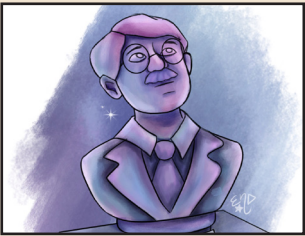


PAGE 5 • OPINION

Lab history teacher Paul Horton of 24 years speaks on his experience with the institution and how he feels its core values and approach toward learning and education have changed.



PAGE 9 • FEATURES

Despite recent legislative pushback against drag by at least 15 states, Chicago performers flourish and remain widely appreciated for their ability to showcase the joy in self expression.



PAGE 10 • ARTS

U-High students have taken their artwork to the next level by creating a personalized portfolio in AP Drawing and Painting that showcases their individual artistic creativity and skill.



Families to gather for commencement June 8

Speaker to talk about joy outside of achievement

by MIA LIPSON
News Editor

The graduation committee has selected the senior speakers and performers for the Class of 2023's graduation ceremony taking place at Rockefeller Chapel from 2-4 p.m. on June 8.

Amy Solomon, Class of 2010, will give the commencement address. Camille Bryant and Sydney Tyler, class president, will each address their classmates.

Louis Auxenfans will perform a song on clarinet and Zara Baig, Fermi Boonstra, Zoe Johns and Kriti Sarav have been selected to sing together.

Families will be able to obtain up to six tickets per graduating student, per Rockefeller Chapel's capacity.

After the ceremony, the Parents' Association will host a reception in Ida Noyes Hall, which will include food and will feature musical performances.

Ms. Solomon, a third-generation Lab lifer who is now a writer, comedian and film producer, thinks of her time at Lab as meaningful and special.

From running through the forest at sixth grade camp to soccer practice with Michael Moses to Bel Canto with Katy Sinclair, Ms. Solomon's time at Lab is characterized by these stand-out memories.

"I just felt like Lab was such

“
I just felt like Lab was such an incredibly open-minded progressive community. I just never felt hindered in any way.
Amy Solomon, commencement speaker
”

an incredibly open-minded progressive community. I just never felt hindered in any way," she said. "You know, I just felt like you could be a leader and kind of whatever you want, and I felt like there was a lot of opportunity to take on whatever you were interested in."

Ms. Solomon went on to graduate from Princeton University, where she majored in journalism and pursued creative writing and comedy. She now lives in Los Angeles.

She has worked on shows such as "Barry" and "Silicon Valley," and wrote a book entitled "Notes From the Bathroom Line," which features poetry, essays and artwork.

In her speech to the Class of 2023, Ms. Solomon hopes to inspire students to reflect on their time at Lab. She also wants to encourage them to look optimistically to their future.

"I felt like high school was so intense and so résumé- and success-focused, and you're trying to, like, be this incredibly high-achieving person — and all of that is good — but also I think so much of life

speaker details



Source: 2008 U-Highlights yearbook; photo provided by Bianca Harris

SOPHOMORE MEMORY. Amy Solomon, left, listens to organizers campaigning for then-Sen. Barack Obama in Iowa City, Iowa, in November 2007 during her sophomore year. Ms. Solomon, a third-generation Lab student, also enjoyed playing soccer and participating in Bel Canto.



Photo provided by Amy Solomon

LIFE AFTER LAB. After graduating from Lab, Amy Solomon pursued writing in college. She is now a writer, producer and comedian, and has worked on shows "Barry" and "Silicon Valley."

is about having happy experiences and looking beyond those achievements," Ms. Solomon said. "I think now I want to encourage people to just take a step back and breathe and have fun."

Dean of Students Ana Campos believes Ms. Solomon's experience at Lab and her experience in comedy will allow her to connect to the graduating students in a unique way.

connect to the graduating students in a unique way.

"The fact that she was a 'Labbie' means she just understands the Lab experience, and she can really talk about it," Ms. Campos said.

Ms. Campos is excited to gather on this momentous day as families unite to celebrate members of the Lab community.

"I think it's just a really wonderful day for the whole Lab community, even for families who don't have seniors graduating, Ms. Campos said. "The ceremony is just the culmination of the Lab journey for so many families and, for so many, after 15 years at this school, so I think it's always a really special day and special moment."

Election circumstances spark concern, feelings of distrust

Students criticize lack of transparency over deductions, breach, vote margins

by VICTORIA WASHINGTON
Opinion Editor

Unauthorized vote changes to the April 28 Student Council election, minimal information surrounding the breach, and a lack of transparency around vote margins and penalties have caused mixed reactions among students who want more information and say their concerns aren't being addressed by Student Council or the administration.

Many students were confident or somewhat confident in the integrity of elections before the April 28 election, according to an unscientific, anonymous poll run by the U-High Midway. Sophomore Taylor Landry had never questioned the integrity of the election and assumed transparent results.

Taylor said, "I have never once

questioned the security of the site because who would want to hack the Student Council elections?"

Before the unauthorized vote changes, sophomore Oscar Kasthuri said he had confidence in the election system, but after, he distrusts the process.

"I thought the lack of transparency was not good at all," Oscar said, adding that the students and administrators in charge could have done a better job to show the votes and what went wrong in the system.

Oscar said, "I definitely don't trust the way the election is run."

James McCullen, 2022-23 all-school secretary and an unsuccessful candidate for all-school president, believes there are several reasons why the student body has low confidence in election integrity.

"It seemed quite clear to me that there was a lot that was not being released about what had really happened with the election, and I think that certainly added to a growing distrust that most

students have in Student Council elections," James said. "It builds upon other issues where there doesn't seem to be much transparency or accountability in how elections are governed."

Election procedures give the non-returning executive board members the authority to settle election disputes, complaints and rule violations. The decisions the board makes are not subject to review by the student body and are kept confidential.

According to an email to the Midway from Dean of Students Ana Campos, several complainants were sent to the non-returning executive board members, who were tasked to review each case and determine whether a penalty should be enacted. In the 2023 election, one candidate received a violation and penalty of a 10% deduction in votes.

"Based on the facts that they were able to discern, they determined if the alleged actions were true, and if so, if they were a violation of the campaign rules," Ms. Campos wrote. "If they determined that the actions were a violation, they then determined if any penalty should be applied."

“
As I am a part of the student body, I want to know if the people I vote for are having points deducted. It might bring even more transparency to the voters and make the election more trustworthy.
Zoe Alphonse, ninth grader
”

Fermi Boonstra, 2022-23 all-school president, said the board looks at the exact language on the election guidelines and at the cases to determine whether a warning is sufficient or to enact a vote deduction penalty.

"We see if it violates the language, does it violate something in the election guidelines that was clearly stated, and if it does, we discuss potential outcomes," Fermi said. "Sometimes it's violated, and we don't give a punishment. It really varies case by case."

According to Graham Robbins, 2022-23 all-school vice president, the 10% penalty is used for more serious offenses, and the execu-

tive board believes it provides the appropriate disciplinary action, without destroying a candidates' campaign.

"If it was an egregious violation of the election guidelines then it would definitely be an option to remove a candidate from the election," Graham said. "I think the reason it's set at 10% is because we don't have to deliberate a 10%, 15% or 20% deduction in votes. The number is small enough to where if a candidate had a strong showing of support among the student body, they would definitely still be able to win the election."

Either way, ninth grader Zoe Alphonse believes that if a 10% deduction penalty is enacted, it is important for student voters to know at the time of the election.

"As I am a part of the student body, I want to know if the people I vote for are having points deducted," Zoe said. "It might bring even more transparency to the voters and make the election more trustworthy."

Graham suggests the next executive board work to release exact voting numbers. This wasn't enacted previously due to concern for the candidates' well-being.

Related: See the editorial on election transparency on Page 4. Add comments on the Midway's website.

May projects prompt creative exploration

by ZARA SIDDIQUE
Sports and Leisure Editor

From Jeep restoration to perfumery to traveling the world, seniors have chosen a multitude of activities to explore as their May Project. Over the past decades, the projects have become a creative outlet for a senior's personal interests.

The requirements are straightforward: students must find a faculty adviser and get their proposal approved by the May Project committee. After completing the project, each student must make at least one classroom presentation. Participation in the exhibit on June 1 from 12:30-3 p.m. and 6-9 p.m. is also required.

But in between, their creative freedom spans as far as some of their travels.

by the numbers

161

seniors are on May Project

29

seniors are traveling internationally

41

seniors are traveling domestically

19

seniors are exploring projects involving food

27

seniors are working outdoors

Source: Jayna Rumble

description

goals

inspiration



NICO AHMED

My May project is designing and building a small electric go-kart or vehicle. We are making the entire frame, steering and drive axle from scratch.

We wanted to have a decent drivable end product, but also have fun with the creative side by recording the entire process with an old camera and making it look scuffed and rundown with weird parts.

The idea to build some type of vehicle was a joke at first when one of us said we should make a vehicle from the game "Bad Piggies." As we talked about it more, the idea actually seemed viable.



MAYA ATASSI

My May Project is making a recipe book of authentic Syrian dishes with some help from my grandmother and mother.

My end goal is to have something that I can use to make sure my children are able to experience the Syrian culture in the way that I did, through food. Hopefully, I will cook them the dishes I grew up eating.

What inspired me was Meena Lee's May Project last year, where she did a similar thing but combined her two cultures. I thought that I could do something similar in order to honor my Syrian culture.



AMELIA CIFU

I'm learning American Sign Language, and I'm translating a poem. I'm using a couple different sources, grammar and a dictionary for specific things.

My goal is to start learning sign language so I continue later this summer and later into next year and something I've been interested in. I'm using a couple different sources, grammar and a dictionary.

When I was fairly young I saw someone presenting their May Project and they did something similar and that was the inspiration for this May Project. It's been going well and I feel like I'm on track.



BLAKE DUNKLEY

For my May project I have these little essential oils, and I plan to mix them together and make perfume out of them.

My end goal is to create one that I would like to wear, especially because I'm usually kind of picky about which ones I do like to wear. My goal is to create a fragrance I can enjoy and will be proud of.

The inspiration is really just from that I like buying a lot of colognes, so I figured it would be interesting to try making one myself. I was curious about what kind of effort went into creating my favorite fragrances.



JENNA KILKUS

My May project is restoring a 1987 Jeep Willy. It started off in really bad condition, and my goal is to get it turned over and running by the end of May.

This project gave me a great opportunity to work with family on a journey to restore a car to its original condition. This consists of doing electric work and working to figure out what's wrong with the motor.

I have always had a passion for old cars. Ever since I was little I have admired any and all muscle cars that have passed by. I also got this passion from my grandfather. May project gave me the perfect opportunity.



LEO PRATT-THOMAS

My May Project is sailing to Mackinac Island. I wanted to continue sailing, especially most distance sailing.

My motivation was really since freshman year, I've always wanted to do more long distance sailing, since the sailing team only does two a year. This project is so that I can have more experience with that.

My idea for my May Project came to me last year during the sailing team's race to Mackinac Island. I then had to get my boat long distance ready, and I was able to do that successfully.

news in brief

5 will compete at National History Day finals in D.C.

Five U-High students qualified for the National History Day finals, which will take place in Washington, D.C., on June 11-15.

The students who qualified include senior Jade Deng and juniors Andrew Pincus, Mahi Shah, Kaavya Shriram and Alice Fan.

Last year, the contest was held virtually because of the pandemic, but this year, it will be held again in-person.

Jade was pleasantly surprised that she qualified for the finals.

She believes that the best part was knowing that other people care about her topic.

"It's really gratifying to know that people appreciate my project, especially since I wrote about a topic that I really care about and wish more people were familiar with," Jade said.

Jade would advise a younger student who wanted to win the competition to pursue a topic they actually want to research and not what they think might be successful.

History teacher Cindy Jurisson said the best part of watching her students win the award over the years is seeing them realize their potential and be pleased with their achievements.

Dr. Jurisson said, "The thing I most like is when I see kids be so proud of what they've accomplished, and I'm always really proud of what they put together."

— Light Dohrn

Sophomore organizes food, clothing drive for school

Have you ever wondered how you can help people in need? One way is to donate to the drive to aid students at Benjamin E. Mays School in Englewood with monetary, non-perishable foods, clothing donations and things such as backpacks. The drive that U-High sophomore Nash McKeague is facilitating will help students at the school and will provide them with unavailable necessities.

Students can donate things to help the students at Englewood and make sure they have enough school supplies, food and other necessities.

