

With many coronavirus restrictions lifted, the Class of 2022 had greater flexibility in their May Project choices and locations than in the past two years.



U-High art teacher Mirentxu Ganzarain and P.E. teacher Diane Taylor will retire at the end of this year — each after teaching at Lab for more than 30 years.



From outdoor activities in parks and downtown Chicago to indoor entertainment for rainy days, summer doesn't need to be spent on a screen.



University of Chicago Laboratory High School

U-HIGH MIDWAY

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Graduation to feature food activist alumnus

Class of 2020 alumni will also reunite for an in-person event

by **AUDREY PARK**
MANAGING EDITOR

The commencement speaker and performers for the Class of 2022 graduation ceremony have been decided. Food entrepreneur Sam Kass, a 1998 U-High alumnus, will speak at the ceremony, which begins at 1 p.m. June 9 at Rockefeller Chapel.

The graduation planning committee, composed of Dean of Students Ana Campos and six seniors, began planning in early January.

Seniors Zach Gin, class president, and Anatheia Carrigan will also deliver speeches. Seniors An Ngo, Taig Singh and Eddie Christensen will perform at the ceremony after being selected through an audition. An will sing, accompanied by Taig on guitar. Eddie will play the violin, accompanied by a music teacher.

Students can bring up to six guests, but families will have access to spare tickets starting the week of May 30, following the initial ticketing process, which ends May 27.

An after-graduation reception organized by the Parents' Association will be from 3-4:30 p.m. in Ida Noyes Hall.

Alumni members of the Class of 2020 will also celebrate their graduation on June 9 at 5 p.m. follow-

ing the Class of 2022 ceremony. This informal celebratory event will be their first in-person celebration because their graduation was canceled due to the pandemic. A reception will follow at Ida Noyes Halls at 5:45 p.m.

In a message sent to seniors, the 2022 committee selected Mr. Kass to be the speaker because he is a product of and understands the Lab and Hyde Park community.

After graduating high school, Mr. Kass attended Kansas City Kansas Community College before returning to Hyde Park, where he graduated from the University of Chicago with a degree in U.S. history. Mr. Kass then attended an abroad cooking program in Vienna.

For many years, Mr. Kass traveled the world, expanding his passion for cooking. He returned to Chicago in 2006 and worked at Avec, a renowned restaurant. He became a personal chef to former President Barack Obama and in 2009 Mr. Kass accompanied the Obamas to the White House, serving as the senior policy adviser for nutrition.

Now, he is the founder of Trove, a company that helps corporations implement more healthy and sustainable practices relating to food.

Mr. Kass said his path was less traditional compared to his classmates.

"Plenty of people, my mom among them, thought I was making a big mistake," Mr. Kass said in an interview with the Midway. "While my peers were attending prestigious universities, I went



OFFICIAL WHITE HOUSE PHOTO BY CHUCK KENNEDY PROVIDED BY SAM KASS

FORGING FOOD FAMILIES. Sam Kass, Class of 1998, will speak to the Class of 2022 at this year's graduation. Mr. Kass served as the senior policy adviser for nutrition at the White House under the Obamas and founded Trove, a company that helps implement healthy, sustainable food practices.

down an interesting path, honestly, where I was trying to navigate who I was."

In his speech to the Class of 2022, he plans to talk about the importance of pursuing what you want to do amid societal and communal pressures.

"I encourage kids, and young people who are working, ... on picking a direction they love and to stick with it," Mr. Kass said. "For me, it was cooking, and looking back I have no regrets."

Committee member Tona Martinez said Mr. Kass was chosen to speak because his story is inspiring and met the committee's objective.

"This year we decided to have that message convey that it's OK if you know your path is not exactly linear because you will end up where you need to be and where you want to be," Tona said.

The committee also wanted to have a speaker involved in activism.

"He has helped with some policies in terms of healthy eating and aided Michelle Obama in her healthy eating plan," she said. "We wanted to have some side of activism to our speaker."

Ms. Campos added that Mr. Kass' experience illustrates that life doesn't always go as planned.

She said, "It was important that the speaker knows well the experience that the students have just gone through for the past four years."

HOLI CELEBRATION



MIDWAY PHOTO BY MATT PETRES

COLOR BLAST. Sinead Nagubadi, at right, throws a ball of powdered paint at Katie Sasamoto-Kurusu during the Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders Heritage Event on May 24 to celebrate Holi, a popular Hindu festival celebrating spring's arrival. "Having other people who have never celebrated Holi before try it out for the first time and see people have fun throwing colorful powder at each other was really heartwarming," Sinead said. The event, hosted by the Asian Students' Association, also featured food, music and games to celebrate Asian culture during AAPI Heritage Month.

Donor starts Asian culture fund

\$100,000 fund will spread Asian cultural presence

by **AUDREY PARK**
MANAGING EDITOR

An anonymous family has donated a \$100,000 investment to create the Asian Culture Fund with the mission of increasing the awareness and presence of Asian culture within the Laboratory Schools. Asian American members of the Lab community are looking forward to and are enthusiastic about the fund.

A commencement ceremony was hosted in Ida Noyes Hall May 11 for Lab parents and faculty members to attend.

To coincide with the creation of the fund, the donor family will match additional donations to the fund up to \$50,000. If the challenge is matched to its maximum, the fund will have \$200,000 by the start of the 2022-23 school year.

Priya Laroia, assistant director of annual giving and alumni relations, said at the event that the fund is an opportunity for Lab's community of Asian Americans and allies to elevate Asian culture.

"This is the next step to ensuring every Asian American feels pride

and comfort in who they are," Ms. Laroia said. "It is the next step in every Lab student understanding the beauty and complexity of Asian heritage and Asian American history."

Ms. Laroia addressed the timeliness surrounding the fund's creation and the surge of national and local prejudice Asian Americans are encountering.

"Asian Americans are facing elevated levels of prejudice, hate and abuse. School children are being bullied and teased and isolated," she said in an interview.

She said the increase of anti-Asian hate crimes is the unfortunate circumstance of the urgency for the fund.

Funds will be allocated by a committee of teachers and Lab faculty to clubs, projects and programs that will increase awareness about Asian culture at Lab.

Committee member Heather Tamburo, associate director of annual giving and alumni relations, said this was the fairest way they could distribute the funds necessary to create change.



Zara Baig

Middle school teacher and committee member Erica Cheung, a 1995 U-High alumna, spoke at the ceremony. She said as someone who identifies as Asian American she is excited to engage the middle school community in conversations, experiences and cultural performances.

High school Chinese teacher Xiaoli Zhou expressed a similar interest and said she also hopes to lower the overall cost of the high school exchange trips to China, so the option is available to more families at Lab.

Zara Baig, president of the Asian Students' Association, also spoke at the event, and said she is excited to elaborate on the impacts her club has made already.

She said, "With the Asian cultural fund, even more will be possible. As members of ASA, we are very grateful for the support and excited for the possibilities that will now be in reach."

Parents who attended the event were excited about the fund and said it was long overdue.

Audris Wong, mother to two children at Lab said, "Many kids feel as though their Asian culture is something that just happens within their home, and would love to connect with other students and other families to show how diverse Asian culture is just within itself."

May Projects reflect passions

Seniors choose array of experiences: travel, art, music, more

by **LOUIS AUXENFANS**
NEWS EDITOR

Seniors have taken long bike rides and travelled around the world for their May Project, an annual U-High tradition that allows seniors to use three weeks in May to pursue a passion project. With many coronavirus restrictions lifted, seniors in the Class of 2022 had more flexibility with project choices than the past two years.

MAY PROJECT BY THE NUMBERS

16

At least 16 students are tasting the cuisines around them. Some are traveling abroad to gain this experience, while others are staying at home.

15

At least 15 students are traveling internationally for their May Project. They are exploring the cultures of Italy, France and Greece.

12

At least 12 students have decided to work at institutions. Some are interning at companies, while others are volunteering with nonprofits or at Lab.

11

At least 11 students are experiencing the natural world through backpacking escapades, fishing trips and farming adventures.



Eddie Christensen

Location:
Chicago

DESCRIPTION

Volunteering at the ReVive Center for Housing and Healing on Ogden Avenue to investigate how homelessness is being dealt with.

