughter through the lens of her age, versus just as this like ever-growing kid who lives with me," Ms. Himmelfarb said.



MIDWAY PHOTO BY MALCOLM TAYLOR

COMING TOGETHER. History teacher Naadia Owens poses with her husband, Aaron Brunswick, and their daughter, Eden, in typical pandemic get-ups outside their home. Since schools transitioned to distance learning last March, parents like Ms. Owens have had to adjust to working near their young kids, and in the process, have gained insights into who their kids are as students.

"So I think, I don't know, that was actually a beautiful outcome that I had more insight into what a Nursery 3 classroom was like."

Mr. Martino said he felt a similar satisfaction watching his daughter learn from home.

"It's also fun to see their school in a way that we don't get to normally see [...] It's difficult to get my daughter to do her schoolwork, she's the one in first grade," Mr. Martino said. "But it's fun to get to see that product and those results in a way that you don't see as much when school is something that happens over there."

While parents are learning more about how their kids work, their kids are also picking up some of what the adults actually do all day as well.

"They have had a lot more insight into the kind of work that I do as a teacher," Ms. Himmelfarb said. "And there was a kind of a funny video I found on my computer, where my daughters were actually teaching on Zoom on my computer, like in a sort of pretend play way, and so I could see what they thought, like a teacher does."

For these high school teachers, understanding how their young

children learn has also given them a greater appreciation for the lower school teachers.

"My main takeaways," Ms. Himmelfarb said, "have been that nursery teachers and, like, first and second grade — those like teachers and young children deserve, well, maybe a lot more respect than they're given."

First published on March 10, 2021.



Scan this code to listen to audio extras.

Students struggle to shatter the silence in breakout rooms

by **CAROLINE HOHNER**
ARTS CO-EDITOR

Click. "Joining breakout rooms. It may take a few moments."

The gallery of tired students and an even more exhausted teacher is replaced by a white box warning that this transition may "take a few moments." One at a time, the faces of classmates fill the screen. The students stare at the little boxes or fiddle with their phones, unsure of how the next few minutes might pan out as they wait for a brave individual to unmute and break the silence.

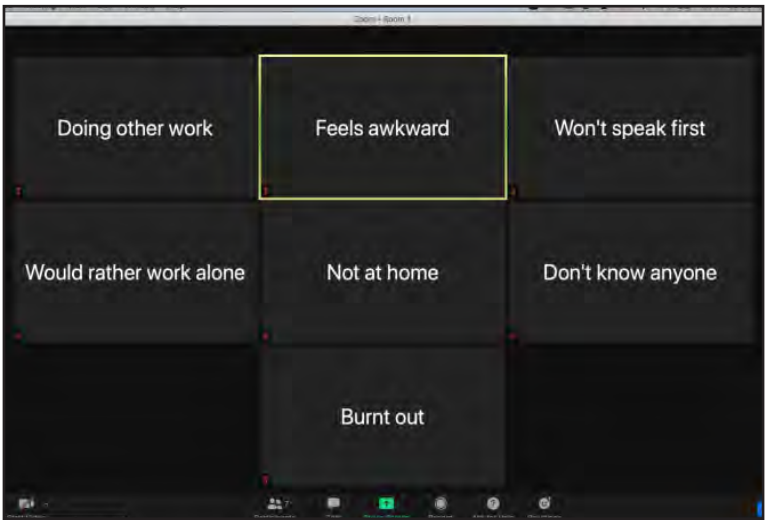
Breakout rooms may have offered the best alternative to small-group work available during the past year of distance learning, but the format doesn't work the same for every randomly generated group of students.

For some students, the awkwardness and lack of an obligation to participate leads them to wait out the minutes on mute. For others, the casual setting lets students converse easily and exchange ideas.

Some students go beyond ignoring the collaborative aspects of breakout rooms and choose not to participate at all, only bothering to fake lively conversation when a teacher pops in. Unlike an in-person classroom, breakout rooms are not supervised by a teacher



Charlie Brennan



SCREENGRAB FROM ZOOM

AWKWARD. Students often turn off their cameras and microphones in breakout rooms, making collaboration difficult.

until one pops in.

"In a classroom, there's some kind of pressure just by the teacher being with you, like, maybe do work, you might not necessarily want to do, but if you're in a breakout room, everyone could just stay silent," senior Charlie Brennan said. "No one has to actually work if they don't want to."

When checking in on his classes' breakout rooms, English teacher Ian Taylor has seen for himself the results of a mutual pact of silence.

"I'll go into a room and everyone's camera is off, and nobody's talking," Mr. Taylor said. "And I'll be like, 'Are you finished?' You know, like, 'What happened?'"

Sophomore Sydney Tyler, on the other hand, has had a relative-

"I think some of my friends definitely are more on the outgoing side and would normally start conversations in school, but now they kind of just, they either wait, or they like, go on their phone or start reading or something and just wait for someone else to start."

— SYDNEY TYLER

"You know, sometimes they're really doing a great job and talking and even sometimes debating with each other," Mr. Taylor said. "I hate when I put kids in groups, and they try to outsmart me by doing the divide-and-conquer thing — like, 'I'll do number one, you do number two and number three' — when I really want them to actually collaborate."

While Mr. Taylor dislikes when his students evade group-work, he encourages any kind of communication, even if it strays from the subject matter, at times leaving breakout rooms open for a little while longer to facilitate casual conversation.

Some of the more outspoken students who, before distance learning, would jump head-first into group work, have fallen silent.

"I think some of my friends definitely are more on the outgoing side and would normally start

conversations in school," Sydney said. "But now they kind of just, they either wait, or they like, go on their phone or start reading or something and just wait for someone else to start."

On the other hand, the low-pressure environment makes it easier for quieter students to contribute or ask questions.

"One of the upsides is that the group is a lot smaller. So maybe if someone is intimidated to ask a question in the main group, they'll ask the question in a breakout room," Charlie said.

Although senior Karina Escobedo enjoys contributing to breakout rooms, she finds the awkwardness of the virtual format can make it difficult to do so.

"I would say that it definitely inhibits my participation, because it just kind of gets awkward sometimes. And you're just not feeling engaged in it," Karina said. "It's like through a screen, it's not person-to-person."

Ultimately, breakout rooms, with all their faults and awkwardness, are virtually the only method of bringing group work to online learning.

"It's never going to be the same as in person," Mr. Taylor said. "I think that you can still have meaningful connections and exchanges with people online and in these groups, but never the same, it lacks the kind of energy that you have in person and the authenticity of being next to somebody. But it's as good as we can do."

First published on Feb. 25, 2021.

Zoom strains connections

Student-teacher connections get better in person

by **PETER PU**
MANAGING EDITOR

Student-teacher relationships, critical in the educational process, have had to be established virtually this year with only two synchronous sessions per week. The lack of opportunity to connect during unstructured class time has left students and teachers feeling detached. The awkwardness of synchronous sessions has led to office hours becoming a way for students and teachers to get to know each other.

For some students, in-class interactions with teachers and peers have become more tentative. English teacher Christine Himmelfarb has noticed that students ask fewer questions in class, but instead send her more questions by email.

“I think the reason has to do with twofold, it’s the pressure of unmuting and taking what a student perceives as the class time,” Ms. Himmelfarb said. “So everyone, you have this captive audience, everyone has to hear your question.”

Junior Ava Eggner has felt the pressure and awkward nature of unmuting in her classes.

“I’ve noticed that I participate a lot more in school than I do over Zoom and maybe I’m more inclined to ask questions when I have them because it’s less pressure and it’s not as awkward,” Ava said. “But even just like I feel like when I unmute myself, I have to ask that profound question that’s like, you know, well thought out.”

Without casual passing periods for informal conversations, even the couple minutes before class allows Ms. Himmelfarb to get to know the students who arrive early a bit better.

“Those students, I feel that I know better, because I actually talked to them, for even if it’s 30



MIDWAY PHOTO BY ELLIOTT TAYLOR

STAYING CONNECTED. Math teacher Julia Maguire jokes around with her remote students while teaching a class in person. It has been a challenge for teachers and students to get to know each other over Zoom, but they say that in-person class helps.

seconds or a minute, before my class each time. But for students who come right on time, or even, let’s say 30 seconds, a minute or two late, we don’t have that before class time,” Ms. Himmelfarb said.

With only two synchronous sessions a week, junior Alma Moskowitz uses office hours to enhance her understanding of class materials and to get to know her teachers a bit better.

“Normally, it’s because I want to improve my understanding of material. But I think that has really improved my relationship with my teachers, because not only do they understand that I genuinely care

about the material that they’re teaching in class, but they’re getting to know me more personally, because I’m able to have conversations with them more one on one instead of in a class environment,” Alma said.

For juniors, college recommendation letters may represent a culmination of the established student-teacher relationship. However, Alma Moskowitz is concerned that teachers may lack an understanding of students as people outside the classroom.

“Teachers see us in the classroom environment with our mics muted and we raised our hand

a couple of times in class to answer your question, but it’s not like they’re getting to know an individual as a person,” Alma said.

Ms. Himmelfarb said the letters of recommendation she writes usually reflect how students fit in the community and interact with others, but this year, they may be more focused on their academic performance.

“I think I do still have a pretty good sense from, you know, journals and papers and note-taking, and the participation I’ve seen in class, how they are independent students, but I don’t have a sense of them within a community in the

same way,” Ms. Himmelfarb said.

With the beginning of hybrid learning. Students who choose to opt-in may meet their teachers for the first time this year. Ava hopes that the situation will improve with in-person education.

“I’m hoping that being in class will help. I think that’s one of the main things that’s missing over Zoom is that it’s hard to communicate and you don’t necessarily have a good relationship with your classmates or teachers,” Ava said. “So yeah, I’m hoping that that will make it more comfortable and easier to participate and stand out.”

First published on April 13, 2021.

I.S. tech team links classrooms, homes during hybrid

Teachers find support with new technology

by **LUCIA KOURI**
CITY LIFE CO-EDITOR

Most members of the Lab community have seen them poking in and out of classrooms, walking through the halls or even visited their offices in need of tech-help. While members of the Information Systems team have always played a crucial role at Lab, they are currently taking on a more crucial responsibility than ever before.

Members of the IS team have played an instrumental role in Lab’s hybrid learning program, easing the transition for both students and teachers by helping bridge the gap between remote and in-person spaces.

Upon returning to school after more than a year of distance learning, teachers spanning from low-erschool to high school were introduced to a classroom technology system that allows students at home to connect with people that are at school. The general classroom setup includes a powerful microphone, speakers and a document camera.

According to Monika Bahroos,

interim director of innovation and technology, the goal was for this technology to be as user-friendly as possible.