— Niall Danahey

Midway leaders appointed for 2023-24 school year

Audrey Park, Katie Sasamoto-Kurusu and Sahana Unni have been appointed as editors-in-chief for the 2023-24 U-High Midway. Other editors for next year include Chloë Alexander, arts; Tariq Ahmed, digital; Mia Lipson, news; Clare McRoberts, features; Zara Siddique, sports and leisure; and Victoria Washington, opinion.

Sahana said she looks forward to working with new people and reaching out to the community.

"I am most excited to be able to work with all the new section editors and my fellow EICs," she said. "I think that we will be able to connect with the student body more."

— Ainsley Williams

by JAYA ALENGHAT
Reporter

In honor of Pride Month in June, the Rainbow Alliance group at Lab's lower school is raising a Progress Pride flag in the Blaine courtyard on June 1, continuing the tradition that was started last year by two students who are now in sixth grade.

The flag will be flown until the end of June, and the entire lower school is invited to watch the initial flag-raising ceremony.

Current sixth graders Lucy Osborne and Lily Vogel created this tradition in spring 2022.

"They wanted everyone to be able to be seen," Riva Cohen, lower school assistant principal, said.

After Lucy and Lily asked Ms. Cohen to sign their petition, she suggested that they release an advertisement in one of their lower school assemblies to raise awareness. They reached their goal of 120 signatures after the assembly and presented their proposal to Laboratory Schools Director Tori Jueds.

Lucy and Lily started this effort because they noticed some of their classmates who identify as LGBTQ+ were treated poorly.

"I talked to a few of my LGBTQ+ friends, and they said that people were making them feel bad about their pronouns," Lucy said.

So, they decided to raise awareness by starting the tradition of raising a Progress Pride flag during Pride Month.

Pride flag will fly in courtyard

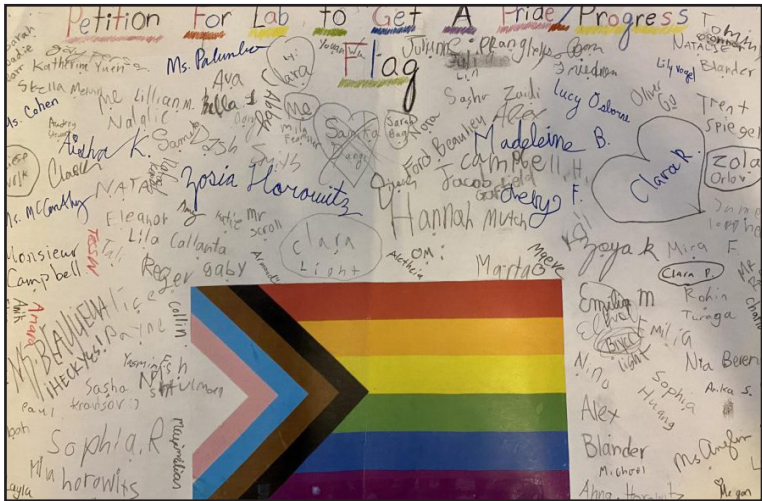


Photo provided by Riva Cohen

FLYING PROUD. Last year, two current sixth grade students started a petition to raise the Progress Pride flag in the Blaine courtyard. The tradition is going to continue this year, and the flag will be raised for the month of June.

Lily said, "We felt that Lab didn't have enough representation for the LGBTQ+ community and we felt that we should make a difference by getting a flag."

Chris Sullivan, Mariaelana Lozano and Melissa Steger are the fifth, fourth and third grade counselors who currently lead the Rainbow Alliance. The group was created last year in response to parents reaching out about the difficulty in finding support for their younger children who identified as transgender and nonbinary.

"I think any time we're creating space for kids to have a sense of belonging is something that is im-

portant to us," Ms. Steger said.

The Rainbow Alliance meets during lunch on Fridays and gives lower school students the support they need.

"We want to make sure it feels safe to them and that it's a safe space," Ms. Lozano said.

The group raises visibility for the LGBTQ+ community in the lower school.

The group was given the opportunity to raise the progressive pride flag again this year.

Ms. Sullivan said, "It is something that the group feels strongly about and they're very proud of who they are."

Athletes' reactions to the ups and downs of their spring season. Tough losses to thrilling victories. Dedication and talent for their sport can easily be seen in long practices, record-breaking races and in their ...

RAW Reactions



SUCCESSFUL SCORING. Girls soccer captain Elsa Nielsen jubilantly celebrates Lucy Aronsohn's overtime game-winning goal against Latin on April 10. The season came to an unexpected end in a 2-1 game against Coal City High School in the sectional semi-final game on May 16. "It was a really good season this year, coming into the season knowing we lost a lot of seniors from last year, I wasn't sure how the season was going to go," Lucy said. "We won won ISL for the third consecutive year, we won regionals, so in that respect we were a similar team. The last game was really disappointing, but I think overall we really grew as a team, and there were some really good moments from this year."

Midway photo by Kaden Moubayed



EYES TO THE FLY. Baseball players look up at a fly ball during at a game against Latin School of Chicago on April 11, which the team lost 11-5. The baseball season came to end in a close 8-9 game against Leo High School in the 2A IHSA Regional Championship game. Junior Mason List, who re-entered the game after dislocating a finger, said, "The final game, that one was tough for sure. The whole game the emotions were very high. There were guys that were telling me it was the most nervous they'd ever been. Even though we did not come out on top, I think it was very valuable for everyone, we all learned a lot of lessons." About his injury Mason said, "I knew it was the last game, and I didn't think it was bad enough to hold me out of it, so I did what I could to get back in."

Midway photo by Matthew McGehee



SETTING SAIL. Senior Amy Ren and sophomore Lydia Frost raise their sail as they leave the dock and head out of the harbor at a practice on May 25. The sailing team has been practicing for its second national competition, Phebe King Memorial Trophy in Hampton, Virginia, June 3-4. Lydia wrote in a text to the Midway, "This season I have put a lot of effort into the team, same with many other people, and even though it has taken up all of my weekends, in the end it was very much worth it."

Midway photo by Henry Benton

THE FINAL STRETCH. Sprinting for the finish line, Luke Grotthus competes with his relay team at the IHSA 2A Sectional meet May 18 at St. Rita of Cascia High School. The team finished third, and sent eight players to state May 25-27. Luke, a senior, said, "Although the sprinting relays didn't make it to state, it was still an amazing experience to be on the team with my friends. We also broke the school record in the 4x100, which was amazing. I improved a lot this season, and so did all of my teammates."

Midway photo by Gabriel Issa



WINNING SMILE. Sophomore Dash Smith celebrates winning a point during a match against Carl Sandburg High School on April 10. The boys tennis team placed second in the IHSA 1A Sectional Tournament, sending four players to state where they placed fifth. About sectional, Dash said, "We won most of our matches, but we had some tough losses that we shouldn't have lost, but I feel pretty good about our performance so far. I think I've learned a lot since last year and I'm happy about that."

Midway photo by Kaden Moubayed

Election breach threatens student voice

Failure to condemn unauthorized vote changes compromises institutional trust

Within hours of the Student Council election on May 1, it was clear something had gone wrong. An unauthorized alteration of votes in the database had taken place. The issue was caught by managers of the system. Students noticed changes to their votes and began speaking up.

Tampering with any election is an extremely serious violation of democracy. At U-High, it undermines the credibility of Student Council elections, contradicts Lab's core values and, more broadly, breeds distrust in all institutions.

One could argue that this occurrence has little significance or impact on our school; the alteration was caught and the election was re-done under more secure conditions.

This violation, however, goes far beyond the inconvenience of voting a second time. One occurrence and lack of accountability sets a dangerous precedent, normalizing unacceptable and unethical behavior.

In 1962, when a young man named Donald Segretti was running for student senate at the University of Southern California, cheating, spying and disruption were standard in the school's student campaigns. A decade later, Mr. Segretti and two other USC students were part of President Richard Nixon's re-election campaign and the Watergate scandal that brought down his administration. The behaviors these men ex-

hibited in college, without being held responsible, informed their future actions, leading to one of the most notorious political scandals in American history.

To be clear, we are not suggesting that whoever is responsible for U-High's tainted election will become the next Watergate conspirator. Still, this should not be dismissed as a harmless prank.

A potential consequence of certain responses to this incident is the erosion of trust in institutions beyond U-High and of elections in general. Already, too many people in this country have unwarranted and harmful doubts about the validity of the 2020 presidential election. The notion that a flawed U-High election is inconsequential could

harm students' perceptions of future elections in which they will participate, producing cynicism or apathy.

The U-High administration's failure to condemn — or even respond to — the Student Council election breach falls far short of Lab's principle values to foster honesty and democracy within our community.

Lab sets a goal of teaching students throughout all grade levels to be admirable global citizens and active participants in democracy. Yet, when the integrity of our school's democratic system is at stake, all we hear is silence.

Given the potential repercussions of this instance, more accountability must be established, and more transparency from the



Midway illustration by Eliza Dearing

administration is essential. The process of checks and balances within the Student Council election voting system must be improved and clarified to students. To avoid future transgressions, Student Council and administration must ensure this system is trustworthy moving forward.

One way the administration and Student Council can accomplish reliability and restore trust is simple: an election commission, including non-Student Council representatives and impartial teachers, should be appointed to regulate election procedure. Furthermore, all election results,

votes and vote margins, should be shared with the student body as soon as they are available.

It is not solely about one flawed Student Council election. It's about instilling trust in elections among all U-High students and maintaining our democratic system going forward.

Supreme Court should represent current America

by AINSLEY WILLIAMS

Audience Engagement Manager

In June 2022, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled 6-3 in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, a landmark decision that overturned *Roe v. Wade*. This ruling failed to represent the 62% of Americans who believed abortion should remain legal and plummeted the public's trust in the Supreme Court, especially among younger generations.

The overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, and the scandal involving Justice Clarence Thomas accepting luxury gifts from a Republican mega-donor show that the court is now more polarized than ever, and the need for Supreme Court reform is necessary to ensure public trust in the court among all citizens. Establishing 18-year term limits for justices on the Supreme Court would finally allow the court to accurately represent the diversity of the country it represents.

Unlike many government po-

sitions, justices on the Supreme Court do not have a fixed term limit. Article III of the Constitution states the justices, "shall hold their Offices during good Behaviour."



Ainsley Williams

The Article grants lifetime appointments, allowing judges to serve on the court until they retire, die or get removed by the Senate.

The length of time a justice spends on the Supreme Court has lengthened significantly since its establishment in 1789. This allows each justice to sit on the court for decades, gaining more power and influence. Justice Clarence Thomas was 43 when he joined the court, Neil Gorsuch was 49, and Amy Coney Barrett was 48.

The court is also getting older. Justice Thomas is 74 and has served on the court for 32 years,

“Establishing 18-year term limits for justices on the Supreme Court would finally allow the court to accurately represent the diversity of the country it represents.”

Justice Samuel Alito is 73 and has served for 17 years, and Justice Sonia Sotomayor is 68 and has served for 14 years.

“We’re a court. We really don’t know about these things. You know, these are not like the nine greatest experts on the internet,” 63-year-old Justice Elena Kagan said, referencing *Gonzalez v. Google*, a case narrowing the scope of law that applies to social media.

While there are a range of potential term limit proposals, the most frequently mentioned op-

tion is an 18-year renewable contract, allowing for a more frequent turnover of justices on the court, which in turn will create a far more diverse group of people, viewpoints and experiences that truly represent the country.

Younger generations cannot possibly be accurately represented by the justices who were appointed during the term of a president they were not alive to see — times change. Now, the most pressing issues facing Generation Z are things like climate change, gun control and affordable housing and education. These are modern issues that require modern people to represent them in government, not the same nine people who have been sitting on the court for decades.

An ever-evolving country needs an evolving court to represent it. Introducing 18-year term limits for Supreme Court Justices will ensure more diversity in the court, and a better understanding of the issues facing younger generations.

more online

Don't glorify athletes who irresponsibly influence

“Just as we celebrate star athletes for their immense physical aptitude, we should hold them to the same high standards for their mistakes. Public figures like Ja Morant should not get a pass for their irresponsible actions off the court, no matter how valuable or talented of an athlete they are.”

— William Tan

'Nepo babies' are not limited to just the rich and famous

“We need to acknowledge and accept that nepotism isn't just for the Hailey Bieber and Kylie Jenners, it exists in our lives and we must acknowledge it.”