MOTIVATIONS

“Any person who lives in a city to some extent should be knowledgeable, if not in the fight against, homelessness. My entire life I kind of grew up in the city doing nothing more than tossing change into spare cups every once in a while, and being exposed to it, but not really knowing what’s going on kind of motivated me to really, like, look into it.”

GOALS

“I’m learning what it takes to run a nonprofit. I’m learning what’s being done on the fight against homelessness. I’m learning about all these intersections between substance abuse, physical disability, mental illness and poverty.”



Grace Cruise

Location:
Chicago
Plano, Illinois

Sketching architecturally interesting buildings in Chicago and constructing a model with classmate Julian Deroitte.

“I feel like any person who lives in a city to some extent should be knowledgeable, if not in the fight against, homelessness. My entire life I kind of grew up in the city doing nothing more than tossing change into spare cups every once in a while, and being exposed to it, but not really knowing what’s going on

“It’s just such a good opportunity to practice modeling, which is a huge component of architecture in college, so we’re going to gain some new skills and explore before we step right into it.”



Brent Pennington

Location:
Chicago

Shadowing student council presidents in other independent high schools to bring back new ideas for U-High’s Student Council.

“I wanted to leave off my high school chapter on a positive note, specifically for Student Council. I’ve been with it the majority of my high school and middle school careers, and I just wanted to be able to give back to my community in one last way before I leave.”

“I hope to make it so that it’s more easy to understand direction for Student Council and other people in the Lab community who want to make change, just because it can be sometimes difficult to understand what the students’ role is in making change in the broader system.”



Kara Tao

Location:
Chicago

Using food to explore the Korean and Tibetan culture of classmates Loren Chang and Tenzin Karma.

“I definitely wanted to choose a project I could do with my friends because this is kind of our last moments together. And second, for me personally, I haven’t really explored much of Chicago, so I thought that this project was a really good opportunity to explore the other different cultural neighborhoods that I haven’t explored yet.”

“My personal goal is to understand more of the nuances between different Asian cultures because I believe that much of Asian culture tends to be homogenized.”



Will Trone

Location:
Chicago

Creating an experimental film with classmate Leo Mehring-Keller.

“In middle school, we did this camp and we took a film class, and we were both really interested by it, but we haven’t really had time since then to explore that more. And so, we both thought it’d be just a good way to learn more about something new in ways that we hadn’t learned about before.”

“A lot of kids, including me, made iMovie movies when we were younger, and I think it was a way to kind of finalize that desire to, like, make movies in a more advanced way. So I think for me, it’s kind of a closure.”



Tyler Turek

Location:
Chicago
Green Bay,
Wisconsin

A four-day, 220-mile bike ride from Soldier Field in Chicago to Lambeau Field in Green Bay, Wisconsin.

“I want to take my biking journeys to the next level. I thought it would be pretty cool if I could use this extra time the school has kind of given me to do something that I found really fun, which is biking up to Green Bay.”

“I really want to figure out how to do these longer multiple-day bike rides, and it’s a skill that I want to take with me into college in the future.”

TRACK AND FIELD



MIDWAY PHOTO BY GABRIEL ISSA

SPEED SPRINT. During the May 19 boys track and field IHSA 2A sectionals, junior Luke Grotthus takes the baton from junior teammate William Montague. The two were part of a 4x100 meter relay including juniors Cristian Ferreyra and Sohan Manek that competed in the state competition May 26-28, placing 17th of 24 teams, with a time of 3:35.49.

Five lower, middle school teachers retire with 122 combined years at Lab

by **PETER COX, AMY REN & TÉA TAMBURIO**

Five Laboratory Schools teachers outside of U-High will retire at the end of this year — a band director, a science teacher, a language teacher, a lower school teacher and a librarian — each with unique Lab experiences.

Linda Weide, a fourth grade teacher, came to Lab in 1998. For her, building connections with her students and their families is a highlight of her time at Lab.

“Teaching is a relationship profession and I have enjoyed my relationships with all my students, colleagues and families,” Ms. Weide said. “I can walk around the neighborhood and the city and see people that I’ve taught and I feel a lifelong connection, and I think it’s really powerful.”

Like Ms. Weide, **Jamelle St. Clair**, a lower school librarian, enjoyed interacting with students the most, throughout her time at Lab. Ms. St. Clair came to Lab in 2000.

“What has kept me at Lab was always the students. Always,” Ms. St. Clair said. “It was the love of students, their curiosity.”

Although Ms. St. Clair will miss Lab, she looks forward to spending

more time with her grandchildren.

For **Angelica Guerrero**, lower and middle school Spanish teacher, spending time with smaller children was a highlight of her 20 years at Lab.

“The last few years I have been working with lower school kids,” Ms. Guerrero said, “and I feel that their energy, their love, their love for learning, the love that they feel for their teachers — it keeps me young.”

According to Ms. Guerrero, she enjoys the kids playfulness. After retirement, she plans to visit her family in Mexico more often. She has in-laws in Chicago that she also wants to spend more time with. She enjoys running and is looking forward to extra time to train for upcoming races.

Like Ms. Guerrero, **Catherine Janovjak**, lower and middle school band director, will miss spending time around kids, and she plans to come back to check in on her current students. Ms. Janovjak started at Lab in 1988 and taught second grade at Lab for over 20 years prior to her current position.

“I think fifth and sixth grade are amazing, because kids are excited about possibilities,” Ms. Janov-

jak said, “and then, seventh and eighth when they get skills.”

Ms. Janovjak also said she valued the schedule of being a teacher and always feels ready to return to school after summer break. In September she’s going on a cruise to keep herself busy. She is also very involved with her church, including her church’s programs supporting refugees.

Another retiring teacher, **Mark Wagner**, a middle school science teacher, also appreciated the schedule the Lab school year provided. Prior to coming to Lab in 2000, he taught in public schools for 30 years. At Lab, he especially enjoyed the greater time to plan, greater access to science equipment and an engaged student body that allowed him to pursue more creative lesson plans.

“It was like being released to be able to do more of what you really would like to do,” he said.

After his retirement, he plans to live at his vacation house in the Indiana Dunes with his wife, Eileen, who retired from Lab in 2019. He plans to practice his electric bass, which he plays in a blues band. He also wants to spend time visiting his son, who lives in California.

After Lab, teacher will pursue own art

Mirentxu Ganzarain plans to spend more time on her artistic passions

by SAHANA UNNI
FEATURES EDITOR

Soft music plays in the background of Room N308 in Gordon Parks Arts Hall, providing a peaceful and meditative environment for students to express themselves creatively. After brief directions, Mirentxu Ganzarain's students are able to sculpt, create and ask questions as they learn about the importance of art throughout humanity and dive deeper into their work.

After teaching art at the Laboratory Schools for 32 years, Ms. Ganzarain is retiring at the end of the 2021-22 school year to further pursue her career as an artist. She is currently working on projects to submit to potential exhibits and planning on going to her second artist residency in Italy.

"I want to focus on my own art practice, and it's been great teaching, but now my interest is more focused in that direction," Ms. Ganzarain said, adding that her artwork would be displayed in the school's Corvus Gallery. "I've been upping the amount of time that I spend on my work and now that's where the bulk of my interest is."

During her time teaching at Lab, Ms. Ganzarain says she is proudest of incorporating 3D art into the curriculum, through establishing ceramics and sculpture courses.

"I think I've impacted a lot of lives," Ms. Ganzarain said. "Kids come back, sometimes even as adults. Some are artists, some are not, but they talk about the process of exploring themselves through art as having an impact on their lives, and I think that es-

"I want to focus on my own art practice, and it's been great teaching, but now my interest is more focused in that direction."

— MIRENTXU GANZARAIN

establishing a sculpture program for the school has been a great benefit to students who want to continue in art because there are very few high schools that have a sculpture program."

To honor Ms. Ganzarain's time at Lab and showcase her work, fine arts teacher Gina Alicea is curating a show of her work for the Corvus Gallery beginning June 3.

"One of the reasons I wanted to honor her is that as visual artists here, we do our own work in addition to teaching, and it is a difficult task to keep your art career alive as well as your teaching career because teaching takes up most of our time," Ms. Alicea said, "so to really dedicate our time away from school to creating art is a really big dedication, it's a passion of ours."

