COVID-19 worries decrease despite city’s current infection rate

"Last year, the variant that we were dealing with was pretty con- tagious," nurse Mary Toledo-Tre- villo said, "so there was definite- ly more of an increase in COVID infection that we had at the end of last year versus what we have now. We’re staying hopeful. These numbers are doable." As an added measure of secur- ity, COVID-19 vaccine boosters will be available to faculty, students and family along with their yearly flu shot, which will be available Oct. 4, 18 and 25. Despite seemingly reassuring numbers, many U-High students continue to wear masks in order to avoid the inconvenience and dis- comfort of contracting COVID-19. "I had COVID in May, and it sucked, and I don’t want to get it again," said senior Nathan Gree- ley, who wears a mask regularly, "I couldn’t go to a Wizzler concert. I don’t want to have to not go to a concert again."

Only a minority of students continue to wear a mask

During a passing period, stu- dents fill the hall in an almost wall-to-wall mass, laughing loudly con- versing and calling out to passing friends — almost every face un- masked. It’s a scene that was diffi- cult to imagine seven months ago, when constant worry over infec- tion numbers, which are high- ly more of an increase in COVID-19 infection that we had at the end of last year versus what we have now. We’re staying hopeful. These numbers are doable. As an added measure of secur- ity, COVID-19 vaccine boosters will be available to faculty, students and family along with their yearly flu shot, which will be available Oct. 4, 18 and 25. Despite seemingly reassuring numbers, many U-High students continue to wear masks in order to avoid the inconvenience and dis- comfort of contracting COVID-19. "I had COVID in May, and it sucked, and I don’t want to get it again," said senior Nathan Gree- ley, who wears a mask regularly, "I couldn’t go to a Wizzler concert. I don’t want to have to not go to a concert again."

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Precaution taken after two shootings

Student opinion added to survey

IEXCEED EXPECTATIONS. Courtney McDonald laughs while talking to adviser Holly Johnston during the advisory period.

EXCEEDED EXPECTATIONS. By CLARE MCRBOBERTS Reporter

The Jackson Park Golf Course will no longer be the practice site for the U-High golf team after students witnessed a drive-by shooting during practice on Sept. 13 and another shooting occurred near the same location on Sept. 15, school administrators said.

Several golf team members were playing at the course's sixth hole on the afternoon of Sept. 13 when they heard a screetch of car tires and turned their attention to the intersection of East 67th Street and South Jeffery Boulevard.

"Right before I take my shot, I kind of look up and I see this car flying down the road," team member Myles Cobb said. "As it comes flying across, that's when we hear the shots."

He added that he and his teammates ran down a hill and dropped the ground at the direction of their coach.

Athletics Director David Ribbens said in an interview that the team had practiced at the course, which is less than two miles from school, for many years without a serious incident.

"It's never happened in the 20 years that I've been here," he said.

According to Mr. Ribbens, no one was believed to be hurt in the shooting.

Practices will now take place exclusively at Harborside International Golf Center, another facility about 30 miles south of campus that the team has used for nearly a decade.

"It's a half hour drive from school," Myles said, adding that he has mixed feelings about the added commute time and balancing homework.

"But after today," he said, "I feel like it's the best choice just to keep everyone safe."

PRACTICE RELOCATION. The golf team relocated its practice to Harborside International Golf Center due to two shootings that occurred near the team's practice site in Jackson Park.

New student welcomed by community

New students feel welcomed by community

EXCEEDED EXPECTATIONS. By KATIE SASAMOTO-KURISU Reporter

Students will be able to weigh into the priorities of school support during the annual health and wellness survey which will be taken on Oct. 6 during assembly period. The survey was moved from spring to fall in part due to utilizing a third-party administrator, Authentic Connections.

The changes are designed to allow for customization and to increase student enthusiasm toward participating.

Betsy Noell, director of equal opportunity services, said the old survey was built around risk-bearing, risk-taking tendencies while the new survey contains questions related to an individual's feelings and experiences.

"We will have a better sense of the mental health and social and emotional experiences that are known to contribute to (risk) behaviors," she said.

The administration is working to create custom questions pertaining to topics of significant influence in order to most accurately reflect the experiences and views of participants.

Student input is one factor that has contributed to the implementation of changes and discussions on ways to better accommodate the student body.

"I'm very excited about the level of engagement that we've had with students this year," Ms. Noell said. "Some of the feedback that they gave was what drove the decision to use this company, that takes it in a different direction."

After the results of the survey are published, the platform will use the data points to develop possible plans and strategies to fit Lab's needs.

Ms. Noell emphasized the importance of using a vendor like Authentic Connections to consider external factors that may impact an individual's attitude towards certain questions.

"They put more effort into the students this year," Ms. Noell said. "Some of the feedback that they gave was what drove the decision to use this company, that takes it in a different direction."

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EXCEEDED EXPECTATIONS. By CLARE MCRBOBERTS Reporter

With the first month of school nearly complete, new students at U-High are finding the transition into U-High to be smoother than expected, and many are happy with the ease they have felt in joining the community.

Like the others, new-to-Lab ninth grader Zuri Cosery-Gay has been pleasantly surprised by the open and welcoming community U-High has presented.

"It's been great, everyone has been real nice and kind to me," Zuri said.

This year, U-High welcomed 32 new students: 23 ninth graders, four sophomores, four juniors and two seniors.

Zuri said she has been "welcomed" by friends at his previous school that U-High's homework would be easier.

Daniel Chung, another new-to-Lab ninth grader, shared a similar experience to Zuri, emphasizing the concern about homework.

"I was expecting a lot of smart kids, and more homework," Dan said.

As it comes flying across, that's when we hear the shots.

