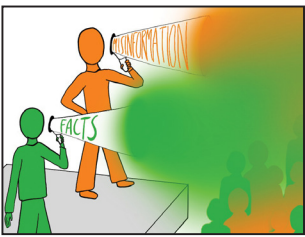


The spread of misinformation and disinformation is threatening reliability. Learn why people believe misinformation and how to regulate it.



In “Kena: Bridge of Spirits” players can meet vibrant characters and explore detailed areas while collecting items, battling monsters and watching cutscenes.



Laboratory Schools Director Victoria Jueds uses her background of listening and advocating for marginalized people as leadership strengths to lead the community.



University of Chicago Laboratory High School

U-HIGH MIDWAY

1362 EAST 59TH STREET, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60637

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Homecoming boosts school spirit

Dance attracts a record turnout; assembly features competitions

by **AUDREY MATEI**
REPORTER

A line stretching out the entrance of Gordon Parks Arts Hall the evening of Sept. 25 contained eager students anticipating the moment they could join their peers already surrounded by loud music and chatter to experience their first Homecoming since 2019.

That line resulted in record attendance of 533 people, 200 more than previous years.

The “Hollywood”themed dance was held from 7:30-10:30 p.m. in the Sherry Lansing Theater, another first for the annual event.

The combination of increased attendance and students forgetting their IDs created an entrance line that took 20-30 minutes at its busiest.

Cultural Union President Saul Arnov said the high attendance was exciting.

“Attendance blew the previous record out of the water,” he said. “The venue worked out really well, even though it was at school, giving people the chance to socialize, eat and even dance safely.”

To satisfy the University of Chicago’s COVID-19 safety protocols, masks were required inside, and food was only allowed outside. Additionally, the Secret Garden provided an outdoor space to cool off.

Senior Amelia Sharma said that she felt somewhat safe about COVID-19 at the dance.

“For the most part I felt pretty safe, a lot of people did keep their masks on,” she said, “But there were definitely times I felt we were a little crowded.”

Saul said having to accommodate to COVID-19 protocols made it harder to plan the event, which was also two weeks earlier than in past years.

“The planning process was on

a shorter time table, which made it more difficult,” he said, adding that Dean of Students Ana Campos put the planning request form in months ago. “Even then, we could only start planning two weeks in advance.”

Amelia said she had mixed feelings about the dance compared to years past.

“This one was definitely a bit more crowded. I felt like the dance in Upper Kovler was better because there was more space,” she said. “But I enjoyed that there was an outside area so that if you needed any water you would feel comfortable taking off your mask.”

Homecoming was sophomore Mahi Shah’s first high school dance. Mahi said she was pleasantly surprised and enjoyed the social element of the dance.

“It was different from how I expected it, but not in a bad way. But I definitely thought there would be more dancing,” she said. “It was really fun to dress up and do something fancy after staying in sweatpants for a year and not being able to go to any events.”

Along with the dance, a spirit assembly occurred Sept. 23. Activities included limbo and hula hoop competitions and a teacher arm wrestling tournament.

History teacher Richard Del Rio and gym teacher Luke Zavala were finalists of the arm wrestling tournament. While Dr. Del Rio lost, he enjoyed the assembly and felt as if students got to know him better as a new teacher.

“I did get a sense that there is space for fun in this school and students are creative and think of ways to have a fun time here,” Dr. Del Rio said. “I’m not surprised that I lost because Mr. Zavala is very strong, but it was fun to have everyone get entertainment out of it.”



MIDWAY PHOTO BY ANDREW BURKE-STEVENSON

DANCE ON. Students dance and socialize in the Sherry Lansing Theater Sept. 25. The event was harder to plan than in previous years due to the University of Chicago COVID-19 safety protocols.

READY, SET, WRESTLE. History teacher Richard Del Rio and gym teacher Luke Zavala compete in the finals of a faculty arm wrestling tournament during the spirit assembly Sept. 23. While Dr. Del Rio lost, he said he enjoyed the assembly and felt as if students got to know him better.



MIDWAY PHOTO BY MALCOLM TAYLOR

Credit card users stand in longer cafeteria lines



MIDWAY PHOTO BY ANDREW BURKE-STEVENSON

HOW MUCH LONGER? Students stand in the cafeteria line during lunch. Students who use their MealTime account checkout faster compared to students who use credit cards.

by **LOUIS AUXENFANS**
REPORTER

The return to in-person school means long lunch lines at Café Lab are back for credit card users who accept the annoyance for payment convenience, but students who cannot bear waiting in line use their MealTime account for a quicker checkout.

Two lines in the café are dedicated to paying with cash or MealTime, an online system where students can preload funds to their school ID. Only one line is for credit card payment, which many students use, even though the wait can extend for 15 minutes into the lunch period.

The credit card line has not deterred junior Milo Jarard, who finds a credit card simpler and more convenient to manage.

“I kind of feel like it’s a lot of extra work to put in,” Milo said. “I’d

have to put money into MealTime whenever I’m low, but I just think credit cards are more useful because I have it on me all the time.”

Meanwhile, students who use MealTime appreciate the lunch time saved. Senior Sophia Park used to use a credit card to buy lunch but switched because the lines were too long.

Part of the reason for the longer wait is that credit cards have to connect through the Future Point-of-Sale payment network, according to Brian Lipinski, director of finance.

“There’s extra layers of security that have to be implemented that aren’t in place for MealTime, and that doesn’t make MealTime less secure,” Mr. Lipinski said. “It’s just because, since it’s a stored value, you’re just simply deducting the stored value, whereas the credit card [machines], you have to run

each transaction individually.”

Future POS charges Quest Food Management Services, which runs Café Lab, 4% of the sale amount for each credit card transaction. This added expense has led Quest to encourage students and families to use MealTime, which does not charge a fee per transaction.

Alisha Culverson, food service director, said Quest and the school are currently in discussion on how best to reduce the lunch lines, but they continue to encourage students to use a MealTime account.

“Right now we don’t plan to add another portal in for credit card payment, just because it is a large investment as well as an investment of time to build another portal,” Ms. Culverson said. “But, we also are looking for more students to start using their MealTime accounts and this will help the lines move faster and be more efficient.”

Back to... *normal*?

Distance learning took a toll on the daily life of students across the Laboratory Schools. With the return to in-person learning, everything changed. The Midway spoke with students and teachers to discern how social and academic aspects of life have been impacted.



MIDWAY PHOTO BY CHLOE MA

ROCKY RETURN. With masks over their faces, students converse in the hallways as they commute between classes. While students are physically back in person, much has changed since the last in-person fall at U-High.

Teachers adopt new in-person class structures

by **AN NGO**
CITY LIFE EDITOR

Even though students are now back in person, many are experiencing breaks from tradition such as “flipped” classrooms, take-home tests and online gradebooks, all products of how teachers adjusted their classrooms to distance learning. Last year, not only did teachers have to figure out how to structure homework and lessons without meeting in person but had to adjust to having less synchronous time with students.

Distance learning pushed teachers to use new tools that they hadn’t before, such as live online gradebooks.

“There had been lots of discussion in the high school in previous years about using online grade books,” math teacher Joseph Scroll said. “We used it last year because it just seemed like the best tool during the pandemic.”

Mr. Scroll and other teachers have continued using online grade books this year during in-person

“I already feel like in this first week and a half that life is way better than it was at any time when we were completely remote last year.”

— JOSEPH SCROLL,
MATH TEACHER

learning.

Many teachers have increased their reliance on Schoology to organize homework, class materials and grades. History teacher Charles Disantis said he’s used Schoology’s gradebook to allow students to access their grades at any time.

English teacher Darlene McCampbell said she was the last one in her department to start using Turnitin, a platform that lets students submit assignments and allows teachers to check for plagiarism.

During distance learning, classes met synchronously just twice a week, so teachers had to adapt

and rethink how to use class meetings time effectively. Science teacher Matthew Martino did this by recording lectures that students would watch outside of class.

“I lecture outside of class, and then you come in and you do the problems there. There’s lots of evidence that this is a great way to do it,” Dr. Martino said. “When you have a problem with some physics problem, I’m there and I can lend some expertise on how you might go forth on it. So that part I’m definitely keeping.”

Many teachers also adapted the way they tested students during distance learning. Dr. Martino allowed students to resubmit quizzes and tests as many times as they wanted. Students also had partners to work with on every quiz.

“The multiple tries on tests I know helped stress levels a great deal,” Dr. Martino said.

Dr. Martino plans to continue allowing students to retake exams and work together on some quizzes.

Mr. Scroll said that Calculus AB

teachers will be giving take-home portions for tests that would usually have to be given during 75-minute periods.

“We’re taking what we think is the easiest part of the test and making it the take-home part. The mindset there is we don’t want kids to be cheating,” Mr. Scroll said. “But the hope is, even if they do, it’s not going to really change the grade on the take-home assessment, and it’ll save class time, it’ll give us more time to do more problems and to just cover the course in a better way.”

Senior Natalie Hultquist, a student in Mr. Scroll’s Calculus AB class, said she finds the extra class time allowed by take-home portions helpful.

“It’s nice to have the long period math not taken up by a test. In my opinion I like having that work time,” Natalie said. “I always appreciated classes where I could get work done before I left.”

Students in Mr. Scroll’s calculus class will also only turn in four questions from the set they are as-

signed for homework.

Natalie said that in the past she struggled with staying on top of homework as it took her a long time to complete problem sets, but with the new adjustment that students are only required to turn in four questions, it’s been more manageable.

“I can work on the problems I need to turn in, and maybe as many as I can get done, and then go back to the ones I haven’t gotten done or focus on the ones I didn’t understand another night when I have less of a load,” Natalie said.

Mr. Scroll said he feels he’s returning to teaching in person with a bigger breadth of tools at his disposal.

“Everybody learned a lot last year and I think teachers, students, every day was brand new,” Mr. Scroll said. “We’ll have to see how the year goes and how it turns out, and what happens, but I already feel like in this first week and a half that life is way better than it was at any time when we were completely remote last year.”

Social overload? Students face new demands for time

by **ADRIANNA NEHME & ANATHEA CARRIGAN**

The moment Kira Sekhar, senior, entered the U-High building on Sept. 8, she immediately faced an overwhelming mass of individuals, most of whom she didn’t know, which was a sight foreign to her during her distance learning experience last school year.