After observing students at schools without art programs, Ms. Ganzarain had to adjust to teaching at a school that emphasizes the arts.

"When I came here, kids had been exposed to a lot of art, either at home or through their travels," Ms. Ganzarain said. "It's a more privileged population, and I found that their need for art is very different. They aren't starving for it, but they don't quite understand the importance of it in terms of what it does for humanity, so I had to refo-



MIDWAY PHOTO BY MATT PETRES

READY TO RETIRE. After teaching for 32 years and starting Lab's sculpture program, Mirentxu Ganzarain will retire to spend more time on her art. An exhibition of Ms. Ganzarain's mixed media work, titled "Humans, Spirits and Power," will be displayed in Gordon Parks Arts Hall starting June 3.

cus. It wasn't just feeding the hungry, it was more working on the more advanced topic of the meaning of art in history and in humanity."

Having worked with Ms. Ganzarain for eight years, fine arts department co-chair Allison Beaulieu turns to her colleague for ad-

vice and guidance.

"She's very very thoughtful, very patient and she is definitely passionate about the arts program here at Lab," Ms. Beaulieu said. "She's very thoughtful about how she wants to move our program forward. How children learn or how students learn and just the

importance of the arts."

Although Ms. Ganzarain cherished seeing her students develop and grow as artists, she is looking forward to the next part of her career.

"It's been a fun trip in my experience," Ms. Ganzarain said. "Not just a trip, but a really fun trip."

P.E. teacher leaves legacy of compassion



MIDWAY PHOTO BY CARTER CHANG

SO LONG, FAREWELL. Diane Taylor will retire after showing kindness to students in her 36 years teaching at Lab. During retirement Ms. Taylor plans to spend quality time with family.

In retirement, Diane Taylor will indulge her love for the outdoors

by AMONG GRAY
SPORTS & LEISURE EDITOR

The sound of basketballs hitting the hardwood floor echoes off the padded walls of Sunny Gymnasium. Middle schoolers dressed in gray and maroon uniforms dribble between the colored lines on the floor, their gym shoes squeaking as they run. Standing on the sidelines, Diane Taylor shouts instruction and encouragement, handing out lighter volleyballs to students who can't quite reach the basket with the regular balls.

When Ms. Taylor came to the Laboratory Schools in 1985, it was her first full-time job out of college. At the end of this school year, Ms. Taylor will retire after teaching P.E. to lower, middle and high school students for 36 years where she has become known as a teacher who goes above and beyond for her students to stay active.

"It was really a learning curve for me because, in my experience, I hadn't been exposed to really a lot of other religious beliefs and a lot of the diversity of the cultures that are here," Ms. Taylor said.

Her own children attended Lab, too.

"I loved it, that my kids got that experience and were exposed to so much when they were here."

Ms. Taylor said that before 1993 she coached a year of swimming,

two years of volleyball and eight years of gymnastics. After her second child was born, she stopped coaching to devote more time to her family.

Terri Greene, a friend and P.E. colleague, said Ms. Taylor will be very difficult to replace.

"When you look at things that she does for the school, you know, it's just like all the little things ... not a lot of people are willing to do that," Ms. Greene said. "People don't realize that putting up bulletin boards, you know, like things that you don't get paid for, things that are to make the school look nicer for the kids, like setting up websites."

Ms. Taylor's dedication to her job comes from a deep care for her students. Throughout her time at Lab, Ms. Taylor has earned a reputation as a supportive and beloved mentor for students of all ages.

"I mean, she's a stellar teacher," Ms. Greene said. "Very consistent. I don't think there's ever a time where a kid could say, 'She, she wasn't fair to me. She let this kid do that,' because she's 100% fair. She just possesses the qualities of a perfect teacher."

Ms. Greene added that Ms. Taylor earned extra certifications so she could teach CPR and lifeguards and to support student mental health.

Ms. Taylor has brought her love for the outdoors to her P.E. classes, too.

"My personal philosophy is to stay active. I am," Ms. Taylor said. "If you don't use it, you lose it. So I am trying to teach my students that, and I'm trying to live that out

"Seeing kids be successful. I guess that's the most rewarding thing to me — when someone's struggling to learn a skill and then they get it or they get better at it."

— DIANE TAYLOR

myself because I know how fragile life can be and how important your health is."

As for life after Lab, Ms. Taylor said she has bought a property in Oklahoma and plans to spend more time indulging her love for the outdoors with her family.

"Diane is very much an outdoor person," Ms. Greene said. "That's someone who in her free time, she is not the go-to-the-mall type person. She likes to go to the forest preserve and climb a rock wall. Her and her husband, Joel, love outdoor activities. The camping and all of that and canoeing and caving."

Reflecting on more than three decades teaching physical education, health and wellness, Ms. Taylor said the most rewarding part of teaching has been seeing her students gain experience, overcome obstacles and learn new skills.

"I just have a tremendous amount of fun experiences and stories, you know, and just times of laughing with kids," Ms. Taylor said. "Seeing kids be successful. I guess that's the most rewarding thing to me — when someone's struggling to learn a skill and then they get it or they get better at it."

Reposting tragedy can be detrimental

As the Midway sees it ...

On May 14, an 18-year-old gunman stormed a supermarket in Buffalo, New York, killing 10 people and injuring three more. Among many racist and white supremacist motivations published in a 180-page online document, shooting suspect Payton S. Gendron cited the 2019 Christchurch, New Zealand, massacre as his inspiration.

This shooter's most striking similarity to the Christchurch shooting was his use of the online streaming platform Twitch to promote his actions to a wider audience. In the document posted before his attack he wrote, "I think that livestreaming this attack gives me some motivation in the way that I know that some people will be cheering for me."

While Twitch identified and removed the content within two minutes of him going live, the video was shared by screen recordings to other sites such as Streamable, where it circulated over 3 million views. On Facebook, the clip was shared 46,000 times and remained on the site for over 10 hours. In a perverted sense, the shooter's wish to showcase his egregious actions to the world came true.

A digital age, where information flows freely and instantly, forces young people to navigate the



MIDWAY ILLUSTRATION BY DALIN DOHRN

challenging world of online content. While sharing tragic events can lead to awareness and social change, teens must remember the negative consequences that violence can incur on its viewers.

There is legitimate justification to share videos of graphic violence, especially to shed light on serious injustice. Most famously, Darnella Frazier's video of police officer

Derek Chauvin kneeling on George Floyd's neck garnered over a billion views in its first week and has been instrumental in prompting many people to join the #BlackLivesMatter movement for social change.

But recently, a study by the University of Southern California published in the Journal of Adolescent Health claims videos of violence against African Americans con-

tribute to the poor mental health of young members in the same racial communities.

More generally, a 2019 study published in Clinical Psychological Science attributed media exposure to extreme traumatic events with both acute and posttraumatic stress symptoms in viewers. It also found that graphic exposure could lead to irrational fears of future ter-

rorism, functional impairment and mental health conditions.

In addition to mental and physical impacts of viewing similar forms of media, there are more frightening effects to consider. A May 16 New York Times article linked the Buffalo shooter's motivations to those of other mass murderers. After analyzing his writings, it concluded that many of his twisted ideas were rooted in white supremacist, neo-Nazi and other far-right ideologies. He was inspired by the video of the Christchurch shooting and sought widely circulated material from far-right leaders such as David Lane. There is a real possibility that by circulating his video — the pinnacle of his own ambitions — one can expose and influence young adolescents to incredibly dangerous ideas.

There is no clear line to what should and should not be shared, but it's crucial to understand that resharing can have serious impacts, and those implications must be carefully considered before acting. Resharing especially graphic imagery should not be a trigger-click or a clout-grab.

Only an intentional decision to do so can protect those around us and create an online environment that encourages others to never perform similar actions.

This editorial reflects the opinion of the U-High Midway Editorial Board.

The nature of May Project has changed, and that is OK

by CLARE O'CONNOR
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The front page story of the U-High Midway from May 13, 1969, describes a new opportunity for seniors dubbed "May Project."

"The project was developed last summer by students, faculty and administrators in an effort to make the end of senior year — traditionally a "slump"... — of new educational value," the story reads.