— Audrey Matei



Scan QR code for more opinions at uhighmidway.com

u-high midway

Published during the school year by journalism and photojournalism students of University High School, University of Chicago Laboratory Schools.

1362 East 59th Street
Chicago, Illinois 60637
Phone 773-702-0591
Email midway@ucls.uchicago.edu

Copyright 2023
Journalism students,
University High School
Printed by Grace Printing,
Chicago, Illinois

uhighmidway.com

mission and editorial policy.

The Midway is an independent newspaper that strives for excellence across all of our platforms. We are a student-run newspaper for the entire University of Chicago Laboratory High School community. We aim to not only represent the multitude of thoughts and experiences at U-High but also inform community members through transparent, timely and complete reporting.

In a time when the press is criticized, the U-High Midway seeks to inform, educate and serve the community of University High School. The Midway is developed and managed by students, for students.

In every story we write, the Midway should give a voice to the experiences of people at U-High. We will report on the people, activities and thoughts that make our school unique, striving to include the voices we haven't heard yet.

editorial board.

EDITORS-IN-CHIEF Audrey Park,
Katie Sasamoto-Kurusu, Sahana Unni
DIGITAL EDITOR Taariq Ahmed
NEWS EDITOR Mia Lipson
OPINION EDITOR Victoria Washington

section editors.

FEATURES Clare McRoberts
ARTS Chloë Alexander
SPORTS & LEISURE Zara Siddique

AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT

Ainsley Williams
REPORTERS Jaya Alenghat
Niall Danahey
Light Dohrn
Xander Feigenbaum
Skye Freeman
Kabir Joshi
Haley Maharry
Edward Park
David Ren
David Santiago

photojournalism staff.

PHOTOJOURNALISTS Henry Benton
Ellis Calleri
Kaden Moubayed
ARTIST Eliza Dearing
ADVISER Logan Aimone, MJE
PHOTO ADVISER .. Jayna Rumble, MJE

Dewey’s ideals are disappearing

History teacher urges Lab community to reconnect with foundational values

by **PAUL HORTON**
Guest Columnist
This has been edited for length and clarity. See a longer version at uhighmidway.com

When I first came to the Laboratory Schools in 1990, I was scared to death. I was invited to work at one of the most famous schools in the world. John Dewey’s Democracy and Education was required reading for all preservice teachers, and I, like most teachers I met at Lab, regarded it as a holy text. When I finished grad school and began teaching in a rural school in Texas in the early 80s, the students jokingly called me “the preacher.” Looking back, I did see teaching as my calling, and teaching democracy through history as my vocation. So, when I came to Lab I was full of zeal, and some would say, a lot of other stuff.



Paul Horton

In the early ’90s, I can remember teachers talking non-stop about Dewey, democracy and progressive education. Teachers were proud that Lab was a progressive school and they knew a great deal about the context of the Progressive political movement and Dewey’s role in it, and even about his relationship with Jane Addams and Hull House here in Chicago.

I can remember having very long conversations in the faculty lunch-room where Phil Jackson, a legendary professor of education would share Dewey stories that were handed down in the Education Department once housed in Judd Hall. I felt really at home in this environment coming from a Texas public school system that was the first in the country to embrace a “back-to-the-basics” curriculum based on standardized assessment.

Over the years, this democratic spirit gradually changed. The Lab Schools grew, the composition of the school board changed, the Biological Sciences division was expanded bringing to Hyde Park more east coasters with Ivy expectations, and the school actively recruited more north side families with wealth in an effort to raise more money.

A political change also soaked into the Lab ethos. The university added another layer of administrative positions in the last 15 years as the school grew and there seemed to be a push to control the very strong and active faculty to make the school (especially the high school) safer for parents with more traditional expectations

about learning with a focus on competitive college admissions.

In today’s version of Lab faculty parents in the professional schools in addition to North Side parents who seem to have wrested control of the schools. A neoliberal philosophy that privileges the marketplace, and is hostile to unions and progressive politics seems to have been imported from the Booth School. Many of these parents speak the language of Gary Becker (Milton Friedman light), referring to the Lab faculty and staff as “human capital,” and the Lab Schools as a part of a “portfolio.” This neoliberal ethos also tends to pay mere lip-service to the legacy of Dewey by featuring innocuous quotes on its webpages, ads and T-shirts.

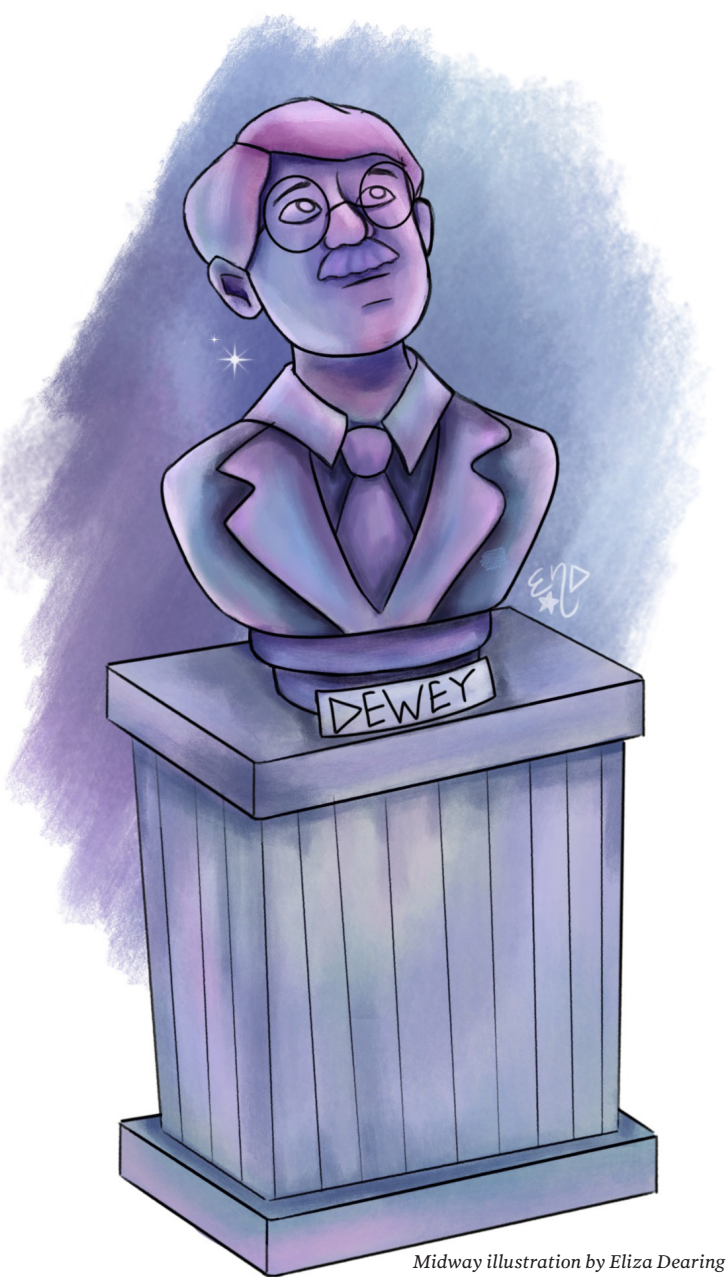
To be sure, faculty are still inspired by Dewey and endeavor to inspire students at Lab using his philosophy and ideas. Dewey’s legacy can also still be seen and felt in the actions of AFT local 2063 that actively pushes back on the neoliberal control of Lab.

But the die has been cast in recent years as the university’s administration and legal counsel, the school’s director, and the school and university human resources departments are seeking to create what sociologist Max Weber called an “iron cage” of rules and regulations for faculty and students.

This process has been disheartening for the faculty and students who actually live at Lab and is worsened by the fact that constant administrative churn has destroyed working institutional memory.

I have no doubt that Dewey would have been very concerned with what has happened to his school.

The real John Dewey would seem much more like Bernie Sanders, Elizabeth Warren, Brandon Johnson, or AOC to Labbies today. Dewey helped found the American Federation of Teachers, the American Civil Liberties Union, and the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People). He also played an important role in the People’s Lobby and the League for Independent Action in the 1930s that were organized to create a third-party challenge to what he considered a plutocratic political system without mentioning that unspeakable word: socialism. The latter organization supported government ownership of mines, transportation and utilities; progressive taxation for public investment; an inheritance tax; and support of union organizing and labor unions. The goal of all of these organizations was to bring together liberals and socialists in



Midway illustration by Eliza Dearing

a new progressivism that went beyond pre-WWI “liberal” Progressivism. (Livingston and Quish, 4)

Indeed, the very idea of the Laboratory Schools was inspired by a train conversation that Dewey had with a union organizer during the Pullman Strike. According to historian Robert Westbrook, Dewey came to believe that union solidarity was the most tangible form of participatory democracy he had witnessed. But because the “Chicago Univ. is a capitalistic institution—that is it belongs to the higher classes,” Dewey decided to recreate the experience of solidarity within the classroom as a way to evolve authentic democracy that would eventually replace “capitalistic institution[s]” based on individualism like the University of Chicago. (Westbrook, 408-15)

This idea is made clearest in his 1937 essay, “Democracy is Radical.” In this essay, Dewey makes the case that the “bourgeois” liberalism of the marketplace had reached a dead end. “By ‘bourgeois’ democracy is meant one in which power rests finally in the hands of finance capitalism, no matter what claims are made for

government of, by, and for all of the people.”

According to Dewey, “The end of democracy is the radical end...It is radical because it requires great change in existing social institutions, economic, legal, and cultural. A democratic liberalism that does not recognize these things in thought and action is not awake to its own meaning....”

As I say goodbye to Lab, it certainly appears to me that the colonization of Lab by “bourgeois” liberalism has progressed too far.

Dewey challenged us to fight: “But it is simply false that this country, even politically, is merely a capitalistic democracy. The present struggle in our country is something more than a protest of the new class, whether called proletariat or given any other name, against the established industrial autocracy. It is a manifestation of the native and enduring spirit of a nation against the destructive encroachments of forces that are alien to democracy.”

I challenge all of you, teachers and students, to reconnect with Dewey’s legacy to continue fighting the good fight.

vox pop.

What did you learn or gain from the extracurricular activities you participated in this year?

Swimming: “I learned how to navigate a team sport when it’s just me in the water. It’s like a sense of camaraderie in something individual.”

— Lydia Gilbert, ninth grader

F1 Club: “I now have many more skills that I did not have. I can use computer and design software, as well as knowing many different manufacturing techniques.”

— Jashan Gill, sophomore

Track and field: “During the season, I learned a lot about determination. To actually succeed in something, you really need to put your mind to it. Plus, the motivation of coaches and teammates means a lot, and I think that’s what made the track team such a good community to be in.”

— Hayla Shah, ninth grader

Internship: “I have gained the skills from the lab like learning how to genotype mice, but also I’ve learned what it is like being in the environment and how people work together in it.”

— Karis Lee, sophomore

Asian Students’ Association: “I’m the current vice president of the Asian Students’ Association, which not only carries a lot of responsibility, but allows me to do what I love: giving back to the community. I’m able to contribute more to the assemblies, social events, and workshops facilitated by our club, which I have a passion for.”

— Jacob Liu, junior

Fencing: “I’m in the high school fencing team, and I think it’s allowed me to connect with a lot of people I wouldn’t have otherwise known.”

— Angela Zhang, sophomore

Model United Nations: “I gained a number of leadership, organization, speaking and writing skills. I also learned a lot about the different spheres of public policy and international relations.”

— Areen Khan, junior

Water polo: “I participated in water polo this year and can’t wait for next year’s season. The team was such an amazing community in and out of practice. One thing I learned was that for a play to work, the whole team needs to understand it: no player can be left behind.”

— Maya Livni, ninth grader

— Compiled by Light Dohrn and Kabir Joshi

D&D creates safe spaces for LGBTQ+ people

by **HALEY MAHARRY**
Reporter

In the past years, Dungeons & Dragons, a tabletop role-playing luck-based game, has made its way into mainstream media through shows like “Stranger Things” and most recently movies like “Dungeons & Dragons: Honor Among Thieves” being shown in theaters.

Because of its openness to different identities, Dungeons & Dragons has a history of being an LGBTQ+ safe space, and recently, its rise to mainstream culture has brought that safe space into the spotlight.