“It should really just be secondary in nature,” Ms. Bahroos said about the teachers. “They come into a classroom and they are back into what they used to do, with technology not being something that they’re worried about.”

The IS team has been working hard to make this aspiration a reality, but navigating technology isn’t easy for everyone. While teachers all run their classes differently, most are making some type of use of this additional technology – and not always without difficulty.

Catharine Bell, an English teacher who has been regularly seeking help from the IS team, said navigating the new hybrid routine has been a steep learning curve.

“At the start, being old-school and lacking the foresight to imagine schooling during a pandemic, I knew how to record grades, write reports on PowerSchool, and hook up my laptop in the classroom,” Dr. Bell said. “That was it.”

Since then, the IS team has helped Dr. Bell and other teachers through workshops, personal videos, private sessions and even on-the-spot help.

“You have seen Anthony Gonzales come from his desk in IS in the

“At the start, being old-school and lacking the foresight to imagine schooling during a pandemic, I knew how to record grades, write reports on PowerSchool, and hook up my laptop in the classroom. That was it.”
— CATHERINE BELL

basement all the way to the third floor to help me out. Eric Schmidt, who used to be in charge of the Language Lab has also been a tremendous resource,” Dr. Bell said. “Often, I’ll ask a question and he’ll make a video to answer.”

Ms. Bahroos says this one-on-one time is a particularly valuable part of the IS team’s work.

“A teacher reached out and said, ‘Hey, you know I haven’t been in the classroom since last March, would you be willing to sit down with me and go over the tech in the classroom?’” Ms. Bahroos said. “We absolutely try and accommodate that, because we want our teachers to feel comfortable when they’re back in the classroom – and again – we understand that it’s hard dealing with folks at home and then folks in the classroom as well.”



MIDWAY PHOTO BY NICKY EDWARDS-LEVIN

COMPUTER WHIZ. Information Technology support specialist Anthony Gonzales works to help teachers navigate new technology through the transition to hybrid learning.

According to Ms. Bahroos, familiarizing students and teachers with technology isn’t necessarily just beneficial during hybrid learning, but instead could lead to long-term benefits if people can learn to use technology as a tool rather than seeing it as a burden.

“I think we always have an opportunity to do better,” Ms. Bahroos said, “to make Lab a better place, to meet our teaching needs and goals, and to serve our com-

munity.”
As Ms. Bahroos put it – perhaps technology is a step in the right direction. For now, however, many teachers still have a lot of learning to do, and, luckily, have a place to turn for help.

“Now, many teachers struck with the challenges of Hybrid are nostalgic for the days of just Zoom,” Dr. Bell said. “We teachers continue to be grateful to IS.”

First published on April 14, 2021.

Best CLUCK for your BUCK

There are not many comfort foods Americans love more than fried chicken. Even better, the crispy fried chicken sandwich, fit between a warm bun topped with sauce and pickles. It seems like the perfect meal wherever one may be. Different components can “make or break” its taste. But what exactly makes the best fried chicken sandwich? The crispiness of the breading? Fluffiness of the bun? Or maybe the sauce that adds just the right amount of spice. To find out, Midway staffers tried three chicken sandwiches popular throughout Chicagoland.



MIDWAY PHOTO BY MALCOLM TAYLOR

Honey Butter Fried Chicken • \$10
Avondale

An excellent take on a classic that hides a unique twist, Honey Butter Fried Chicken's honey butter fried chicken sandwich is the perfect combination of sweet and savory. As the menu explains, “The name says it all.” Golden fried chicken conceals the restaurant's custom honey butter, sandwiched between a fluffy and equally golden bun. The sandwich is a great example of comfort food, but its simplicity is its weakness. The mild spices fail to completely balance the combined sweetness of the butter and bun. However, the restaurant also offers three other sandwiches with more complex flavor profiles. For each sandwich sold, HB-FC donates a dollar to organizations which support communities of color. — CAROLINE HOHNER

The Budlong Fried Chicken • \$11
Three locations throughout Chicago

As its name suggests, The Budlong Hot Chicken's hot chicken sandwich is spicy — yet its combination of additional flavors and crispiness make it an excellent choice. The sandwich consists of a fresh-fried chicken breast, the restaurant's own “comeback sauce” and coleslaw fit between a fluffy brioche bun. The chicken's crispiness is exceptional and is one of the most successful components of this sandwich. The strong spiciness comes from the chicken's fried layer, providing an unexpected but welcome kick. The sauce and coleslaw work well to curb the spice, blending in sweet and cool flavors naturally. The restaurant offers three other levels of spice: Naked (no spice), Hot and X-Hot. There are also three Chicago locations. — MEENA LEE

Popeyes Lousiana Kitchen • \$4
Locations throughout Chicago

The Popeyes Chicken Sandwich, a project two years in the making by the iconic fast food chain, caused an uproar in 2019 as high demand led to a mad dash to try the sandwich before shelves cleared. The sandwich in question contains a fried chicken breast with pickles and cajun sauce on a brioche bun. It is the classic fried chicken sandwich. With the Popeyes fast food menu, a number of sides and sauces can be added to the original sandwich if there is a preference for spicing, seasoning or just something to break up the flavor. The chicken itself is sweet and crispy with an almost nostalgic and comforting taste. The sauce is not strong or very flavorful but does add texture to the sandwich. For a feel-good meal to eat at a nearby Popeyes or at home, this sandwich is the perfect option. — AMON GRAY

	PRESENTATION	FRESHNESS	FLAVOR	SPICE	CRISPINESS
Honey Butter	🐔🐔	🐔🐔	🐔🐔🐔	🐔🐔	🐔🐔
Budlong	🐔🐔🐔	🐔🐔🐔	🐔🐔	🐔🐔	🐔🐔🐔
Popeyes	🐔🐔	🐔🐔	🐔🐔	🐔	🐔🐔

OK: 🐔
GOOD: 🐔🐔
AMAZING: 🐔🐔🐔

Four steps to help you be financially literate

by **JULIAN INGERSOLL**
ARTS CO-EDITOR

Investing, card debt, checking accounts — these terms are what “adults” talk about. The topic is a complete eye roll and not on the radar for some high school students. As teens grow into the idea of being more self-sufficient and financially independent, these ideas circulate in the background being postponed until the time comes where there is no escaping it. The trick to making the topic seem less intimidating is to make a short list of all the basics one should know to become financially literate.

Financial literacy is the ability to understand and use different financial skills such as investing, budgeting and managing one's own funds.

Financial literacy is not something that is explicitly taught at U-High, but many clubs and groups take great interest in the idea. April is financial literacy month, so here are six things financial novices should be aware of.

1 Research. Finances are different for everyone, due to one's financial stability, the amount of loans someone has and other factors. But in order to step away from the uncertainty, doing a little research and trying to understand how financial literacy works and why it's important are crucial in making a genuine change in understanding. Assessing your understanding of finance is crucial before diving into investing and setting up accounts for yourself. Senior Zach Sharp, head analyst for the U-High the Finance Club, implores anyone getting into finance to do their research before starting any aspect of financial planning and to join the Finance Club for personal help and guidance. This is so you don't get conned, confused or caught in a situation that you have to dig yourself out of.

2 Budget. Sure, people “know” what it is and what it means, but have they taken the time to see how it might impact their future finances? Budgeting, in short, is planning your finances for the future. This ensures that people

know where their money is going and what they spend it on.

“It's just about information and awareness,” economics teacher Charles Disantis said. “You know what you have coming in, and you know what you have going out, and you keep track of it in a systematic way. If you don't do that, it's really hard to have sturdy finances.” Ways to practice this are to ask people at home how budgeting in the household works and their personal strategies for staying on top of their budgeting.

3 Invest. Investing and the stock market are a little more complicated than what meets the eye. Investing is an activity anyone can get involved in, but don't expect to be the Wolf of Wall Street in the first few weeks of investing.

Before diving in head first, study up on the basics. What is a stock? According to Investopedia, A stock is a portion of a company that someone can buy, meaning ownership of a fraction of that specific corporation. This also means that you are entitled to the assets and profits of that company. But de-

pending on the market, the prices fluctuate, and you can end up gaining money or losing money.

Some apps like Robinhood and Etrade can make investing seem very simple, but the problem arises when the apps make it easy to confuse investing with gambling.

“Even though these make it easier to invest, it also can make it feel like gambling, and there are major problems with that,” Zach said, “so you need to go into it with some sort of basis.”

Countless YouTube videos and books have helped Zach through his investment journey, and he hopes others will take his advice to do the same.

4 Credit card interest and debt. People aren't financially born into the world until they make their mark with their own credit card. As seniors and juniors become old enough to start getting credit cards for themselves, many responsibilities come along with what most people see as a plastic, or metal card. So what is this new form of spending money?

A credit card is not a right of passage to make it Christmas ev-

ery day, but it is two major things at one time. It can work as a debit card, but it is also a loan. As people pay with their credit card, they must pay back a certain amount at the end of the month — the sooner the better. The longer the holder of the card waits to pay the company the more the interest rates will increase, making it harder to pay off.

This is not a rite of passage to buy your mother a new car or to buy a new condo, but it is also a new way of proving that you are financially responsible and conscious of that responsibility.

To start small with investing, look up YouTube videos and read books such as “The Intelligent Investor” by Benjamin Graham, which comes highly recommended by the Finance Club. Investing is a great secondary source of income, and becoming familiar with the concept is a very helpful tool in the financial literacy toolbox.

When it comes to credit cards and debt, reading the fine print before signing. Keeping an eye out for your budget never hurt anyone.

As the years go on these topics will just be another part of life, when will you get involved?

A place to call (or bark) home

In fostering dogs and cats, senior develops deep relationships, appreciation for service

by **MEENA LEE**
CONTENT MANAGER

At 5 a.m., on Nov. 30, Sophie Raphael opens the door to let out two energy-filled foster puppies, Starsky and Hutch. They run outside to play in the fresh snow for the first time in their lives. Sophie watches the puppies' excitement with affection, and it is enough to make her forget the early hour.

For over three years, Sophie, a senior, has given a home to puppies like Starsky and Hutch to grow up in. Having fostered 10 kittens and 13 dogs from PAWS Chicago, Sophie developed deep relationships with her animals and learned how it feels to make an impact on others through service.



Annika Ludwig

Sophie's family began fostering almost a decade ago, when she was in third grade, but stopped when the family adopted their own second foster dog. In 2017, the beginning of her freshman year, Sophie's lifelong obsession with dogs compelled her to ask about fostering again.

"My parents had said, 'You can foster, but it has to be your own thing,' because puppies are a lot of work," Sophie said. "That was when I really started to do it on my own."

When she begins to foster a pet, Sophie picks up the animal from a PAWS Chicago medical center in Pilsen, where she gets young foster animals who often have medical needs. The foster animals tend to stay with Sophie in her Hyde Park home for about three weeks, though they can spend up to three months in a foster home depending on the severity of their medical conditions.

