



Cheney keeps faith in U.S. democracy

*In campus visit,
Jan. 6 committee
vice chair rebukes
Republican party*

by **CHLOE ALEXANDER**
Assistant Editor

Just days after the midterm election, U.S. Rep. Liz Cheney, the vice chair of the House committee investigating the Capitol insurrection, spoke at Mandel Hall on Nov. 11, where she discussed the rise of misinformation, Jan. 6 aftermath and the hope she has for the future of United States democracy.

The talk, organized by the University of Chicago Institute of Politics, came against the backdrop of the midterm election and the ongoing Jan. 6 Committee subpoenas, including of former President Donald Trump.

Rep. Cheney, a Republican from Wyoming, said that after the events on Jan. 6, 2021, people, more specifically Republicans, cannot excuse the insurrection that occurred.

She believes her party needs to have a stiffer spine that does not tolerate lies about the results of elections.

"I also think though as a party, we need to be clear that we should not be embracing [Trump] even if he was a winner because what he's doing and what he advocates is so dangerous," Rep. Cheney said. "I think elected officials need to understand that words matter."

Rep. Cheney disclosed that committee members are working on a summary report of the Jan. 6 hearings in hopes of informing people about the causes and events of the insurrection and additionally to stop the spread of misinformation.

Rep. Cheney said, "We'll talk about things like the security failure leg, the extent to which there

"I really think that elected officials need to understand that words matter."
Liz Cheney, U.S. Representative

was clearly an intelligence failure. But as a committee, we will not blame law enforcement for Trump's armed mob that he sent to the Capitol to try to stop the electoral account."

Rep. Cheney ran for re-election but lost the primary election on Aug. 16 and will not return to Congress in January.

This event was open to the UChicago community, including U-High students.

Cassia Collins, a U-High junior, attended the event because she appreciates Rep. Cheney for standing up for truth.

"She stood up for something that we don't stand for, an insurrection, and she lost her seat for it," Cassia said. "I respected her as a person for that, and I wanted to see her speak."

Katherine Baicker, dean of the Harris School of Public Policy, asked Rep. Cheney how news media changes by region which leads people to experience very different realities based on where they live.

Rep. Cheney said, "I think that it certainly is true that we end up in silos and we only get information from people that agree with us. It's also certainly true that our adversaries are attempting to sow division and discord."

She also said that social media should be regulated and the social media algorithms need to be held responsible for the misinformation and dangerous sites they lead people to. Although there are many concerns with the Unit-



Midway photo by Kaden Moubayed

DEFENDING DEMOCRACY. Republican U.S. Rep. Liz Cheney speaks at a University of Chicago Institute of Politics event held Nov. 11 at Mandel Hall about the rise of misinformation and Capitol insurrection aftermath.

ed States, Rep. Cheney is optimistic about what's to come with the country's democracy.

The audience question period included three University of Chicago students wearing gray suits who each listed a long series of facts before posing a question designed to make their own point.

According to U-High history teacher Cindy Jurisson and other

UChicago students in the audience, UChicago students from conservative campus organizations have been doing this at different political events.

Rep. Cheney believes that the midterm election results, while not yet finalized, could be a win for the nonextremists.

"It was a really important and incredibly hopeful outcome for

democracy," Rep. Cheney said. "I think we have a long way to go, and we have a threat we've never had before, a former president that tried to overturn an election and prevent a peaceful transfer of power. We have a lot to do, but I really think that the outcome this week was certainly a step in the right direction, a very important step."

Political implications of state, national election results worry students

by **KRISHITA DUTTA**
and **ETHAN SWINGER**

U-High students watched the Nov. 8 election results with their attention on how issues they care about — from climate change to racial disparities — will be acted upon by political leaders, and some students worried about the implications of elections at the national, state and local levels.

In Illinois, J.B. Pritzker was re-elected governor, and the majority of seats in the General Assembly stayed in the Democratic party, allowing Illinois to continue its blue streak. Tammy Duckworth was re-elected as U.S. Senator.