Although I was disappointed in the lack of LGBTQ+ representation in “Dungeons & Dragons: Honor Among Thieves,” bringing

D&D to the public eye will allow people to access LGBTQ-friendly



Haley Maharry

language and encourage self-expression through its ideology and inclusive gameplay.

The Dungeons & Dragons tabletop game has made a massive shift from its official launch in 1974 by Tactical Studies Rules and subsequent version published by Wizards of the Coast, which was mainly directed at a white male audience. In recent years, the fanbase around D&D has expanded dramatically, becoming a magnet

for the LGBTQ+ community.

The creators of Dungeons & Dragons have embraced the community and added queer-friendly wording to their official player handbooks that relate to gender nonconformity.

The 5e player handbook says, “You don’t need to be confined to binary notions of sex and gender.” Along with inclusive language, D&D features inclusive characters too, such as LGBTQ+ nonplayer characters in their official campaigns.

Alex Fogel explained that along with mainstream media representations of the game, other media forms have picked up D&D. One of Alex’s favorite podcasts, “The Adventure Zone,” is a broadcast-

ed D&D game, which Alex said was not only entertaining but also an amazing piece of writing. “The Adventure Zone” features multiple LGBTQ+ characters and NPCs. Alex explained that there are many nonbinary and gender nonconforming characters who use they/ them pronouns along the campaigns, and some of the lead characters have queer identities.

As D&D is introduced to a broader audience through these new forms of media, more people will be exposed to positive LGBTQ+ representation. This will allow people to see more LGBTQ-friendly language and characters, which can help to create informed spaces where queer people can feel seen.

Greene cherished kids for 42 years

by MIA LIPSON
News Editor

In 1980, at 22 years old, about to graduate from college, Terri Greene received a phone call offering her an interview for a P.E. teaching position she had not applied for. There at Lab, a completely unfamiliar school, Ms. Greene sat down with then-Athletics Director Larry McFarlane and asked one question: How did you get my name? To this, Mr. McFarlane responded that Ms. Greene had unknowingly received an outstanding recommendation from his alma mater, Northern Illinois University, and from there, everything was set.

Since then, for the past 42 years, Ms. Greene has been a P.E. teacher at Lab, and has cherished working with kids from kindergarten to 12th grade.

"Larry's been retired for quite some time now, but, you know, every time I see him I thank him for taking a chance on me," Ms. Greene said. "I thank him for giving me such a nice career."

Fueled by her passion for sports, Ms. Greene has become an essential figure in the Lab athletics and fitness community as both a coach and teacher, and will be remembered for her dedication to inspiring learning and growth.

According to current Athletics Director David Ribbens, who has worked with Ms. Greene for 20 years, she has left her mark as both a coach for volleyball and basketball teams and as a devoted, enthusiastic teacher.

"I see her as a consummate professional, always prepared, always somebody that is ready for her students each day for class," Mr. Ribbens said. "She's innovative, and with the curriculum which has changed over the years, she still stays on top of stuff that is new and brings that in."

Ms. Greene said some of her



Midway photo by Henry Benton

LEGACY OF ENTHUSIASM. Ms. Greene has treasured the opportunity to watch students grow and help them along the way since receiving a Lab P.E. teacher position as her first job ever in 1980.

favorite moments in teaching occurred when she used her skills to help a student. Recently, when teaching a tennis unit, Ms. Greene noticed one of her high school students struggling with her serve. After taking her over to a nearby fence and practicing

step by step, from the throw to the hit, Ms. Green said the student was able to serve strongly and confidently with a new sense of accomplishment and pride.

"It brings a lot of joy to me when someone can accomplish something that they couldn't do

when they came into class," Ms. Greene said. "You know, maybe they could do it a little bit, but now they're more consistent, and can actually learn something."

When sophomore Ilana Umanskiy entered the volleyball unit, taught by Ms. Greene, she was

“
It brings a lot of joy to me when someone can accomplish something that they couldn't do when they came into class.

Terri Greene

”

nervous to practice her skills. By the end of the five weeks, she felt confident and comfortable with the lessons Ms. Greene instilled.

"At first I was skeptical about her skill tests, but as the weeks went by, I noticed myself passing the tests," Ilana said. "I felt like I could play the game better."

Over the years, Ms. Greene worked to expand the P.E. curriculum, adding electives such as self-defense, as inspired by her husband who practices karate.

"I think she's adapted to those changes in the curriculum and has been instrumental in making some of those more modern additions to the curriculum," Mr. Ribbens said. "She really works the new stuff like yoga and some of the more modern fitness changes and activities."

Now, as Ms. Greene coaches her final unit, she cherishes her final time looking through the class lists, walking through the halls of the gym building, planning her final lessons and reflecting on her time at Lab.

"I've just had such an awesome time here. I mean, 42 years — my only job out of college. So clearly, I loved it," Ms. Greene said, a soft smile spread across her face. "I never even looked for another job. I never wanted to leave. Even though it was far from where I live, still, I never wanted to make a change. I mean there's just nothing better than this. I really can't imagine anything being better."

At Lab, Brickner found sanctuary to be authentic

by TAARIQ AHMED
Digital Editor

Just over 25 years ago, Brad Brickner walked through the front doors of Lab as a visitor with simple intentions: spend the morning on the campus, have lunch at Medici, stop by a couple bookstores and return home. However, Mr. Brickner was still wandering Lab's halls late into the afternoon.

"I fell in love with the place and the people," Mr. Brickner said. Later, he added, "I thought to myself, 'If I ever had the opportunity to work here, I'd love to do it.' Then, 1998 rolled around, and there was an opening."

Now, after 25 years of teaching elementary, middle and high school bands, as well as courses like Music History, Mr. Brickner will retire this month having had a great influence on Lab's music program, as well as the students and faculty within it.

Sophomore Asa Bordelon said he finds Mr. Brickner's nature to be playful and lighthearted, bringing positivity to the environment.

"He makes music class fun," Asa said. "Instead of just sitting down and playing whatever, there's plenty of talking back and forth between himself and the class. He's often so relaxed, which makes people around him feel less stressed out."

Music department chair Ryan Hudec said Mr. Brickner has a rare presence in the classroom, and that his calm and collected character rubs off on students.

"I've never seen someone like him in a room full of over 70 sixth grade students," Mr. Hudec said. "There can be a mob mentality, and you can either control it by

“
He makes music class fun. Instead of just sitting down and playing whatever, there's plenty of talking back and forth between himself and the class.

Asa Bordelon, sophomore

”

yelling at the kids, which is never going to work, or you can try not to control it at all. But he doesn't match their craziness. He's just cool as a cucumber, and then all the kids calm down, because that's just the energy he exudes."

Mr. Hudec said Mr. Brickner's student-first mentality is one of his most admirable qualities. On a recent Sunday, he and Mr. Brickner went to north suburban Highwood to watch a high school band member perform with a select youth ensemble. And Mr. Brickner was committed to attending the event, even if it meant driving over two hours away from his home in Indiana. Mr. Hudec said Mr. Bricker was there for his students, no matter where or when.

Beyond the caring he shows for his individual students in and out of the classroom, Mr. Brickner's developments to the Lab's music program over the years have been significant: from re-enrolling U-High in the Illinois Music Educators program and initiating an annual recital for U-High students who do not have a musical outlet at Lab, to introducing a Music History curriculum that includes women and composers of color. According to Mr. Brickner, giving



Midway photo by Ishani Hariprasad

TRANQUIL TEACHING. In his 25 years at Lab, music teacher Brad Brickner has impacted the music curriculum greatly, and touched the lives of many students.

everybody an opportunity to shine is his main objective.

"I love bringing those opportunities to our students," Mr. Brickner said. "A couple of weeks ago, we brought in my friend Keith Baer from the reservation, and I think experiences like that mean a lot to the school."

Mr. Brickner said Lab's

open-minded culture gives him the freedom to run classes however he chooses.

"Lab, at least for me, is a place where I can be me, and where I can teach what I feel is important to teach," Mr. Brickner said. "Lab is a place where I don't have somebody looking over my shoulder and questioning every curric-

ular decision that I make."

As the school year comes to a close, Mr. Brickner will soon stroll out of those same front doors he swung open for the first time two and half decades ago. But with him, he takes his many years of sweet memories, and behind him, he leaves a legacy of love for his students and the program.

Horton plans to continue hobbies, travel

by **AUDREY PARK**
Editor-in-Chief

History teacher and enthusiast Paul Horton recently published an article on the Lab open forum where he ruminated on his early career. Mr. Horton said young teachers frequently want to share what they know through lectures. “Fewer and fewer students respond to that kind of approach,” he said. “The key then becomes to set up situations where students have autonomy in what they are learning, something I have tried to do my whole career. I strongly believe that teaching history is teaching thinking.”

Related: See a guest column from Mr. Horton on Page 5

- Horton history**
- Paul Horton started work at a small rural school in Elgin, Texas, east of Austin, for a couple of years.
 - He moved to a larger school on the west side of San Antonio for five years.
 - Mr. Horton began teaching at Lab in 1990.
 - In 1998, he began teaching at Malcolm Price Laboratory School in Cedar Falls, Iowa.
 - Mr. Horton found a job at school in Atlanta and taught there for five years.
 - He returned to Lab in 2007

He believes true teaching is setting up situations for students to absorb knowledge, experiences Mr. Horton has tried to prioritize for his students, and a method he has tried to emulate for the past 24 years at Lab.

Mr. Horton will retire at the end of the school year and plans to explore new hobbies while continuing his passion for history.

He has taught sixth, eighth and all high school grades and history classes ranging from AT United States History to the study of the Four Corners. He said he will miss his students the most.

“The students are the best. They’re the most curious, they’re passionate and they’re taught to believe that ideas are essential,” he said. “These are the best students one could have.”

Mr. Horton said he hopes his students will remember him as someone who stood for a different set of values than conventional academics.

He said, “Hopefully, students will value the memories that they have of being in my class, or something other than a greater point, that hopefully, they’ve learned

some things that go beyond strict time content, academics.”

Senior Bryan Pan has had Mr. Horton as his teacher for two years. Bryan said he had a lot of fun in Mr. Horton’s classroom and will miss him.

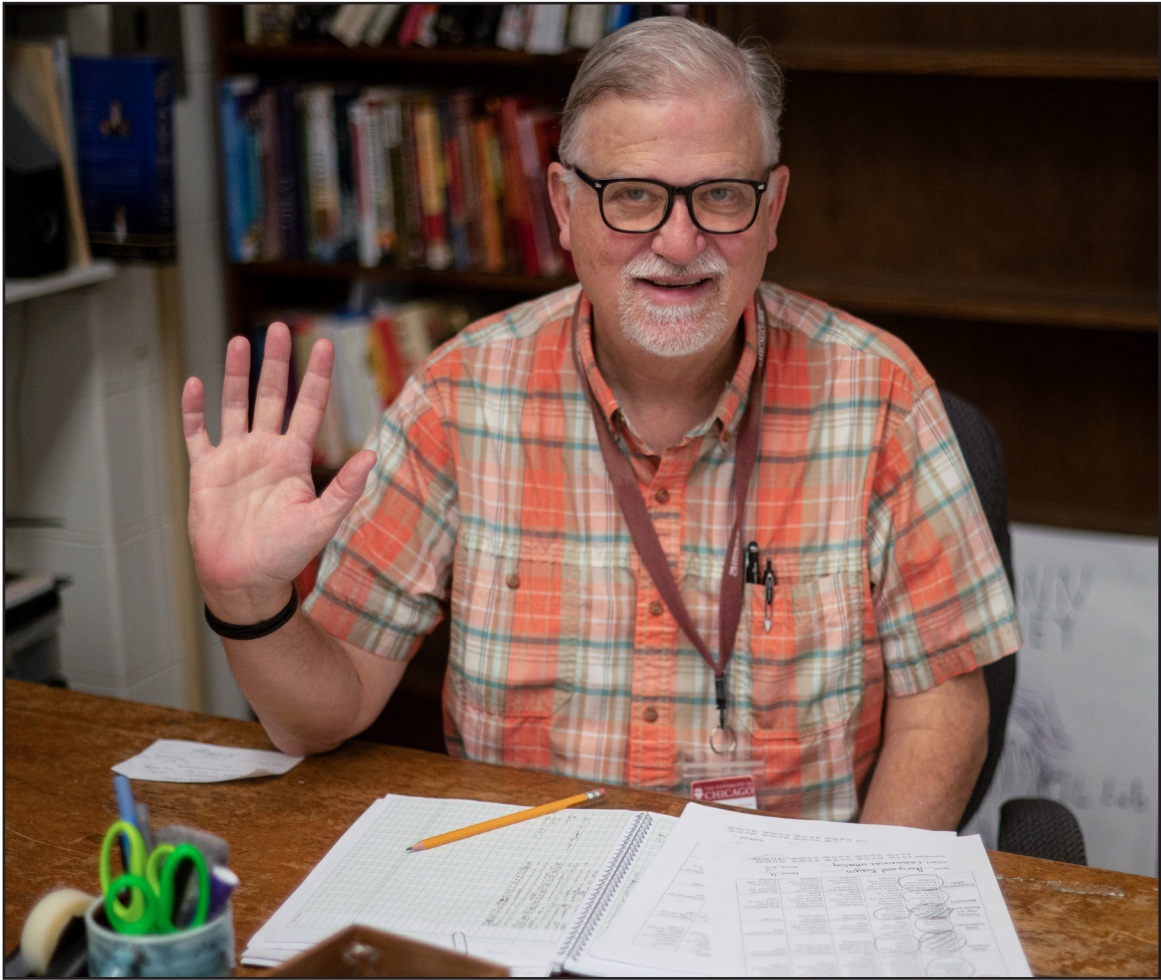
“He teaches in an unorthodox way that is way more engaging than any other history class I’ve had,” Bryan said.