He added that he and his teammates ran down a hill and dropped the ground at the direction of their coach.

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Increased demand in therapists pose additional difficulties to seeking help

by CLARE O’CONNOR

Norie Kaufman-Sites says she’s lucky. When Norie, a junior, decided to start therapy a little over two years ago, she was able to find a therapist who felt like a good fit through a family friend’s recommendation. Norie didn’t have to wait for an opening or hassle her parents for insurance information.

Norie knows her experience is far from the norm. She’s seen friends spend upward of six months wading through waitlists, waiting before finally receiving help, and others struggle with a rotating cast of new providers. Norie’s friends represent a larger trend: right now, it’s hard for teens to get the help they need.

The demand for mental health services has been outpacing available practitioners for years, but the pandemic exacerbated the issue. A 2021 study from the American Psychological Association showed that only 16% of psychologists had the capacity to accept new clients and 48% of psychologists’ waitlists had grown longer since 2020.

The pandemic’s impact on demand for mental health services is especially pronounced, according to Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows that “All adults report ongoing mental health issues,” Mr. Bruner said. “That’s when we saw a really big uptick in requests for therapy. Many, many, many practitioners were filled up. So, there has been a shortage. We’ve started seeing people spending a lot of time on waitlists.”

Ilayna Mehrtens, a pediatric psychologist at the University of Chicago, echoed Bruner’s sentiment, having witnessed both sides of the congested therapy system.

“There are a lot of people who are seeking out services who aren’t able to receive them.” Mehrtens said. “It’s been hard. It’s been hard for my own colleagues to find solutions for themselves.”

Teenagers can face additional hurdles when seeking mental health support. Minorors require parental permission and permission to participate in therapy. Additionally, finding a therapist and setting appointments can be difficult without deep involvement from an adult.

“Your parents aren’t super committed and really diligent about getting you to therapy, it can be, like, almost impossible to try and find someone,” Norie said.

Therapy doesn’t always support

by WILLIAM TAN

Sinking into a comfortable chair, facing a pad and paper, junior Kian Quinn-Calabrese prepares himself to share another personal story. But he’s not in a writing class or conversing with some friends; he’s speaking to his waiting therapist.

In 2017, Kian entered adolescence and entered into a period of rapid physiological development. Even as teenagers face increased responsibilities and pressure, paired with rapid physiological development, often result in teenagers needing outside support to help manage their changing lives and emotions.

Adolescents, by definition, are in a stage of life where they are going from being kids to adults, and that transition is quite difficult,” Dr. Bruner said.

Despite the difficult system, Norie encourages her peers to seek therapy to address both large issues and more subtle problems. Mr. Bruner and Dr. Mehrtens also both expressed hope that teenagers can find support even when the process is discouraging.

“In most settings, the folks teenagers interact with have judging sentiments, but Dr. Mehrtens said, “Therapy is one of the few places where one can get support as an adolescent without being judged.”

OPENING UP: Junior Kian Quinn-Calabrese found that his therapist didn’t help him as much as he had hoped, and he parted ways with them during the pandemic.

“Your parents are going to have to reach out to you and people and put in a lot of time,” he said. “School and home work is complicated scheduling for students, making the regular time commitment required for therapy sometimes unsustainable.”

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Secretary leaves legacy of love

Lab community remembers Elaine Robison for her caring nature

by AUBREY PARK
Managing Editor

Mr. high school secre-
tary Elaine Robi-
sion was admitted to the hospital in late June, a worker approached her and said Ms. Robison looked familiar. Unable to pinpoint how, Ms. Robison returned to her room.

The next morning, she woke up and found a note next to her bed written by a student at the Laboratory Schools as a student 16 years ago and conveying their appreciation for Ms. Robison’s kind-
ness at the time.

Ms. Robison’s contagious smile and ability to create a stress-free environment impacted this former student and others across the Lab community.

Though the high school experienced the loss of one of the longest working and admired staff mem-
bers, who died July 12 after a short medical leave, Ms. Robison’s lega-
cy lives on.

Known as a reliable coworker, a dear friend, a faithful Christian and a willing listener, as well as a wel-
coming face in the high school office for 29 years, Ms. Robison is remembered as someone who im-
pacted all in the Lab community.

Principal Paul Beckmeyer worked with her for three years in the high school office. He said her presence was a lot of the stress and created a peaceful space for students and teachers.

“Ms. Robison brightened days for many students and faculty alike,” Beckmeyer said. “I think everyone could recognize her by her smile and by the way she greeted people. She was always willing to listen.

Junior Leila Battiste said Ms. Robison was nice and had a com-
passionate heart.

“I didn’t really know her that well, but I talked to her a few times throughout sophomore year and said hi to her almost everyday in the halls,” Leila said.

Since she started working at Lab, Camille Baugh-Cunning-
ham, a high school counselor, had known Ms. Robison for 15 years.

“We were work friends,” she said.

“Any time I would set my feet in the high school office, she was there, always with a kind, thought-
ful greeting. She was willing to lis-
ten to whatever was going on, al-
ways a welcome face.”

According to Dr. Baughn-Cun-
nigham, Ms. Robison and the other high school secretary, Car-
ol Arrington, were viewed as “the pair.”

“They had been up until last June, working seamlessly together, and everyone viewed them as the force of organization, and the folks who knew everything about how the Lab School works, certainly the high school,” Dr. Baughn-Cun-
ningham said.

Ms. Arrington had worked alongside Ms. Robison for 25 years, and they became more than just coworkers or even dear friends, they became family.

“They were a couple, unwilling to tol-
erate life in Spain under the fas-
cist rule of Francisco Franco in 1939, fled on a dangerous journey by boat into France.