Undergoing the drastic change from interacting with a few close friends frequently during distance learning to seeing both familiar and unfamiliar faces daily during in-person learning has led to students feeling uncomfortable and pressured socially.

During distance learning, Kira typically interacted with her close friends and rarely talked to other individuals in her class outside of breakout rooms. Therefore, with the return to in-person learning, Kira finds that socializing in large groups has been awkward.

“I have definitely had some social anxiety in the past few weeks,

but I do think I am adjusting to it as it gets more normal to be back,” Kira said. “The first two weeks were definitely a little anxiety-provoking, especially in the cafeteria since it’s so crowded there.”

The lack of social events in previous years has also imposed pressure on students to feel forced to engage in communal activities, something sophomore Cameron Grant has experienced.

“If there’s an opportunity to go out or go to a sporting event, let’s say, I feel pressured to say yes, even if I don’t really want to go,” Cameron said. “I feel like I have to make an excuse if I don’t want to agree to plans. So most times, I just agree to go.”

Similarly, ninth grader Allison Li wasn’t too engaged socially during distance learning during most of 2020-21. With the return of a typical school schedule and activities, Allison felt pressure to compensate for missed opportunities in previous years, such as joining

“The old schedule, all my classes every day, homework, college applications and still feeling like I should be giving so much time to my extracurriculars, which obviously I care a lot about, is overwhelming.”

— KIRA SEKHAR

clubs and sports teams. Due to the overwhelming amount of activities she enrolled in during the past month, she had to drop some.

“I joined the tennis team so I could interact with more upper-classmen,” Allison said. “I also thought that if I joined more clubs, I could make more friends, so I joined a lot of clubs that I simply could not handle and had to end up quitting a lot of them.”

Kira also found it difficult to make the same level of commit-

ment to clubs as she did in previous years.

“I do feel internal pressure from my extracurriculars to be more involved, but at the same time, it’s stressful and overwhelming to go back to how busy that used to be,” Kira said. “The old schedule, all my classes every day, homework, college applications and still feeling like I should be giving so much time to my extracurriculars, which obviously I care a lot about, is overwhelming.”

The social pressure with the return to full school classes and activities has been difficult for senior Erik Erling to manage. Since he doesn’t want to miss out on opportunities during his final year of high school, he finds himself feeling pressured to participate in more social events.

“For me, it’s less about not having had it for a while and more about it being my final year,” Erik said. “Up until this year, I had never been to club shopping, but this

year, I really felt like I should join some clubs.”

Erik noted that his distance learning experience has allowed him to handle social stress better.

“During lockdown, I learned that I really like free time alone, so if I am feeling overwhelmed, I can go home and do nothing, or go to Gordon Parks and find a quiet corner to sit on my phone,” Erik said.

While Kira finds it difficult to balance all of the things that she is involved in, she continuously reminds herself that she shouldn’t put too much pressure on herself when it comes to engaging socially.

“I think I just have to remind myself that school is my priority right now, and that has to be my priority,” Kira said. “If that means that I can’t be as dedicated to certain activities right now, then that’s OK, and I shouldn’t beat myself up about that because we are still in a pandemic and still adjusting to this new ‘normal.’”

In-person school heightens stress

Stark differences between distance, in-person learning lead to difficulty

by ADRIANNA NEHME
NEWS EDITOR

Like her peers, Maya Mubayi's days last school year were filled with numerous free periods and time to pursue extracurricular activities. But as Maya started her senior year in September, she found her days swiftly transformed as she jumped from classroom to classroom with only five minutes in between while balancing college applications, homework, sports practice and sleep.

The stark difference between distance and in-person learning has forced students to undergo a significant adjustment, causing effects on students' mental health.

Along with taking a full course load, Maya has to balance meetings for four clubs in addition to cross country practice.

"I'm struggling to find time to get work done because I am also doing college applications," Maya said. "We're all back and kind of getting thrown into school, so homework is a little stressful right now."

Olivia Gin is a sophomore but experiencing high school in person for the first time. She finds it difficult to find time to complete work, causing an increase of stress.

"I've been a lot more stressed out because I have a lot less time to do work," Olivia said. "Also, since school is starting at 8 a.m. for most days, I have been sleeping a lot less."

According to Olivia, the stress she experiences due to her overwhelming schedule has affected her school performance. Olivia finds that she falls asleep earlier than usual and must wake up earlier to finish her homework.

"I have seen a change in how I approach things because lately, I've been falling asleep at 8 p.m., which is bad for my homework situation," Olivia said.

According to counselor Aria Choi, students' schedule change appointments signal that students are being proactive in adjusting their workload.

"I just feel like we are making sure that we are using our time to get some movement in and just really take care of each other."

— MEGHAN JANDA,
P.E. TEACHER

"While students aren't directly dropping by within the first three weeks of school with reports of mental health concerns, I've had conversations with students who are considering level changes in courses, dropping a course or adding a different course to see how that helps them shape their experience this year," Ms. Choi said.

Some students, like junior Akshay Badlani, say the return to school has been beneficial toward their mental health.

"In the remote environment, I wasn't able to interact with as many people all the time," Akshay said. "I feel like the one thing that makes in-person school so much better is just the little interactions you have with people in between classes."

Additionally, Akshay found his experience with extracurricular activities during distance learning overwhelming since he was able to enroll in more with his increased free time.

"I feel like I am better able to manage myself during in-person school because communication is a lot more fluid, so I know exactly what homework I am getting each day," Akshay said.

Similarly, senior Sid Shah has had a positive experience with the return back to school and his mental health as he has found it easier to meet people and hasn't had trouble readjusting to courses.

"It's a lot more intense than last year, but I think it's good because at least we get to be in person with teachers and friends," Sid said.

According to Ms. Choi, it would be beneficial to students if teachers did general check-ins at the beginning of class or at the start of



MIDWAY PHOTO BY HENRY BENTON

ACADEMIC ANXIETY. Many students have experienced a drastic increase in workload since shifting back to in-person school, prompting considerations of dropping classes. Aria Choi, counselor, said that students are being proactive when it comes to prioritizing their mental health over schoolwork — many students have made appointments to drop or adjust courses.

the week to get a sense of how students are.

"I think the messaging I would want students to hear and take in is that each of them is on their journey but never alone," Ms. Choi said. "The best and healthy way to get through this year is going to be through relationships between adults and students."

Meghan Janda, P.E. teacher and an adviser, mentioned that she has been diligent in using class time for self-care. For example, every week

the class goes on a walk, which she finds beneficial for students who want to explore locations they can return to if they need to clear their heads. Additionally, the Stress Redux class is offered in all levels of the P.E. curriculum. In previous years, Stress Redux was an elective six-week course.

"I just feel like we are making sure that we are using our time to get some movement in and just really take care of each other," Ms. Janda said.

While Ms. Janda has seen the energy from students that comes with the return to school, she recognizes a lot of students feel overwhelmed.

"Everyone is A-Z when it comes to their experiences from last year and how they handle everything," Ms. Janda said. "As long as you remind yourself of that and just have extreme empathy, then I think that we will continue to have our community support each other with whatever needs we may have."

Seasonal allergies are often milder than COVID-19



MIDWAY PHOTO BY ANDREW BURKE-STEVENSON

DISTINGUISHABLE SYMPTOMS. Many have misidentified hay fever as symptoms of COVID-19. However, school nurse Mary Toledo-Treviño says that allergy signs are much less particular.

by AUDREY MATZKE
REPORTER

Most of us used to take them for granted: The sounds of dry coughing. Knuckles wiping across bare noses. Used tissues. But with nearly two years of antiviral vigilance under our belts, many students may be feeling a little extra cautious this allergy season.

For the most part, however, COVID-19 symptoms and the regular trappings of hay fever hold quite a few key differences among them. According to nurse Mary Toledo-Treviño, signs of the latter without the former shouldn't be cause for concern.

While seasonal allergies are pretty far from comfortable, Ms. Toledo-Treviño says COVID-19 can make stuffy noses and itchy eyes look like a day at the spa. For those afflicted, symptoms will likely be quite a bit more debilitating.

"COVID symptoms are definitely a lot more particular," Ms. Toledo-Treviño said. "With seasonal allergies, you could get a headache from congestion, but if you're talking about body aches, fevers, chills — especially fevers and chills — that's not something you deal

with with seasonal allergies."

Moreover, Ms. Toledo-Treviño says context matters. If you spent open time making dandelion crowns on the Midway with your (masked and vaccinated) friends, only to find yourself feeling a bit funny during fourth period, don't jump to any earth-shattering conclusions. Additionally, she says it's important to take both past and present circumstances into account, including any previous experience with perennial, seasonal discomfort.

"Sometimes it's really helpful to know family history," Ms. Toledo-Treviño said. "If your parents have a history of seasonal allergy symptoms, it's quite possible that, especially as you're getting older, you may develop them yourself."

Malcolm Taylor, a senior, ended up testing for COVID-19 following a medical recommendation. The test came back negative, but he says it wasn't just his initial cold symptoms that caused him concern.

"At first I didn't think it was that bad of a cold, because I only had a sore throat, but the day after I got tested, I had all the symptoms,"

Malcolm said. "I had body aches, I couldn't get out of bed, I was super out of it."

Like Ms. Toledo-Treviño, however, he encourages others experiencing symptoms to get rest, drink hot beverages, and most importantly, take things one day at a time.

"I'd say, don't freak out," he said. "That was part of what made my recovery worse. I was really thinking hard about it, really overthinking it. As soon as you can, go get tested. That's the largest relief you can give yourself."

All in all, given the medical reality of each condition, Ms. Toledo-Treviño says this probably wouldn't be such a fraught conversation were it not for the power of post-lockdown anxieties. That said, she validates student concern and hopes to act as a transparent and familiar resource — in the coming season and beyond.

"I think it's great that students are hyper-aware and want to be educated as much as possible," Ms. Toledo-Treviño said, "but I think in this day and age it's quite responsible for our students to be mindful."