High school secretary Carol Arrington has known Mr. Horton his whole Lab career, and her sons also were in his class. Ms. Arrington said she appreciates him greatly.

“I know he meant a lot to my sons,” she said. “They enjoyed his classes and appreciated the time he put into them. I am appreciative that my sons had him as a teacher.”

Mr. Horton said the men in his family, including his father and grandfather, have died at early ages, and with that in mind, he hopes to “live life.”

“In my adult life, all I’ve been is a teacher, read and taught history,” he said. “I want to broaden out a bit and take care of myself with



Midway photo by Henry Benton

HISTORY ENTHUSIAST. Paul Horton will retire after over two decades of prioritizing authentic learning for his students. During retirement, Mr. Horton plans to explore and continue new interests, and travel more.

the understanding that the males in my family don’t have longevity.”

Despite retiring, Mr. Horton plans to develop a history curriculum on social class and continue unfinished history projects. Outside of history, he is excited to read and immerse himself more in the music scene.

“I’ll be spending a lot of time in the library and going to Fitzgerald’s in Berwyn to listen to music. I’m not a particularly visual person, but maybe gardening and exploring different interests that I’ve

never had time to explore I’ll also do,” he said.

Mr. Horton plans to travel to Munich and Vienna and said he looks forward to continuing exploring the world, an interest that began when he attended his first year of college in Germany.

“I’m not a homebody. I don’t like to stay in one place,” he said. “I like to get out and explore places and new places and learn where history is all around you. I’m very curious, so it’s a form of learning.”

Mr. Horton’s mission has been

to advocate for a learning environment where students develop into insightful and compassionate learners, the epitome of his educational values. Mr. Horton has done just that, concluding a legendary career and now is excited to expand upon his own interests.

“He puts his whole self into teaching,” Ms. Arrington said. “He’s got a wonderful personality, and he’s so passionate about teaching and everything he believes in. There is no in-between with him, he’s the real deal.”

Ribbens inspired with energetic teaching



Midway photo by Matt Petres

ACTIVE ACTIVITIES. After 21 years of interactive P.E. teaching, Debbie Ribbens will retire. She plans to continue her active and energetic lifestyle.

by **KATIE SASAMOTO-KURISU**
Editor-in-Chief

Bright and early at a quarter to 7, an hour before school starts, P.E. teacher Debbie Ribbens begins setting up pickleball for a first period class of high schoolers, laying out materials and putting up nets. Arriving early to set up for class is just one way that she maintains a structured, active and energetic life.

She said that the students are the ones who push her and energize her.

“I never want them to be waiting on me. I should be waiting on them,” she said. “That’s why you’re a teacher — it’s about the kids.”

In her 21 years as a teacher and coach at Lab, Ms. Ribbens said it has changed in numerous ways. She says athletic programming has improved, team sport enrollment has increased and the P.E. department has grown. Even as she prepares for retirement this June, what has not changed is her excitement for her role. Her connection with her students is fueled by an enthusiastic mindset, one centered around an active lifestyle.

She said it gives her joy to see her students, ranging from 3rd to 11th grade, progress and develop through various stages of their lives.

“It’s a dream job,” Ms. Ribbens said. “It’s been a real honor and privilege to be able to see students in elementary school and then be able to teach them again in high school and see how they’ve developed and grown into mature young adults.”

Despite the difficulties that come with teaching such a wide ran-

ge of ages, Ms. Ribbens finds that it makes her work interesting. This allows her to find specific enjoyment in each level she teaches on a day-to-day basis. On the same day she may go from classroom management with her lower schoolers to giving fitness tips with her high schoolers.

“It’s kind of a nice transition that you see, it’s never boring. I think if I was teaching the same grade and the same thing all day long, it might be a little boring for me,” she said. “They’re all doing something different. It’s kind of exciting for me. I look forward every day to coming to school.”

Sophomore Bryce Light, who had Ms. Ribbens last year and for a tennis elective this year, said during class she was always active and enthusiastic when it came to activities or exercises.

“She always kept our class engaged, and she was super active during P.E.,” he said. “I remember a couple of weeks ago, we were having a duo tennis tournament in P.E. and the team my partner and I were up against was missing a player, so Ms. Ribbens stepped in and played. They ended up winning, but it was still super fun.”

This philosophy of continuous and energetic activity is one of the key aspects of Ms. Ribbens’ life, influencing the way she teaches.

“I’m big in fitness. I really try to take every class you can ever imagine, because I want to be the best person I can be for my students,” she said. “When teaching physical education, I try to practice what I preach.”

Nichole Magliocco, a fellow P.E.

“
I never want them to be waiting on me. I should be waiting on them. That’s why you’re a teacher — it’s about the kids.
Debbie Ribbens
”

teacher, has known Ms. Ribbens since coming to Lab eight years ago. She said over the years, she’s learned so much from Ms. Ribbens’ many years of experience at the school.

“She helped me so much with how she engages with the kids and just seeing them grow through high school,” she said. “They love her at all levels. She’s a fun teacher. She also is very well respected as a teacher.”

Ms. Magliocco said Ms. Ribbens’ guidance assists her to connect with students and watch them develop.

“She offers students a chance to grow, also to be themselves. They’re very comfortable with her,” she said. “A lot of kids come to her, especially high school, to ask her about fitness, things that she really can help such a wide variety of students with.”

Over her career, Ms. Ribbens says she’s learned to not take herself so seriously and has some advice for her fellow teachers.

“Always have fun in everything that you’re doing,” she said, “because if you’re having a good time, then your students are having a good time.”

Other cherished faces will retire

by VICTORIA WASHINGTON

Opinion Editor

Fifth Grade self portraits. Playing soccer on Jackman Field. A friendly face in the lower school office. These are the many ways that the Lab school community has come to know Philip Matsikas, Michael Moses and Loretta Palmer — all of whom are all retiring at the end of this year.

PHILIP MATSIKAS

Matsikas inspired students through nurturing artistry, building independence

Forty years ago, a friend of a friend called Mr. Matsikas about a job opening at the school where she worked. A lower school art teacher had just quit with little notice. Mr. Matsikas got the job, beginning an iconic legacy of art education at Lab.

"It was the planets lining up," he said.

In the years that followed, Mr. Matsikas became known for a robust style of training lower school students in portrait making, painting and studying some of the world's most famous artists.

"I've been very dedicated to my students' education, to the sense of — and this is very Dewey — going out into society," he said. He added later, "At some point, between early childhood and adolescence, students need to develop all sorts of skills of resilience, persistence and grit."

One aspect of Lab that especially inspired Mr. Matsikas was its value of the core ideas of John Dewey about teaching and learning. In particular, Mr. Matsikas appreciated the tenet of empowering students and giving them control over their learning.

"There was an intellectual piece that totally grabbed me," Mr. Matsikas said. "How do you educate human beings through the vehicle of fine arts? And that's basically what I've been working on for 40 years."

Mr. Matsikas especially finds his purpose when a student's artwork is complete.



Ranjana Patnaik is also retiring this year after working at the high school library for 25 years.

He said, "When a student's face reflects the pride of going beyond what they knew they could do before they started. When they get to that rite of passage at the end of a project. Like, 'Oh, I can do this.'"

MICHAEL MOSES

Moses created community, made space for students to express their identities

Mr. Moses, himself a Lab alumnus, has spent his career teaching physical education at Lab. He began working as a substitute teacher for Lab P.E. classes in 1989, and later took over for a retiring teacher.

Mr. Moses said part of his experience in teaching P.E. for so many years has been recognizing the different levels of athleticism and acknowledging all students' progress.

"Having kids feel comfortable with aspects of P.E. recreation that they might not feel comfortable doing," he said, "and when the unit is over, they have a higher level of confidence because they've had levels of success in that particular class."

Every season, Mr. Moses takes members of the soccer team to help a non-profit organization, America Scores, serving public schools on the West Side. He sees participation in sports as a way to give back to the community and engage with younger athletes from different backgrounds.

"To me it resonates with the value of the experience — there's more to sports and athletics," Mr. Moses said. "To be a part of community building, helping kids in situations that are different than Lab school kids are."



Midway photo by Kaden Moubayed

CARING COMMUNITIES. Philip Matsikas (who insisted on being photographed from the back), Loretta Palmer and Michael Moses will retire at the end of the year after decades of facilitating welcoming communities.

Helping students form their identities through sports is something Mr. Moses has tried to incorporate into his teaching. He believes the sense of accomplishment students take away from each short unit in P.E. will help in the long run.

"Yes, it's P.E., but there's more aspects to it that might help students in the future," Mr. Moses said. "Say they want to go out in college and play Ultimate Frisbee, they would have had that experience. Maybe they don't throw the Frisbee all that well, but there's this sense of identity: maybe I can do it again."

LORETTA PALMER

Palmer hopes Lab will keep, continue to prioritize respectful community

Ms. Palmer came to Lab as an administrator in the lower school

office 26 years ago. She formerly worked in telecommunications at the University of Chicago, yet Ms. Palmer felt Lab was the place she was supposed to be.

"I was very excited about coming here," Ms. Palmer said. "I took a look around and saw the kids, I love the kids. So I knew it was the perfect place for me. I felt it in my spirit."

When Ms. Palmer's brother died in 2000, she saw the heart of the Lab community.

"Everyone was very compassionate about our loss, and we had colleagues show up at the funeral and just show their support and love and their condolences," she said. "That made me feel very included in the Lab family."

Ms. Palmer has seen the school change dramatically since she first arrived. She said she has seen a shift, in particular, when it comes

to the experiences of people of color. Ms. Palmer said she wonders if current students and community members have the level of support they once had.

Above all, Ms. Palmer said she doesn't want Lab ever to lose its central philosophy on the importance of community.

"We don't want to lose focus on the importance of being a family and being supportive to each other," Ms. Palmer said.

Ms. Palmer would like to add a fourth rule onto the lower school's often mentioned "Rules of the Road."

"The Lab School has a saying where they say, 'Be kind, be thoughtful, be responsible,'" Ms. Palmer said. "I'd like to add onto that legacy to 'be respectful,' as well," she said, "so we as a community can get along and respect one another."

300-word stories from the community

ELSA NIELSEN

Team goals

It's unseasonably cold. Soccer drills are outside anyway. Girls dribble through cones and pass balls back and forth to each other. Coaches shout out directions to the players, they also yell to each other, mostly encouraging, some berating. Later they'll divide into teams and play a practice game.

Seniors are playing through their last days of high school. Whether acknowledged or not, finality is present in every moment.

People react differently to that. Captain Elsa Nielsen will continue playing soccer in college but is concentrating on the present.

"I'm not ready to be thinking about who my roommate's gonna be or anything like that," Elsa said. "I'm focused on living in the moment."

For her, that means making the most of her last season with the girls she's grown up playing with. She wants things to be perfect.