Ms. Baum, who teaches Span-
ish and French at U-High, took a paid study leave during the 2021-22 school year to complete a trans-
lational book of historical fiction, “Married to Spain,” which shares the experience of her husband’s grandparents during the Spanish Civil War.

“I was family folklore,” said Ms. Baum, who began researching and writing the book over a period of years and fin-
ished the self-published work this year.

“I wanted to research the actual history and see if I could find out the truth.”

Ms. Baum started traveling to Lab in 1993 but left for sever-
al years to work in Spain, where she had met Óscar Emilio Rebol-
lo Martínez, the man who would become her husband during a college study-abroad program.

Ms. Baum began researching for the novel in 2014, studying histori-
tical texts on the Spanish Civil War.

She initially began this project to share the history with her daugh-
ters, and to pass on the story of her husband’s grandparents.

She said her students too, might benefit from the story, which in-
cludes English, French and Span-
ish.

“I hope they learn some histo-
ry,” she said.

“Not only, that they have a greater appreciation for Spain, Spanish culture, the suffer-
ing that took place.”

Food also plays a key role in “Married to Spain.” Chapters be-
gin with recipes for Spanish cui-
sine such as flan, lentils with cho-
rizo, and paella.

But at the heart of the story is Ms. Baum’s husband’s grand-
mother — or abuela — Manue-
a Bermejo Sánchez. As Mrs. Sán-
chez prepares recipes, she tells the story of her and her husband’s long, difficult journey across the snowy Pyrenees Mountains as they fled Spain during the coun-
try’s Civil War in the late 1930s.

Then, ringed in a camp in France but persisting.

“Being a friend of hers was such a privilege, and I used to tell her that every single day,” Ms. Ar-
rington said with tears in her eyes.

“We take so much for granted, and I miss her beyond words.”

She said their friendship was immediate and natural.

“It was not just that she was nice, but we found that we had a lot in common,” she said. “It is kind of funny because we were both mar-
rried to men named Joe, our am-
versaries were one day apart and most importantly, my love for the Lord, and her love for the God, be- cause of that love, we always had so much to talk about.”

Ms. Robison was an accom-
plished gospel singer, and religion was a huge part of her life. Ms. Ar-
rington said her commitment was admirable.

“She recorded albums, she trav-
elled with choirs, she was always so passionate, singing from her soul,” Ms. Arrington said. “Her love for the Lord is what caused her to sing. People would just marvel when they heard her voice.”

Similarly, P.E. teacher Deb-
bie Ribbons, who knew Ms. Robi-
son for 21 years, connected with her through their shared religious identification.

“We were once at a gospel brunch together, and my whole family was there,” she said. “She invited my son on stage and had him perform with her, and it was really touching. She just embraced everyone she knew with love and kindness.”

Although her absence and warming personality are clear-
ly missed, her legacy will contin-
ue and remains unuprooted by the community she impacted so emi-
nently.

“There were many students, like the student who works at the hos-
pital now, who found somebody who they could just have that re-
liable, kind face to check in with, and I think that would mean a lot in an intense school like this,” Ms. Baugh-Cunningham said. “I think it was like having an island in some type of storm, I’m quite sure of it.”
Staged or sincere: How to BeReal

BeReal brings authenticity to social media through randomly timed posts

by AUREY MATEI

Art Editor

Buzz Buzz. “Time to BeReal.” At a random time each day, this notification lands onto millions of phones across the globe, prompting users to take a tiny circular photo that is displayed next to the original post. In lieu of public follower counts, users must mutually “friend” each other to view posts.

These features lead to an intimate online experience limited to small clusters of users and supposedly removes the pressure present on other platforms. Junior Adam Cheema joined the app in January, months before it garnered mainstream attention. He appreciates the app’s unconventional nature.

“My impression was that it’s a very fun solution to the social media problem of real expectations,” Adam said.

Sophomore Millie Norton has been using BeReal for a few months and said she loves how low-stakes posting is.

“It’s really personal because you don’t have to have a bunch of people seeing your posts,” she said, “and it’s not so much pressure.”

Although the app allows users to post after the two-minute window and retake photos after the original snapshot, this information is displayed above the post to remain consistent with the philosophy of authenticity.

These features lead some to criticize the app as it still allows users to somewhat curate their online presence.

“TikTok has become more contradictory to its original message since its growth in popularity,” Adam said. “I’ve seen the BeReal culture change. When I first joined, I used to post exactly as it came out and react to everyone’s post because I only had three friends, but now people say that there are social norms,” he said. “BeReal has presented us as consumers with a problem, and that is too much social media, but here’s the thing: BeReal offers a solution in more social media.”

TikTok trend inspires book discussion

BookTok provides reading proposals, recommendations

by MIA LIPSON

Reporter

On a regular school day, after school, sophomore Lisa Tao spends 30 minutes on TikTok, scrolling through countless videos. One video she crosses offers a video that suggests “The Bell Jar,” written in 1963 by Sylvia Plath. Intrigued by the recommendations, Lisa decides to look more into the book and the author’s background, which the video mentioned.

On her “For You” page, this type of video is not uncommon. In fact, approximately half of the videos Lisa watches are from BookTok, a subculture of TikTok dedicated to discussing books.

BookTok — which offers recommendations, revivals and discussions to encourage reading of literature — has become widely popular among teens, yet it has amassed mixed reactions among its viewers. While some enjoy BookTok’s recommendations and the space it provides for discourse, others bemoan its intimate nature to lack diverse representation.

“There are so many different kinds of books there, and it’s just really interesting to see such a wide set of books being shown in teen media,” Lisa said.