Support overwhelmed students

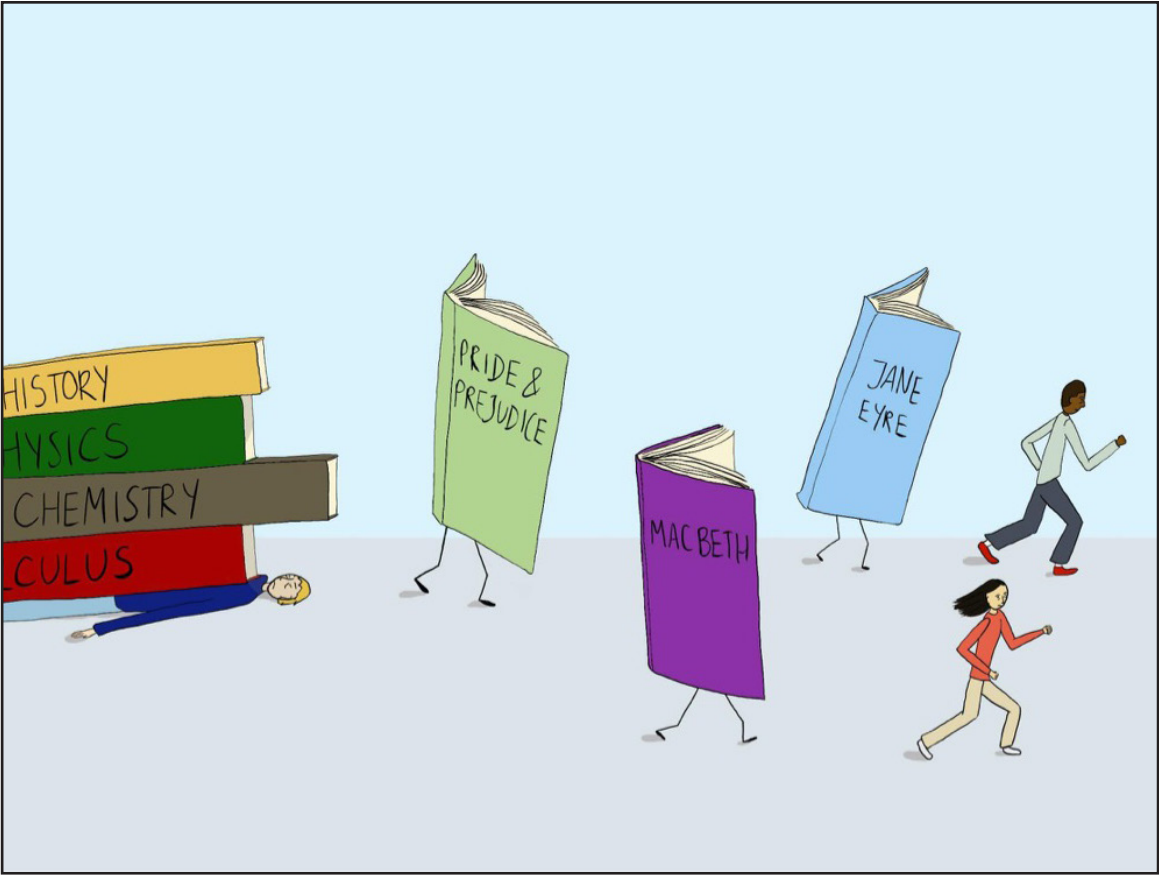
Return to class in person brings new challenges teachers should now address

As the Midway sees it...

Seemingly overnight, U-High has returned to its pre-pandemic state of affairs with all the concomitant feelings of hectic business to which U-High students are accustomed. While the school should be lauded for renewing its characteristic academic commitment, there's no reason to maintain an artificial amnesia about the past year. After a year of isolation, the student body has been plunged back into commutes, intensive extracurriculars and the former daily schedule. If the high school is to have a successful return, U-High faculty and administrators should treat the fall semester like the transition that it is and make the right accommodations to avoid overwhelming students.

The first hurdle for students has been the rescindment of the block schedule. Students now have daily homework deadlines, no common office hours and reduced breaks. Whereas previously school was wholly digital, students must now adapt to an awkward and inconsistent mix of analog and online formats, with many teachers discontinuing the helpful weekly schedules they created and others requiring students to turn in work both physically and electronically. The time commitments of clubs and athletics have ballooned in tandem with the spike in schoolwork. Students are now experiencing entirely new kinds of difficulties.

There's no need to slash curricular goals, but a few adjustments to class policies could go a long



MIDWAY ART BY ALINA SUSANI

“U-High faculty and administrators should treat the fall semester like the transition that it is and make the right accommodations to avoid overwhelming students.”

way toward ameliorating the sentiment among many students that they are drowning in work and aren't sleeping enough. Teachers should try to simplify or condense tasks — more work due over several days is better than a barrage of ever-changing tasks every day. And since students are adapting to new workstyles, the faculty should waive disciplinary penalties, like those over late or wrongly formatted work, in the first semester. Clear schedules made several

days in advance also help students to manage their time. Overall, listening to students and being more accommodating than usual about the difficulties of the current period would provide a much-needed balm for present frustrations. Many teachers are already doing this, but everyone in the high school needs to work together to facilitate a transition, and not merely a reversion, to the school of two years ago.

A certain attitude despairs over the insufficiency of distance learning and seeks to compensate for the past year by charging headfirst into maximum educational rigor. But this position is misguided. A more accommodating transition would help, not inhibit, students to learn more. Overwhelmed, overtired students will hardly be able to absorb or retain any new material.

Some others say that students are at fault themselves for being overworked: if they didn't do so many extracurriculars, they would not have such trouble with homework. But this idea is more than a little naïve. Parents, peers and the school culture as a whole vigorously push students to fill their free time with clubs and academic teams, and the sudden resumption of meetings and responsibilities is an additional shock.

For many U-High students, September was one of the most overwhelming months in their academic careers — but the rest of the semester does not have to go that way. A mindset shift among students, faculty and administrators to view this period as a transition, rather than an instant return to the old way of doing things, would greatly ease students' worries and help them to lead healthier lives.

Obligation to Afghans remains after withdrawal

by **TÉA TAMBUR**
DEPUTY MANAGING EDITOR

On the morning of Sept. 11, 2001, 19 members of al-Qaeda, a group in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan, hijacked four commercial airplanes. Two of the planes were flown into the World Trade Center and resulted in the complete destruction of both towers and the loss of 2,977 lives.

Then-president George W. Bush launched Operation Enduring Freedom, and United States forces and our allies overthrew the Taliban, which had been in power since 1996. This started the War on Terrorism, the longest war the United States has been a part of.



Now, 20 years later, the United States has rightfully withdrawn from Afghanistan after years of establishing positive policy and diplomatic relations. Even though remaining on their grounds would be futile, we can still play a crucial role in aiding Afghanistan and its citizens from afar.

The United States led counterterrorism efforts with the goal of securing human rights, international law and overall governance. Under United States protection, the quality of life there improved. Women, in particular, benefited, for they were permitted to receive an education. From 1996 to 2001, the Taliban prohibited women and girls from attending school. Only after the United States' invasion did career and education opportunities open to them, creating a generation of educated women.

In August, after months of conquering cities throughout Afghanistan, the Taliban entered Kabul, and Afghanistan fell to their rule.

The United States is no longer capable of altering Afghanistan's military or political dynamics, and the war has reached stalemate. Perpetuating the U.S. military presence would not reverse these dynamics. The United States spent \$2.3 trillion on the war, and future finances and human capital would be more productively spent elsewhere. While the United States can no longer improve conditions from within Afghanistan, the goal of improving Afghanistan is still relevant and shouldn't be abandoned. This

Now under Taliban rule, women's education is uncertain. In the United States' rapid departure from Afghanistan, U.S. citizens, green card holders and Afghanistans residents were left there and are in need of humanitarian assistance. While this was not the desired outcome of the War on Terrorism, we shouldn't give up on Afghanistan and its citizens either. Through means such as providing asylum and supporting nongovernmental organizations, we still have the ability and resources to help improve Afghanistan's societal wellbeing, something that should remain a priority.

Foreign crises are longer than your news cycle

by **CLARE O'CONNOR**
ASSISTANT EDITOR

In August, as the United States struggled through its hasty military withdrawal from Afghanistan, the crisis in Afghanistan dominated my Instagram timeline, my recommended news feed and many of my conversations. For almost a week, Afghanistan was trending on Twitter as people blamed former President Donald Trump or President Joe Biden and argued about how the United States should have handled its withdrawal.



The coverage soon tapered off. By September, news outlets had

moved on from the still-developing tragedy, and I found myself trying to recall other times when Afghanistan was “trending.” Looking back, I can remember a week's worth of news when Mr. Trump signed an agreement with the Taliban and a few days of news after a particularly heinous drone strike, but I don't remember anything changing.

Every year, the American public cycles through myriad tragedies like the crisis in Afghanistan, prompting a torrent of news and attention. For a week or a month, articles are published dissecting a particular issue until society loses interest and moves on. However, we need to refuse to turn away from difficult issues so we don't enable this transitory news cycle.

It's natural to accept this pattern

as an unfortunate societal constant. So many tragedies happen every day that it seems impossible to pay attention to any one issue for long. That mindset exacerbates this cycle. Policymakers respond to public concern while an issue is popular, but the news moves on too quickly to hold those in power accountable for their promises. Our fickle outrage is what allows our elected leaders to avoid making substantial change.

By feeding into fast news cycles, people also desensitize themselves to suffering. Every time the public stops reading about an issue, we move toward believing that the issue is no longer outrageous. Social norms have to shift so we can justify our waning interest. Every time we stop reading, we start to believe that suffering is

more acceptable.

This problem feels insurmountable, but we can do some things. I urge you to search out news stories about ongoing problems that matter to you rather than simply responding to the most emotionally engaging news of the day. Besides Afghanistan, I think about gun violence, the protests in Hong Kong and the Uyghur genocide. Those issues continue even when the news cycle turns away. The public can force journalists to stay dedicated to crises around the world if we keep reading. Only then can substantial change happen. It's not much, but if enough people deliberately pay attention and express concern, we can influence patterns of press coverage and even the decisions of those in positions of power.

U-HIGH MIDWAY

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

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

Barbara Kruger’s art invites society to reflect

Artist showcases conceptual art at the Art Institute

by **AMON GRAY**
ARTS CO-EDITOR

A room filled with text. White-on-black and black-on-white letters cover all four walls. Text on the floor reads, “‘If you want a vision of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a face forever.’ George Orwell.”