Junior Lincoln Richardson remains uncertain about the country's future.

"The results only give me a slight feeling of comfort that America hasn't slipped firmly into fascism with the Republican Party becoming even further right," Lincoln said. "I am very worried about fascist America because it could happen. I hope that in the next election that some working class parties can take any seats in this virtual one-party state."

Junior Rathin Shah also has concerns with the election outcomes.



Midway photo by Matt Petres

WATCHING & WAITING. A week after Nov. 8, students continue to follow Senate and House election results that were not yet announced.

"I'm worried about how abortion access will be handled moving forward with states like Florida and Ohio likely adding new restrictions," Rathin said. "Also, with [Florida Gov.] Ron DeSantis re-elected, I'm worried about the attitude toward transgender people in the U.S. right now."

Rathin thinks the election re-

sults have multiple implications for the country's politics.

"The election results paint a clear picture of what's important to US citizens right now. 'Trump Republicanism' is on a downtrend with many of the election-denying Republicans underperforming," Rathin said. "Personally, I am glad that [Pennsylvanian] John Fet-

terman won a seat in the Senate, and I'm curious what this means for progressive politics going forward."

Gender equality was one of the specific issues through which students viewed the election results. Abortion rights were as important to voters as inflation, according to exit polls. Reuters reported about "six out of 10 voters said they were 'dissatisfied or angry' about the U.S. Supreme Court ruling that overturned Roe v. Wade."

In a Midway poll from October, 35% of students said abortion was the most important election issue.

Senior Hala Attassi was among those who viewed the election through a women's and abortion rights lens.

"I was scared for my rights as a woman during the election not knowing if my rights would be taken away or not, but with Pritzker, I feel safe," Hala said. "This is a scary time for women, and we need someone who will keep our rights as protected as possible."

Senior Donovan Miller is glad that the elected politicians are Democratic and hopes they focus more of their time and energy on communities of color.

listen online

Rite of passage: Seniors reflect on first voting experience

Listen and read online:

In the Nov. 8 election, 18-year-old seniors could vote for the first time. The moment signified a rite of passage on the path to become a more engaged citizen and a moment of reflection on the cherished right to vote.



— by Louis Auxenfans

Chicago voters will have another election soon. The municipal election for mayor, city treasurer, city clerk and city council will be Feb. 28. The strongest piece of advice Donovan has for eligible students in upcoming elections: vote.

"Some of you will be 18 in the presidential election, so I recommend voting very heavily," Donovan said. "It's important to exercise your rights."

Get Gassed

New social media app designed as less toxic but remains potentially harmful

by CHLOE ALEXANDER

Assistant Editor

Four names and a question light up a student's phone. They can shuffle the names to get new choices or skip the question to get one of the 12 others they get for the hour.

After the recipient clicks on a name, the chosen person will receive "flames" in their inbox indicating that they have been chosen by someone. The only information that will be given is the sender's gender and grade. This is called giving "gas" — all part of a new app called Gas.

The new, anonymous social media platform is intended to bring positivity to the sometimes-harmful realm of social media.

Although the app's agenda is to make the social media experience less toxic, with the questions predetermined by the app, there are still ways that it can negatively affect students' mental health.

Whit Waterstraat, a ninth grader, said he downloaded the Gas app because he saw his friends and classmates were using it.

"I mainly downloaded it because everyone else had it, and I really didn't know what it was," he said. "I downloaded it to see what everyone else was talking about."