Sophomore Sinead Nagbadi has enjoyed numerous book recommendations from the platform. However, she said many of the books she initially saw promoted on BookTok lacked diverse voices.

“TikTok pushes you toward a lot of authors who don’t really understand good representation,” she said. “And then the good books with accurate representation are kind of pushed into the shadows.”

Middle school librarians Tad Andracki and Amy Atkinson appreciate the way BookTok has encouraged readers to engage with books they might have otherwise not seen. They utilized BookTok’s popularity to create a display dedicated to some of the books promoted by TikTok’s algorithm, as well as other related options.

“Students will really latch on to one particular title that they’ve seen on BookTok that have been amplified by, like, the algorithm,” Mr. Andracki said. “But what our display was able to do was also take those recommendations and say, ‘Here’s something else that you might also be interested in reading that hasn’t been picked up by BookTok.’”

The algorithm is also impacting the publishing industry, as shown by data from the NPD BookScan, which displays the top selling books from each month, many of which are widely popular on BookTok.

NPD Books’ executive director of business development and the primary industry analyst, Kristen McLean, credits BookTok’s growing popularity with the rise in print sales from 2020 to 2021 in the fiction category.

“Overall, reading the book was a really interesting and thought-provoking experience,” Lisa said. “I would definitely look to BookTok again for another recommendation.”

BeReal offers a solution in more social media.
Workload policies need work

Over the past few years, homework has become the subject of increasing scrutiny at U-High, as students and parents in the community have lamented the excesses that have taken place in the student body. These calls only increased during the pandemic, when homework was cited as an additional mental health burden for the already put-upon high school community. Since then, the administration has taken steps to reduce the homework students have to do in the past few years. New measures including not allowing work to be assigned over the weekend for assignments due to be done two days after breaks, have been introduced to ensure that students get the rest that they need. However, the implementation of these rules has made clear that achieving change through policy will take time.

The administration’s ideas are well intentioned and have the potential to impact student workload and mental health, but the existing policies need to be enforced and rationalized before anyone can determine the effectiveness of these efforts.

U-High needs to have a well-structured system in place to enforce homework in all of its policies. It doesn’t matter if there is a formal process for reporting violations of the school’s homework policies. If a teacher breaks the rules, it’s the student’s responsibility to address these violations and solve the issue by reaching out to their teachers. The administration cannot be expected to do so. However, some students won’t feel comfortable complaining about their teacher. Because of the unstructured nature of these interactions, teachers’ responses are unpredictable, and many students could have a reason to worry about seeming lazy or disrespectful when bringing up these topics. It’s unreasonable to expect students to lay down, nor should they. It would be possible for the administration to require the approval of a homework curriculum over the course of the year to ensure that this would be difficult and unnecessary.

The most effective and reasonable solution would be to create an anonymous form that students could fill out to report issues to the administration. The administration will then deal with these reports with each teacher. Most teachers don’t intentionally assign work that doesn’t fit the guidelines laid out by the administration, but like students, they just aren’t aware of the policies. Over time teachers should become familiar with the policies and stop making errors.

Another smaller issue is some of the loopholes in the current policies. For example, if a downturn assigns a test two days after a break, under the current rules that would be allowed, even though that would be an extraordinarily light workload to make an assignment due over the break, which isn’t allowed. These sorts of issues are going to come with the introduction of a policy. They’re things that are going to make it hard for high schoolers, who only have four years at U-High, to see that change.

May be years to determine if the current policies could achieve the goals that we are trying to achieve, but right now, they definitely aren’t.

This opinion represents the editorial of the opinion board.

Later start time displays progress

by AMON GRAY
Sports & Leisure Editor

My first days on Lab’s historic campus started in Elizabeth Roche’s Nursery 4 classroom, which was always filled with crayola markers and览空 books and other tools to prepare you for the world. In the 14 years since then, I have seen Lab grow and change — from the new buildings to the renovations to the expansion of enrollment in recent years. MCPS has changed, and these changes will be a later start to the school day.

In the laboratory, Schools Director Tori Jacobs announced in an email on Aug. 25 that the school will begin their school year at 8:30 a.m. This decision is not only an important one for student well-being but also an important step in student voice leading to major change.

This implementation of the late start has been in progress since the school’s 2009 Strategic Framework was released. One of the framework goals was to elevate student health and wellness.

Along with the later start, this includes health and wellness councils, more discussions around homework and workload, and monitoring the effectiveness of social emotional learning policies.

The school’s rhetoric and actions on these issues has significantly changed since 2018, when I started middle school. At that time the middle and high schools were beginning to collect data through the health and wellness survey to address problems around workload and stress.

Despite the later start time, the school day at the middle and high schools will end no later than 3:30 p.m. This means some school years will be shortened by about 30 minutes. It will be the role of the scheduling committees to decide the schedule’s priorities in what time should be kept as part of the school day.

Some students and teachers have vociferous apprehension about these trade-offs. However, all re-search done within and outside the school has shown that a later start time will improve the well-being of students.

This has been shown by the survey the school has conducted as well among students, faculty and parents in partnership with Challenge Success as well as additional research done by the scheduling committee.

Many of the schoolwide changes have been a result of expanded enrollment, which has grown by about 29% in my time at Lab. This led to both benefits and drawbacks in the classroom but also showed the school’s need for change to accommodate its larger size and create more equitable systems.