Barbara Kruger’s installation exhibit “Thinking of You I Mean Me I Mean You” at the Art Institute of Chicago heavily incorporates text in room-sized works offering insight into modern issues such as consumerism, identity and narcissism.

The exhibit, which opened Sept. 19 and continues through Jan. 24, 2022, features art of many mediums: prints, photography, film, audio and collage. Much of the art pieces filled the space they were in, forcing the viewer to absorb the message conveyed by the text.

The films were some of the most powerful pieces of the exhibit featuring a mix of dark humor, popping visuals and provocative messages. The exhibition also featured some of Kruger’s earlier work featuring photographs of famous artists.

Ms. Kruger began her career in graphic design for magazines and photography editing. In the 1960s she began writing her own poetry.

Despite Ms. Kruger having been creating art for galleries since the early 1970s, her contemporary work is still relevant to the current problems seen on social media today. With the ever-shifting landscape of modern culture, the exhibit manages to convey relevant ideas. Many of the works also contain undertones of protest. The words seem to be shouting from the walls as not only a message but a call to action.



MIDWAY PHOTO BY AMON GRAY

IMMERSIVE ART. Barbara Kruger’s art exhibit at the Art Institute of Chicago is filled with oversized installations of text-heavy graphics, photography and visuals. Visitors can walk through the room to observe the surrounding art, composed primarily of contrasting shades of gray and red.

Another thought-provoking feature in the exhibit was a “selfie room” designed for visitors to

take photos of themselves in front of a wall reading “I hate myself and you love me for it.” The twist is that a large security camera on the ceiling sends the feed from the camera to a phone-sized screen in the lobby of the museum. Ms. Kruger’s art is not subtle and does not disguise the message in the visuals,

yet the text is somewhat open to interpretation by the viewer.

The exhibit fills the Regenstein Hall, the museum’s largest exhibition space. However, while some of the artworks went from floor to ceiling and wall to wall, others left some of the rooms feeling vacant and empty with Ms. Kruger’s pop-

ping text made smaller by the unfilled walls around them.

Despite this, Barbara Kruger’s “Thinking of You I Mean Me I Mean You” is an impressive display of artwork that can be appreciated by anyone and allows for reflection by the viewer on the problems of today.

Sophomore’s art passion sparks online expression

by **SAMUEL BECK**
REPORTER

On March 26, sophomore Emmanuelle Bal posted a sketch from her arts notebook, captioned simply: “Random Print/Sketch.”

It is a rough sketch that uses bright colors with vibrant and juxtaposed motifs to create a feeling of chaos in the piece. In the center, a cartoon-esque face is drawn with teary eyes and a despondent face.

Four days later, she posted again. This time, the piece was more abstract; depicting a number of confusing and shapeless creatures. The piece was captioned: “Is this art?”

In the following months, she continued to regularly post a wide range of artistic pieces, from abstract portraits to breathtaking landscapes.

Since her initial post in March, she has posted 47 more of her art projects on the account, tilted “optic.arts.”

Emmanuelle Bal feels things very intensely and says this account has served as an instinctual coping mechanism for venting emotions in her daily life. Her journey to becoming an online artist began last year, when she took a print-making class, which she really enjoyed. She was inspired to continue to pursue her artistic abilities.

This pursuit led her to explore opportunities for her summer.

“This summer I was given [the opportunity] to do this paid apprenticeship with a Chicago-based program, which not only supplied me with a variety of art supplies to work with but also helped me expand my skill set as an artist.”

Emmanuelle describes herself as a “mixed media” artist but said this apprenticeship allowed her to

expand her skills.

“It helped me expand my skill sets with charcoal, chalk pastel and other mediums I usually don’t work with,” she said.

She has continued to grow as an artist, enrolling in the AP Drawing/ AP 2D class this year, which allows her to pursue independent projects.

Her teacher for this class, Brian Wildeman, describes her as an enthusiastic student, who spends extra time in the classroom honing her skills. He said her fearlessness epitomizes her as an artist.

“She wanted to work on this board and she wanted to change the shape of the board, and I got out my electric jigsaw and was about to start cutting it for her, but she wanted to do it herself,” he said. “It’s a loud dangerous tool that a lot of people are intimidated by, and she said ‘Oh I can do that,’ so I said, ‘Have you used one of these?’ and she said ‘No.’ I think that says a lot about her: she’s really excited to jump right in with anything that she needs to pursue her muse.”

She describes her “muse” for these projects as a number of sources that she interacts with daily.

“My inspirations come from everywhere overall,” she said. “I am inspired by nature, other people, forms of art in museums, and everything that can be felt through any of my senses.”

Emmanuelle is one of many students who have pursued personal passions over quarantine. For Emmanuelle, art has been a way to express and release her emotions, and her online presence has given her a chance to share that with her peers in a healthy way.

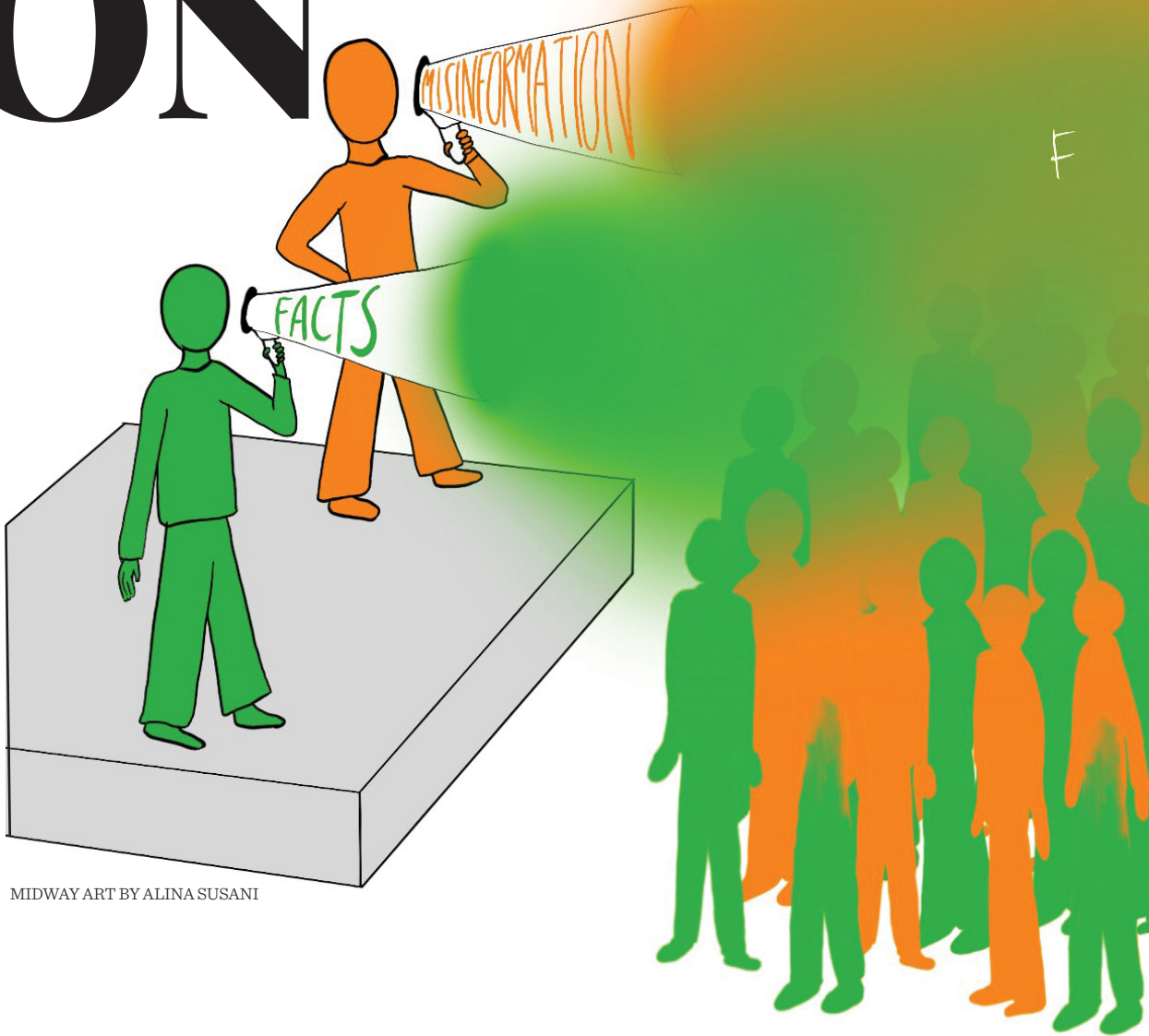


ART BY EMMANUELLE BAL

INTENSE COLORS, INTENSE EMOTIONS. Shown are four of Emmanuelle Bal’s artworks, as seen on her Instagram art account @optic.arts. Using markers and layers of a sketchbook, the piece on the top left depicts an abstract face. She uses media such as acrylic paint (top right), watercolors (bottom left) and charcoal (bottom right) to convey her emotions.

FACT OR FICTION

One of the primary issues of the digital age is determining truth from falsehood. Skills of reasoning and media literacy have become more relevant than ever before.



MIDWAY ART BY ALINA SUSANI

Glossary

MISINFORMATION
False information that is spread, regardless of the intent to mislead.

DISINFORMATION
Deliberately misleading or biased information; manipulated narrative or facts; propaganda.

CONFIRMATION BIAS
The tendency to process information by looking for, or interpreting, information that is consistent with one's existing beliefs.

MOTIVATED REASONING
Reasoning processes (information selection and evaluation, memory encoding, attitude formation, judgment and decision-making) influenced by motivations or goals.

MENTAL LAZINESS
Spending insufficient time and effort to reason through the accuracy of information, implying that people who reason more should be better able to discern true from false information.

MEDIA LITERACY
The ability to access, analyze, evaluate and create media in a variety of forms.

PLATFORM REGULATION
Measures taken by platforms to curb the spread of misinformation and disinformation.

ADAPTED FROM DICTIONARY.COM,
ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA, OXFORD
BIBLIOGRAPHIES, MEDIALIT.ORG,
TRENDS IN COGNITIVE SCIENCES

Stop, think it through

Skepticism goes long way breaking the tendency to believe false content

by PETER PU
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Rapid scientific research leading to the rise of the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines against the coronavirus accompanies a simultaneous spread of misinformation and disinformation. Just 12 influencers, termed the Disinformation Dozen, are responsible for up to 65% of anti-vaccine content. While evidence debunks claims that messenger RNA vaccines change DNA, cause autism, or render people infertile, false information continually fuels vaccine hesitancy and impedes progress toward herd immunity.