Today, many seniors don't seem to receive much of the "educational value" intended by May Project, but that shouldn't matter. May Project should give students a robust final opportunity to take advantage of being a high schooler. For some that means focusing on an academic venture, but for oth-

ers that could mean traveling with friends, learning to cook, spending time outside or trying a new hobby.

May Project in 1969 was heavily focused and regulated: a faculty committee reviewed every project request, some classes only gave seven-eighths of a class credit to seniors who chose to participate, and all participants had to attend a weekly seminar at the school to present their progress and have their work evaluated.

In the years since, May Project



Clare O'Connor

has become a U-High institution, but the tradition looks very different today. All seniors expect to participate in May Project. Many students joke that seemingly substanceless projects have been approved and complain about staying in class while some seniors go on school-sanctioned vacations.

The Midway has published multiple opinion articles about the deterioration of May Project in the past. Some students even openly flaunt their "low-effort" projects. May Project has become a beloved U-High tradition, but it's also become a shared joke — and that's not so bad.

U-High is demanding. Many students struggle with homework load and time management. The

beginning of senior year is especially draining as seniors take on leadership roles, navigate college admissions and try to keep up in challenging classes. At the end of four years, most students haven't had enough time to fully embrace this unique period of their lives.

The coronavirus pandemic recontextualized the value of May Project for current students. May Project is an opportunity to supplement all of the time lost to mandated isolation. The pandemic also displayed the importance of seemingly trivial activities, even outside of COVID-19 isolation. Joy, relaxation and socialization are critical for all adolescents' development. The recent public health crises made this more clear.

The greatest problem with May Project is its presentation. We shouldn't feed into the joke by claiming that a student working 9-5 for their May Project is having the same experience as someone traveling to the beach. However, we also shouldn't claim one is inherently better.

Non-seniors have a lot of time to think about their projects. Use that time to think about what you want out of your high school experience you aren't getting at Lab. Don't mock others' May Projects as too relaxed or trivial. The school community should embrace how May Project has evolved, and this new understanding should guide how May Project manifests in the future.

Adoption should not be considered a panacea for abortion

by TÉA TAMBURÓ
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

From the late 1970s to 2016, the Chinese government enforced a strict one-child policy that prohibited people from having more than one child. This led to unsafe abortions and thousands of children left at orphanages. Often, I think about this and wonder what would have been if my birth mother had the power to choose her reproductive measures.

Now, the power of choice is uncertain in the United States. The ruling in Dobbs vs. Jackson Women's Health will determine the legality of Mississippi's ban on abortion after 15 weeks gestation and potentially overturn Roe vs. Wade. The speculation has sparked po-

litical demonstrations throughout the nation.

During the 2020 Supreme Court confirmation hearing, Amy Coney Barrett supported her pro-life stance, citing adoption as a substitute for abortion. Although this didn't cause a widespread stir during the hearing, we cannot forget this remark. Rather, we must now acknowledge adoption as an unsuitable substitute to abortion and recognize the adverse effects of carrying an unwanted pregnancy.



Téa Tamburó

Leaving it to states to decide their abortion laws makes abortion and prenatal care less accessible to rural parts of the country. Federally overturning the right to choice overlooks the health complications people face when carrying any pregnancy to term. The United States' maternal mortality rate has been rising, with 23.8 deaths per 100,000 live births, according to a 2022 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study, currently the highest mortality rate among developed nations.

Disregarding maternal health would result in an increased maternal death rate. Not only would people be forced to carry a child to term, despite any health complications, they may resort to less-safe

termination methods, depending on their geographic location. Even if they carry the pregnancy to term, they may not have the resources to adequately raise a child.

For years, there have been conversations about whether adoption is a panacea to abortion for those who don't want to or cannot raise a child. While adoption provides children with a family, viewing it as a replacement to abortion overlooks the emotional trauma the birth parent would face. Claiming adoption as a viable substitute automatically assumes people that choose the former can effectively side step all parental challenges. However, these people still become parents — they just don't raise the child. This over-

looks the trauma and grief birth parents are shown to feel in a society that views adoption through a savior complex.

According to many reproductive justice advocates, carrying an undesired pregnancy to term irrevocably alters the path of a person's life. Banning abortion takes the power to decide that path from the people and gives it to the state governments, and the option of adoption does nothing to change that. This power of federal choice is up for serious question, with a decision expected this month. To protect this right, we must actively advocate in the reproductive health and equity movement to prevail in the struggle for reproductive justice.

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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.

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Lamar introspects in new record

Kendrick Lamar is a genius; the problem is that he knows it

by **PETER COX**
CITY LIFE EDITOR

Kendrick Lamar cemented himself as the most socially influential rapper of the 2010's with three genre-transforming albums. 2012's "good kid, m.A.A.d. City," a long-form narrative about the artist's struggles growing up in Compton, California, was his first mainstream success. The brilliant, politically-conscious, but inscrutable "To Pimp a Butterfly" (2015) defined Mr. Lamar as an artist capable of addressing serious cultural topics in his work. Mr. Lamar's biggest success was 2017's "DAMN." The album was the artist's most accessible so far and won a Grammy and a Pulitzer Prize, the first hip-hop album to do so. Needless to say Mr. Lamar had made himself a difficult act to follow.

Since the release of "DAMN." other than producing the "Black Panther" movie soundtrack and a few features, Mr. Lamar has released very little music.

"Mr. Morale & The Big Steppers" — Mr. Lamar's fifth official studio album and his final with his current production company Top Dawg Entertainment — solidly builds on Mr. Lamar's image as a brilliant and socially conscious music star. Despite the enormous pressure Mr. Lamar had put himself under for his first full release in more than five years, the album delivers everything you could hope for in a Kendrick Lamar album.

Mr. Lamar has consistently varied the sound and composition of his work in the past. His first breakthrough "good kid, m.A.A.d City" had classic West Coast hip-hop production, "To Pimp a Butterfly" had a jazz-focused composition, and on "DAMN." he ventured into the trap sounds that were making waves in rap at the time. On "Mr. Morale & The Big Steppers" Mr. La-

mar switches up his production sensibilities again. Piano, drums and violins have a greater presence in this album. The piano in particular has a lot of discordant chords that along with the rapid beats produce a rushed and anxious undertone for most of the verses on the first half of the album on songs like "United In Grief" and "Worldwide Steppers."

Like Mr. Lamar's previous albums, "Mr. Morale & The Big Steppers" uses music to discuss the relevant social issues of the time. The album features lyrics about the impact of COVID-19, with lines like, "seen a Christian say the vaccine mark of the beast / then he caught COVID and prayed to Pfizer for relief." But, the album also has a more personal side than of the artist's previous albums. Mr. Lamar mentions he has started going to therapy and also reflects on his unfaithfulness to his fiancée, his personal trauma from growing up in the gang culture of Compton and his own deeply-ingrained toxic masculinity, which he connects back to the values that his own father instilled in him.

The eighth track on the first side is a loosely-rhymed argument between lovers. Mr. Lamar's partner is played by actress Taylour Paige. The two hurl obscenities at each other as they pound through the many issues with their relationship. The song showcases the exploration of highly personal content with universal themes, in this case anger in a relationship, that Mr. Lamar is trying to achieve in much of the album.

The album has attracted some controversy because of the 15th song, "Auntie Diaries." The song highlights anti-LGBTQ+ discrimination in America through focusing on Mr. Lamar's past use of homophobic slurs, which he uses in the song several times. Fans have criticized his use of these words, worrying that the use of slurs in the song might normalize their casual use.

On the second side the album becomes less manic and more quiet and reflective as it begins to wind down. "Mother I Sober"



SOURCE: TOP DAWG ENTERTAINMENT

RELEVANT RECORD. Kendrick Lamar's new album, "Mr. Morale & The Big Steppers," is technically and thematically rich, prominently including themes of current social issues. However, it doesn't surpass the artistic level of his previous

and "Mirror," the last two songs on the album, summarize the point of the entire album. The chorus on "Mirror," the final track, hazily repeated by Mr. Lamar over and over, articulates the final theme he's trying to get across: "I choose me, I'm sorry." He has made a conscious decision to focus on himself and his own experiences and thoughts, at the expense of his coverage of social is-

sues.