During that time, Sophie works a lot with the animals.

"I would go home during all my free periods to let the puppies out, because they can't really stay in their crates for too long," Sophie said. She needs to constantly watch the puppies, clean up after them and give them medicine.

Senior Emelia Piane, one of Sophie's good friends, has witnessed firsthand how much time Sophie spends caring for her foster animals.

"There have definitely been times where she says, 'Oh, I can't go, I have to watch the pets,'" Emelia said. "Sophie really loves them, but they're a lot of work for sure."

"My favorite thing, if they're either really sick or shy, is just seeing them get better and come out of their shells. It just feels so good to like, you know, nurse them back to health when we see them grow into big, happy cats and dogs."

— SOPHIE RAPHAEL

After fostering for a while, Sophie has found the puppies don't like to be alone.

"I'm such a softy that it's hard to crate-train them because I hate hearing them cry," Sophie said, "so I spend like 24 hours with them pretty much – it's just like a full-time job."

Despite the demanding task, Sophie really values the bond she has created with them.

"My favorite thing, if they're either really sick or shy, is just seeing them get better and come out of their shells," Sophie said. "It just feels so good to like, you know, nurse them back to health when we see them grow into big, happy cats and dogs."

The emotional bond, however, makes giving up the animals the most difficult part of the process.

"The longer you have them, the harder it is to say goodbye," Sophie said about one dog she had for three months. "I feel so much guilt, dropping them off at the medical center because I can't explain to them, 'I'm doing this because you need to go to a home forever.' I feel like they just think I've abandoned them, which is so hard."

Sophie is thankful a few of her foster animals were adopted by people in Hyde Park like junior Annika Ludwig, who adopted Iko, a German shepherd hound dog mix Sophie fostered in April. Knowing she can see them often makes giving them up a lot easier, Sophie said.

"Sophie walks up and you can see Iko's tail just starts to go crazy, and she gets so excited," Annika said. "She just jumps all over Sophie and licks her. It's a pretty sweet reunion whenever they see each other."

Ultimately, fostering dogs has given Sophie a greater appreciation for service. She makes a connection between her work fostering and volunteering at La Rabida Children's Hospital, a specialty hospital for children with lifelong medical conditions.

"It makes me sad sometimes, kind of in



MIDWAY PHOTO BY MIRIAM BLOOM

PUPPY LOVE. Sophie Raphael poses in front of her house in November with two dogs she was fostering at that time. Having fostered 10 kittens and 13 dogs from PAWS Chicago, Sophie developed deep relationships with her animals and learned how it feels to make an impact on others through service.

the same way that it can be heartbreaking to be at La Rabida," Sophie said. "But I've realized that I'm doing something good for them. That makes it easier. It makes it more

valuable. It would be hard to let yourself do that if you don't see the benefit or the reward that you're giving to others."

First published on Dec. 7, 2020.

Post election, activism shifts to local, specific issues

by **AMANDA CASSEL**
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Scrolling through Instagram, Santana Romero sees a graphic with information on how to help children detained at the U.S.-Mexico border. She shares it. Santana, a ninth grader, notices how different the content of her story is now compared to just six months ago during the heat of the election. Rather than post after post about getting out the vote, her posts call for action around the most important issues to her: immigration reform and police brutality.

This is just one example of how students, comforted by having President Joe Biden in office, have shifted their activism from frantic and political party-specific to more local and issue-driven.

"I'm optimistic because I know just from the get go, that he's going to have more positive effects than Donald Trump," Santana said about President Biden. "But I think that we should be cautious, because if we just assume things, then that's when activism starts drifting and stops."

Similar to Santana, senior Eliza Doss said the presidential tran-

sition of power brought a general sense of calmness and eased her stress about politics.

"I feel like I can go a day without checking the news about what terrible thing has happened, and what's coming out and what tweet has been said," Eliza said. "I feel like people our age, we don't really remember much about Obama's presidency, but it feels like we're going back to normal where there isn't a constant scandal going on."

Comparative Politics teacher Christy Gerst said not only has she seen students be less anxious about the presidency, but they are also more focused on local and specific issues.

"Students are more zeroing in on issues, right? Rather than platforms," Ms. Gerst said. "And it's interesting about political participation, because a lot of it revolved around the election. So in a post-election environment,

what does that mean? And so you see students in lots of different areas, some of which are related to school clubs, some of which are related to community organizations around Chicago, as well as issues that are central to Chicago."

According to Santana, her advocacy using social media has become much more focused in this way.



Eliza Doss



Christy Gerst

that, like, you need to vote and you need to have your voice heard, and so then that was it," Santana said. "But now you have to be much more focused about what you post about. It has to do more than an election graphic did, and you have to really care about it."

Both Santana and Eliza believe it is important to make sure their

Instagram graphics result in some sort of action.

Eliza said, "I want the things I repost to do something like helping educate people, or I'm very into election-based stuff, so letter writing and that kind of thing, just sharing the information."

She added that simply sharing is not enough.

"Otherwise, it's just sort of performative and ends up being the same kind of activism as only doing something to get into college," she said.

To Santana, graphics that don't cause someone to take action can often do more harm than good.

"Just showing, like, video clips of actual people of color, the injustice that is actually happening to them, I don't think that's very effective because I think that can also be very damaging mental health-wise," Santana said.

According to Ms. Gerst, education-based activism is something she's consistently seen with U-High students, but particularly now as her Comparative Politics classes students approach analysis of political action.

"What I see is a real openness

"I'm optimistic because I know just from the get go, that he's going to have more positive effects than Donald Trump, but I think that we should be cautious, because if we just assume things, then that's when activism starts drifting and stops."

— SANTANA ROMERO

to the education," Ms. Gerst said. "They're not quite aware of those public policy intricacies and have a real desire to be more knowledgeable. Right, so more of an openness, as opposed to a stance."

Ms. Gerst said this interest and focus in politics is in the DNA of Lab students.

"It's uniquely Lab," Ms. Gerst said. "Throughout its history, Lab students have been at the vanguard of political expression, and that's a right that's afforded to them by the University of Chicago's principles. Lab is like a century-plus institution, and having these kinds of focuses and conversations, it's a big part of who we are."

Outdoor spaces diminish stress of pandemic

Teachers spend time outside to escape, relax

by AMON GRAY
ASSISTANT EDITOR

On a rainy evening during the summer of 2020, math teacher Shauna Anderson took her daily run to the Garden of the Phoenix in Jackson Park. She was alone because of the rain and it reminded her of Kyoto, Japan, a city known for its beautiful outdoor spaces.

During the pandemic and distance learning, teachers have found that outdoor spaces have been a place to develop hobbies and escape from the mundane parts of the city and Zoom.

Chemistry teacher Zachary Hund has enjoyed having a spacious backyard in the suburb of Flossmoor as a space for himself and his family. Dr. Hund said he and his family spent most of their time before the winter out in their backyard and their neighborhood to ensure that his young children got enough time outdoors.

“There’s nothing, to me, better than sitting out there with a fire pit surrounded by trees and my children’s playground and enjoying the peace of my own space,” Dr. Hund said.

P.E. teacher Tom Piane recommends his students to stay active outside as much as possible. Mr. Piane enjoys walking and biking with his family in Bemis Woods Forest Preserve, part of the Forest Preserves of Cook County in the west suburb of Westchester.

“When we’re on that bike path, we stop at a bridge to watch and hear the water going over the rocks,” Mr. Piane said. “There’s also woods to explore around there



MIDWAY PHOTO BY AMON GRAY

ONE WITH NATURE. The Lakefront Trail is an 18-mile path that follows the Lake Michigan shoreline. Since Shauna Anderson was used to running on the lakefront, she was glad to discover different outdoor locations.

and you can find animal tracks like deer and raccoons.”

Ms. Anderson has found places closer to her home in the Woodlawn neighborhood to run and exercise. Since the lakefront reopened for recreation in late spring, Ms. Anderson has enjoyed the view of the city from Promontory Point, but she said she’s glad to have discovered the other spaces she did during the summer.

“Those places, the Japanese

Garden and Washington Park, were the COVID silver lining for me because I was so used to running on the lakefront,” Ms. Anderson said, “so the fact that I had to find someplace else to run, and I could discover those places by necessity, was actually a good thing.”

Outdoor spaces during the pandemic have also opened up opportunities for expanding hobbies. Librarian Susan Augustine has been able to put more time and effort

into her backyard garden. Ms. Augustine also enjoys walking at Bobolink Meadow in Jackson Park and in Graceland Cemetery on the North Side.

“I think that nature is the antidote to Zoom,” Ms. Augustine said. “It’s tactile, it’s physical, it’s peaceful. It relaxes me and it brings me joy and it makes me feel like the earth is going to be OK.”

This past year, outdoor spaces have been places where teach-

ers can find things in their lives to counter the stress and tedium of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“I think it’s really important to get out and get refreshed and do that outside,” Ms. Anderson said. “It just gives me a whole different mindset when I’m outside and I’m wearing my mask, and to get a break from the monotony and the screen time and the Zoom calls is just very refreshing.

First published on Feb. 10, 2021.

Students acquire new lifestyles with their extra time

by CAROLINE HOHNER
CO-ARTS EDITOR

A few years ago, junior Ben Sachs sat in a car on a road trip, listening to his mom read out a Facebook article about a farm sanctuary that rescued animals from the animal products industry. While the article was hopeful, it led Ben to question what about the industry was so brutal that those animals had to be saved from it.

That experience inspired Ben to become a vegetarian. Yet, it wasn’t until U-High transitioned to distance learning last spring that he transitioned to a vegan diet.

Throughout the pandemic, some U-High students have taken advantage of extra down-time and classes near the kitchen to drop animal-based foods from their diets.

While Ben entered the pandemic as a vegetarian, he has since taken up a vegan diet out of both concerns for the environmental impacts of animal agriculture and the well-being of the animals themselves.

Given the wide variety of foods containing dairy products, Ben found it difficult to avoid them in the cafeteria or at restaurants near school.

“But now that I’m home,” Ben said, “I’m not really going out anywhere. I’m a lot more creative. And my dad was cooking a lot, and so we were just able to kind of eat vegan pretty easily.”

According to Ben, he’s had to be more creative with food, as he now has an even more limited range of ingredients to cook with since starting his vegan diet.

“You have to be more creative



MIDWAY PHOTO BY ADRIANNA NEHME

GOT VEGETABLES? Students have taken advantage of time at home and increased kitchen access to drop animal-based foods from their meals and replace them with vegan and vegetarian products.

in order to keep things fun,” Ben said. “So, we’ve just tried a lot of different things and just been able to branch out, because I remember when I wasn’t vegan, [...] we would eat the same thing every week.”