"I want us to be working hard," Elsa said. "Doing well and looking good and playing the best we can."

Discipline is coupled with appreciation of the moments that the team has together. Outside of practice the team does all of the event days that teams do, those matter to her. She talks about everyone wearing pajamas before a game as an example of "those little things that make the team what it is."

Her desire to do well doesn't

override her appreciation of the time that she has left doing the thing she loves with the people she's met doing it.

"It's more just about, how can I make these last two months that I have where I am as meaningful as possible," she said.

There's an ending in this season, of making memories that'll last forever, but Elsa's relationship with soccer isn't over. You get the impression it never will be.

"I've been playing since I could walk," she said. "I don't know how to function without it."

— Peter Cox

CHANI PATTERSON

Taking steps

Playing in the background is rhythmic classical music, tapping pointe shoes across the hardwood floors. Chani Patterson is in one of the lines of dancers moving to the music in unison. Creating a piece of art through years of lessons and technique.

When Chani was 3 years old, her mom wanted to put her in an extracurricular activity, something physical, and ballet seemed like the right choice.

That was 12 years ago, and ever since then ballet has been the center of Chani's world. She loves the challenge, the physical excursion. She loves the comradery with the people she dances with. She loves looking back on a performance and seeing all of her hard work pay off into something so beautiful. Chani loves ballet.

Yet that all changed in 2020. Rehearsals came out of the studios, and went behind computer screens. The performances she once loved were put on hold, and the dance school fell apart. The classmates she once looked forward to seeing every rehearsal just stopped showing up. Even after the school reopened and dancers came back into the studio, ballet had lost its spark. Chani had lost her motivation.

Chani had to make a choice. She

had dedicated 12 years of her life to this dance school, 12 years of her life to the teachers, 12 years of her life to the friends she made, and she was about to leave it all behind.

In the end, she chose to leave. She wanted a challenge, and she wanted to find joy in ballet again and couldn't find it at her old school. This year, she made the switch to a new school, she is challenging herself, she is working with her new friends, and is back to performing again. Dance has regained its spark, and it's not dimming anytime soon.

— Ainsley Williams

QUINN SMITH

Soothing strolls

She grips the leash firmly as she walks her dog, Cocoa. Leisurely, she strolls on the familiar sidewalks and through the grassy yards of Hyde Park. She is accompanied by a familiar sound of boisterous laughter from a group of cherished neighbors.

Quinn Smith is an integral member of a neighborhood dog-walking group. Forming this group has helped get rid of anxiety in her life. This habit that started during the pandemic snowballed into a consistently expanding group of more

than 30 members.

Since then, she walks Cocoa for three hours daily with the group.

But Quinn Smith is also an electrical engineer and entrepreneur. She started her own software development business to help local businesses on the South Side, the same neighborhood she grew up in. She talks with her growing team on the phone and works with clients to make a difference in the community. Recently, she started working from home.

"I have a different world that exists online," she said.

She breaks up her time during the busy day by walking Cocoa. Something that has been extremely effective for her when managing the stress of running a business. After the pandemic, these two groups have been essential for Quinn.

She strives to be a part of her community in any way she can, in both work and leisure. She strives to be the difference in the lives of those around her.

Now, she is working on raising money with others to get a dog park approved a few blocks away. A space she hopes can be built for the community to come together. A long-shot. A space that combines the joys of walking her dog and socialization that has meant so much to her. And to others.

Her friend said it would change her life — and her dog's life. Quinn knew before she even spoke.

— Ethan Swinger

Dazzling drag city

Despite nationwide legislative threats to shows, Chicago drag queens thrive

by **SAHANA UNNI**
Editor-in-Chief

Loud music. Flashing lights. Glitter on nearly every surface. The roar of the crowd. Eye-catching outfits. Dollar bills strewn across the floor. It's an environment of excitement, dancing and self-expression, yet a new Alabama bill categorizes it as "obscene material to minors" and a "public nuisance."

While politicians across the United States desperately try to ban drag, Chicago drag performances persist and flourish, widely enjoyed and appreciated by people of all ages and identities. Not only do they provide a good time, but an environment in which audience members and performers alike can be unabashedly themselves.

Within the recent flood of anti-LGBTQ+ legislation, at least 15 states — particularly Florida, Texas and Tennessee — have focused on banning drag shows from public spaces, with vague bills written that potentially criminalize gender expression in general for LGBTQ+ people. Tennessee's anti-drag bill states that those found in violation of the law for the first-time face misdemeanor charges punishable by a fine up to \$2,500 or up to a year in jail. Subsequent violations would be felony charges.

According to drag performer Sofonda Booz, who has been performing in drag since 2015, the forward thinking in Chicago has insulated the city from much of the anti-drag movement. Sofonda said that while there is room for improvement, the LGBTQ+ community is lucky to have such safety in the city.

"I think Chicago was really at the forefront of being a safe space for gender expression in drag — long before a lot of these topics became national issues," Sofonda said. "It was just something that I think people in Chicago were sen-

show spots

Lips Chicago

2229 S. Michigan Ave.

Age Restriction: 16+

Price: \$32.95–\$46.95 for dinner and a show

The Walnut Room

111 N. State St.

Age Restriction: None

Price: \$20 for show

Kit Kat Lounge

3700 N. Halsted St.

Age Restriction: None

Price: \$53.45

The River Kitchen and Bar

2909 N. Sheffield Ave.

Age Restriction: None

Price: \$59.95 for dinner and a show

— compiled by Sahana Unni

sitive to."

Drag queen Holly Hazmat similarly described Chicago as a "safe haven" for drag entertainers, but the widespread audience they reach on social media still opens them up to hate from those outside of the city. Holly recounted one instance where — shortly before they were supposed to headline a Pride event — a photo of them in a revealing outfit was posted on the far-right Twitter account Libs of TikTok. The image was reshared by U.S. Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia, who added: "This should be illegal."

Although the subsequent flood of accusations and threats prompted Holly to turn off their social media notifications for the following two weeks, they still performed at the Pride event — albeit with an increase in security.

"That's a perfect example of how social media can take one



Midway photo by Audrey Park

DANCING QUEEN. At Lips Chicago on May 19, during a drag show and dinner, drag performer Priscilla Rock dances amid flashing, colorful lights as viewers offer cash.

thing and turn a mountain out of a molehill," Holly said. "Of course, I did not wear that scandalous outfit to an event where I knew children were going to be, but of course, all of these people, they only took what they saw and went with it. And it's unfortunate that we have people with authority and such high power that are able to mold things on social media and on the news to their benefit."

Having grown up in the Chicago suburbs, drag queen Aurora Divine said a much more negative attitude toward drag remains in areas just outside the city. She attributed much of this to social media, including threats a library received after booking her to host childrens' bingo.

"I haven't really had any hate or pushback in Chicago, but in the suburbs there definitely is," Aurora said. "Some suburbs are great,

they're welcoming, and then there are some suburbs like Downers Grove, where they threatened the library because of everything that's going on with social media. They were sending hate mail, they actually sent an envelope with a bullet in it to the library. So there was that."

To help ensure the safety of drag queens across the United States, Holly said the most important thing is to vote.

"The number one thing is always go out and vote because even though it seems like your voice may not matter because you're just one vote in a billion, it really does matter," they said. "The more numbers that we get, the more votes that we get, the better an outcome will end up being. And, raise your voice."

Additionally, Sofonda recommended supporting organizations

like the American Civil Liberties Union and individual drag queens themselves.

"So it's just a matter of continuing to be supportive, be loud, you know, and do whatever you can just because just because you're not down in Tennessee, doesn't mean there's not something you could do," Sofonda said. "Every little bit could possibly help."

Shavonna Brooks, who has been performing in drag for 23 years, said drag queens across the country are not going to stop fighting against the legislation threatening their very livelihoods.

"This is Chicago — we're not having it, there's too many of us," Shavonna said. "United we stand, divided we fall and every community, we're gonna stand with each other and you're not gonna wipe us out or stop us from doing what we've been doing."

At college, student journalists experience growth

by **CHLOE ALEXANDER**
Arts Editor

2021 U-High graduates Ella Beiser and Amanda Cassel remember long days working at the U-High Midway. They stayed in the journalism office until 6 p.m. some days. They edited stories again and again. They designed newspaper layouts, surrounded by peers doing the same.

These alumni said their experiences working on the Midway have stayed with them as they work on their college newspapers, and some other alumni are also finding journalism experiences in college.

Amanda, a former Midway editor-in-chief who now attends Barnard College, found the Midway to be a place where she could grow friendships but also foster new skills. She gained other skills, too, including leadership and collaboration.

Amanda said, "I think journalism felt like something that I could use to sort of become my own person and, like, develop my own interest. But also, there were lots of practical skills that I could see myself getting through journal-

college journalists

Ella Beiser goes to Bates College and works on the student newspaper there.

Andrew Burke-Stevenson is a photographer for the Boston College newspaper.

Amanda Cassel goes to Barnard College but works on the Columbia newspaper.

Andrada Nicolae attends Columbia University and works on the newspaper.

Malcolm Taylor goes to Syracuse University but does photography outside of school.

ism, and I heard really good things about the program."

For Ella, another former editor-in-chief now at Bates College, journalism was a way to build and find a community at U-High.

"I think that when I was in high school, it felt really special to have a place where I had such a great community," Ella said.

2021 alumna Andrada Nicolae wasn't on the Midway staff at U-High due to schedule restrictions. But when she got to Columbia University, she knew she want-

ed to explore the interest in journalism she had since high school, so she joined the staff of the Columbia Spectator — the "Spec."

Andrada said, "For me, Spec was a way to meet people from all different years at Columbia and to get really close to people who I'd never otherwise would interact with."

For Amanda and Andrada, journalism isn't their intended career path, but for Ella, journalism is something she's interested in doing for the long run. Ella said her Midway experience brought her

passion for the work and a possible future field. She plans to work on a local paper this summer.

"But I think that being on the Midway in high school gave me kind of a hunch that I might want to be a journalist after college," Ella said.

Like their editor and writer peers, photojournalists are capturing the moment of the story beyond high school into college.

Malcolm Taylor graduated from U-High in 2022 after three years in the photojournalism program and now attends Syracuse University. Most recently, Malcolm said he has focused on photography for fashion magazines, a shift from the newspaper and yearbook.

"Fashion photography, you literally have control over every aspect of your environment. The only thing you don't have control of necessarily is the people there," Malcolm said. "I was one of many photographers for the magazine that would show up to shoots, take photos, help make the models feel more confident and hype them up a bit."

Malcolm said his time in U-High journalism helped him come out

of his shell.

"I was a pretty nervous person before I really invested myself in photojournalism," he said, "and I use that as a way to teach myself, like, how to have confidence in almost any situation, even one that I'm not familiar with."

Andrew Burke-Stevenson, a Boston College student who graduated from U-High in 2022, started photojournalism as a junior. As he worked on his art, his passion and love for photography grew and so did his expertise, as he started freelancing.

Andrew said that the photojournalism at U-High, taught by Janya Rumble, was unique from any other photography class he has taken and gave him a context that went far beyond the technology of cameras.

Amanda and Ella's nights in the journalism office working on pages, Andrada's long interest in journalism and Malcolm and Andrew's work behind the scenes with photography. Each of these journalists have found passion for journalism as a college student, allowing them to use the passion and skills in other aspects of their lives.

Portfolios allow displays of creativity

Students compile art portfolios with hopes of expression

by AINSLEY WILLIAMS
Audience Engagement Manager

An acrylic self-portrait with a black background with a collection of gray figures floating over it representing parts of the artist's identity.

A skull, a vase and a bird statue all in grayscale with pops of colorful shapes in the background. Sculptures and paintings that emotionally display the human form through movement.

These works of art will be included in the portfolios of the students currently taking AP Drawing and Painting. For these students, the process of creating this art portfolio gives them an outlet to showcase their individual skill and to express who they are as artists.

Traditionally, an artist's portfolio is a curated collection of their own original artwork that is meant to be shared.

Artists commonly use making a portfolio as a way to delve into different mediums and to track their artistic growth.

"You need a basis of around 15 pieces, so most of your time is dedicated on what you want to do and create," junior Emma Ciesla said. "It can be a really stressful process."

Emma said the development of a



Artwork provided by Isadora Glick

ARTISTIC ENDEAVORS. Painted by Isadora Glick, this work shows two children—herself and a childhood friend.

portfolio provided a chance to tell stories through art when words failed.