As a senior, I will not see the late start time implemented. I do feel confident that the school is a better place than it was when I arrived, and I hope the school will continue this progress toward student wellbeing.
Donors for Gordon Parks Arts Hall stood for diversity, inclusivity, roots

by SAHANA UNNI
Features Editor

In 1940, Gordon Parks moved to the South Side of Chicago, where he dedicated himself to accurately portraying African American life through his camera lens in order to change the way the world saw his community. In 2020, “Rosa’s Law” was signed by President Barack Obama, replacing the federal law that was in place. It was only days ago that Mr. Griffin donated $125 million to the City of Chicago to recognize Mr. Parks’s contributions to the field of education. The targeted demographic is the African American, given the disparity in education within the community. He donated to a lot of valuable institutions but spent his time giving to the University of Chicago, prior to his move to Chicago. He donated to a lot of valuable organizations around Chicago, including $30 million to the University of Chicago, prior to his move to Chicago. He donated to a lot of valuable organizations around Chicago, including $30 million to the University of Chicago, prior to his move to Chicago. He donated to a lot of valuable organizations around Chicago, including $30 million to the University of Chicago, prior to his move to Chicago.

Mr. Griffin has undoubtedly contributed significantly to the city of Chicago, becoming a part of Gordon Parks Arts Hall after he feels incentivized. Mr. Parks made his own principles, including socio-economic and racial diversity, that Mr. Griffin simply does not.

The R-word has long been used as a playground insult, used to mock someone by inverting them as an intellectual disability. Inherent in this usage is the belief that being disabled is something shameful and worthy of ridicule. The word itself comes from the Latin root for “hurt” and “damaged.” The R-word has been in the English language since the 19th century. In 1961, the American Psychiatric Association adopted the word as a scientific term for people with intellectual disabilities. If I pulled aside a student who I heard using the R-word in the halls and asked what the word meant, they would likely tell me that it just means “stupid” or “crazy.” But, if I pressed them and asked whether their definition comes from, I believe they would know the answer.

Most students aren’t ignorant of the discourse surrounding the R-word, and they know some people say the word hurts. Some students choose to use it anyway. Still, I don’t blame my peers who use the R-word. It was only days ago that Mr. Griffin donated $125 million to the City of Chicago to recognize Mr. Parks’s contributions to the field of education. The targeted demographic is the African American, given the disparity in education within the community. He donated to a lot of valuable institutions but spent his time giving to the University of Chicago, prior to his move to Chicago. He donated to a lot of valuable organizations around Chicago, including $30 million to the University of Chicago, prior to his move to Chicago.

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‘RRR’ presents maximalism at its best

By KAUSIK NAKAS

Two men spontaneously unite to rescue a boy stuck under a bridge in the midst of a train wreck by ty- ing a rope to each other and jumping off of the bridge, each on a sepa- rate side so that the rope prevents them from falling. They then pick the boy up in mid-air and throw him out of the area where the train is falling before grabbing each other and exclaiming their names. This is the scene in “RRR” where the two protagonists meet.

The film’s combination of intensity and absurdity create a wildly entertaining viewing experience, even if the unnecessarily long run-time prevents it from being a fully enjoyable film. “RRR” is part of a segment of Indian film known as Tollywood, which, in contrast to Bollywood, is in the Telugu language, while Bol- lywood films are in Hindi. Tollywood is rapidly gaining popu- larity worldwide due to its emphasis on extreme stunts and large-scale musical numbers.

“RRR” tells the story of two In- dian revolutionaries, Komaram Bheem and Alluri Sitarama Raju, fighting against villainous Brit- ish administrators in Delhi. While the story is fictitious, the two main characters were real revolutionary leaders in India. The film has the highest budget of any Indian film to date, and it has become a sen- sation in India due to the casting of Tollywood superstars N.T. Ra- ma Rao Jr. and Ram Charan, who play Mr. Bheem and Mr. Raju, Ad- ditionally, “RRR” has captured the attention of an international audi- ence after being added to Netflix.

“RRR” is at its best when it’s hy- perreal. In one scene, Mr. Raju, undercover as an Indian Imperial Police officer, leaps 20 feet in the air, over a barbed wire fence, to engage in combat with a massive crowd of anti-imperial protesters. In another scene, Mr. Raju and Mr. Bheem take part in a dance bat- tle with a British man who has in- spired the dance capabilities of all Indians in an imperial party. The stunning performances from the film’s cast combined with the sur- real nature of these scenes makes them delightful, and while they’re not frequently, they leave the view- ers enthralled.

Another highlight is the cine- matography, which perfectly con- veys the film’s grandiose nature. In the scene in which the imperi- al governor’s palace is introduced, several aerial shots are used to in- tensify the ominous atmosphere of the palace. Another scene, featur- ing a large crowd rioting in front of a prison, makes viewers aware of the sheer scale of the rioters through the use of wide overhead shots. The way in which “RRR” uses cinematography to reinforce its narrative is one of its most im- pressive feats, and it ensures that viewers have their eyes glued to the screens.

While the film’s scale is usu- ally an asset, one aspect of “RRR” that is too massive is its runtime. At 3 hours and 7 minutes, “RRR” is never boring, but the plot me- anders frequently. These detours are, at times, astonishing. Howev- er, they’re usually mundane, fea- turing just enough interesting di- alogue to partially offset the dragging.

“RRR” suffers from a bloated runtime, and parts of the film defi- nitely feel unnecessary. However, the acting and music, its hyperreal entertainment, featuring dazzling cinematic performances and some of the most fun scenes in modern cinema.

On new release, Demi Lovato powerfully reinvents herself

A genre-shift allows Demi to fulfill her potential vocally and aesthetically

By AISLYN WILLIAMS

“I know the s— that I’ve ig- nored. I’m a girl that you adored, she’s dead, it’s time to f—- you now.”

These lyrics characterize Demi Lovato as she says goodbye to her previous era (the singer has ac- knowledged that she uses both she and they pronouns) of pop ballads and R&B anthems.