Senior Alexandra Nehme became a pescatarian during the pandemic, meaning she now avoids meat but not seafood, after deciding to try it out last year when her mother gave up animal products for Lent, the six-week

period preparation for Easter in which Christians abstain from something in their daily lives. After Lent ended, Alexandra said, it was easy to drop meat from her diet.

“After I stopped eating meat during that initial period, I didn’t really have any desire to go back to eating it,” Alexandra said. “I think I realized that I personally don’t have much of a need for meat in my diet.”

But, according to Ben, those wanting to stop eating animal

products but worrying about cravings don’t have to cut themselves off completely or all at once. The adjustment can be easier when eased into slowly, Ben said.

Ben also encouraged people to have a reason for making the switch before doing so, to ensure they stay invested in maintaining the lifestyle.

Alexandra also offered some advice to new vegetarians on how to maintain a healthy diet without consuming animal products.

“If it’s something you want to stick with, you have to be invested in it because it’s not really a diet. I’d say it’s more of a lifestyle choice in a sense, and the diet follows that.”

— BEN SACHS

“Make sure that you’re getting in the right nutrients and getting in enough protein,” Alexandra said. “So you can look for alternate protein sources like beans, quinoa, there’s a lot of other options.”

According to registered dietician Lara Field, founder of FEED Nutrition Consulting, new vegetarians shouldn’t forget to work more veggies and whole grains into their diets alongside attempts to pack in enough protein.

“When trying to move towards a vegetarian or vegan diets, many people seem to get wrapped up in finding the right protein alternatives. However, it is vital to make sure you include the right veggies as well,” Ms. Field said. “Whole grains are also essential. Whole grains contain whole nutrition — protein, minerals and fiber — essential parts of a healthy diet.”

Veganism and vegetarianism are typically referred to as diets, but, as Ben explained, they’re more akin to a lifestyle.

“If it’s something you want to stick with, you have to be invested in it because it’s not really a diet,” Ben said. “I’d say it’s more of a lifestyle choice in a sense, and the diet follows that.”

First published on March 31, 2021.

Coronavirus cooking strengthens family ties

Students find community cooking together

by **ANATHEA CARRIGAN**
OPINION EDITOR

Over the sound of the mixer, sophomore Sarina Zhao barely hears her brother yelling “Heads up!” as he throws a big bag of chocolate chips her way. It creates a cloud of dust as it lands on the flour-covered counter.

Before picking up the chocolate chips, Sarina finishes measuring out the sugar she needs to add. In between classes, they’re whipping up their favorite sweet treat, chocolate chip cookies.

Students at Lab have been using their extra time at home to hone their cooking and baking skills, strengthening their familial relationships in the process.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, Sarina has been trying to find ways to be more creative. Noticing that her family had been eating at home more often, she decided that cooking and baking would fit her need for a creative outlet.

“I’ve cooked dinner for my family several times, which is something I’ve never done before,” Sarina said.

The meals she’s cooked have had varying degrees of success.



MIDWAY PHOTO BY CHLOE MA

DISHING DINNER. Sophomore Sarina Zhao’s family prepares dinner together. Extra time at home has allowed students to share more moments cooking and bonding with family.

“When I cooked chicken soup with my family, it turned out well,” Sarina said, “but my brother and I tried making a dish out of mung bean pasta once, and that ended pretty badly.”

Sarina has also found her new creative hobby to have practical uses.

“Cooking is definitely a skill I should develop at some point,” she said. “Cooking dinner is just also a great way to help out around the house.”

Senior Zach Sharp has also been cooking for his family, but he has been focusing more on strengthening his skills for upcoming years.

“I’ve been learning knife techniques and meal prep from my mom,” Zach said. “I am going off to college soon, so I believe that it is an important life skill. I want to know how to cook so I can cook for other people, and so I won’t have to eat out all the time.”

In addition, Sarina finds cook-

“I’ve been learning knife techniques and meal prep from my mom. I am going off to college soon, so I believe that it is an important life skill. I want to know how to cook so I can cook for other people, and so I won’t have to eat out all the time.”

— ZACH SHARP

ing and baking to be beneficial to her mental health.

Oftentimes, she’s the one helping her parents cook. But when she’s cooking alone, she notices she has a helper of her own: her 9-year-old brother, Kingston.

“Sometimes I’ll be cooking something and my brother will be following me wanting to help. So I’ll have him cut vegetables or something like that,” Sarina said. “It’s like having my own personal sidekick.”

Sarina’s favorite foods to cook are those where the entire family can get involved, whether it’s tossing chocolate chips, chopping celery, or stirring the soup pot.

“One of my favorites is chicken soup. There’s so much to do; everyone can get involved,” she said. “It’s always a fun, family food.”

First published on Jan. 27, 2021

Face masks fit any occasion

Masks have become latest accessory for fashion, function

by **JULIAN INGERSOLL**
ARTS CO-EDITOR

Phones, purses, jewelry — and now surgical masks. The pandemic has taken many things from us, but one thing that it gave us was a new accessory everyone carries and wears all the time, visible for the world to see.

For more than a year, people have worn masks not only to protect themselves from COVID-19, but also for fashion.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that the public still wear masks for the next few months, what kind of mask should you wear, and which masks should you avoid?

Masks that are breathable are essential but they still need layers of filtration. A mask that is see-through or a mask that can rip or break easily is not recommended especially when one is reliant on that mask for the day.

KN-95: When it comes down to it, it doesn’t matter if your mask is covered with bright colors and glitter if the mask doesn’t actually work. The KN-95 mask is a popular disposable mask, and can be used for any event or outing. It’s not a fashion statement but they are reliable because of their cloth-like material and their laminated edges that make for a sturdy, reliable face covering. These masks usually come in black or white and are worn by those who choose to just wear a mask instead of a fashionable accessory. You can buy these in bulk and keep spares around.

Surgical masks: You haven’t been seeing off-duty surgeons around the city. Surgical masks have been quite popular during the current pandemic. Their lightweight and basic material has made them a national favorite.

“Given that they are uniform-



MIDWAY PHOTO BY AMON GRAY

MASKUP. Masks have become an essential day-to-day accessory for people across the world. In the next few months, which masks are worth discovering and which are worth throwing out?

ly made and consistently used in a hospital setting,” senior Andrada Nicolae said, “I feel confident that they are protective, which is sometimes less clear with cloth masks made by different brands.”

Andrada also said that they are easy to fit around her nose and stay securely on her face.

Since the CDC recommended in February that two masks are more effective, some people wear a surgical mask as a base layer for their other face coverings, usually because people would appreciate wearing a more stylish mask over the more basic model.

Under Armour Sportsmask: Under Armour masks are thick yet breathable and are very well ventilated. These \$30 masks are becoming increasingly popular among athletes as the sports seasons continue. Senior Danny Han wears an Under Armour mask every day to his practice. He said he is able to breathe in it very well during physical activity.

“They also dry very quickly and don’t stay wet like other masks,” Danny said. “The best part, though, is there is space in between the mask and my mouth, so I’m never breathing it in.”

3M Daily Face Mask: To pre-

vent throwing away face masks every day, the 3M Daily mask comes highly recommended and is worn throughout the Lab community. It comes with an extra layer of protection across the face horizontally as well as vertically.

“The 3M daily style of mask works for me because it gives me a little space to breathe without a compromise for safety,” senior Graham Waterstraat said. “Other masks have caused more irritation for me, especially the chin and nose.”

This mask is super high on the comfort scale, and is reusable. This mask keeps your face covered and comfortable at about \$14 for a three-pack.

Athleta Mask: The Athleta face mask is a \$15 mask that is not only fashionable, but is also double layered for extra protection.

“The Athletica face mask’s nose wire makes the mask fit really well, and its double layers make it feel a lot safer,” senior Emelia Piane said. “Not to mention the wide variety of fun colors.”

Breathable fabric is a must for daily masks, so an Athletica mask is a perfect choice for a fun mask that comes in various sizes and colors for any occasion.

In-person workout classes kick back up

by **ADRIANNA NEHME**
ASSISTANT EDITOR

In a candle-lit studio surrounded by motivational phrases, senior Eva Platz Walker rides a stationary bike in sync to music during her SoulCycle class.



Eva Platz-Walker

workout classes.

Eva used to attend classes at SoulCycle about five times a week, but once the pandemic began, she purchased a SoulCycle bike for her house as a replacement. Despite being able to tune into live or pre-recorded classes and listen to similar music as she would in a regular SoulCycle class, doing the workout alone separated her from the other SoulCycle riders.

“When you’re in person it feels like you’re part of a community, but when you’re doing it online, you feel like you have to work out,” Eva said. “It’s not like the process of going to the studio, meeting people and changing your shoes in the locker room.”

Kellen Townsend, a senior instructor at SoulCycle, who is originally from St. Louis, teaches eight classes a week on a reduced schedule due to the pandemic. Mr. Townsend appreciates the in person classes as they have introduced him to numerous individuals from different backgrounds.

“It’s been cool to build a community and get to know people since everybody comes from a different lane in life,” Mr. Townsend said. “It’s just a great way to learn more about different people and cultures and see what Chicago looks like since I’m not from Chicago.”

When the pandemic began,

Mr. Townsend stopped teaching for four and a half months but resumed toward the end of the summer. According to Mr. Townsend, he feels safe teaching, despite the ongoing pandemic since SoulCycle changed the way the daily business is run through factors that include continuous disinfection of equipment, an upgraded air filtration system and enforced social distancing.

Similarly, junior Ashley Hannah has been completing workout classes at a gym and has attended hot yoga classes at Ritual Hot Yoga during the pandemic. When going to both, Ashley said her temperature was checked, had to wear a mask at all times and was asked if she had any symptoms suggestive of infection.

Despite the enforced safety guidelines, Ashley said there are frequently members at her gym who don’t comply.

“Because it’s a gym connected to a college, there are kids who don’t care about COVID-19, and they take off their masks, so I try to stay away from them because that doesn’t make me the most comfortable,” Ashley said.

Ashley also found it difficult to complete the hot yoga class with the enforced safety guidelines as she had to wear a mask in a hot room and didn’t have the instructor in the same room as her, but instead had to listen to instructions on a loudspeaker.

Mr. Townsend, on the other hand, prefers the safety measures because he can continue building a close community and strong relationships with the other SoulCycle riders.

“I like that the classes are smaller right now because it lets me know people better, and it allows for a less formal format in the class,” Mr. Townsend said.

Regardless, Ashley still prefers going in-person because she can build a similar community and feels more motivated when surrounded by others.