"I'm including a lot of self-portraits in my portfolio. My focus was portraying my identities and going through my different and conflicting identities growing up," Emma said. "It was stuff that I felt was more easy to portray through

art than words."

For sophomore Ilana Umanskiy, creating a portfolio has given her the liberty to try new forms of art that she typically would not have reached for.

"I feel like you need lots of variety in a portfolio, so I have included, like, paint markers and pencil drawings and charcoal," she said.

Ilana thinks the creative process has given her the space to change and evolve as an artist.

"Earlier in the year I was doing more observational art and realism, but now I like to use my art as a way to show personal issues," she said.

One of her more recent pieces is a colorful and distorted self-portrait made up of bright pinks, blues and greens. She said the distorted characteristics reflect self-image and how what we see in the mirror may not always be reality.

Junior Isadora Glick has plans to work on a portfolio over the summer to participate in a gap year program next year in Paris that allows students to specialize in a craft, as well as supplement college applications.

"Having a portfolio is a good way to have all of my art in the same place and to show who I am as an artist," Isadora said.

Isadora said her plan to create a portfolio will give her an outlet to explore new art centered around forms that she is interested in and passionate about creating.

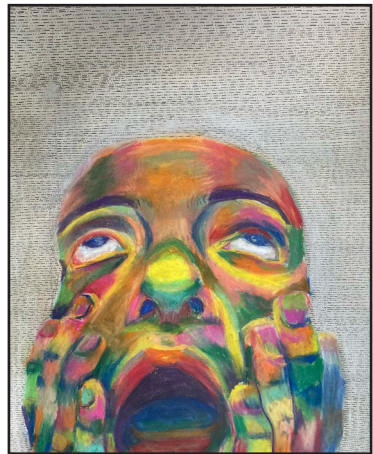
"I like a lot of figure and face painting," Isadora said, "and recently I've been trying to do that with sculpture and creating things both somewhat realistic and abstract."

Isadora wants her art to reflect the themes she is interested in and to show what makes her art tick.

"I think I want to display emotion and movement and texture and things that I find interesting," She said. "I want to show that I am creatively inclined and that I have a large variety of things I can do."

The construction of an art portfolio provides these artists a channel to display their art to the world, play around with new mediums and techniques, and show a diverse range of their own personal style.

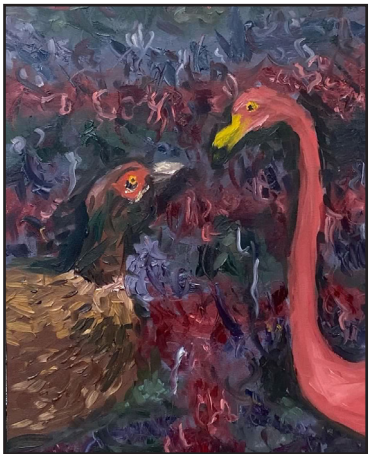
the look of the art



ILANA UMANSKIY
Called "the scream," this work is about struggling through situations.



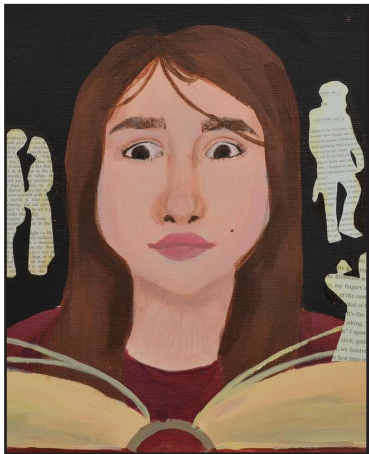
ILANA UMANSKIY
This untitled work reflects looking at the world through a child's lens.



ISADORA GLICK
This work was painted from two plastic birds in front of a blanket.



EMMA CIESLA
The painting "Tarot; the fool" depicts wilted flowers as a tarot card.



EMMA CIESLA
Titled "Hero," this work portrays a literary world that is coming to life.

spring musical



Midway photo by Ellis Calleri

STINKY STORYTELLERS. The spring musical, "Something Rotten," had been in the works since 2020, but because of the pandemic, originally debuted over Zoom. Now, three years later, the musical made its stage debut May 18. Lena Valenti, left, who played Bea (the protagonist's wife), said, "It meant a lot to me because I knew the musical had to be better than anything the previous generation could have possibly imagined. It felt really nice to finally be able to put on the show for them in person like they had wanted previously and make them proud."

Intriguing ideas capture audience

'Pachinko' brings different eras into the same drama

by EDWARD PARK
Reporter

An argument takes place between two characters. Being called "shameless" leaves one character feeling disrespected. The other is annoyed at people not realizing how grateful they should be for their ancestors' achievements. Neither understands the other.

One yells, "We're not taking advantage. We're offering a fortune. But instead of being grateful, you act like everyone's trying to cause you some injustice."

Korean drama series "Pachinko," available on Apple TV+, based on the book "Pachinko" by Min Jin Lee, appears to simply be about Japanese colonization over Korea but instead makes viewers compare modern society with the period of colonization and raises questions about modern life.

"Pachinko" follows four generations of a Korean family, some of whom move abroad. Japanese oppression of Koreans, which lasted from 1910 to 1945, resulted in the suffering of the first and second

generations of the family. The story of Sunja, a main character, is greatly influenced by these two generations. Having married a Korean priest who has family in Japan, she moved to Japan, the origin of her family's oppression.

Although the story shows the end of Japanese colonialism as the plot enters the third generation, the family is still mistreated by the Japanese. The Japanese call them "dishonorable" and show an aggressive attitude toward them. In one scene, viewers see Solomon, Sunja's grandson, being insulted by the owner of a convenience store for being Korean. The characters of these generations tend to ignore stories about their family's history. Their focus is on the present and future rather than the past. Solomon is constantly annoyed by Sunja's advice and stories. In several scenes, Sunja's and her descendants' thoughts conflict with each other. Solomon cannot understand his grandma's generation. In turn, he's not understood by his grandma.

While Sunja cannot resist herself from calling Korea "home," which represents her past, Solomon continuously calls Japan his "home." The two different definitions of the word makes the audience wonder whether Solomon ever considers where his family is from.

There are shameful pasts and histories, but important events that civilized the society remain. This lesson that is taught in the show is something people should remember throughout their lives.

Solomon is no different. Viewers can see Solomon agreeing with a client who comes from the same background as Sunja, growing up in Korea and having to move to Japan almost forcefully. He admits the fact that he wouldn't sell the house filled with memories of Korean history if he was in the same situation as his client. Eventually, however, he returns to the original idea of ignoring his family's past. Nevertheless, he changed his attitude after speaking with the woman, admitting he wouldn't sell the house if he were in the same situation.

As the second season of "Pachinko" is planned to stream this year on Apple TV+, now is the perfect time to watch the eight-episode first season, especially since May is Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage month. Not only will you learn about history, but you will explore its relationship with modern society.

Movie differentiates itself from others

‘Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3,’ has returning favorites

by KABIR JOSHI
Reporter

On May 5, the third installment of the Guardians of the Galaxy series was released, bringing back old faces. “Guardians of the Galaxy Volume 3” rocketed to the top of the charts making \$48 million on its opening night and being expected to make \$110 million by the end of its opening weekend. As of May 17 the movie has made \$771 million globally.

Of all the films in the Marvel Cinematic Universe, this one differentiates itself by serving as an entry point for new Marvel fans. The movie doesn’t overuse references to characters from previous movies, allowing for a fresh audience to enjoy and understand without needing to think too much about background. This movie is a perfect entry point for new Marvel fans while not losing sight of what made the first two installments global hits.

The first two Guardians of the Galaxy movies were joyrides, the first closely relating to the plot of the popular movie “Avengers: Endgame” and the second about the main character Peter Quill’s struggle to relate and meet with his dad,



Photo sourced by ComingSoon.net

REUNITED AT THE END. Released on May 5, the third “Guardians of the Galaxy” served as an entry point for new Marvel fans by using humor, popular music from the ’60s to the ’90s and interesting plot twists.

ending in Quill nearly destroying half the galaxy.

The third volume opens up the backstory of the beloved warrior racoon, Rocket. Rocket, a main character introduced in the first movie, instantly was a fan favorite

with his daredevil personality and his comedy.

The movie starts with the characters on the skull or planet “Knowhere” which had been known to be a pseudo-base to the Guardians. After the second movie’s de-

struction, the Guardians had settled down to hopefully live a peaceful life on Knowhere, but the galaxy had different plans for them. Within the first 10 minutes, all the characters’ lives are put in danger as they are attacked by a

being who looked like he was sent to apprehend Rocket.

The guardians, as they always do, are able to overcome him but at a cost: their friend Rocket is wounded and has only 48 hours to live.

From here, the team is led through tough challenges, where comedy holds a prominent place in the characters’ hearts.

From snarky remarks to witty remarks, the laughs and giggles were heard around the theater. Comedy seemed to be the attractive feature for all audiences from young Marvel fans to adults. The comedy had them hooked.

The movie also threw some plot twists, such as Quill’s long-lost girlfriend Gamora being reintroduced as a new character. Director James Gunn miraculously balances the film’s ongoing need for action with a love story that had been seen in the past two renditions.

In addition, some life lessons are passed on through characters such as “Everyone deserves a second chance” coming from fan-favorite tree Groot. Not to mention the astounding soundtrack, which brought old songs from the ’60s to ’90s to audiences of today.

This movie is a must watch for audiences of all ages as it brings a fresh perspective for returning viewers and a funny, action-packed love story for new viewers.

Historical fiction novel showcases complex characters

‘Daisy Jones & the Six’ focuses on nuanced themes

by LIGHT DOHRN
Reporter

Any ’70s music fan would be able to tell you that 99% of the music of most ’70s rock groups revolves either around sex, drugs, or rebellion. Fleetwood Mac, The Rolling Stones, Pink Floyd, and so on — it’d be tough to find a song of theirs that doesn’t fit one of those categories.

This rule is made delightfully explicit by the fictional rock band The Six in Taylor Jenkins Reid’s historical fiction novel “Daisy Jones and the Six.”

The book has recently been adapted into an Amazon Prime Video original streaming series starring Riley Keough and Sam Claflin.

The story revolves around two main protagonists: Daisy Jones, a young and beautiful singer-songwriter with a passionate and dedicated love for the pills in her pock-

et, and Billy Dunne, the lead musician for the band, who struggles to balance his artistic vision with his responsibilities as a husband and father.

A lot could be said for the book’s gender politics — the feminist themes are sharp and consistent.

Karen Sirko, the keyboardist for The Six, says very early on that “Men often think they deserve a sticker for treating women like people.” The line is subtle and does not come up again, but it serves as a frictionless way to establish Karen as a fierce and spirited character.

But the main strength of the book isn’t its feminism. The thing that sticks out is the remarkable complexity of the characters.

The seven bandmates are intricately, wonderfully flawed. Despite their endless flow of screw-ups, all seven rock stars come across as immensely complex and compelling.

Billy is a tortured songwriter who often appears aloof and icy-hearted — a loose cannon who constantly fights with himself to avoid destroying his own life

and breaking the hearts of those around him. Yet somehow, Billy is thoughtful, loving and impossible to dislike.

The young musicians are miserable most of the time. They hold themselves together with their art, adrenaline, and with the scraps of love that they cling to.

Ms. Reid flawlessly illustrates the misery and superficiality of being famous, as well as the joy of it and the effect that stardom has on the soul.

“The only reason people thought I had everything is because I had all the things you can see,” Daisy says. “I had none of the things you can’t.”

“Daisy Jones & the Six” is not a polemic. It does not try to teach an oversimplified lesson about fame, fortune or feminism. At its core, the novel tells the story of seven broken young people creating art together and trying to escape the potent unhappiness that threatens to consume them.

It’s never truly made clear if it works, but the journey these flawed, scruffy stars go on to find out is endlessly entertaining.



Source: Amazon

EXCEEDED EXPECTATIONS. “Daisy Jones & the Six” is a historical fiction novel about rock ’n’ roll in the ’70s by author Taylor Jenkins Reid. The novel was turned into a miniseries in 2023.



Source: Amazon

YOUR NAME. Esther Yi’s debut novel, “Y/N: A Novel,” is a meditation on the longing of a digitized age connecting to fan fiction.