Despite the app's open design,

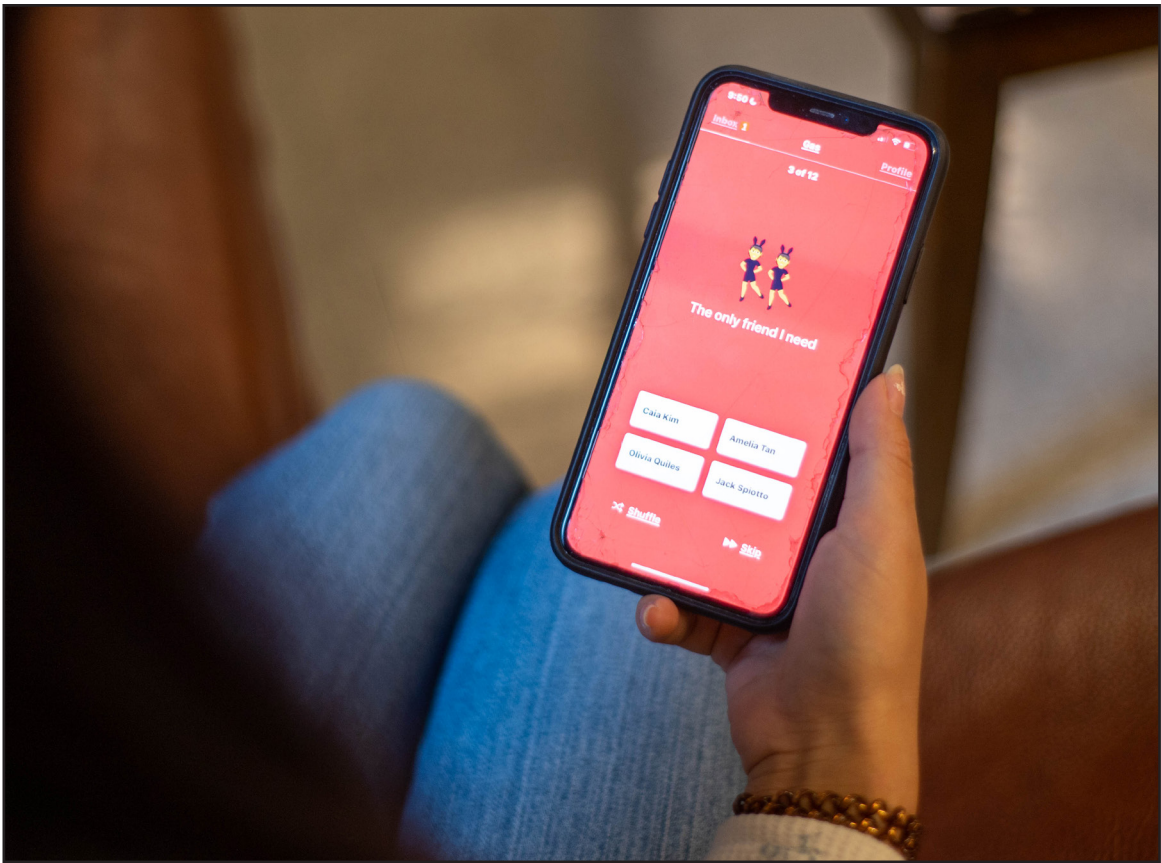
"I'm in the camp that says they have a negative effect. It's nice that someone is reporting to create an app that is positive and nontoxic."
Michael Bruner, counselor

students don't always follow what the creators intended the app to be. Whit said that when the app presents choices, he will usually pick his friends, which is what most people do.

"90% of the things you see in your inbox are going to be from your friends. I've noticed you can see all the activity and what people are saying about others," Whit said. "People will choose other people's names as a joke. And so there were moments of clear, almost making fun of or bullying another person."

Michel Bruner, a U-High counselor, has seen these kinds of apps before. No matter what the app claims as its goal, the setup is still the same.

"I'm in the camp that says they have a negative effect. It's nice that someone is reporting to create an app that is positive and nontoxic,"



Midway photo by Ishani Hariprasad

QUIZ & QUESTION. A student opens the app Gas on their phone, where they get different questions every hour. While Gas is intended as a platform to support peers and bring positivity, thereby lessening the toxicity of social media, the message is lost in the app's skewed influencing and biased nature.

ic," Mr. Bruner said. "But I think via the very design of the app they create toxicity, and they make people feel less-than, badly about themselves. One of the most toxic things is the like button on Facebook and Twitter."