Demi’s eighth album, “Holy Fck,” heavily contrasts the feel- good, Disney Channel pop-star persona that she embodied early in her career, establishing a new angle of her musical ability and vocal prowess, and embracing the angry, head-banging, pop-punk sonic.

Every track on the album uses traditional pop-punk elements of early 2000s emo beats, like sharp drums heavy with symbols and vi- cious electric guitar that screech through the songs, triumphantly defying the album’s vibe of memoir- ness and rebellion.

In the opening song, “Freak,” Demi controversially belts, “Came from the trauma, stayed for the drama,” addressing critics and her rocky start in the music industry. This track also features fellow Disney Channel alum and alternative punk artist YUNGBLUD, who’s rasping voice perfectly comple- ments the “screw it” vibe of the song.

The following song, “Skin of My Teeth,” opens with catchy drum

Visuals stun, yet ‘Rings of Power’ underwhelms

By AUDREY MATEI

The past decade has brought a fantasy-television renaissance with the smashing success of “Game of Thrones” and its succes- sors. Sprawling worlds of dragons, magic, and kings have enthralled audi- ences multiple times with the smash- ing success of “The Lord of the Rings” and “The Hobbit” sagas. Now comes the series, “The Rings of Power,” an extension of J.R.R. Tolkien’s Middle-earth, which suffers frequently. These detours are, at times, astonishing. However, they’re usually mundane, fea- turing just enough interesting di- alogue to partially offset the dragging.

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Lab teacher honors father with exhibit

by KRISHITA DUTTA
Opinion Editor

A

t one point in the card-
board boxes shuffled from
home to home were memo-
dairies, high school yearbooks, collec-
tions of paintings and print-outs of
research papers: souvenirs from a
successful art historian’s life. Now,
his belongings are beautifully dis-
played behind glass boxes at the
University of Chicago.

The art historian Paul B. Moses
lived an extraordinary life, from
overcoming barriers as the first
African American student to at-
tend the University of Chicago, to
eventually becoming a successful art
historian. The pen at the University of Chi-
go through his research papers. It
was too much for [my family],
Mrs. Ambrosini said. “I felt that ev-
erybody could be really involved in
the process of moving mul-
tiple times, he shuffled around
the Sherry Lansing Theater on Oct.
27-29.

“The Firebugs” will be performed in
the Sherry Lansing Theater on
Oct. 27-29.

In this photograph from 1964, Paul B. Moses laughs with his son, Michael Moses, who
is now a Laboratory Schools P.E. teacher. Mr. Moses co-curated an exhibit with Stephanie Strother in honor of his late
father, who was a trailblazing art historian at the University of Chicago.

TOUCHING TRIBUTE. In this photograph from 1954, Paul B. Moses laughs with his son, Michael Moses, who
is now a Laboratory Schools P.E. teacher. Mr. Moses co-curated an exhibit with Stephanie Strother in honor of his late
father, who was a trailblazing art historian at the University of Chicago.

I was afraid it would open up old
wounds, but it turned out to be all
right,” Mr. Moses said. “It’s been
stressful, but satisfying.”

Ms. Strother has been working on
the exhibition for about a year
and a half. She said she was inspired
by the story of the Moses family,
and the exhibit is a way to honor
their late father.

“The Firebugs” play is in an absurd
style, and she chose it to build
up the boxes and begin the proj-
ect with her.

Their proposal to the Regen-
stein Library was approved in
April 2020. According to Mr. Moses,
he achieved his mission.

“Through all of this, I’ve been
able to get to know my father,
touching the items,” he said. “At
this point, I truly feel like I know
who he was, who he is, and more
of what he would’ve been in the
future.”

Mr. Moses said there was an un-
expected emotional aspect of put-
ing the exhibition together.

“The condolence letters were
the most personal letters, I read
every one of those, six of those being
in the exhibit,” he said.

Through the process, there were
some emotional and touching
moments that jumped out at me here
and there, and I really didn’t think
I would get emotional in the pro-
cess of going through the items,” he
said.

Mr. Moses wants people who
visit the exhibition to take away an
incredible leader and to under-
stand Paul Moses’ life, and the sig-
nificance it held.

“We hear about many great Af-
rican American pioneers through-
out the country, and I think he’s wor-
thy to be in that group of great pi-
oneers,” Mr. Moses said. “I’m not
about me for other people, it’s
about him.”

Mr. Moses believes that through
this experience, he’s gone from a
novice to an exhibition-making
understanding the process. Even
though he didn’t get it right away,
getting through the process with
that mindset, he’s embarked on a
wonderful journey to getting
Mr. Moses, separating him-
self from the exhibition is im-
portant, since he believes the exhi-
bit is shaped by his father. “Over-
all, I want people to think of a
person who was a trailblazer, a
short-lived excellent father, amazing
person, and learn what he was like
as a teacher, as an excellent father,
who knew his profession, was an
excellent professor, was a short-
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Kilwins renovates following shooting in November 2021
by LOUIS AUXENFANS

Light aromas of warm chocolate and roasted nuts fill the air, beckoning customers to buy a pecan snapper or caramel krispy treat. Bags of taffy, caramels and chocolates line the wooden shelves. Dozens of ice cream flavors fill the dipping cases, and freshly dipped caramel apples cool by the window sill. The new wooden floors,ouches of copper kitchenware and relaxing R&B music make the store a comforting place to buy and eat sweet treats.

It’s a sharp change from the scene almost a year ago when bullets shattered windows and left dozens of glass shards on the floor. When I stepped into Kilwins store, the owner, owner of other Kilwins stores in the Loop and Navy Pier, never laughed. His tone has changed since leaving Hyde Park.