RACIAL JUSTICE

Community organizations demand reparations from university

by **MEENA LEE**
CONTENT MANAGER

Since 1901, a bronze plaque hung in Hutchinson Commons on the University of Chicago campus, which honored the contributions of Stephen Douglas, an Illinois politician and lawyer. Last summer, the university removed the plaque in an attempt to condemn Douglas’ historical ties to slavery.

While the university has taken the first steps to address prior connections to Douglas, some community organizations believe that this act of symbolism is not enough, arguing that recognition of the institution’s past must go a lot further.

Community organizations on the South Side argue that the connection between the university, slavery and harm done to the people on the South Side run a lot deeper than the university currently acknowledges. In response to the university’s history, organizations demand collaboration with the university for reparations that will meet community needs.

Founded in 2017, the Reparations at University of Chicago Working Group, or RAUC, published a paper in 2018 exploring the ties between Sen. Douglas, the Old University of Chicago, and the current University of Chicago founded in 1890.

In the article, the RAUC explains that Stephen Douglas, a congressman and later a Senator from Illinois, in 1847 married into a Southern family that enslaved Black people in Mississippi. He amassed a huge profit from this exploitation, began buying real estate in Illinois and purchased land in what is now Bronzeville. In 1855, he donated this land to the new institution of University of Chicago. Though gaining land allowed the university to build legitimacy and connect with more donors, ties to Douglas ultimately damaged the university’s reputation. The board decided to rename the university



MIDWAY PHOTO BY ELLIOTT TAYLOR

RACIST ROOTS? Until summer 2020, Hutchinson Commons on the University of Chicago’s campus displayed plaques honoring former Illinois senator Stephen Douglas, who had strong ties to slavery.

ty to “The Old University of Chicago,” which eventually fell into debt and declared bankruptcy in 1866. In 1890, the current University of Chicago as it is known today was founded, without any official legal ties to Douglas.

Even with these changes, the RAUC argues in their paper that “the University of Chicago owes its entire existence to slavery.”

President Robert Zimmer disputed this connection over the summer after the RAUC argument that the old and new universities were linked. Mr. Zimmer said that Douglas died in 1861, and had no ties with the current University of Chicago founded in 1890.

Though it was a new institution by name and by law, half of the new university’s board members had direct ties to the Old University. Additionally, it had many of the same donors, faculty and resources as the Old University, and they were essential in building the university’s prestigious legacy.

David Johnson, a first-year mas-

ter’s student at the Harris School of Public Policy, works as organization liaison for the RAUC. Mr. Johnson believes that even though the University of Chicago is not the only university in the country to owe reparations, it is in a unique place to mend the harms it has caused.

“We begin to analyze the university’s own practices after slavery. You know — with racial restrictive covenant, with gentrification, with UCPD — all of these abuses that have kind of subjugated that community, the South Side,” Mr. Johnson said. “It really has the potential and the grounds to do something that’s never been done before, but is still owed.”

U-High history teacher Paul Horton believes that although the university has no legal obligation to pay reparations, it has a moral and ethical obligation, especially if money from the Douglas estate had been donated to the university founded in 1890. He also noted that it was possible that donations

to the university may have come from Southern families who enslaved people.

“If we find that there are major benefactors of the University of Chicago who come from Southern families who owned slaves, who profited from slavery, then we should pay reparations,” Mr. Horton said. “Some more research needs to be done about that beyond Stephen Douglas.”

According to Mr. Johnson, reparations could come in many forms. They would likely be direct reparations to the descendants of those enslaved by Douglas, or investments into the South Side community focused on education, housing and healthcare. The most important aspect is that reparations are organized not just by the university, but by the community.

“It kind of looks like charity because they’re deciding what they want to do, if they want to do it, how much they want to give, but that defeats the purpose of what the repair is supposed to be,” Mr.

Johnson said. “It will always fail if the victims or the survivors are not at the forefront of this conversation.”

The removal of the Douglas plaque last summer was an example of what happens if the university does not consult any organizations. According to Mr. Johnson, there was no communication from the university regarding the plaque and that no community group had asked for it to be pulled down.

“Of course, it’s a good step in the right direction,” Mr. Johnson said. “But if you are just gonna do things without putting these different organizations at the table, then you continue to have that chasm between those different groups and between the university, and you really never unify because you’re not doing it with cohesion.”

Mr. Horton believes the university community needs a deeper reconciliation with its past of gentrifying Hyde Park.

“We need to talk about these things, we need to have serious talks about it, and the university needs to encourage these talks,” Mr. Horton said. “We need to get beyond lip service with diversity and we need to get beyond symbolism. The university needs to go much farther than it has.”

The conversation about reparations from universities has been happening nationally for a few years. Schools such as Georgetown University, University of Virginia and Brown University have taken steps toward reparations, yet Mr. Johnson said the University of Chicago has not recognized the efforts of the RAUC or other organizations.

“It really doesn’t make sense that they would not acknowledge our presence, not acknowledge our efforts,” Mr. Johnson said. “Because, at the end of the day, it makes the university stronger when it recognizes this past harm and strengthens its own institutions by repairing those harms.”

First published on March 3, 2021.

Vital Bridges food pantry continues service in pandemic

by **GRACE HOLLEB**
FEATURES EDITOR

Pre-pandemic, Saturday mornings at Vital Bridges, the Englewood food pantry for people affected by HIV/AIDS, would feel like a family reunion. Friends would greet each other with bear hugs, and the characteristic smile of James Hoskins, food program coordinator, could light up the face of any customer.

Post-pandemic, few volunteers roam the building, packing food for contactless pickup. Some regular clients aren’t even aware that Vital Bridges has survived since March.

While food pantries throughout the United States have had a considerable uptick in number of customers, Vital Bridges is seeing half as many use their services — around 250 down from 500, according to Mr. Hoskins. The decrease in customers has led to new measures being taken to keep the community afloat.

Beyond the problems that many small businesses experienced through the pandemic, Vital Bridges has been dealing with unique issues. Many Vital Bridges clients do not have a safe way to



MIDWAY PHOTO BY ELLIOTT TAYLOR

STOCKED UP. The Vital Bridges food pantry in Englewood is filled with essential food supplies for people affected by HIV/AIDS.

get their food and fear the effects of contracting COVID-19 while already immunocompromised. To combat these obstacles, employees and volunteers have switched their tactics to communicate more directly with customers and started delivering food to homes in order to continue their mission of helping customers live healthy, independent lives with the disease they have.

“I hope with this vaccine now that things will open up a little bit

and we will be able to reopen the pantry on Saturdays,” Mr. Hoskins said.

Now, clients can pick up food from 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Thursdays and Fridays, whereas earlier they would also be able to pick up on Saturdays. Customers are not allowed inside the pantry, and contactless pick up is required. For clients unable to pick up food on the weekdays yet desperately need it, Vital Bridges works to deliver the food.

One volunteer helping Vital Bridges continue to serve customers throughout the pandemic is Dawn Stanislav, who began volunteering in 2008. Through her time, she has shopped, helped Mr. Hoskins with organizing, entered all the menus into the computer and now does almost all of Vital Bridges’ paperwork and extra tasks each week.

“It’s changed a lot now that the pantry is closed to clients coming into the building,” Ms. Stanislav said. “All I do is check the paperwork before clients are able to pick up their food. All the interaction and helping clients select food, all of that has gone away for right now, which is terrible.”

When the pandemic hit, many clients just assumed the pantry was closed. Many don’t have their own cars and have to use public transportation, so it was difficult to travel and get food safely, according to Ms. Stanislav.

To get the word out that Vital Bridges is still serving customers in all areas of need, volunteers have been calling each client on their list every week. Vital Bridges used to call clients, but stopped for confidentiality reasons. Only since

the pandemic have they continued this procedure.

“I was so glad to hear that that came back into play,” Mr. Hoskins said. “It made a tremendous difference.”

Ms. Stanislav agrees that regular contact with customers is making the biggest difference in getting clients to return to the pantry.

For now, Vital Bridges is doing the best they can with the resources allotted to them and are continuing efforts to contact customers.

“It’s amazing how word of mouth really spreads among the clients,” Ms. Stanislav said. “Once you can get in and pick your food I think we’re going to have an uptick of clients again. I’m hoping.”

While there isn’t the jovial atmosphere that Vital Bridges was known for pre-pandemic, the work of volunteers and staff members continue nonetheless to preserve their mission of helping all customers. And soon enough, Mr. Hoskins will greet old clients and newcomers with his characteristic smile and the same three words: “Get over here!” followed by a big hug.

First published on Jan. 29, 2021.

HIT HARD: Chicago Latinx communities face challenges combatting pandemic

by **ELLA BEISER**
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

With citywide COVID-19 positivity rates beginning to fall at last, for many the end of the pandemic seems within reach. However, positivity rates within Chicago's Latinx communities have remained high at 8.5%, more than two times the citywide positivity rate, according to the City of Chicago COVID-19 dashboard.

Senior Veronica Godina, president of Latinos Unidos, has seen the effects of the high positivity rates on her neighborhood, Brighton Park, on the city's southwest side.

"Basically, all of our neighbors are essential workers," Veronica said. "My dad works in the meat-packing industry. The rates of infection at those factories is insane. Most of our neighbors are also factory workers. There's really no one around that has the luxury of staying at home to do work, because they're factory jobs, you have to go there."

As a result of her father's job, Veronica and her family got COVID-19 earlier this year.

"The way that my dad's job is handling things, it's very easy to get infected and there's not very much space for social distancing," Veronica said. "I wish we had the luxury of my dad not being able to go to work and he could take some time off. Unfortunately, that's not possible."

Referencing the 2020 National Health Interview Survey by the U.S. Census Bureau, Spanish teacher Dinah D'Antoni said that during the pandemic the number of Latinx people reporting feelings of depression was double that of white people. Additionally, the survey found that 40% of Latinx people reported an increase in substance use, in contrast with 15% of other respondents.

Despite this, of the 100,000 people vaccinated in Chicago, over half are white, and just 17% are Latinx according to an article in the Chicago Sun-Times.

Veronica believes the city should be vaccinating communities of color even if they don't fall into the current 1B eligibility group because of how much higher positiv-



MIDWAY PHOTO BY ELLIOTT TAYLOR

PAINTING POWER. A colorful mural covers the wall of a building in the Pilsen neighborhood, located on the Lower West Side of Chicago. With nearly 30,000 Latinx residents, the Pilsen is one of Chicago's primarily Latinx neighborhoods.

ity rates are in those communities.

"Culturally, Latinx households tend to be multigenerational," Veronica said. "Even though not all of them are 65-plus or they're not all high risk, it's very important to begin vaccinating them, because, if not, the rates of infection are going to continue to increase because in one household, it's not four people getting infected, depending on how many people live in your household, it's like six, eight people."