Although Gas doesn't offer a "like" button like other social media apps, there are still ways it can reflect a person's popularity. Then there are people who rarely get Gassed.

"What about the segment of folks who don't get the likes," Mr. Bruner said. "There's going to be

folks who don't get Gassed, and yet they're going to be on the app wanting, desiring that positive feedback. It worries me."

People get this kind of feedback from real human interaction.

Mr. Bruner thinks that there will never be a nontoxic social media platform because human connection is something that humans require.

"Maybe someday some group of folks will create an app that enables real connection. But, from my perspective now as I see it, there's a filter between two human

beings. Whether it's Facebook or Gas or whatever, it's not great," Mr. Bruner said.

A recent update allows people to use the app's currency or send invitations to friends revealing the first initial of the person who chose them.

Whit feels the new feature ruined the app because it made him feel uncomfortable, eventually causing his interest to fade.

"It felt like a one-hit wonder, like, very quickly died out," Whit said, "like YOLO or sendit on Snap."

'Blonde' reinforces misogyny, exploits Monroe's character

by VICTORIA WASHINGTON

Audience Engagement Manager

In an Old Western saloon, Kay Weston sits on top of a piano: legs crossed, in a tight-fitting yellow dress as a group of cowboys watch her sing "River of No Return." A golden haze illuminates her, drawing the 1954 audience in to see yet another performance from the iconic Marilyn Monroe.

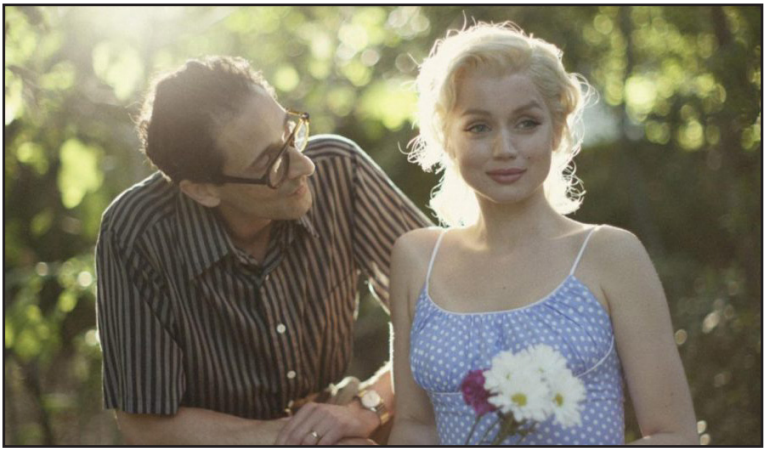
A recent storm of controversy surrounds Netflix's "Blonde," a fictitious biopic of Marlyn Monroe that focuses on suffering as a result of stardom. Despite Ana de Armas' beautiful performance depicting Ms. Monroe through the actress's early life to her eventual death in 1962, the film ultimately fails to represent Ms. Monroe fairly. As opposed to highlighting Ms. Monroe's career in films such as "River of No Return" or "The Seven Year Itch," the adaption harmfully misrepresents sexual assault and pushes an anti-abortion rhetoric by exploiting the legacy of

Ms. Monroe.

Even with the careful attention paid to cinematography and casting, intentional creative liberties are added to the film, often without historical evidence, which leads critics to claim that the film reinforces misogynistic stereotypes while exploiting Ms. Monroe's likeness and character.

Many see "Blonde" as a current example of glamorizing female suffering and exploiting their stories even after death. Content Creator Mina Le comments on society's continued fascination with the life of Monroe in a YouTube video entitled, "let's discuss: the obsession with Marilyn Monroe," in which she critiques the way the world has idolized Monroe, with many people knowing who she is, without having seen any of her films.