“We’ve been in that location for 10 years, and we’ve seen little babies grow up, we’ve seen people get married, we know our customers by name,” Ms. Jackson said. “They have the best ice cream, the best candy,” Ms. Brown said. “It’s a huge shop and it’s just different.”

An outpouring of letters, calls and emails Ms. Jackson received from the community encouraged her to reopen her Hyde Park store, and since the store had been at the same location for 10 years and was getting dated, Ms. Jackson wanted to reopen with a clean slate.

“We decided to totally renovate the store to make it a beautiful environment, so that when customers come in, we can serve them enjoyment and just forget about what happened,” Ms. Jackson said.

Supply chain issues meant the store could not reopen by its original April 1 deadline, but in late July, Kilwins reopened with new floors, lighting, wallpaper and an enlarged kitchen to welcome guests.

Looking forward, Ms. Jackson is encouraging Hyde Parkers to come to its grand store reopening on Sunday, Oct. 30 from 3-6 p.m. and redesigning its outdoor space into an outdoor event patio to accommodate up to 200 people for family reunions and ice cream socials.

The Hyde Park store holds a special place in Ms. Jackson’s heart. “Part of Hyde Park is part of my soul,” she said. “Though we have other locations, Hyde Park is more of a community store, and the customers have been very loyal, and so that’s pretty much where our hearts are.”

Finding fandom: C2E2 gives space for hobbies by AMON GRAY

Convention offers, celebrities, comics and communities

When I stepped into the lobby of McCormick Place Aug. 6, I immediately saw a hastily put together Captain America, a meticulously crafted Master Chief, and a man wearing a Tshirt of an anime character I didn’t recognize. The enormous sign hanging over all of them read “Chicago Comic and Entertainment Expo C2E2.”

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the 2022 C2E2 event was moved to March 2022 and the 2022 event held in August. As I rode the escalator up to the convention floor I saw more and more recognizable characters. The line buzzed with excitement. Everyone was sprinting through the space, the speed and determination of someone explaining every scrap of information they knew about their favorite franchise.

I passed under the archway on the main floor. It was a lively crowd, but there was also room to walk around. The stands for Marvel and DC Comics were replaced by an enormous display from the anime series “One Piece,” featuring an inflatable replica of the pirate ship from the show.

After a quick look, I began my journey through the shelves and shelves of merchandise, compulsively buying comics, replica posters and anything else that caught my interest. By the time I approached the back of the convention floor, I struggled to carry a lightnaber replica, several signed prints from artists and a hand-knit Baby Yoda Christmas ornament.

About a third of the people were cosplaying, with costumed characters about evenly divided among movies, comics and anime. Even the lower-effort costumes looked authentic and passion behind them. Seemingly everywhere I looked someone was shaking hands with someone else dressed as the same character.

I climbed the stairs to a raised cafe above the crowds. From there, I ate a hot pretzel and watched the lines for autographs with the celebrity guests slowly snake below me. Many were eagerly waiting to meet members of the Star Wars cast, anime voice actors and WWE wrestlers.

After walking down the stairs I entered the Artist Alley featuring isles and rows of hundreds of artists selling commissions, prints and original art. Many of their works featured favorite characters in every imaginable artistic style.

I learned about a concept artist’s experiences working on one of the Star Wars movies and bought a signed print of his work. Overall, C2E2 in August 2022 was an incredible Where’s Waldorf of nerd franchises brought to life by passionate fans and creators.

Next C2E2 will be March 31 to April 2, 2023, and tickets are on sale now.

Store opens in heart of Hyde Park

Kilwins renovates following shooting in November 2021

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Convention offers, celebrities, comics and communities

When I stepped into the lobby of McCormick Place Aug. 6, I immediately saw a hastily put together Captain America, a meticu-

ous crafted Master Chief, and a man wearing a Tshirt of an ani-

me character I didn’t recognize. The enormous sign hanging over all of them read “Chicago Comic and Entertainment Expo C2E2.”

Due to the coronavirus pandem-
ic, the 2022 C2E2 event was moved to March 2022 and the 2022 event held in August. As I rode the escalator up to the convention floor I saw more and more recognizable characters. The line buzzed with excitement. Everyone was sprinting through the space, the speed and determination of someone explaining every scrap of information they knew about their favorite franchise.

I passed under the archway on the main floor. It was a lively crowd, but there was also room to walk around. The stands for Marvel and DC Comics were replaced by an enormou
Tabletop game boosts community

Students connect through stories and worldbuilding

by AMY REN
Assistant Editor

A dle clatters on a tab-leton. Players hold their breath as num-bers flicker across it, cheering when it stills. A wizard’s player rolled a high enough score to beat a hag! Someone clears their throat and begins to describe the mysterious opening that the bag guarded. Spread across multiple game sessions, a full Dungeons & Dragons campaign can take years.

Although the fantasy role-play- ing game Dungeons & Dragons was first released in 1974, U-High students continue to bond through it decades later. Senior Joe Bremer began playing when his older brother, then in high school, started a campaign with him. He doesn’t remember if they started while he was in middle school or lower school, but he recalls wanting to play with his brother.

“Told me to be a part of it, because I saw him doing it, having fun with it,” Joe said, but at that point, I was playing as a player.”

Today, Joe is the dungeon mas- ter (DM) for his seven-person campaign of U-High Students and builds the world in which six-others will explore through his story- telling, their characters and dice rolls. He enjoys how the game brings people together.

“The way I talk about D&D is through stories, for a bunch of grown people to play pretend,” he said. “And that’s my favorite part about it — it’s mak- ing a world, it’s inhabiting charac- ters, being a storyteller and basic- ally working on having a collabora- tive storytelling experience with a couple of your friends.”