However, the task is not simple. "My parents, they're immigrants from Mexico, and they're very skeptical of the vaccine. And it took a lot of explaining it to them because there's a lot of mistrust in medical stuff," Veronica said. "A lot of people have had the experience where they're not taken seriously, especially when they're Spanish-speaking people and they don't have anyone they can communicate with."

Veronica said many people in her neighborhood are undocu-

"The main thing that the city can do to build trust is make the COVID information more accessible to people who don't speak English at COVID testing centers."

— VERONICA GODINA

mented, which adds another layer of mistrust in the vaccination process.

"There's this distrust of the government knowing your name, basically just being very wary of everything," Veronica said. "They don't want to give their information over when trying to get a COVID test. And when they have to fill out the race and stuff like that, the immediate question is: Who's going to get this information? Why do you want it?"

To remedy this distrust, Dr. D'Antoni said elected officials should work with community organizations and nonprofits to spread information about the vaccine.

"They explain the benefits and the advantages, and they help

them to let them know that it's OK, that they reach out and they can go — they can get vaccinated," Ms. D'Antoni said.

The office of Alderman George Cardenas, whose 12th Ward includes Brighton Park, has compiled resources to help educate and mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Other Aldermen have also provided resources for their communities.

According to Veronica, a critical element to the success of the city's efforts is making information accessible in Spanish.

"The main thing that the city can do to build trust is make the COVID information more accessible to people who don't speak English at COVID testing centers," Veronica said. "I know some people don't want to go because

they're embarrassed about their English skills."

Reaching out to people at their jobs is another possible option, according to Veronica.

"Another way they could do it is like by having workers of the city go to the jobs, the factories and have representatives speak there, speak to the people," Veronica said, "so that the workers can have their questions answered is another great way to do it."

Dr. D'Antoni also believes that as more Latinx people begin to get vaccinated, trust will increase in the vaccine.

"I think the most important thing is to be equitable across the board and reach out to these communities that are underprivileged," Dr. D'Antoni said. "People of color, minorities, reach out to them, let them know: Yes, the vaccine is free, yes, it doesn't matter if you're documented or undocumented. It doesn't matter. Reach out and get vaccinated."

First published on Feb. 16, 2021.

StreetWise changes face of homelessness in Chicago

by **ADRIANNA NEHME**
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Lee A. Holmes repeats the phrase for what might just be the hundredth time that day: "Would you like to purchase a copy of StreetWise?"

People walk right past him. They pretend not to notice his green apron loaded with the latest edition of the StreetWise magazine — yet Mr. Holmes, a StreetWise vendor, remains unflustered and continues with his spirited pitch.

By presenting vendors like Mr. Holmes with employment opportunities, StreetWise has simultaneously provided many with a life outside of homelessness and changed perceptions about the homeless.

When a vendor joins StreetWise, they undergo an orientation, and as a reward are provided with 15 free magazines to sell. After the orientation, vendors pay 90 cents for a magazine and sell them for \$2, keeping the \$1.10 along with tips. Topics in the magazine range from local news to profiles and columns.

While Mr. Holmes was familiar with StreetWise long before, he only joined after experiencing homelessness.

"I went to one of their orienta-



MIDWAY PHOTO BY ADRIANNA NEHME

A HAND UP. Lee A. Holmes poses outside of a Mariano's in Roscoe Village, holding an old edition of StreetWise magazine.

tions at one of their old headquarters, and I was, like, "This is a scam, who does this?" Mr. Holmes said.

Despite Mr. Holmes's initial doubt, he immersed himself in the organization's programs such as the Transition to Employment Program, which prepares individ-

uals for finding jobs. He also appreciated that the organization provides vendors with basic necessities such as food.

What he found most valuable were the countless hours he spent working on the streets. Mr. Holmes constantly discovered new ways to attract individuals to purchase from him.

"The whole thing is about how do I get an individual that won't acknowledge me and won't speak to me to buy a magazine from me and become a loyal customer," Mr. Holmes said. "So every day or every other day you have to recreate your whole self."

However, attracting customers was often difficult for Mr. Holmes, since many refused to purchase from him based on the negative perception surrounding the homeless community. StreetWise hopes that vendors can form connections with those who pass by and help to alter these perceptions.

"I had a young lady come up to me and ask me what rehab center I came out of, and I looked at her like, 'Does it look like I am a drug or alcohol addict or something?'" Mr. Holmes said. "Would you rather have me have these magazines in my hand or a gun in my hand

taking your wallet? I think this is the better option for me."

According to Mr. Holmes, that same woman was inspired by his words and became one of his loyal customers.

Since vendors at StreetWise independently sell the magazine and are in control of their own profits, Mr. Holmes has picked up skills to expand his passion in entrepreneurship, which began at a young age.

"I was more interested in trading papers and was very fascinated about buying something for one price and selling it at another price," Mr. Holmes said. "I was able to generate or make money off of the little money that I had."

Although his business was successful, he had no concept for financial planning. After joining StreetWise, he learned how to budget his money and spend it on essential items.

Mr. Holmes has since recruited others to join StreetWise as vendors, including his new business partner Paula Green, who he met through family. Ms. Green sells the magazine and also takes pictures for it, which has helped guide her down a good track.

"I was basically homeless, and I didn't have any direction, but now

"The whole thing is about how do I get an individual that won't acknowledge me and won't speak to me to buy a magazine from me and become a loyal customer, so every day or every other day you have to recreate your whole self?"

— LEE A. HOLMES

I feel like I am a little bit more stable," Ms. Green said.

For the future, Patrick Edwards, executive assistant of StreetWise, hopes individuals who buy the magazine actually read it, and view StreetWise as the vendor's business rather than solely a donation.

"Aside from the support for the vendors, I want you to feel as if you got more than \$2 worth of information and experience what I like to call goodness," Mr. Edwards said.

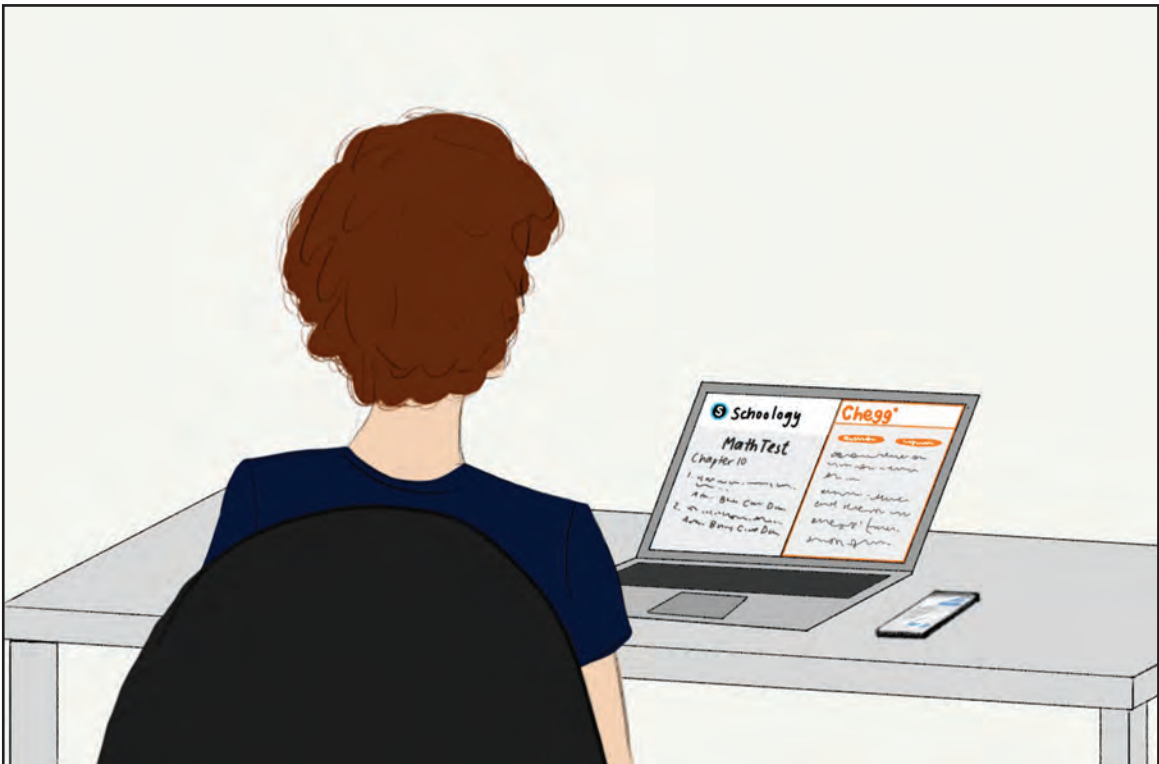
When his shift is over, Mr. Holmes packs his things and leaves the streets. However, his work is not finished. He returns to the area he resides to brainstorm possibilities to increase sales for the following day.

First published on Feb. 5, 2021.

Test Tension: *Cheating during hybrid learning*

Until March 2020, assessments were taken with pen and paper, under a time limit and the watchful eye of a teacher. With distance learning, everything changed. The Midway spoke with students, faculty and an administrator about how testing and cheating changed with distance and hybrid learning.

First published on March 17, 2021



MIDWAY ART BY ALINA SUSANI

Academic standards, challenges lead to cheating

by LUCIA KOURI
CITYLIFE CO-EDITOR
The Midway spoke with five students about testing and cheating in U-High's distance learning environment. Some of their names were withheld in this story.

Pencil, eraser, paper and two pages of blank questions waiting to be answered. The clock ticks. Close by lie notes, Google and a phone full of contacts. For many students facing a challenging test and little supervision, the option is clear. While some students continue to consider testing a crucial component of a quality education, pressure to meet Lab's high academic standards, difficulty absorbing material over Zoom and access to limitless resources on the internet have led many to resort to — and rely on — cheating. Like many, most of Student A's tests are open notes, a tactic that some teachers have adopted, hoping to discourage cheating by allowing students to use their notes to answer more difficult questions. However, when the time comes for Student A, a junior, to sit down and take a test — it's not just their own

notes that they're looking at. "Google is my friend," Student A said. "Yeah, I know it's wrong, but in the end it helps me get a better grade, which helps with a better GPA." While pressure to meet high academic standards has long been felt by students at Lab, according to Student A, distance learning amplifies this pressure by giving students an alternative and direct path toward better grades — one that is particularly compelling for people like Student B, a sophomore who feels like they simply aren't absorbing material as easily remotely compared to in-person learning. "I guess it's much harder to pay attention in class, and then I also know that if I ask someone a question, I won't necessarily get caught," Student B said. "It's kind of just like I have all the resources, you know, and it's very easy — especially when you don't necessarily know the material well." According to Student C, a junior, cheating has also increased in distance learning because of social changes, and the feeling that it is all right to cheat if friends are doing it too.