Misinformation is false information, spread regardless of intent. Disinformation is false information, spread with the intention to deceive. The impact of misinformation and disinformation extends far beyond the coronavirus.

"I think misinformation and disinformation both have undermined America — not just America, the world, the world's trust in institutions, in science, in democratic processes — because they've raised so much doubt in people's minds," Darren Linvill, associate professor at the Clemson University College of Behavioral, Social and Health Sciences, said in an interview.

Why do people believe misinformation?

Two concepts from psychology come into play, according to Deen Freelon, associate professor

at the Hussman School of Journalism and Media at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. One is confirmation bias, believing ideas that fit with one's preexisting beliefs, and the other is motivated reasoning, actively reasoning to fit new ideas into one's preexisting beliefs. The combined effect of both concepts makes it difficult to discern facts from false statements aligning with preexisting beliefs.

"The fundamental issue is that often, disinformation and misinformation is targeting groups of people that are already inclined to believe that information," Dr. Linvill said. "Often that's because it's coming from sources that they trust, that are part of their social network, people that purport to have the same identity as they do, and oftentimes identity is more important than facts."

At the same time, other researchers, including David Rand and Gordon Pennycook, suggest that mental laziness rather than motivated reasoning is the primary issue affecting judgement of accuracy. Their evidence indicates that people who spend more time reasoning about the accuracy of information are better able to discern fact from fiction. A nudge in a social media post questioning the truth in content may be sufficient to bring people to consider the accuracy of information.

The issue of misinformation is often more than the difference between fact and fiction. Even with

accurate supporting facts, a writer's language may be laced with an agenda, according to history teacher Cindy Jurisson. For mainstream newspapers like The New York Times and Chicago Tribune, the interest of maintaining a business comes at odds with the publication's function as a democratic watchdog.

"It's tone. It's use of certain kinds of words that may have more of a pejorative cast. It's adverbs or adjectives that appear to be sort of neutral but actually sort of fulfill a certain agenda," Dr. Jurisson said. "There's a lot of that to go around, and I wince when I see it even in publications I trust more because you don't want that to leak too much into hard news."

She said that part of her goal as a history teacher is to impart close reading skills to her students. Close reading entails maintaining a skepticism toward the content, questioning claims for evidence and even reading correction pages to observe how publications address inaccurate reporting.

"Trust but verify — not cynical," Dr. Jurisson said. "I don't think we should be cynical, but reading with a healthy skepticism is really important when we're consuming news about public events."

Whether belief in misinformation stems from motivated reasoning or mental laziness, discerning true statements from false ones takes time and effort. Senior Kennedy Bickham said it is often not practical to double-check claims in assimilating the mass amount of information presented by outlets each day.

"I do not have the effort to actu-

"It's coming from sources that they trust, that are part of their social network, people that purport to have the same identity as they do, and oftentimes identity is more important than facts."

— DARREN LINVILL,
CLEMSON UNIVERSITY

ally seek out the information and check if it's true. Just because, unlike those types of sites, you're just scrolling for entertainment, so if you see something that's fake, or you suspect of being fake, but it's kind of funny, you're just gonna keep laughing, keep rolling."

Solutions to curb misinformation come from both the supply and demand side, according to Dr. Freelon. On one hand, platforms can regulate the content they present and take down misinformation accordingly. Youtube banned content spreading coronavirus misinformation on Sept. 29. On the other hand, users can learn media literacy or simply take more time and care to consider the accuracy of information they consume.

"When you are reading media or consuming media, from any source to the political side of the spectrum that you're on, that's when you're most vulnerable to falling for mis- or disinformation," Dr. Freelon said, "so you have to be extra careful with that kind of content."

Stopping the spread of misinformation likely requires both supply and demand side solutions.



Misinformation solutions rely on regulation, media literacy

by AUDREY PARK
REPORTER

Misinformation continues to threaten the communication of reliable information, but mitigating its spread will require people to be more diligent and platforms to regulate the content they permit.

Although the dissemination of misinformation is sometimes unintentional, it has repercussions on the general public and especially people who are impressionable like children.

Everyone should take measures to ensure that a resource, article or message is accurate. Taking the caution of increasing skepticism and fact-checking sources are crucial steps to preventing the spread of misinformation.

Anita Rao, a professor at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business, said that regulation is a key component of halting the spread of misinformation. She is an empirical marketing researcher who observes the way in which consumers react to deceptive advertising.

“Consumers should be more skeptical when hearing things that seem too good to be true or really anything in general,” she said. “But really beyond that, we need some



Anita Rao



Zizi Papacharissi

kind of regulatory body who is doing the research for us.”

Dr. Rao referenced the Food and Drug Administration as an example of a regulatory agency which has the power and credibility to check the legitimacy of certain drugs and prescription medications. She said a way to apply this idea to more conventional information consumption is prioritizing “.gov” and “.edu” as opposed to “.com” sites when doing research. Additionally, utilizing impartial sources such as the New York Times is key.

Dr. Rao emphasized the danger and inconsistency of social media and especially its effect on the younger generations.

According to a 2018 study conducted by professors at the MIT Sloan School of Management, posts containing dishonest information were 70% more likely to be retweeted than the truth.

“My personal solution, and one I suggest to all, is just not to look at social media for information. Instead, look at facts. Though facts may be more difficult to digest, you know for sure whether or not the information is trustworthy or not,” Dr. Rao said.

Similarly, Zizi Papacharissi, a professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago who serves on the editorial board of 15 journals, said that becoming more aware of the way in which people are vulnerable to propaganda is part of the solution.

“People in general can send messages — loud ones — when things are wrong,” Dr. Papacharissi said.

She suggests people should not

- Stop the spread:*

According to Anita Rao...

Avoid relying on social media for information
- Maintain skepticism
- Prioritize information confirmed by scientific journals and credible regulatory sites
- Spread information from reliable resources
- According to Zizi Papacharissi...**

Read, process, interpret, listen, wait
- Recognize the bias in the content you consume
- Avoid clickbait
- Curate your feeds

be tempted to look at materials that seem too good to be true.

“A strong message can be sent by refusing to click on deepfake or clickbait content... [and] by refusing to consume content that underestimates our intelligence as citizens.”

Additionally, Dr. Papacharissi emphasized the relevance of resources such as librarians as almost all libraries have solid guides for fact checking.

“How to prevent misinformation — that’s the million-dollar question,” Dr. Rao said. “It is really a matter of being smart and using reason when deeming a source to be credible or appropriate to spread.”

FAST FACTS

160 students surveyed in late September shared the platforms they use most often and rate the credibility of the content on a scale of 1-5.

COMPILED BY WILLIAM TAN

USAGE	PERCEIVED CREDIBILITY
THE NEW YORK TIMES	
66%	4.36 out of 5
CNN	
55%	3.70 out of 5
YOUTUBE	
51%	2.79 out of 5
THE WASHINGTON POST	
33%	4.24 out of 5
ABC/CBS/NBC	
31%	4.00 out of 5
WIKIPEDIA	
29%	3.14 out of 5
FOX NEWS	
8%	1.80 out of 5

False claims spread vaccine distrust, promote hesitancy

by ERICH RAUMANN
REPORTER

Celebrity and singer Nicki Minaj tweeted on Sept. 13 to her 22.8 million followers a claim that a distant acquaintance was rendered impotent due to the COVID-19 vaccination. Ms. Minaj wrote that one should “just pray on it & make sure you’re comfortable with ur decision, not bullied.” The message divided Nicki Minaj’s fanbase and spilled over to the rest of the online world, calling into question the line between outright misinformation and the sharing of a personal anecdote.

Ms. Minaj’s claims were proven to be unfounded, and there has been a large amount of backlash to her tweet. However, anti-vaxxers and fans of Ms. Minaj still work to defend her. A small number of people believe that the vaccine is entirely harmful and should not be taken by anybody, but the majority of Ms. Minaj’s fans defend her on a different basis. In her tweet, she never explicitly said not to get the vaccine. Her fans argue that she was simply sharing a personal experience.

Twitter user @Shenekaaa argued in defense of Nicki Minaj, writing

“She and any other person in this world is allowed to share their experiences. How you decide to twist and interpret it is on you.”

However, a different sentiment exists at the Laboratory Schools. Many students are upset or disappointed in Nicki Minaj, believing that her simply sharing the story is irresponsible as it spreads misinformation and encourages hesitation toward the vaccine. While she did not directly suggest not getting vaccinated, junior Nathan Greeley said he believes Ms. Minaj’s tweet is almost as bad.

“I thought it was funny at first, and then I realized it wasn’t ironic,” Nathan said. “She could just be really really stupid and is not seeing how extremely harmful this could be to people.”

Vaccine hesitancy has been proven to be a legitimate and growing issue, and no matter Ms. Minaj’s original intent with her tweet, it inspired hesitation in some of her 22 million followers.

The user @Tasty_MINAJ wrote on Twitter, “I had to get the vaccine cause they wouldn’t let me look for a job or get a job and to earn some money, and now im unsure about getting the second vaccine.”

Across fall sports, teams find success

Boys soccer

Record: 6-5-2

Despite winning only one of their four games in the shortened spring 2021 season, the boys soccer players have worked hard to bounce back.

The team practiced throughout the summer, and captain Philip Kellermeier, a senior, said the extra training has already helped them build from last season. He credits coaches Josh Potter and David Vadeboncoeur with their improvement.

“The coaches helped the team practice a lot,” Philip said. “They helped us come in before practice or times that we didn’t have practice over the summer. They, like, came to school to open the gym for us, practiced with us on the field.”

The summer practices have helped the team off the field, too.

“It’s helped us a lot for team bonding,” Philip said. “I would say we’re more of a team than last season. We all share stories with each other. We just got to know each other way more than last year.”

— AMY REN

Cross country

Senior Amanda O’Donnell, captain of the girls team, said the season has been going well.

“We’ve gotten into some big meets, which has been great because we didn’t really get that last year,” Amanda said. “Also everyone’s been able to run together. Last year, it was kind of split up, so only one or two runners from the team would run at one time, but now everyone’s together.”