Kendrick Lamar changed what it meant to be a rapper. He showed that rappers could achieve commercial success with intelligent and politically conscious lyrics while remaining true to his roots. "Mr. Morale & The Big Steppers" isn't a bad album — in fact, it's a really good one — but it hasn't significantly gone past where Kendrick was previously.

Netflix series 'Heartstopper' lives up to its name



SOURCE: NETFLIX

EYE-CATCHING. Netflix's use of graphics is effective in displaying emotions of the characters in "Heartstopper," an enjoyable casual watch that displays genuine emotion well but lacks maturity.

by **ZARA SIDDIQUE**
REPORTER

Originally known as the Tumblr comic that amassed 52.1 million views, "Heartstopper" by Alice Oseman is now ranked fifth across the U.S. in Netflix television shows. The show takes place in the United Kingdom and follows the lives of a group of teenagers struggling with school, sexuality and relationships.

"Heartstopper," a genuinely adorable series that truly captures the excited energy of crushes and first love, shows an innocent reality with milkshake dates, bowling trips and long hugs, but it is still able to capture a mature take on discovering one's sexuality.

The story follows Nicholas "Nick" Nelson (Kit Connor) and Charles "Charlie" Francis Spring (Joe Locke), two boys who enter a relationship that they keep a secret, because Nick is not "out" and also is friends with some students who are openly homophobic.

Each episode follows a different stage of their relationship. The first is called "Meet," where Charlie develops a crush on Nick, the popular star rugby player in the grade above.

The show excels technically. It uses subtle graphic design to illustrate the characters' emotions. It shows a heart above Charlie's head and flowers connecting Nick and Charlie (which looks better than it sounds). The graphics add to the show's overall sweetness.

The music paired with cute and romantic montages adds to the show's appeal. The music is recognizable and catchy, making the show feel current.

Currency is portrayed well in the show with the integration of social media not feeling forced or excessive.

The show does have a slight tendency to make the kids out to be too childish. While the activities were endearingly sweet, it feels as though the show is jumping from mature topics of dating and romance, to the char-

acters making snow angels together, and the flow doesn't feel very natural in these scenes.

Additionally, the happy medium between "Euphoria" and "Peppa Pig" wasn't quite found. The actors themselves were brilliant, diverse and truly captured every quirk of their characters. Still, some potential personality and conversations were lacking due to the immaturity they were instructed to display.

The show portrayed mature and articulate conversations surrounding sexuality and the fears behind coming out, and while the show does display Nick making significant progress in accepting and understanding his sexuality, the show leaves some of his major conflicts unresolved.

With the exception of a few minor flaws, the show is a lovely and heartwarming watch. Each 30-minute episode is compelling and legitimately enjoyable. You will find yourself engrossed in and rooting for each of the characters.

Jack White's experimental style falls short in album



SOURCE: THIRD MAN RECORDS

ALLURING ALBUM. Jack White released his fourth solo studio album, "Fear of the Dawn," in April 2022. Although the album contains attention-grabbing moments, the record as a whole remains incoherent and messy.

by **AINSLEY WILLIAMS**
REPORTER

There is a moment in the middle of the song "Into the Twilight" in Jack White's newest album "Fear of the Dawn," where the voice of novelist William S. Burroughs ruggedly asserts "When you cut into the present, the future leaks out." The late author is credited with spreading the style of "cut-up writing." In this method he would write down his various ramblings and ideas, then cut the very sheet of paper they lay on, and rearrange the scraps to create a new patchwork story.

Jack White, the lead singer and producer on the 12-track album released April 8, has clearly embodied this disorganized and avant-garde style of writing into his fourth solo album "Fear of the Dawn," a chaotic, at sometimes dissonant, musical mess. Yet despite the innovativeness, the music is hard to listen to.

"Into the Twilight" conjures the early days of jazz by opening with scatting from the Grammy Award-winning jazz group The Manhattan Transfer. The voices swap scatting for the brassy, electronic and unsettling repetition of "Here in the twilight, here in the night, everything's right." Mr. White echoes the patchwork style of Mr. Burroughs when, halfway through the song, the clunky striking of a piano disrupts the song. This creates an almost five-minute long messy collage of jazz, nu-metal and classic rock.

Mr. White again attempts to re-imagine the beginnings of jazz in "Hi-De-Ho" where he sampled famed jazz artist Cab Calloway's scatting to open the song. The scatting is looped and manipulated until it becomes an almost unsettling chant. The only lyrics are of hip-hop artist Q-Tip, who raps about nicotine, Stevie Wonder, and a snarky nod to a past record label.

Albeit interesting and catchy, the lyrics

seem to fight for dominance with the background track of synthesizer and an annoyingly slow drum beat.

The song "The White Raven" is comparable to shoving antibiotics down the throat of an elderly cat recovering from a kidney infection. The lyrics are more shrieked than sung, and again we hear that the rhythm of the background track seems to compete with the words. This makes it one of the harder songs to listen to on the album.

Jack White's intentions are clear. He wanted to take a plethora of different music styles and somehow make them work together to create a patchwork quilt of an album. The quilt is there, but the seams that hold the patches together are falling apart, ruining the structural integrity altogether.

The idea of the album is interesting, but the delivery can range from unsettling to downright boring, leaving a staggering mess of an album.

All over the map

Explore something new this summer

Chicago is the perfect place to try new food and activities or revisit old favorites. This summer, go explore to see and learn about the various cultures the city has to offer, experience new activities, try new tastes and see unfamiliar sights and attractions. Beyond your neighborhood boundaries, you might discover something that will become a new tradition.

Tasting Chicago’s flavors: Here’s what’s on the menu

by **KIRAN COLLINS, MILO PLATZ-WALKER & KATIE SASAMOTO-KURISU**, REPORTERS

Chicago is full of interesting cuisines, all exhibiting different tastes and coming from different cultural backgrounds. Summer is the perfect time to explore a new neighborhood or fare, savoring the city’s flavors in different ways. Here’s the Midway’s guide to a full three-course meal’s worth of must-try menu items.



PHOTO BY KIRAN COLLINS

APPETIZER

Tapas Valencia: Patatas Bravas

Can’t miss: Spiced potatoes layered with Manchego cheese and scallions, the Spanish dish is simple but refined. The subtle kick of the spice cuts through the fatty flavor of the cheese, while the crisped potato skins give way to the soft, creamy center. Mild, but with just enough heat to make the back of your throat tingle. Location: 1530 S. State St.

Rajun Cajun: Vegetable Samosas

Can’t miss: The traditional South Asian savory appetizer is fluffy, crispy and delicious. Packed with potatoes, peas and spices, these are a perfect snack or accompaniment. Other menu items are filling, flavorful and authentic. Beware of intense spiciness within the dishes. Location: 1459 E. 53rd St.

Saucy Porka: Bacos

Can’t miss: Sweet, seasoned pork tucked neatly into a bao bun, this Asian-Latin fusion appetizer packs a lot of flavor into a small bun. Topped with an Asian slaw and finished with braised pork, they make the perfect appetizer. Location: 1164 E. 55th St.



PHOTO BY MILO PLATZ-WALKER

ENTRÉE

Tortillería y Taquerias Atotonilco: Birria de Res Tacos

Can’t miss: A flavorful and filling traditional Mexican dish, these crispy, beef-filled tacos make a perfect savory dish for any time. The seasoned meat pairs perfectly with the spicy salsa provided with the food. Location: 1637 S. Blue Island Ave.

Manny’s Cafeteria & Delicatessen: Corned Beef Sandwich

Can’t miss: A massive pile of tender beef packed between two halves of an onion roll, the sandwich, a Jewish deli classic, is almost intimidating. Fatty yet somewhat sweet, every bite of the beef is flavor packed, while the slight acidity of the onion roll brightens up the taste. Thoroughly satisfying but not overwhelming. Location: 1141 S. Jefferson St.

Caribbean Jerk Joint: Jerk Chicken

Can’t Miss: A bed of flavorful, fragrant rice beneath three large pieces of juicy jerk chicken, this large platter makes a perfect entree for anyone with a large appetite. The smoky flavor of the rice and jerk sauce pairs perfectly with the perfectly cooked chicken. Location: 1400 E 47th St.