‘Y/N’ explores teen desires using fan fiction

by DAVID SANTIAGO
Reporter

Esther Yi’s debut, “Y/N: A Novel,” is a tale about a woman’s devouring obsession with the K-pop boy band member Moon, who has gone abruptly missing after his most recent world tour.

She crosses seas to Seoul, where she encounters the myriads of people whose unrequited love for the boy has carved canyons into their hearts, despite them never knowing him personally.

In this surreal landscape, she’s aimless, she makes impulsive decisions and she’s ferried along by the Kafkaesque turnings of the corporation that manages the boy.

The occasional companion muses aloud about the nature of desire, and she says of Moon: “I don’t want to meet him; I want to have known him for years and years.”

Published in March 2023, “Y/N” is named after “Your/Name” fanfiction, where the reader is implored to self-insert into a story where they’re suddenly the romantic interest of their favorite celebrity.

The novel’s structure does pay adequate

homage to its namesake, in that the narrative is occasionally interrupted by the narrator’s own homebrew fiction in Your/Name format, the absurdity of which slowly begins to mimic the narrator’s own life.

But “Y/N” is a novel about more than just K-pop boys, since Ms. Yi seeks to meditate on the nature of modern desire and solitude.

She does this often through her characters’ philosophical dialogue, which, after we meet the fourth character who talks like a broken robot with a philosophy degree, becomes rather old.

Ms. Yi’s prose, however, is abundant with poetic observations such as: “It was the neck that disturbed me. Long and smooth, it implied the snug containment of a fundamental muscle that ran down the body all the way to the groin.”

“Y/N” is plagued by a lack of strong characters: the novel’s unnamed protagonist is rather passive save for a few plot-advancing impulsive decisions, which keeps in line with “Your/Name” fanfiction, where the protagonist is intentionally left a blank slate. Alongside the plain protagonist, the small

Scan this QR code to read more reviews of movies, books, TV shows and more on the Midway’s website.

cast of side characters is rather forgettable.

I think this is supposed to represent solitude in the modern age, where relationships are made temporary and disposable by increasingly commercialized means of interaction.

But if real life is lonely, why then, should literature be lonely too? Should a novel not call us to be more than we already are, rather than notifying us of what we already know?

While I do not recommend this book, it is easy to see that Ms. Yi’s new novel was made with a talent that very well may flourish further, and that it is one in a long line of novels that will deal with the malaise of a digitized age, and how the longing that arises from it results in obsession and transformation, heartbreak and transfiguration.

festival FANS

At Chicago summer music festivals, students find culture, community

by ZARA SIDDIQUE
Sports & Leisure Editor

When Leila Rezanian has her friends over before a concert to get ready she sometimes finds herself enjoying being with them more than the actual concert. It's the same for Brandon Jones whose favorite part of Lollapalooza was experiencing his and his friends' favorite artist together. He said it was life changing. It's also the same for Ethan Clark who attends concerts and festivals early and waits in line because he loves finding people to enjoy the music with.

These students represent a larger community and culture surrounding concerts and festivals.

While many are there for the music, the experience goes beyond the few hours spent at the venue.

Summer festivals are gathering spots for groups of friends, but above all, the joy lies in the culture, community and atmosphere.

"It's just always a positive experience," Leila, a sophomore, said. "I've never experienced anything negative. We're going to have fun all together no matter what happens."

The excitement begins days, if not weeks, earlier with the overwhelming anticipation of planning outfits, researching schedules and gathering large groups of friends.

Within their alluring atmosphere lies a community and lifestyle for many teens, for whom the experience goes much further than the music, becoming an exciting and year-round hobby.

Chicago has become a hub for mainstream music festivals and concerts — home to famous festivals such as Lollapalooza, Summer Smash, Pitchfork and more — where a stream of popular artists constantly perform.

These festivals attract many high schoolers and have been deemed a crucial activity, a gathering spot for large groups of friends and a defining aspect of summer.

When Brandon, a junior, attends concerts or festivals, it's not only for the music but also for the connection he feels with his friends. When walking into Lollapalooza last year with his friends, he said he could feel the energy radiating off all of them. A moment that stood out to him as special was when they got to see their favorite artist, Playboi Carti.

"We were all just dancing and moshing, and it was just great to experience that with them," Brandon said.

The community atmosphere in concerts also contributes to making the experience so special. Brandon remembered an instance where at a set last year at Lollapalooza, he fell down in the chaos, and immediately multiple people reached out to help him up.

"When you're at a concert or festival everyone looks out for each other. It's like a family kind of thing," Brandon said. "It's something I really enjoy, being around all that with my friends."

Leila said the concerts mean more to her than just the people performing on stage. She views



Midway illustration by Eliza Dearing

CONCERT COMMUNITY. Summer festivals are gathering spots for groups of friends, who say the joy is in the culture, community and atmosphere rather than in the performances themselves.

the friends she goes with to be a crucial part of the experience.

"Without friends it's definitely not the same," Leila said. "Like, part of the reason I even attend concerts and festivals is to experience them with my friends."

Leila also views the buildup to concerts and festivals as equally enjoyable to attending them.

"It's always fun picking out our outfits, and to sort of match the theme of the concert you're going to, and also just getting ready with and meeting up with everyone you're going with," Leila said.

Ethan, a junior, prefers to arrive at concerts and festivals early as a way to get to know people aside from his friends while waiting in lines for entrance or merchandise.

"Everyone is similar in ways, and if you just start a conversation, it's like the build-up to the concert is just as good as the concert itself," Ethan said.

Senior Ben King is attending two main festivals this summer, primarily to spend time and bond with his friends.

fan favorites

Summer Smash: This music festival has been self-titled as the Midwest's premier hip-hop music festival with 90,000 attendees last year. Held in SeatGeek Stadium from June 23-25, the headliners include widely known hip-hop artists such as Kid Cudi, Future and Playboi Carti.

Pitchfork: Viewed as one the more low-key Chicago festivals, Pitchfork is home to well known and up-and-coming artists alike and focuses on alternative rock and indie music. It will be hosted in Union Park from July 21-23. Headliners such as Bon Iver, The Smile, Perfume Genius, King Krule and Koffee, perform to a crowd of 60,000 people.

Lollapalooza: Attended by over 300,000 people a year, Lollapalooza is perhaps Chicago's most famous music festival. It is held in Grant Park from August 2-6, with headliners spanning multiple genres, including Billie Eilish, Kendrick Lamar, The 1975, Tomorrow X Together, Red Hot Chili Peppers and Lana Del Rey.

Riot Fest: Representing Chicago's punk rock music scene, the festival spans from Sept. 15-17 at Douglass Park. Headliners include Foo Fighters, The Cure and The Postal Service. Riot Fest, known for its rock, punk and metal music, hosts about 50,000 people daily.

— Compiled by Zara Siddique

"I see a lot of different friends because there are so many different types of music, so it's not something that I just share with a small group, but instead I'll be

with like 15 to 20 people and we're just all together," Ben said. "Especially with college soon, it's like one of our last moments all together."

Pulling up downtown: NASCAR hits Chicago

Summer street races bring more inconvenience than excitement

by JAYA ALENGHAT
AND EDWARD PARK
Reporters

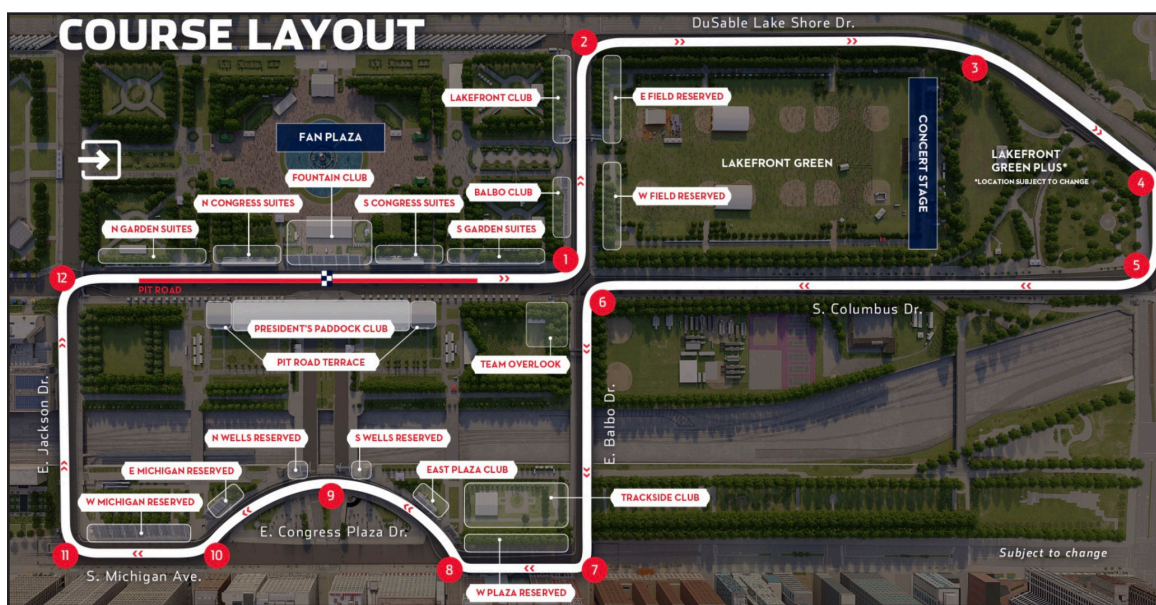
This summer, the busy streets of downtown Chicago will be packed with racing cars and cheering crowds, bringing both excitement and disruption to many students. Students say the unique NASCAR street races on July 1-2 around Grant Park in downtown Chicago will be inconvenient as starting June 25, major streets like Columbus Drive, Michigan Avenue and DuSable Lake Shore Drive will be closed to prepare for the races.

The International Motor Sports Association will race on July 1 and the NASCAR Cup Series race will occur on July 2.

People commuting on July Fourth weekend will be negatively affected by the street closures, and those who live near Grant Park are also upset, including sophomore Marko Nagel, who lives in the South Loop.

Marko thinks the races are a great way to bring people to the city but put those who already live there in a tough situation.

"If I want to get anywhere now, I'm going to have to walk outside of my area before I can drive anywhere," Marko said.



Source: NASCAR

URBAN ROUTE. From Buckingham Fountain to Grant Park to Michigan Avenue, the NASCAR Chicago drivers will make their way through a track that will include views of Lake Michigan and other famous Chicago attractions. The front straightaway and pit road will be housed on South Columbus Drive, running along a two-block stretch that will take the race past Buckingham Fountain.

The streets around Marko's building will be closed, filled with race cars and fans who have bought tickets to the races.

With a two-day general admission cost starting at \$261, students who plan to watch the race will most likely be watching online or from a building nearby.

Sophomore Sofia Picciola, a Kenwood resident, is also unhappy with the inconvenience that the races will cause, but she will be watching the race with her grandpa on a friend's balcony that over-

looks the downtown course.

"I really want to spend time with my grandpa doing something that he's interested in as well," Sofia said.

While she will enjoy watching the race without facing the disruption of living nearby, Sofia is not looking forward to the difficult commute.

"It's going to be really difficult to get in town, and I don't know too much about how it will affect traffic, but it's definitely an inconvenience," Sofia said.

Like many students, Sofia recognizes both the pros and cons of this new NASCAR event.

"One of the pros is that it's cool to have a race car event in Chicago on a street that we drive on, and the con is that it's really bad for traffic and messes up the entire flow of the city," Sofia said.

Like Sofia, junior Austin Kim finds the race interesting but significantly inconvenient.

"I think that it is certainly exciting," Austin said. "I've never seen anything like this before, but I also

for more

- Why the Chicago race is controversial
- Opening festivals and concerts
- Ticket and viewing information
- Vox pop: Student opinions
- The race's impact on Chicagoans
- Information on race car drivers



Scan this QR code for more at uhighmidway.com

have volunteering that makes me take roads around there, throughout that time, so it would be quite a hassle to drive around that."

For someone who follows NASCAR, sophomore Iain Chu expects this untraditional race to be cool and entertaining, but knows its side effects, including road closures, will be brutal.

"Three weeks is kind of a lot, especially in downtown Chicago," Iain said.

Iain understands why the city agreed to this race, but is unsure if it was a good idea.

"The city of Chicago does need money, too," Iain said. "I get why the city of Chicago is doing it. I don't know if it's smart."