Senior Zachary Gin, boys team captain, also said the more relaxed coronavirus restrictions benefited the team.

“Now we can go inside the actual gym building, to stretch inside and to use the actual weight room,” Zachary said. “[Last year] we weren’t allowed to go inside at all, so we had to do everything outside.”

The team has also gained many younger runners, which made Amanda confident for future seasons.

“I’ve definitely seen, like, a number of sophomores that were not on the team last year that joined this year, and also a lot of freshmen. Our team is really bottom heavy,” Amanda said. “This is really great because that means, you know, we’ll have a strong team in the future.”

Team records were unavailable at press time.

— AMY REN

Girls tennis

Record: 9-3-1

The team has developed a close team relationship and found success this season, even with a larger team.

Senior Emilee Pak, one of the team’s captains, feels the team is very strong this season.

“The season is going pretty well, not only results-wise but I feel like the relationships within the team are pretty strong,” she said. “The bonds between us all are pretty strong.”

This year the team has 37 players, compared to 28 last year and 32 in 2019.

Emilee feels that the increase in players this season has created some struggles for the team.

“Because there are so many people on the team, the practices are sometimes quite hectic, but we have been able to figure out ways to make it more manageable,” Emilee said.

She says communication has been able to help make this season run more smoothly.

“I feel like there is a lot more communication this year between the team and coaches, and within the coaches and captains,” she said.

— JOAQUIN FIGUEROA

Girls swimming & diving

The team has been able to build team spirit and find success during this season, despite the challenges presented by the coronavirus. Due to the restrictions imposed by IHSA for the coronavirus pandemic, the team had no fall 2020 season. According to Zoe Morton, a senior, this has created a struggle for some team members.

“A lot of people haven’t swam over the pandemic, so they haven’t swam in a year, a year and a half, so the coaches have been really working to get us back in shape,” Zoe said.

Not having a season last year also means that the team is bringing in both ninth and tenth grade students into high school sports for the first time. Despite this, Zoe thinks they have been doing well.

“They’ve been really open to everything and had a lot of spirit,” she said.

— JOAQUIN FIGUEROA

Golf

The golf teams are larger this season than ever, with 19 boys and 8 girls. For the boys team especially, there was an influx of younger students.

Captain Aaron Kim, a senior, says



MIDWAY PHOTO BY MATT PETRES

SETTING FOR SUCCESS. Sophomore Chloe Hurst sets the ball at a game against the British School of Chicago on Sept. 28 where the Maroons won 2-0. As of Oct. 4, the volleyball team was undefeated in the ISL and played Woodlands Academy Oct. 5.

this change will have both short- and long-term consequences.

“The freshmen and sophomores are actually probably the strongest classes we’ve had ever, so I think we’ll probably do a little bit better than we did the previous year,” Aaron said. “But I think in a year or two, we should be competitive with most people, both at the regional and state level, and then also within our league.”

After placing third at IHSA Regionals on Sept. 30, the boys team advanced to sectionals Oct. 4 but did not advance. This is only the fifth time in 20 years that the boys team competed at sectionals as a whole team.

The girls team competed at IHSA Regionals on Oct. 1, where two ninth-graders on the girls team, Amelia Tan and Maxine Hurst, placed second and fourth respectively. They competed at sectionals on Oct. 4.

Visit uhighmidway.com for sectional results that were unavailable at press time.

— AMY REN

Sailing

The team is feeling strong this

season, with members looking to compete and prepare the younger teammates.

Last season the team placed first in the state, and this season they’re looking to continue competing at that high level, says Eli Erling, one of the team’s captains.

“We’re feeling pretty strong, and generally we have a good depth in the team,” he said.

The team has faced some struggles, one of them being that they have had to fund themselves during fall season because the school only sponsors the team in the spring season.

The team is also working on clearly establishing the job of each captain.

“I think we’re still trying to work out, at least captain-wise, the responsibilities that we have and working with that, as well as making sure we could be more communicative,” Eli said.

Despite these struggles, Eli feels confident that the team will get through the challenges they face.

“I think for the most part we’re doing pretty good with managing what comes up,” he said.

— JOAQUIN FIGUEROA

Volleyball

Record: 11-0

The varsity volleyball team anticipates a successful season.

According to captain Charlotte Henderson, a junior, it has been over 15 years since U-High won an ISL conference. The team was undefeated as of Oct. 4, but played Woodlands Academy on Oct. 5. Results were unavailable as of press time. Latin and Woodlands are the team’s immediate competitors, but this season the team beat Latin for the first time in a decade.

“We have a really good chance in the running,” Charlotte said. “We got a lot of new sophomores and freshmen who have been playing club for a while, so it’s really helped strengthen our team.”

Although the team had its 2020 season pushed back to spring 2021 due to the pandemic, Charlotte views this as an advantage.

“We had a shorter time between our seasons,” she said, “so it was kind of like a temporary break, but now we’re all back, so it was easier to get into the flow and really connect with the team.”

— AMY REN

Dedicated to students, athletic trainer joins U-High

by **TÉA TAMBURIO**

DEPUTY MANAGING EDITOR

In just a few weeks since beginning her time at U-High, Breanna Lewenthal has treated sprains, recommended stretches and watched U-High soccer games.

Excited to connect with student athletes, Ms. Lewenthal joins U-High as the new athletic trainer. She is located in the fitness center, and student athletes can visit from lunchtime through the end of athletic practices.

Before coming to the Laboratory Schools Sept. 13, Ms. Lewenthal worked in a physical therapy clinic and at a charter school in Los Angeles, where she covered the school’s fall and spring sports.

Dedicated to helping students



Breanna Lewenthal



MIDWAY PHOTO BY ELIOTT TAYLOR

HELPING HAND. In the fitness center, new athletic trainer Breanna Lewenthal examines a student athlete. Here to care for players, Ms. Lewenthal is dedicated to athletes’ wellbeing.

achieve their best physical health, she appreciates how student athletes have been holding themselves accountable for maintain-

ing their wellbeing.

“So if I ask them to come in the next day or to do some stretching exercises, they seem to come

in and do them, which shows that everybody is serious about getting back to 100% health,” Ms. Lewenthal said. “And that makes my job easier, so I don’t have to go hunting anyone down and making sure they get back to their healthy selves and get to play.”

According to Athletics Director David Ribbens, the school has experienced frequent turnover in athletic trainers throughout the pandemic.

“For the past 18 months or so it’s been more part-time and a variety of different trainers,” Mr. Ribbens said. “It has been a revolving door, and we’re hoping that Breanna stays for a while. I think the students really respect her, and she’s somebody that I’m confident will do a great job for our team.”

Junior Kiran Chinniah, a member of the dance troupe, visited Ms. Lewenthal to recommend exercises for a pulled iliotibial band.

“She’s really, really nice,” Kiran said. “She took the time to fully ex-

plain to me what I needed to do and all of that and explained the exercises in detail and made sure I was doing everything right.”

With the start of the year-long sports seasons, Ms. Lewenthal is excited to not only help student athletes feel their best, but also watch them play. She has already watched a few soccer games.

“I want to get to watch some volleyball games as well, ‘cause I enjoy volleyball,” Ms. Lewenthal said. “Not that I don’t enjoy soccer, but I played volleyball myself, so it’s exciting.”

Ms. Lewenthal wants to establish a connection with athletes that extends beyond the walls of the fitness center.

“Just the relationships. Like that trainer-to-student-athlete relationship, and I’m excited to get to learn about everyone, what they enjoy doing and then seeing how many of the soccer and volleyball young adults go on to play in the next season.”

Karate kids

Students excel, gain experience at Under 15 World School Sport Games

by **CAROLINE HOHNER**
FEATURES EDITOR

Ninth graders Mateo Nacu and Milo Platz-Walker have traveled all over the country and the world. The two haven't been dropping by far-flung locales like Scotland and Hawaii on a whim. They grew up on karate, and their skills have brought them to elite competitions all over the world. This fall, Milo and Mateo both added another stamp to their passports: Belgrade, Serbia.

Mateo and Milo represented the Amateur Athletic Union USA National Karate Team at the first International School Sport Federation Under 15 World School Sport Games in Belgrade.

Mateo won a bronze medal for 14/15 Male Kata, an event in which competitors are judged on their forms, while Milo placed in fifth for 14/15 Male Kumite, or sparring, in the under 63 kilogram weight division.

"I was really nervous towards the beginning, but once I got in the groove, I loosened up a bit," Mateo said, "and it was just fun."

Jay Nacu, a Lab primary school P.E. teacher and Mateo's dad, coached Milo, Mateo and their teammates from Indiana and California. Alongside his wife, Denise Nacu, Mr. Nacu has led the Enso dojo, the center of the Lab karate community, since 2002 and the Lab after-school karate program since 2009.

"We have a very strong karate community at Lab," Mr. Nacu said. "We have a couple other students who have competed internationally. And I think it's made them better students and just all-around great people from their experiences that they've had throughout traveling and competing with different people from around the

"I was really nervous towards the beginning, but once I got in the groove, I loosened up a bit, and it was just fun."

— MATEO NACU

world."

Milo and Mateo qualified for the games at the USA National Championships and the AAU Junior Olympic Games in the past year. As this was the inaugural year of the games, this was the first time the two could participate in the competition.

"Any other kind of sporting event or competition, there's some athletes that are OK, and some that are outstanding. Sometimes it's half and half," Mr. Nacu said.

Here it was different.

He said, "Everyone was just really, really exceptional."

The games were just as much about the sports themselves as they were about creating bonds between the 35 countries represented. Throughout the games, Mateo and Milo mixed and mingled with teens from all over the world.

"There was this thing called the Nations Night where other countries from all the different sports came to one place, and each country had a performance. It could be like a cultural dance, or just like anything," Mateo said. Teens from the United States performed the "Cha Cha Slide."

The AAU team's experiences in Belgrade weren't restricted to ISF programming. The teens also got to explore the city in their downtime.

"We walked around Serbia a lot. My legs were, like, sore. I was aching, but it was so nice," Milo said. "We saw a massive church. We went and we saw a soccer game,



MIDWAY PHOTO BY MALCOLM TAYLOR

INTERNATIONAL ATHLETES. Ninth graders Milo Platz-Walker and Mateo Nacu train in the fitness center on Oct. 1. Last month, the two traveled to Belgrade, Serbia, to represent the Amateur Athletic Union USA National Karate Team.

which was pretty crazy. It gets very loud over there."