PHOTO BY KATIE SASAMOTO-KURISU

DESSERT

Mochinut: Mochi donut

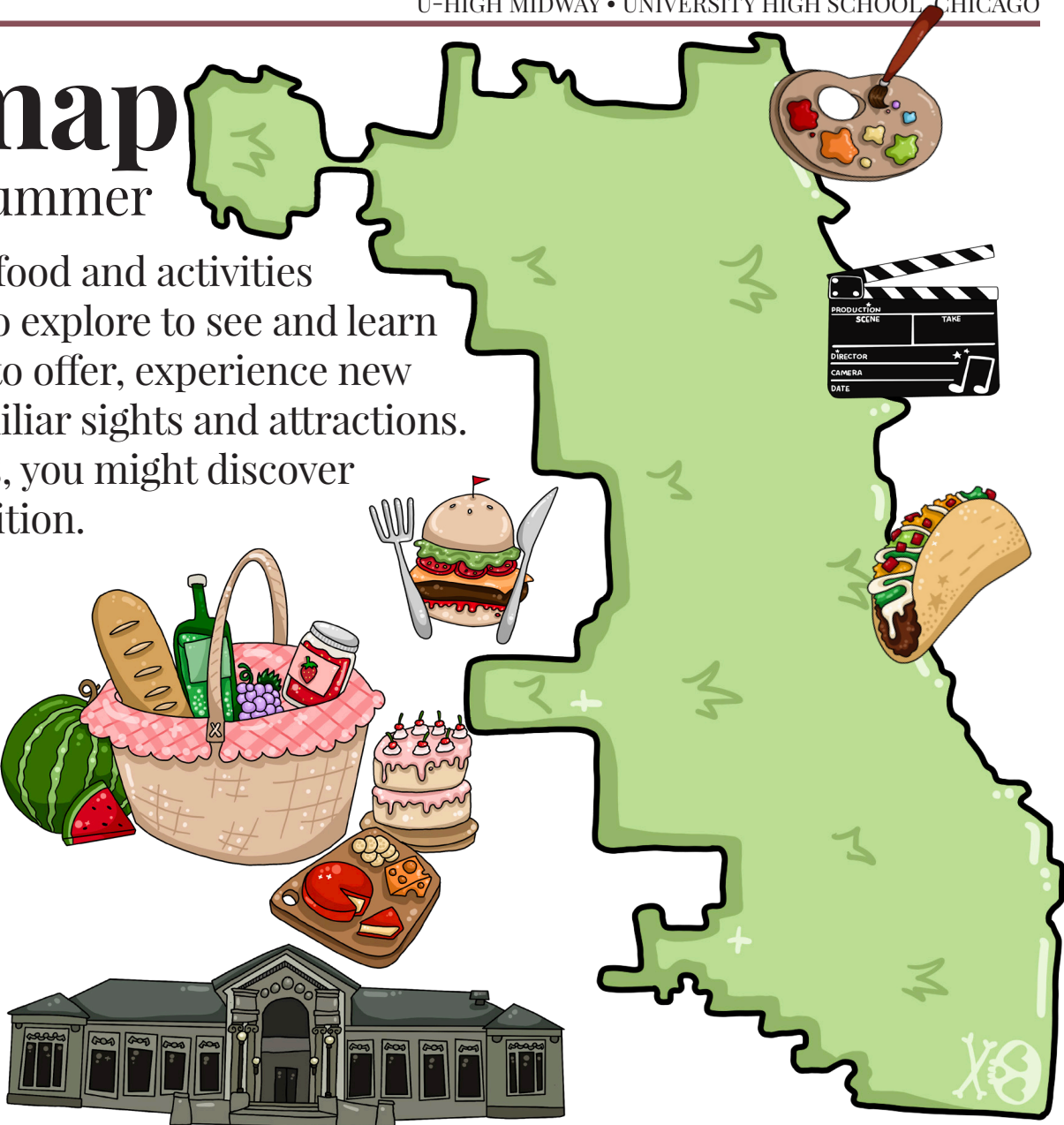
Can’t miss: Choose any mochinut flavor, topping or glaze (varies daily). The main ingredient, sticky sweet rice flour, is also used in the typical Japanese dessert mochi and gives the donuts their unique texture. Each has a crisp, golden brown exterior with a soft, chewy inside that tastes buttery and sweet. Location: 1139 W. Taylor St.

Forno Rosso: Coppa Pistachio

Can’t miss: The Coppa Pistachio, an Italian dessert, is a decadent mix of custard, chocolate and pistachio gelato topped with praline pistachios. The smoothness of the gelato is given some textural variety by the crystallized pistachios, while the mellow pistachio flavor balances the sweeter custard and chocolate. Location: 1048 W. Randolph St.

The Crepe Shop: Wild Berry Cheesecake Crepe

Can’t miss: The crepe is lightly topped with powdered sugar, which offers a balance of sweetness. The soft, pillowy outside is filled with blueberry, raspberry, blackberry and cheesecake cream. The restaurant offers nine crepes: five sweet and four savory. Location: 2934 N. Broadway



MIDWAY ILLUSTRATION BY DALIN DOHRN

Parks provide free cultural fun

by **OLIVIA ADAMS & CHLOE ALEXANDER**, REPORTERS

Get active in other cultures through movies and music with free movies and live music in parks around Chicago. The events listed run from June to August.

MOVIES IN THE PARK

June 21 at Washington Park, 5531 S. King Dr.

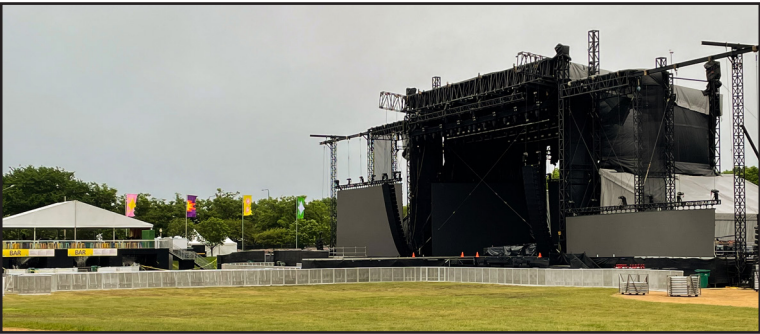
“Black Panther” will screen from 8:30-10:44 p.m. in the Sunken Garden behind the DuSable Museum of African American History. Recently appointed T’Challa, king of the fictional kingdom Wakanda, must protect his kingdom from an outsider, Eric Killmonger.

July 8 at Douglass Park, 1401 S. Sacramento Dr.

“Encanto” will screen from 8:30-10:12 p.m. This follows a teenage girl in the mountains of Colombia trying to find magical powers to fit into the rest of her family.

July 12 at Mozart Park, 2036, N. Avers Ave.

“Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings” will screen from



MIDWAY PHOTO BY OLIVIA ADAMS

FUN IN THE PARK. Grant Park will host many cultural events.

8:30-10:42 p.m. This 2021 movie follows Shang-Chi and his best friend Katy as they must look for Shang-Chi’s sister, Xialing, so they can confront Shang-Chi’s past.

MUSIC

June 9-12, Chicago Blues Festival, 201 E. Randolph St.

If you are open to new music, head to Millennium Park to hear blues artists perform June 9-12 at Chicago’s annual Blues Festival. Past featured artists have been Bonnie Raitt, Ray Charles and Buddy Guy.

June 25-26, **Pride in the Park**, 337 E. Randolph St.

Celebrate LGBTQ+ Pride Month by going to Pride in the Park held in Grant Park, showcasing live music, drag performances and local food.

June 9-12, **Puerto Rican People’s Parade**, 1440 N. Humboldt Blvd.

Celebrate Humboldt Park’s 43rd annual Puerto Rican People’s Parade. This festival includes live Puerto Rican music complemented with a carnival and Puerto Rican-style food and drinks.

Murals, museum express culture, stories



MIDWAY PHOTO BY EVAN LOK

TRUE COLORS. The murals represent various styles of art along a railroad embankment.