For worldbuilding, Joe has ma- ny options.

“Anything from writing specif- ic speeches for specific charac- ters, making new characters, figuring out the world, maybe design- ing a dungeon, like challenges, monsters, whatever that the players will run into,” Joe said. “Usu- ally, I try not to plan the actu- al beat-to-beat events of the ses- sion because you want players to have some agency, I plan out what they could run into, what I sort of want to happen, and like, basically trying to make cool moments that they can run into.”

After discussing the role with his friends, Joe has been the “for- ever DM” for his current campaign, which started three years ago, although players can choose to switch off the role of DM with other campaigns.

Since the start of high school, Joe has run their campaign about once a week during the school year, for two to eight hours each time. As dungeon master, though, he also prepares game pieces between sessions. “I use miniatures in my games, so that also involves painting all of those and doing a little bit of foam sculpting,” Joe said. “And then I usually have set dressing for when I’m running a campaign, so I’ll have in front of the DM screen a bunch of little books and lights and stuff like that.”

Jay Molony, a senior, plays the role of a cleric in Joe’s campaign. His downtime between playing sessions is different from Joe’s.

“Usually I don’t have to plan stuff. What we will do, sometimes, outside of sessions is if we lev- el up, I’ll do that outside,” he said. “Just like making sure I’ve updated all the stats and gotten new spells and stuff.”

His role as a cleric is to heal the other players, which he says af- fects his play style.

“I stay back; I’m just less ag- gressive,” Jay said. “I also sit there and make fun of people outside of combat, and just every time I disagree, bring up funny moments.”

Aaron Moss, a junior and dungeon mas- ter, has start- ed preparing for their own campaign as well. Though they’ve had a specific world in mind for years, the first full campaign Aaron has tried to do in it, which they started preparing for with four others a week before school started.

Although Aaron still loves worldbuilding, their favorite part about the role-playing game is how much agency players have.

“There’s something just so dif- ferent and organic of playing D&D in a world because it’s all, techni- cally speaking, improvised, right?” Aaron said. “The things that hap- pened in that world aren’t things I think, ‘Oh, that’s be interesting,’ and I write down; it’s the players making a choice.”

Although the players choose their own paths, the stage is set by the dungeon master, who can steer the story to be as light-hearted or dark as they see fit.

“I’m also excited to just de- scribe my characters and my players emotionally,” Aaron said, jok- ingly. “I write my diary; ‘They’re already made some backstories that are rife with places for me to just kill them so much.”

Leisure 11

Golfer among top in state, but he’s not allowed on team

by MIA LIPSON
Reporter

Since he was 6 years old, walk- ing around the golf course with his dad, Daniel Chang has developed an interest in golf. Today, having become one of Illinois’ best high school players, he cannot com- pete.

This year, due to his tempo- rary enrollment at another high school and participation in their golf team, ninth grader Daniel Chang cannot play for U-High’s golf team this year or participate in all of the competition season.

In early August, when the high school golf season began, Daniel was enrolled at Naperville North High School and played for NN- HS’s golf team for approximately two weeks.

Then he transferred to U-High.

A bylaw from the Illinois High School Association states that if a student begins at one school and transfers to another, they are ineli- gible to compete in that term.

Athletics Director David Rib- bens filed an appeal to the ISHA, requesting leniency so Daniel would be allowed to compete for U-High, but his request was de- nied.

Recently, Daniel was ranked third in state for members of the Illinois Class of 2026, based on an average of his recent tournament performances. Since the appeal was rejected, he is prohibited from competiting in his first high school season.

“I think it’s definitely disap- pointing that I can’t participate this year,” Daniel said. “I think it’s fair, but it’s kind of frustrating at the same time.”

“I really liked how the team was kind of togeth- er, like it was like a family atmo- sphere, and it was something that I wanted to join.”

Instead of playing for a team, Daniel will continue to practice, but not compete, for the rest of the season.

In the meantime, Mr. Ribbens has welcomed Daniel to practice with U-High’s team, an experi- ence which Daniel has greatly ap- preciated.

Mr. Ribbens is optimistic for when Daniel will be able to play for the team.

“I think he will make the team better, and he gives others around him confidence,” Mr. Ribbens said. “I think he’s the kind of person that will be a good leader for the team in the future.”

Daniel echoed Mr. Ribbens’ sen- timents, hopeful for his remaining three years at U-High.

“I’m just preparing myself for next year to compete,” Daniel said. “We’ve got a lot of depth in our team, so I’m just excited for when that time comes.”

POSTPONED PLAYER. Ninth grader Daniel Chang poses with his driver. He cannot compete on the team in his first year at U-High due to temporarily enrolling at Naperville North High School and their golf team after the school year started. Daniel was recently ranked third in Illinois for the Class of 2026 following recent tournaments.
Head in the game
by KATIE SASAMOTO-KURISU

Sprinting down the middle of the field watching a teammate, feet racing and arms pumping, Charlie Young tears toward the opposite goal.

His coaches watch in satisfaction, and teammates cheer with excitement as he receives the pass, winds back, shoots and scores.

Scoring is familiar to Charlie. As a striker on the boys soccer team and the lead scorer this season, he has become an essential player on the team and found success as a leader.

He has always enjoyed soccer, but in high school has understood that hard work and dedication is what produces results. He started soccer at age 5 or 6, where he would play with friends in his free time. It would be much later before he would realize his love for the sport.

Charlie felt that special to me until middle school, he said. Soccer really never made me feel like I belonged, or that I was a part of a team. It would be much later before I realized how much I loved it.

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