The competition ran through the beginnings of the school year, so Milo and Mateo had to work with their teachers to keep up with a new workload in their first days of high school.

"Not only was I just starting school, but so were the teachers," Milo said. "So they couldn't really fully develop a lesson plan for me being in Serbia, and it was pretty late notice, but I think Mateo and

I both did the best that we could."

The two took away honors and experiences, as well as lessons to carry into their future karate careers.

"It's a very big honor to have gone to the tournament," Milo said. "But I think what's bigger than that is the takeaways, like the lessons that I learned while actually competing and seeing an international tournament of that size."

According to Mr. Nacu, the ISF sits under the International Olym-

pic Committee, making the organization almost like a funnel into the games.

Milo and Mateo's participation in the games could mean big things for their future careers.

"Karate was in the Olympics for the first time this year," Mr. Nacu said. "And we're not sure if it's going to happen in the future, if they're going to continue with it. But if it does, they're at a prime age to maybe make an Olympic team sometime."

Video game displays superb graphics, mediocre gameplay

by **ERICH RAUMANN**
REPORTER

Your character walks out of a dank, gloomy cave, and a different world stretches out before you. It's rich with lush forests, sapphire rivers and sparkling waterfalls. Atop it all is a colossal mountain, beckoning you for adventure.

This is the scene that greets players in Ember Lab's "Kena: Bridge of Spirits," and the game lives up to its flashy introduction. It came out at a great time for many students, when school stress is running high. "Kena: Bridge of Spirits" is the perfect thing to boot up for just 10 or 15 minutes and get lost in its world. The only problem: It's more a movie than a game.

The story in "Kena: Bridge of Spirits" is simple. You play as a teenage "spirit guide" who explores a long-abandoned village, helping out its unfulfilled, ghostly occupants along the way. The goal is to reach a shrine in the mountains far above, but most of your time is spent in the forest and foothills surrounding it, where you collect items, battle monsters and watch cutscenes.

The developers of "Kena: Bridge of Spirits" describe their game as a "story-driven action adventure," but in reality the game focuses heavily on the "story" and "adventure" aspects. The player will meet vibrant characters that look like they belong in a Pixar movie, explore richly detailed areas, and



IMAGE SOURCE: PLAYSTATION

VIBRANT VISUALS. In "Kena: Bridge of Spirits," players are taken through a story mode in which they encounter detailed characters and cutscenes. The game was released on Sept. 21 and has been praised for its excellent animations.

collect almost annoyingly little fur balls suspiciously reminiscent of Minions from "Despicable Me." It's the visual aspect that makes the game such a joy to play.

Despite all of this polish, the grandeur of "Kena: Bridge of Spirits" comes at a cost; the min-

ute-to-minute, bread-and-butter gameplay feels frustratingly neglected. The game's combat system stubbornly refuses to meaningfully deviate from the standard hack-and-slash control scheme and constantly throws the same simple enemies at you time and

time again. The combat is by no means boring, but it mainly serves as padding to lengthen out your playtime. If you are a fan of high-octane, complex combat, look somewhere else.

Ember Lab is not a group of experienced game developers but rath-

Fast facts

"Kena: Bridge of Spirits" is a third-person, single-player story mode game.

It is the first video game created by Ember Lab, an animation studio founded in 2009.

Currently, the game is only available on Playstation 5, Playstation 4 and Microsoft Windows.

The game was released on Sept. 21.

The standard edition costs \$39.99, and there is a digital deluxe edition available for \$49.99

er an animation studio branching into gaming for the first time. This is evident from fantastic visuals in pre-rendered cutscenes and actual gameplay, but it comes with a significant caveat: not all computers can handle it. For the best experience, it should be played on a PlayStation 5, the console it was designed for, but a decent desktop PC or PlayStation 4 will do.

This, on top of the \$40 price for a relatively short experience, means the game isn't for everyone.

However, if you are in the mood for an awe-inspiring, beautiful journey or are just looking to relax after school, this could be the game for you.

Director leads through listening

Victoria “Tori” Jueds seeks to build community

by **BERKOTO**
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Upon hearing the familiar sirens, hundreds of students lined up in groups in front of their teachers during the fire drill on Sept. 22. For most Laboratory Schools students and faculty, it was a mildly annoying and standard routine — not so for Laboratory Schools Director Victoria “Tori” Jueds.

When Ms. Jueds (pronounced Judds) looked at the sea of faces, she saw opportunities to hear people’s stories and gather valuable input. She asked math teachers about their experiences returning to in-person teaching, talked to the chair of the music department about how music can help build communities, and inquired about a student’s interests.

Ms. Jueds sees herself as a steward of the community who considers her background for listening to stories and advocating on behalf of marginalized people as leadership strengths.

Early in her career, Ms. Jueds never expected to go into education. Instead, after graduating Harvard College, she worked for political candidates on the local, state and federal levels.

“The issue that I would say pulled me into politics early on was reproductive rights, particularly for women,” she said. “Bodily autonomy from government is such an important American value that this single issue played a huge role in my decision to work in politics.”

After a few years working in politics, however, Ms. Jueds says she realized that much of the change she was interested in happened through the judicial system, where she could directly advocate for people with disadvantaged backgrounds. Consequently, she studied at Harvard Law School and became a law clerk who dealt with civil liberty and workplace discrimination cases.

“I dealt with cases about topics



MIDWAY PHOTO BY MALCOLM TAYLOR

STARTING STRONG. Victoria Jueds, director of schools, poses outside Judd Hall. Ms. Jueds is carrying years of experience in advocacy and leadership in education into the start of the school year.

I was interested in, which was a great feeling,” she said. “I also fell in love with legal procedure, which I just find fascinating.”

While Ms. Jueds enjoyed her time working as a law clerk because she was able to advocate for people experiencing injustice, she was uncomfortable with the lack of one-on-one time she had with those involved with the cases she worked on.

“That’s when I really discovered how important listening to people and their stories was to me personally,” she said.

Upon teaching law at George Washington Law School in Wash-

ington, D.C., she discovered that education quenched her thirst for getting to know people and their stories.

“While teaching, I got to know the students and I was fascinated by the range of their backgrounds,” she said. “By talking to these students, I learned that a big part of working in education is helping disadvantaged people, since students aren’t always empowered or on equal footing.”

After 11 years working at the graduate and undergraduate levels at GW and Princeton respectively, Ms. Jueds took a head of school position at Westtown Acad-

emy in West Chester, Pennsylvania for four years, before coming to Lab in August.

“I transitioned to being a head of school because I wanted to build and maintain a diverse community of young scholars,” she said. “As director, I embrace the idea of stewardship. I want to help the schools live up to the values in our mission statement.”

Like those at U-High, Westtown Academy students created an Instagram account during the summer of 2020 that highlighted stories of racism from the community. Ms. Jueds’ experiences grappling with systemic racism at

Biography:

High School: Phillips Exeter Academy
College: Studied political science as an undergraduate at Harvard College, returned to Harvard Law School for her J.D.
Career: Began work as a law clerk, then taught law at George Washington Law School and Princeton University before becoming the head of school at Westtown Academy in Pennsylvania.
Fun Fact: Ms. Jueds has a black cat named Wednesday, as in Wednesday Addams.

Westtown taught her the importance of proactively seeking out stories of injustice.

“It’s clearly not enough to hold the door open for students to make complaints,” she said. “Students turn to social media because they feel like they can’t trust, or they don’t feel comfortable sharing that information with the school. At Lab, I want to create environments that actively invite students to share their experiences with the school whether it’s at an assembly or smaller groups.”

To start, Ms. Jueds plans to meet with DEI peer facilitators and Nicole Williams, Lab’s new director of diversity, equity and inclusion. She’s especially excited to talk to the peer facilitators to get their first-hand experiences of racism at Lab.

“Everyday in-person interactions play a big role in fostering collaboration and kindness,” she said. “Things like the ‘aha’ moments you get after getting the perspective of someone new, or the lessons you gain by hearing their story are not only entertaining, but, from my perspective, they’re key to leadership.”

Ms. Jueds says that she gains valuable insights from these interactions that help her set priorities and make strategic decisions later on.

“To me,” Ms. Jueds said, “making common sense decisions means getting all the information about a topic as I can and being truly open to everyone’s perspectives.”

Split-Tok: Algorithm boxes users in ‘sides’ of app



MIDWAY PHOTO BY PATRICE GRAHAM

SWIPE ON. Students scroll through their “For You” pages: never-ending streams of videos curated by TikTok’s algorithm. While the algorithm can bring help members of a community or fanbase together, it can just as easily create isolated “echo chambers.”

by **LUCIA KOURI**
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

From five-minute fame to five-hour scrolling periods, practically every U-High student has some experience with TikTok. The app has risen to the top of the social media hierarchy in the past couple of years. But behind the dances, music and celebrities lies a complex algorithm that some students have noticed interfering with their pages more than they had originally expected.

For better or for worse, U-High TikTok users have found themselves part of tight niches, or “sides” of TikTok, ranging from Alt. TikTok to Political TikTok. While the algorithm can be helpful, some students find it hard to escape.

Senior Kai McManus has noticed that since the beginning of their time using TikTok, some particular categories of videos have popped up most.

“I get a mix, but there’s definitely definable categories within the mix that I have,” Kai said. “I get a lot of activism, I also get a lot of educational and I get a lot of art.”

Freshman Theo Hinerfeld has also noticed sides of TikTok. Ma-

ny of his videos are political, and they all align with his own beliefs.

As it turns out, the TikTok algorithm has been designed to do just this. The app tracks everything from time spent watching a post to what accounts are followed to the comments that a user posts. In doing so, the app’s algorithm keeps feeding the user content that is most likely to be of interest.

Theo worries that this kind of polarization, particularly when it is political, could have a negative effect on some users that don’t get their news from other sources as well.

“It’s definitely one-sided and it doesn’t give a full perspective,” Theo said. “We’re seeing only one thing, but not necessarily everything that we need to see.”

Junior Juan Chaides added that a place like TikTok might not be the best place to facilitate serious conversations in general, especially when they are related to identity.