The Hubbard Street Murals should be on your bucket list for this summer. Featuring art from artists around the world, and stretching 11 blocks along a railroad embankment at West Hubbard Street and North Ogden Avenue in the Fulton Market/River West neighborhood area, the murals feature some of the most stunning street artwork in Chicago. It was started in the 1970s as a space for street artists to express their creativity, but has now grown into an open-air art gallery for all who want to contribute.

— EVAN LOK



MIDWAY PHOTO BY VICTORIA WASHINGTON

ENGAGING EXHIBITS. The DuSable Museum exhibits African American history distinctively.

A popular Lower School field trip, the DuSable Museum of African American History should make your list of places to revisit this summer for engaging stories in unconventional formats. New exhibits include short films and virtual exhibits. Equiano Stories, which can be viewed through Instagram, are a series of films depicting the life of Olaudah Equiano, who was kidnapped from his home in Essaka and sold into slavery in 1756. Equiano tells his story as if he documented them on his Instagram.

— VICTORIA WASHINGTON

Whether you are looking for a fun outdoor activity, stuck at home on a rainy day, or looking for something new to try, there are plenty of ways to have a blast without a device in hand.

Summer unplugged

There’s no need for an outlet outdoors

by **SOPHIE BAKER**
& **AINSLEY WILLIAMS**
REPORTERS

Lakefront Fun

Chicagoans certainly are blessed with spectacular waterways for fun summer boat trips. Whether it’s a Chicago River Boat Architecture Tour where you glide down the river while a tour guide points out significant buildings that grace the skyline, or exploring historic Chinatown via a Chicago Water Taxi, there is no shortage of options for a river adventure. You can also spend your summers on Lake Michigan by dining on the water with Odyssey Cruises, which serves a three-course dinner all on the water. For those who are more adventurous, zooming down the Lake in a fast Seadog boat tour will be right up your alley.

The picturesque Chicago lakefront provides the perfect backdrop for a bike ride on any sunny day. With an 18.5-mile trail from 71st Street in South Shore north to Edgewater, any avid cyclist can enjoy scenic views of sparkling Lake Michigan and the vast Chicago skyline.

Navy Pier is one of Chicago’s top attractions, and a great place to spend an unplugged summer day. The pier includes restaurants like Harry Caray’s Tavern, Billy Goat Tavern and Brown Sugar Bakery for a sweet treat. Navy Pier is also home to the Chicago Shakespeare

Theater that provides interesting performances at a variety of show times. Explore the picturesque Crystal Gardens to see the wonderful display of fountains and the lush canopy of plants. From Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day weekend, Navy Pier puts on a fireworks show Wednesdays from 9-9:10 p.m., and Saturdays from 10-10:10p.m.

Park Activities

Maggie Daley Park, a 20-acre public park downtown, includes plenty of space to relax and enjoy a picnic as well as innovative playground equipment for kids of all ages. The Ribbon, a quarter-mile long ice skating rink, is converted into a rollerblading rink during the summer, with climbing walls in the center. An 18-hole miniature golf course with Chicago-themed obstacles provides family-friendly entertainment.

Farmers markets, where farmers sell their produce directly to the consumer, are an enjoyable way to support small businesses while getting to try many tasty treats and fresh farmed goods. Chicago offers many farmers markets in most neighborhoods throughout the summer. These include: the Division Street Farmers’ Market, the Hyde Park Farmers’ Market, the Bronzeville Community Market, the Lincoln Park Farmers Market and the Logan Square Farmers Market.



PHOTO BY AINSLEY WILLIAMS

COASTING ALONG. A cyclist bikes by North Avenue Beach, the lake glistening behind them. The 18.5-mile path, which stretches from Edgewater to South Shore, provides spectacular views of the city, an enjoyable form of exercise, and direct access to Chicago’s beaches.

Day Trips

Throughout summer, outdoor art fairs, booth-style shows that host galleries, curators and artists, pop up around the city. Visitors can often purchase art and collectibles. Many of these fairs feature fun games, delicious food and live music. Prominent art fairs

throughout Chicago include the Logan Square Arts Festival, the Old Town Art Fair and the 57th Street Art Fair in June, and the Millennium Art Festival in July.

With fans of all ages shouting in support of their teams, the atmosphere at a sports game is unmatched. Whether you want to

venture to see the Cubs at the newly-renovated Wrigley Field, or the White Sox at the expansive Guaranteed Rate Field, there are plenty of options to enjoy a baseball game. Soccer fans aren’t left out, with both the Chicago Fire and the Chicago Red Stars playing throughout the summer.

Chicago offers some summer activities you’ve wanted to try

by **CLARE MCROBERTS**
& **OLIVER WILSON**
REPORTERS

Summer is about getting away. It’s a chance to escape the piles of school work, to have fun with friends and to truly dig into Chicago for all that it offers. America’s third largest city provides endless choices, but here are some of the best options.

Kayak on the Chicago River

What better way to take in some of Chicago’s historical and most significant architecture than from a kayak on the Chicago River? An array of tours, available during the day and even in evenings during the city’s firework displays, provide lessons on the city’s history while simultaneously offering a workout and just plain fun on the water. The tours, which range from about \$40 to \$70, also give kayakers a chance to get a look at the city’s booming Riverwalk, remade only a few years ago.

The Escape Game Chicago

There are a million escape room businesses to try out there, but The Escape Game Chicago in River North is a true gem. The array of choices for your escape adventure are vast here and they can feel relevant to Chicago without giving any answers away. A favorite is “The

Heist,” an escape room challenge that includes classic images from the nearby Art Institute. The price tag: \$39.99 plus tax.

Taste of Chicago

Experience Chicago’s largest festival, the Taste of Chicago, for a chance to eat some of the city’s most famous delicacies without going all over town. With music, activities and good food (think deep dish and ribs and classic Chicago-style dogs), Taste of Chicago is good for families, too. A tradition for more than 40 years, the festival is popular and usually draws tens of thousands to Grant Park downtown. The admissions price is free, and strips of tickets will be exchanged for food. This summer, the festival will do three “pop-ups” in different neighborhoods during June, as well as a somewhat scaled-back version of the traditional “Taste” downtown from July 8-10.

WNDR Museum

The popular WNDR Museum combines an experiential art gallery and a place to take Instagram-able photos. The museum includes a wide and regularly-changing array of exhibits, from older ones like the Yayoi Kusama exhibit, where spheres, above and below, create a sense of infinity,



PHOTO BY OLIVER WILSON

WHATEVER FLOATS YOUR BOAT. A group puts away kayaks after a trip on the Chicago River. The tour renders a different perspective of Chicago’s architecture and a fun opportunity to spend time with family or friends.

ty, to newer ones like the Boxed In, where dancers on screens rotate around visitors. Be warned: The lines can be long, but it’s worth the wait. General admission tickets start at \$36.

Tilt 360

View Chicago from more than 1,000 feet above the Magnificent Mile with Tilt 360 in the 875 N. Michigan Ave. building. The movable platforms will thrill visitors and give an opportunity to see the city from above.

Indoor activities provide cure for rainy day boredom

by **MIA LIPSON & ZARA SIDDIQUE**, REPORTERS

While summer days are typically spent outdoors, every once in a while the hot and humid Chicago summers are interrupted by a day where the weather is not like the postcards. When stuck inside, this list of rainy day activities is the perfect remedy for the boredom of an indoor summer day.

Friendship bracelets prove to be an addictive summertime activity. After picking your favorite colored string, bracelets can be made anywhere. Patterns from Bracelet-Book are available for any skill set ranging from beginner to expert. These bracelets can be perfect accessories, thoughtful gifts, and a fun way to pass time.



PHOTO BY ZARA SIDDIQUE

Summer treats do not require a trip outdoors. From popsicles to cookies, with everyday ingredients, recipes can make all-day projects or short-term snacks. Taste of Home has recipes ranging from four-step snacks to five-course meals, ensuring cooking and baking will be an easy fix for an otherwise-boring day.



PHOTO BY MIA LIPSON

Scrapbooking is the best way to capture every moment if you’re looking for an offline way to document the summer months. All you need is a notebook of any style and mementos from pictures to tickets. From there, you can customize your scrapbook to perfectly encapsulate your summer. The process is meditative, encouraging reflection.