"I think many students think it's justified to use outside resources, especially their notes, because they believe that everyone else is doing it," Student C said. But these social pressures do not extend to every corner of the school. Sophomore Ameya Deo, who takes the majority of his tests on Zoom, has not noticed a tendency to cheat among peers. "I don't see people like asking, 'Hey, do you want to compare answers?'" Ameya said. "Whenever that does happen, it's after the deadline, but there's definitely no communication during tests or quizzes in class — people just aren't comfortable with that." According to Student A, academic dishonesty often isn't something people speak openly about. While some delve into the social aspects of cheating — like FaceTiming or texting friends — others, like Student A, cheat alone, fearing judgment of peers that do not appear to be cheating themselves. "When a student cheats, it's because they know they can. They know if they don't, they will fail, or because they don't want to be the only student who didn't do good," Student B said. "But when peo-

"The administration's not fully at fault, teachers are not fully at fault, students are not fully at fault. It's just a bad situation overall, and I think it has affected and it will continue to affect our educational experience — for some more than others."
— WILL TRONE, JUNIOR

ple know what I did, and when it's wrong — I get embarrassed." Ameya believes that even if cheating has become a more common occurrence, testing should remain in the curriculum. "The best thing I feel like teachers should do is maintain normalcy, and testing and quizzes is a part of the curriculum," Ameya said. "It also takes away kind of the intensiveness of the curriculum, something Lab really prides itself on — without tests and quizzes, I don't really have an incentive to remember a whole lot." Junior Will Trone believes some students' tendency to cheat will not go away, no matter how many

adjustments teachers make. "If students are going to cheat, they're going to cheat. Teachers can't build in the fact that students are going to cheat on their tests," Will said. Though Will has not had particular trouble in remote learning, he noted that students who are struggling academically have much more incentive to cheat. "There are a lot of people who are struggling significantly more, and people who have become reliant on cheating over remote learning, like, I could see that being, you know, a problem — and not necessarily a problem that's all their fault," Will said. "I think there's a lot of blame being thrown around that isn't necessarily warranted." According to Will, academic dishonesty isn't an issue of right and wrong that can be blamed on one specific group — it is much more complicated. "The administration's not fully at fault, teachers are not fully at fault, students are not fully at fault," Will said. "It's just a bad situation overall, and I think it has affected and it will continue to affect our educational experience — for some more than others."

To limit cheating, faculty adjust testing practices

by COLIN LESLIE
REPORTER
Before March 2020, most testing situations looked the same. A teacher would pass out a test, sit down at their desk and keep a watchful eye on any conversations or phone usage during any 45-minute assessment. But during the last year, distance learning has made it easy for students to cheat: to take a test on their computer while another browser tab is open, or to text their friend asking for help on a challenging question. Academic dishonesty has become easier during distance learning, and while the transition to some in-person classes could be used to supervise some students more closely during tests, some U-High teachers and an administrator do not view that as hybrid learning's main purpose. History teacher Christopher Janus said he prefers to test all students at the same time, and will

continue to do so. He said the increased possibility of cheating during distance learning has not affected his plans for testing during hybrid learning. "I'm assuming that people are not cheating, but if they are cheating that's their business and eventually they'll get caught for it and be punished," Mr. Janus said. "It's not something I shape my teaching philosophy around." Science teacher Elizabeth Hubin has used Schoology to test during synchronous class sessions this year. During hybrid learning, Dr. Hubin plans to continue this assessment form, with tests only on days that all students are remote. "I think that there's better ways of spending [in-person classes] than just sitting and taking a test, so while I'll still continue to have tests, I'm going to have them during our Zoom classes," Dr. Hubin said. Dr. Hubin said her tests focus on applying material rather than

memorizing it, which makes it less useful to use the internet to seek answers. Additionally, to try to alleviate the temptation to use outside resources, all of her tests are now open note.  Elizabeth Hubin "What sets scientists apart is their ability to digest scientific information and apply it and really have scientific literacy," Dr. Hubin said. "None of that is memorization; it's about really digging deeper into material." Similarly, science teacher Zachary Hund said the uniqueness of his test questions reduces the effectiveness of outside resources. His tests are also all open note. "I would like to think that my students are not using the internet to search for answers, which also goes into why I try to make

questions that are very unique and things you can't Google, at least for my AT Chemistry class," Dr. Hund said. While he hopes his students would turn to their notes before the internet when stuck on a question, Dr. Hund said he and teaching colleague Kenny Fournillier have taken steps to reduce the stress of testing so students feel less inclined to cheat. "With Chemistry C, Dr. Fournillier and I decided to drop the percentages pretty significantly in terms of how much an exam counts for," Dr. Hund said. "Hopefully, knowing that an exam really ends up actually being less than a homework, I would hope, encourages less students to cheat or think about cheating." Like Dr. Hubin, Dr. Hund does not plan to use in-person classes for tests. Instead, his classes will do experiments. "I am more worried about making the in-person experience

worthwhile, rather than using it as an excuse to give a locked-down assessment where I know students can't cheat, because the other thing, too, is half of my students are going to be remote, so there's no way to give everyone the same test anyway," Dr. Hund said. U-High principal Paul Beekmeyer said he hopes in-person learning will be enjoyable for all students who choose to return. "As always, assessment is set by the teachers in the department. As a school, I encourage us all to have a healthy balance between coursework, assessments and room just to be together and have fun as a community," Mr. Beekmeyer said. So while these tabs may stay open and these conversations may continue to happen, the goal for teachers in the format of hybrid learning is not to become a watchful eye over tests, but rather to capitalize on the opportunities presented by in-person classes.



MIDWAY ART BY AMON GRAY

Isolated at home, teenagers and adults alike are bored and looking for excitement. For some, drugs and alcohol seem like the escape. Without published data on how substance use relates to the pandemic, the Midway sought a clear picture of student use since March.

First published on Dec. 11, 2020

Experts unclear on teen substance use trends

by **CAROLINE HOHNER**
ARTS CO-EDITOR

With students managing U-High's large workload, isolated from their social circles and under the stress of living through a global health crisis, it takes no stretch of the imagination to count substance use as one of the many impacted behaviors of U-High students.

Yet, given a lack of statistics on teen substance use during the pandemic and seeming silence between students and high school counselors on the issue, it's hard to tell exactly how students' relationships with substances like alcohol, e-cigarettes and other drugs has changed in the past eight months during a pandemic and distance learning.

According to high school counselor Aria Choi, students have

been coming to the counselors for help dealing with heightened anxiety and depression during the pandemic. Despite this, she said no students have reached out to her about substance use.

This lack of communication is not new. Ms. Choi said in her four years at U-High, she has only talked about substance use with two students.

Just because students have not reached out to the high school counselors does not mean they have avoided substance use altogether. The 2020 wellness survey reported that 34% of U-High students have had more than a few sips of alcohol, 22% have used vapor products and 21% have used marijuana.

The high school counselors aren't the only ones finding themselves in the dark about how teens are using substances right now. There aren't many published studies on the topic, so knowledge directly about teenage substance use trends during the pandemic is also mainly speculative, according to Andrea King, professor of psy-

chiatry and behavioral neuroscience at the University of Chicago and a Lab parent.

"We don't know a whole lot because it takes time to get really good data and have it published, and peer reviewed, and all those things. So I know, these data are being collected," Dr. King said.

Even with hard data, it could be difficult to pin down a definitive trend. According to Dr. King, the impacts of the coronavirus on a teen's life and substance use habits vary geographically. Risk factors such as poverty and drug availability may also lead to various behaviors among teens.

"So there's probably going to end up being a mixed bag of some kids who might have gone on and used substances this year who aren't using them," Dr. King said. "That may be good, and it could delay the onset. And for others, it could deepen maybe some disturbing trends they already had."

Despite the lack of specific data, figures on general nationwide substance use and mental health may provide a slightly clearer picture of

teen substance use as influenced by the pandemic.

A study published in August by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention showed the pandemic had the greatest impact on the mental health of young adults ages 18-24, with nearly 63% of respondents in this age group reporting symptoms of anxiety or depression related to the pandemic, and around 24.7% turning to substance use as a main coping mechanism.

A recent study of 3,300 high school students published by America's Promise Alliance showed that 30% of respondents reported feeling depressed or unhappy, while 29% felt disconnected from their school communities.

U-High counselor Michael Bruner is concerned about the new role isolation plays in teen substance use, and encourages students to seek support.

"Many students are reporting feeling disconnected. So I certainly worry about those things and my hope is that students, if they're feeling those things, they're able

to reach out to resources that they have available to them," Mr. Bruner said. "That might be family, that could certainly be the counselors here at school, other adults that they're close with and even their friends to some extent, especially friends who are able to engage with them in healthy ways."

Dr. King suggested that students struggling with addiction avoid substance-using friends who aren't similarly committed to getting clean and look into online resources like Partnership to End Addiction or talk to trusted adults.

According to Dr. King, setting up time away from a substance can also help students experiment with finding alternative coping mechanisms.

"I suggest at least one month to give enough time to make these lifestyle changes, and three or more months is even better," Dr. King said. "Many find that they have better alternatives and decide using drugs makes them feel worse in the long run and having this time away from using helps to make that clear."

Bored, desperate for stimulation, students turn to substances

by **AN NGO**
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Five U-High students, each a current or former substance user, agreed to speak with the Midway on the condition that their names be withheld.

Get up. Attend classes. Log off. Finish homework. Sleep. Repeat.

For most students, every day has felt like this since school began in September. This routine quickly became dull, leading people to seek excitement.

"Reality was just kind of boring, and that made me want to alter my reality by doing drugs," one senior said.

For every student, substance use looks different — the substances, the volume, the context, the reason — and it has only diversified since the March stay-at-home order took affect.

But months of the pandemic have brought one commonality to many teen users: substances feel like a remedy to the seemingly

endless hours of boredom and loss of a normal teen experience.

Spurred by boredom, some students are curious about trying drugs and alcohol and having their first experiences alone at home.

One ninth grader said though she had tasted some wine with her parents, her first time drinking without the consent of her parents was by herself, in her room as she planned an all-nighter for school work in November. Craving excitement, she went downstairs to her parents' liquor cabinet.

"I was bored," she said about her first time trying vodka. "I was like, 'Ooh, let me be crazy' and I'm like, 'Have some of the vodka.'"

For students who used substances pre-pandemic, their substance usage increased. Junior A's use escalated dramatically until she decided to stop using pills.

"I'm 17 days clean from pills. So that's pretty cool," Junior A said. "I didn't realize how bad my situation was until I stopped taking them."

She explained that she even ex-

perienced withdrawal symptoms.

"I felt so sick," she said. "I couldn't eat without getting sick, and my body ached so much."