In a 1975 essay, Laura Mulvey, a feminist film theorist, explains the phememon of the "Male Gaze Theory" in Hollywood.



Netflix

MAJOR MISREPRESENTATION. Despite a star-studded cast, "Blonde" takes too many inaccurate liberties in documenting Marilyn Monroe's life.

"In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness," Ms. Mulvey wrote.

Ms. Le argues that by disregarding Ms. Monroe's acting abilities even by her own co-stars, she continued to be viewed as simply a model, and someone that only had an audience because of her looks.

While the current portrayal of female characters by the media is

problematic and considered inferior in importance to the roles played by men, Ms. Mulvey offers some hope as Hollywood continues to reinvent itself and evolve from traditional film.

"The voyeuristic scopophilic look that is a crucial part of the traditional filmic pleasure can itself be broken down," Ms. Mulvey wrote. "Women, whose image has continually been stolen and used for this end, cannot view the decline of the traditional film form with anything much more than sentimental regret."

Even with beautifully executed recreations of scenes evoking the memory of Marilyn Monroe, "Blonde" tragically misrepresents her. "Blonde" could have strived to pull Ms. Monroe out of the male gaze and focus on what made her an incredible actress, as opposed to fictionalizing the abuse and trauma she experienced as a result of Hollywood and tarnishing her legacy.

Prominent feminist themes emerge in 'House of the Dragon'



HBO

TAKING THE LEAD. "Game of Thrones" prequel lives up to original.

by SAHANA UNNI

Features Editor

Decades after her aunt was denied the crown simply for being a woman, Princess Rhaenyra Targaryen stands before the Iron Throne, surrounded by Lords from each part of the Seven Kingdoms of Westeros, as her father, King Viserys Targaryen, declares her to be his successor.

Bowing her head, she watches as each nobleman, some more willing than others, "bends the knee" to the first-ever female heir, pledging fealty to her future reign.

The first season of "House of the Dragon," a prequel to the wildly popular "Game of Thrones," premiered on HBO Aug. 21 with episodes released weekly.

The show is based on select chapters of "Fire and Blood"—a

"Game of Thrones" history book by George R. R. Martin — and depicts the ruling Targaryen family almost 200 years before the original series.

Despite some inconsistencies, the cinematography, plot and feminist themes allow "House of the Dragon" to truly live up to its predecessor.

Within the fantasy genre, female characters are often tokenized, many serving a single purpose usually as a love interest. "House of the Dragon," however, completely diverges from that trend, with two female lead characters: Rhaenyra and her childhood friend Alicent Hightower.

Rather than portraying women as one-dimensional, the show presents these two characters as both endearing and morally gray.

As they vie for power, they both face a surplus of misogyny in a world defined by gender norms.

Similar to the original series, this show features astounding cinematography and animation. The detailed computer-generated dragons and ornate settings are captivating, illustrating this strange world beautifully.

While the unsatisfying writing in the final seasons of "Game of Thrones" upset many fans, "House of the Dragon" creators George R. R. Martin and Ryan Condal do a fantastic job of producing a compelling and heart-wrenching script true to the source material.

Even though the plot itself remained fairly consistent with the "Game of Thrones" history, the awkward pacing of the show became glaringly obvious through-

out the season.

Over the course of 10 episodes, "House of the Dragon" covers 19 years, including three significant time jumps. This means that while some of the actors for young characters change in the 10-year jump between episodes five and six, others do not.

Additionally, the technology in "House of the Dragon" is identical to that of "Game of Thrones," despite the centuries between the two shows.

Regardless of these issues, "House of the Dragon" is an enthralling addition to the "Game of Thrones" universe, piling only slightly to the original series. With magic, manipulation and enduring familial conflicts, this complicated-yet-addictive show is perfect for any fan of the fantasy genre.