FLICKR CC2.0 / M01229

At-home workouts can provide a way to stay active when stuck indoors. Don’t throw out those hand-outs from gym class. Instead, they can be used to complete a workout with everyday objects. From yoga to cardio you can engage in a self-paced and customized workout.



FLICKR CC2.0 / NENAD STOJKOVIC

Local comic store thrives in COVID

First Aid Comics grew during the pandemic due to community loyalty

by **PETER COX**
CITYLIFE EDITOR

It's 7 p.m. on a Friday night and a man working the closing shift starts locking up. Upstairs in a backroom, behind boxes of comics, shelves of manga and a TV playing an old-school Batman movie, two card tables are set up. Plexiglass shields run the length of both. About 18 people sit in folding chairs on both sides of these tables as a middle-aged man reads out the list of participants and matches in that night's draft.

Dungeons and Dragons and Warhammer posters cover the walls. Shelves full of roleplaying and board games line the room. Kids and adults talk and laugh as they begin to open the packs they've been allotted for the night.

This is taking place at First Aid Comics, Hyde Park's neighborhood comic book shop. Events like this were put on hold at the start of the pandemic, and are only returning now. Despite this, the variety of other products that the store offers saw it through the last two years.

Aside from a few difficult initial months, First Aid did well during the pandemic, as people turned to comics for nostalgia and comfort in a difficult time, and to be part of First Aid's committed community.

James Nurss owns the Hyde Park location, which was originally on 53rd Street. After two and a half years the store moved to its current location on 55th Street.

Mr. Nurss said his relationship with comics started when he was growing up. He had trouble reading, so his mother took him to comic shops to teach him the joy of reading. This experience sparked a lifelong passion.

He worked in comic shops for most of his time in school, and after finishing college decided he was ready to open his own store.

Though he hadn't grown up in Hyde Park, he visited often as a child and always wished the

Why Comics?

First Aid Comics staff explain

"Comics are what I know, that's what I really know, and that's what I had originally opened, or wanted to do... That's all I've ever done. I grew up in it. I started when I was about 12, so it's what I know, so when it goes under I'll be in trouble."

— James Nurss, owner

"Being able to experience certain characters that I didn't experience in my youth. It might seem kind of weird to say that I'm like a 20 something year old man...going after something and doing something that you wouldn't normally think would be something acceptable for you."

— Zachary Jones, employee

"Working at a comic book store, I guess it's like being at a place full of a thing that you love, but you don't have time to read everything. And, what really pushes more of, what really pushes more of my interest being here is the independent comics section."

— Santiago Alvarez, employee

neighborhood had a comics store.

"I always thought it would be a neat neighborhood to live in," Mr. Nurss said. "So, when I was ready to open I was like, well, Hyde Park still doesn't have a comic shop. It needs one."

While he had planned to open a store for comics only, Mr. Nurss quickly added a gaming component to First Aid. Some of the earliest customers asked if they could use the space to play Magic: The Gathering and Yu-Gi-Oh!, both popular trading card games. Mr. Nurss let them use the store to run games, stocked cards for both and continued to expand the stock of board and card games at the 55th Street location.

Mr. Nurss notes that many other people have played an import-



MIDWAY PHOTO BY GABRIEL ISSA

PURPOSEFUL PERUSING. Issues in hand, a customer browses through some of First Aid's comic stock in the store's addition. The addition, which was added after the store next door moved in 2016, allowed the store to increase its comics stock and expand into board and cards games.

ant role in that process. One of those people was Raoul Mowatt, who has been running the Magic: The Gathering draft at First Aid for 11 years.

Mr. Mowatt said that he had already been playing Magic when he saw that First Aid was running events. Once he started participating he saw that the store could use help organizing the draft, so he decided to help out.

The Magic draft, and all the other events at First Aid were out on hold when the pandemic started. Like most businesses in Chicago the store was closed for most of 2020. During this time the store continued to sell their merchandise online and through curbside pickup.

Though the first few months of the pandemic were hard for First Aid, once the store was allowed to reopen the store didn't continue to struggle as much as other businesses.

"We've definitely grown this last year and a half. You know, it's been good because people got stimulus money," Mr. Nurse said. "They weren't going out to dinner and they weren't going to movies as stuff like that. Comics are something you can do solo. So, a lot of people were buying comics and graphic novels, because they can do it at home. It was a good thing for us. We got a good bounce out of it."

Community is at the core of First Aid's success over the pandemic. People who were dedicated to the store chose to continue to buy things there throughout a difficult time.

"It's been good and the neighborhood's been great, the neighborhood's been very kind to us. People definitely bought stuff that they knew they could probably get cheaper online," Mr. Nurss said.

So far, the Magic draft is the only gaming event that has been re-

started, though the store does plan to restart all pre-COVID events.

Santiago Alvarez, the man who locked up the store on Friday night, said the store is an important place for people to create a community.

"People, you know, go to grocery stores and other types of businesses out of need," Mr. Alvarez said. "A comic book store is somewhere you walk into because you really enjoy that thing, or you're looking for that type of enjoyment, or you're looking to bring that enjoyment to someone else."

The draft's community is the main reason Mr. Mowatt has continued to run the event for so long, despite the challenges of the pandemic.

"At the end of a long week there's nothing like just kicking back with friends, and getting some cards, and having some laughs," Mr. Mowatt said. "That makes this all very enjoyable."

Chicago shops offer variety of iced treats to enjoy in the summer

Frozen desserts are a sweet way to chill out in the hotter months

by **KRISHITA DUTTA**
OPINION EDITOR

Chicago summer's heat is no joke, with people left sweating and desperate for something to help them cool down. Across the city the atmosphere heats up to over 100° on some days. Luckily, Chicago is full of stores offering unique treats to refresh people across the city.

One of these stores is Ava's Italian Ice on the North Side, with icy, slush in fruity flavors. Walk up to Ava's Italian Ice and you'll face a small window with friendly workers, along with a whiteboard revealing the flavors of the day.

A second store with locations across the city is Kilwin's Ice Cream, with any flavor and style of ice cream you can imagine, like Traverse City Cherry to Sunrise Kooler. The store carries the scent of rich chocolate fudge, which customers can often watch being made live. Kilwin's lets you choose how you'd like your ice cream, with a variety of options for cones, flavors and toppings.

In the bustling streets of Chinatown is Oriental Tea, offering rolled ice cream with a variety of fruits and toppings in a sit-down store filled with goodies and toys for purchase. Oriental Tea has a beautiful interior, incorporating classical Chinese-style elements in the building design mixed with modern accents.



Italian ice
Ava's Italian Ice
1814 N. Western Ave.

Ava's Italian Ice, a local favorite in Bucktown, is a pick-up shop that specializes in Italian ice. The store's Italian ices are refreshing, each flavor bursts with fruit flavor. Ava's Italian Ice offers a range of size and flavor options for \$3 to \$10, allowing visitors to mix flavors as they like or try a four-flavor sampler flight. The shop focuses on creating healthy Italian ice options without compromising flavor by using organic fruit in all of their recipes. Ava's Italian Ice also makes an effort to be environmentally conscious by using all compostable cups and spoons.



Rolled ice cream
Oriental Tea
2244 S Wentworth Ave.

Oriental Tea is a Chinese shop offering rolled ice cream in a series of refreshing flavors from mango to Oreo, alongside a wide range of toppings. The rolled ice cream goes an extra mile to refresh customers with real, cold fruit added to the treat. Customers get to watch the satisfying process of their rolled ice cream being made! The shop is located in the heart of Chinatown, and offers other refreshing treats such as waffle cones and milk tea. A mango rolled ice cream with mango topping and whipped cream cost about \$8.



MIDWAY PHOTOS BY KRISHITA DUTTA

Ice cream with fudge
Kilwin's Ice Cream
310 S. Michigan Ave.

Kilwin's Ice Cream is a perfect summer treat to satisfy one's taste buds. The ice cream can be customized. Customers can choose from various types of fudge and toppings, the shape of the cone and a wide range of funky ice cream flavors both sweet and refreshing. One store is in the heart of downtown across from the Art Institute on Michigan Avenue. Kilwin's also offers other treats like chocolate and caramel dipped apples, chocolate boxes and bricks of fudge. A standard ice cream with fudge in a cup cone costs around \$8.