Prior to the start of distance learning last March, Junior A said she was smoking marijuana and using hallucinogens regularly, but ever since, she's started drinking alcohol more frequently and using harder drugs like opioids, cocaine and MDMA.

Stuck at home, her use escalated because drugs and alcohol became something she could look to for entertainment.

She decided to stop using pills when her friend intervened.

"I just saw how much my friends hated seeing me like that, and that hurt me, hearing my friends share their concern for me, that made me cry," she said.

While Junior A's substance use changed due to a friend's intervention, for some students who only drank and smoked in social contexts, isolation has interrupted their substance use habits.

"I just saw how much my friends hated seeing me like that, and that hurt me. Hearing my friends share their concern for me, that made me cry."

— JUNIOR B

One such sophomore feels that the constant uncertainty of the pandemic encourages him to make the most of his time with his friends.

"You don't know if you're going to be hanging out with your friends for a while, because you don't know if cases are going to start getting worse. You don't know if your parents will make you lock down at home and you won't be able to go out and see your friends," he said. "When you're with your friends, you don't want to miss that opportunity."

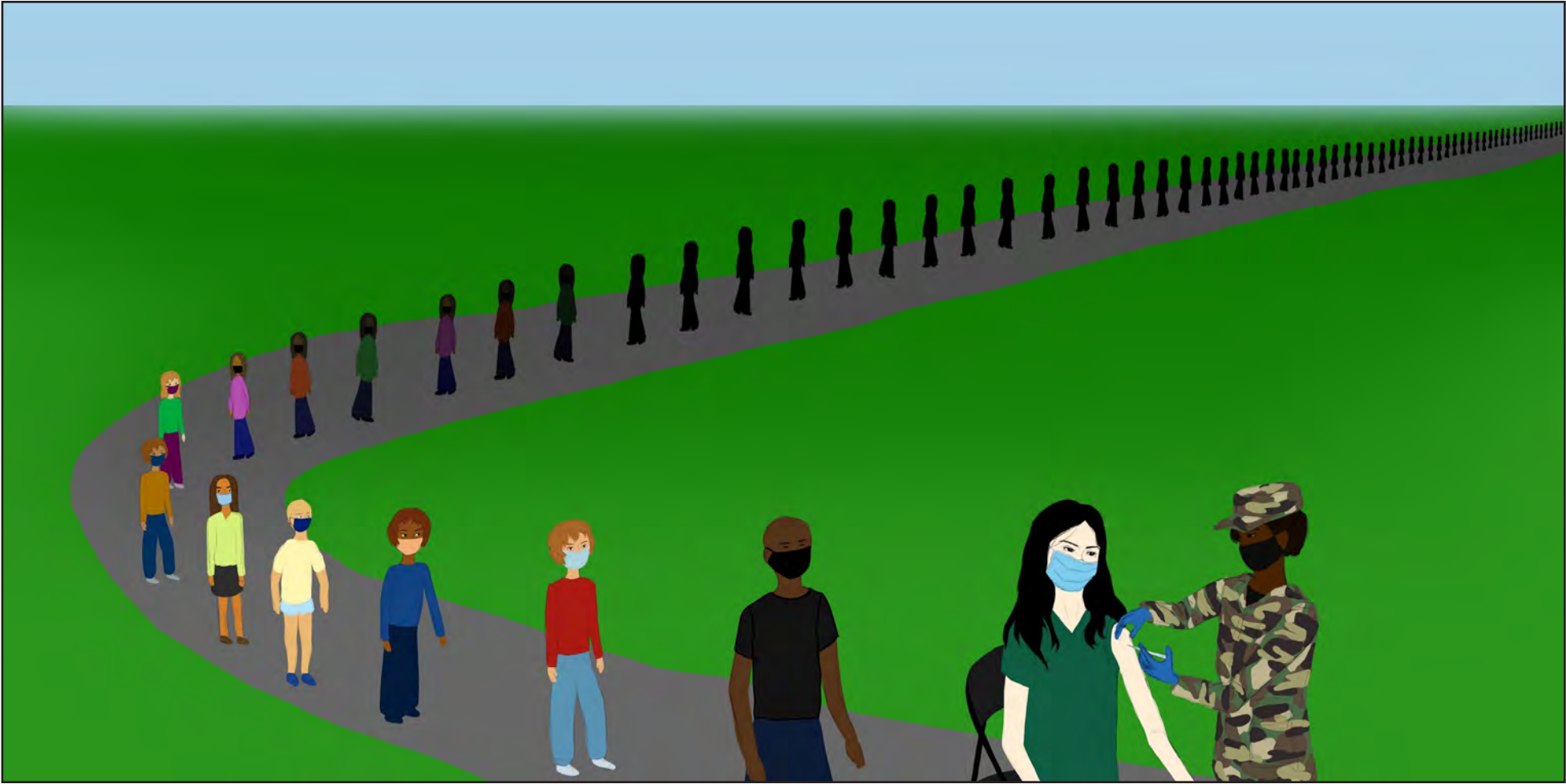
Meanwhile, other students have found ways to mimic their

pre-pandemic habits and still consume with their friends, but from the safety of their own homes. For Junior B, who wants to let loose and escape the monotony her home life, Zoom calls with her friends are a way to get drunk, get high and have fun.

"It would basically just be bring your choice of substance," she said. "Then we would just talk and show up and play games and whatever."

Having fun with her friends on Zoom may restore a bit of normalcy, but she anticipates that after the pandemic she will use alcohol and marijuana more frequently than before.

"I feel like I spent so much time before quarantine just being stressed out about school," she said. "Now that I'm in quarantine, I've realized school is not everything, and I want to be able to have fun with my friends whenever I can, because it's important to cherish the moment, and that's the biggest change."



MIDWAY ILLUSTRATION BY ALINA SUSANI

Hours of driving, long lines, sore arms and knockout side effects: students, desperate for a vaccine and a return to normalcy, have weathered a logistical and at times emotional storm in search of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Pfizer frenzy: Students feel relief, guilt and stress after vaccine

by **AMANDA CASSEL**
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Scrolling through Instagram stories, one image has become increasingly common — the vaccine card. But before COVID-19 vaccines became available to all Chicago residents age 16 and older on April 12, some U-High students desperately entered vaccine lotteries, looked for extra doses at pharmacies and ventured to Indiana and rural Illinois for a vaccination.

Despite eagerly searching for vaccine doses, upon actually receiving their first doses, students felt combinations of excitement and guilt, and now they say they feel relief.

In early March senior Sana Shahul began to see on social media that her peers were getting vaccinated. She started looking for appointments online.

“I first tried to look the same way my peers were getting vaccinated, going far away, trying to get extra doses,” Sana said. “And then, coincidentally, I got a mass text by one of my friends that was like, ‘Go to Gary (Indiana) right now to get your vaccine if you’re under 18.’”

According to Sana, once she filled out the medical and eligibility forms with her parents, the process was easy. On April 7, Sana drove the half hour across the state line to Gary, Indiana, and found the mass vaccination site operated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency almost empty.

Ardith Huhner, a junior, didn’t hear about how her peers were getting vaccinated until it became a topic in class.

“I didn’t have social media before, so I didn’t realize people were getting it until people started talking about it in class,” Ardith said. “Tons of people were getting it, and it was like, ‘Oh how can I get it, too?’”

Once Ardith got on social media, she saw an abundance of information about how students could get vaccinated.

“I was only seeing registration information on social media,” Ardith said. “Nothing was on the news like that. There weren’t adults broadcasting where to find it.”

Senior Orla Malloy got her vaccination appointment through a lottery of extra vaccinations at the University of Chicago. For Orla, the fact that it was a vaccine that would otherwise go unused made her feel much less guilty about getting vaccinated before her group became eligible.

“I got it through the university lottery system with people turning it down, which I

26%

The number of Gen Z people who said in March they would not get the COVID-19 vaccine, according to an NBC-Morning Consult poll.

4

The number of months until it’s possible for children 6 and older to be vaccinated according to Dr. Anthony Fauci, White House chief medical adviser.

323.5

The average number of daily doses administered to children under age 18 in Chicago in April, according to the City of Chicago COVID-19 dashboard.

16

The age of the youngest Chicago citizens eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine as of April 19.

“I wanted to get vaccinated so I could see my friends again and just feel safe in general, and know I’m not going to give it to my parents. I definitely felt guilty, a little bit, because I know the distributions of vaccines is a huge equity issue that is affecting people of color mainly.”

— WILL TRONE,

distancing from friends at school in the hallways and between classes is challenging, so for her, being even partially vaccinated has reduced a lot of stress in that area.

“[Distancing] is difficult regardless of if you have the vaccine or not — to stay apart from your friends when you’re talking to them,” Izzy said. “Personally, I’ve had a lot of anxiety about it, so for me the idea of being vaccinated is really exciting and really comforting.”

Since Sana got her first dose, she’s been more comfortable doing high risk activities she hasn’t done since before the pandemic.

“I’m trying not to let up my guard as much. I’ve eaten indoors for the first time. I know I’m not fully vaccinated, but I think the other part of me is like, this is the biggest step toward normalcy ever,” Sana said. “Now it’s all about holding down the fort and getting ready to travel.”

What ninth graders think about vaccines

Myles Cobb, ninth grader: “Well it’s difficult knowing that I’m just one year too young to get ‘vaxxed.’ Knowing that leads to so many things is hard, but I guess just being patient is the thing I need to do right now.”

Sasha Duda, ninth grader: “Well yeah, I’m 15 so I can’t get ‘vaxxed’ yet, but I think that it’s really good that other people are getting ‘vaxxed.’ It’s been a whole year since we’ve had some sort of normalcy in the world, so people getting ‘vaxxed’ is a great step in the right direction. I mean, it does kinda suck that us freshmen can’t get ‘vaxxed’ yet, but there have been so many reports about it getting much closer to our turn, which I think is really awesome.”

Chloe Hurst, ninth grader: “I think that the more people that get vaccinated the better — I know that there are people that are more high risk than me that should definitely get vaccinated before me. My family is vaccinated, so it makes me feel a lot better, but when I am able to get vaccinated I will.”

Mason List, ninth grader: “So I’m currently 15, which means I just barely don’t qualify for the vaccine. It’s pretty frustrating to see people just barely older than me being able to get the vaccine and return a little bit more to their regular lives while I’m stuck without it. I have heard, however, that Pfizer is working toward being able to get 12-15 year olds vaccinated, which is really exciting news.”

Ella Cohen Richie, ninth grader: “It’s a little disappointing, but it’s OK since we should be able to get ours by this summer. I think that it will be less stressful since I know that I have it, but I’m probably gonna maintain at least a good distance from people with and without the vaccine.”

— COMPILED BY NICKY EDWARDS-LEVIN