“You have to tread these topics lightly, because a lot of the top topics that are causing polarization can really shock people,” Juan said. “If it’s delivered the

wrong way, you’ll get the wrong sort of idea.”

Senior Tyler Nava expressed that this phenomenon can be expanded beyond political identity. It’s part of what makes the app so addicting. When he opens up TikTok, he can be sure to find something that aligns with his own interests and beliefs.

Senior Ardith Huner, added that these sides of TikTok are part of why she stopped using the app.

“As soon as you click on one video, a bunch more pop up,” Ardith said. “You get into scrolling a lot and then time passes and then you realize how much time passed.”

However, Kai believes that there are positive parts of TikTok, too. Though polarization can be an issue, students can also find communities within the bounds of the app.

Whether obvious or not, similar user trends of polarization can occur in most forms of social media.

“It’s not a great thing in general, but I don’t think that you can say that without talking about all social media,” Kai said. “It happens with everything.”

Summer allows students freedom to explore

Given free time, students travel, work, rest, grow

by **MEENA LEE**
SPORTS EDITOR

With the large number of COVID-19 vaccinations and few restrictions, America's summer of 2021 felt like a return to normalcy for many. U-High students had the opportunity to work and travel, gaining valuable lessons and meaningful relationships.

This summer, junior Kiran Chinniah spent six weeks working as a counselor for Adventure Kids, a summer program at Lab. Though planning activities and playing with her group of kids was fun, Kiran said the highlights of her experience were her relationships with the seven other counselors, most of them Lab students as well.

"I think we had a really great group of counselors working together, so it was a really nice work environment," Kiran said. "Most of us grew up going to camp together, so we mostly knew everyone. Then, during our breaks, we got close pretty quickly."

Senior Alina Susani also reconnected with others over the summer. She spent 10 weeks in Turkey, visiting family and friends that she hadn't seen for two years because of the pandemic.

"When we got back, we just clicked right back in, and it was like no time had passed," Alina said.

Alina has traveled to Turkey almost every summer since she was born, but this year was different. There were limitations on what they could do, Alina said. Still, she spent most of her time with her friends sailing and going to the beach, so it felt relatively normal.



MIDWAY PHOTO BY MALCOLM TAYLOR

SUMMER SCENE. Senior Loren Calleri brandishes a handmade spear. On a seven-day backpacking trip through the Appalachian Mountains, Loren, alongside Julien Deroitte and several other Lab seniors, spent time enjoying the outdoors and strengthening bonds.

Senior Julien Deroitte was able to spend time away from home as well. Right after school ended, he went on a week-long backpacking trip in the Appalachian Mountains with his friends.

"It was really nice because obviously there was no homework, no teachers," Julien said. "But also it was totally disconnected from devices, and it was a good break from being completely online."

Julien also went to the Blue Lake Fine Arts camp in Michigan. There, he developed his viola skills by

learning how to make music without his teacher. Julien felt that this camp taught him many important lessons that have stuck with him.

"Having to rely on myself taught me a lot about independence and knowing when to work," Julien said. "I learned about finding your own weaknesses and trying to solve them, as well as listening to others."

Similarly, sophomore Aaron Moss participated in an ensemble casual Shakespeare summer camp. He performed shortened

versions There, he learned acting skills such as stage combat and plans to join the U-High theatre.

"You are learning from professionals there," Aaron said. "Learning to embody a character, to walk like them, and learn their movements."

Working as a camp counselor taught Kiran skills that she now uses as a peer leader, such as time management, asking for help, and getting middle school students to engage with the activities.

"Motivating them to do a lot

of the activities was a challenge. You'd say something, and they'd automatically be like, 'no.' I feel like that's how the freshmen can be sometimes," Kiran said. "One thing I learned well was how to pivot. If the kids were absolutely hating an activity, I learned how to kind of turn that around into something positive."

With the freedom to do many more activities this summer, students are heading into the year with new experiences and skills to help them succeed.

Community considers green energy law strong start

Law supports elimination of carbon emissions by 2045, invests in transitioning to nuclear, renewable energy

by **COLIN LESLIE**
ASSISTANT EDITOR

On Sept. 15, Illinois became a leader in the United States in the push for green energy, as governor J.B. Pritzker signed into law a bill meant to reduce the effects of climate change by eliminating carbon emissions and increasing funding to nuclear power plants.

Lab students and teachers had mixed reactions to the law, viewing it as a good start but not enough by itself to stop the effects of climate change.

The bill was proposed after Exelon, an energy company with multiple nuclear power plants in Illinois, threatened to close some of its plants in Illinois.

The law lays out a timeline which requires municipal coal and natural gas power plants to be carbon-free by 2045 and commits to 100% clean energy by 2050.

According to science teacher Sharon Housinger, timelines like these in energy regulations are crucial.

"If you just tell people, 'Oh, you should be carbon neutral,' there's no financial incentive for a company to do it," Ms. Housinger said. "So you give them a timeline. Otherwise, they'll keep saying, 'Oh, we'll put it off until it's more affordable.'"

Ms. Housinger said the effectiveness of Illinois' regulations depends on the measures taken by other states.

"One issue is if only Illinois does

Bill breakdown

- Funds for Illinois nuclear power plants
- Zero carbon emissions by 2045
- 40% renewable energy by 2030
- Financial incentives to purchase electric vehicles
- Investments in renewable energy
- Estimated \$4.50 average increase in residential electricity bills

it, and let's say the cost of some item is higher because, in Illinois, they have these measures, but, like, Indiana doesn't do it, then Illinois loses business," Ms. Housinger said. "That's why we want a national standard."

While a common opposition argument of the bill is the potential increase in electrical bills, Ms. Housinger said a bigger issue is the potential for social and economic issues if the region does not address climate change effectively.

"People from other places that don't have a good water supply are going to be moving towards the Great Lakes, and so we're going to have an increased population with less food, and that's going to cause huge economic disparity and a lot more social problems," Ms. Housinger said.

According to middle school science teacher Tony Del Campo, the law is an important and realistic step forward. He said he is optimistic about the future of the environment because younger gen-

erations are beginning to recognize the reality of climate change, which leaves room to take action.

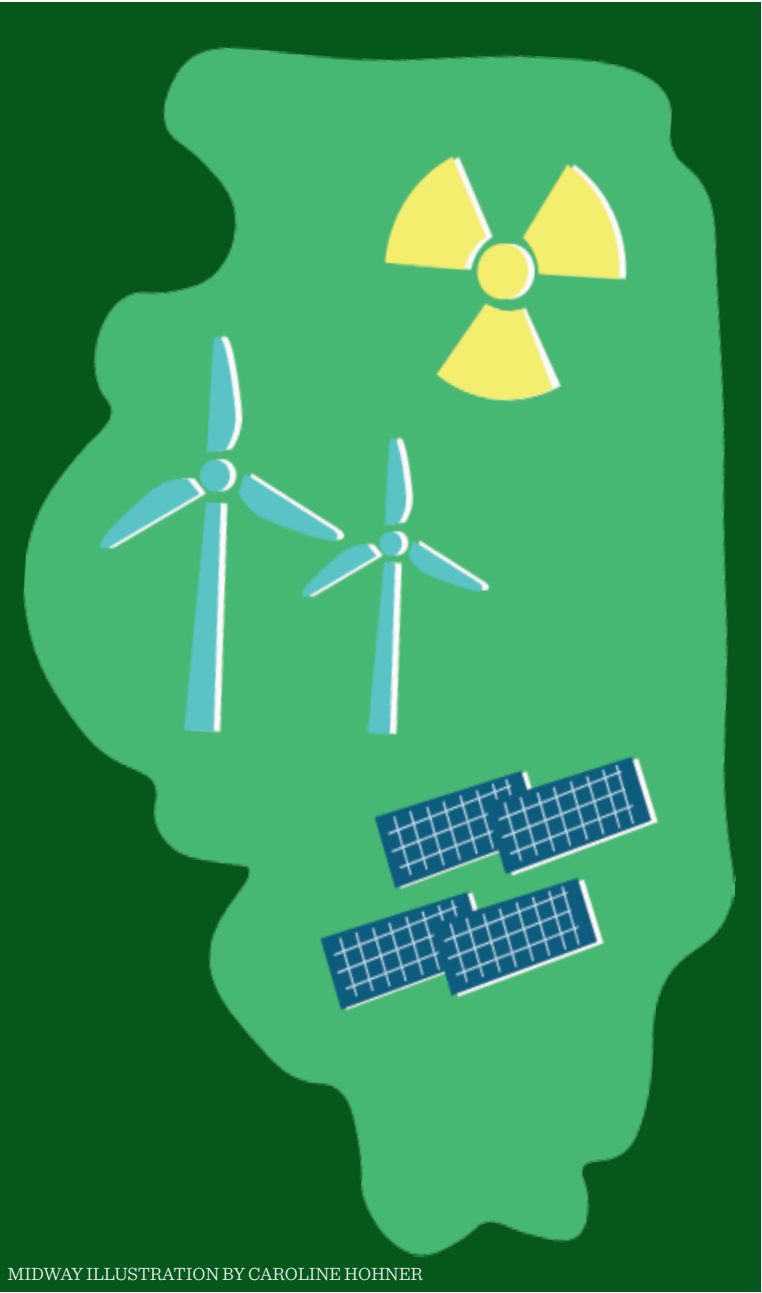
"We just have to be aware that when we're using fossil fuels, we do recognize what that means, and then make that conscious decision, 'Is it worth doing or not?'" Mr. Del Campo said. "So it's like you're driving, like, five blocks away to get to the grocery store. Do you need to drive a car?"

Junior Zoe Johns, president of the Green Team club, which hosts guest speakers and does service projects to help Lab be environmentally-friendly, said laws like this one are important in stopping the progress of climate change.

"Because we wasted so much time already, we're not going to be able to avoid all of the consequences of climate change, but if we switch to clean energy as soon as possible, then we can avoid some of the worst effects," Zoe said.

According to Zoe, however, the focus should be on consistent progress, not just lofty goals.

"I feel like pushes for clean energy happen in waves when it should be happening constantly," Zoe said. "This means making new legislation and infrastructure all the time. We can't make pushes every five years or 10 years, because that's not how the world works. The world works every single day of every single year, and we need to try every single day of every single year."



MIDWAY ILLUSTRATION BY CAROLINE HOHNER

Obama Center construction underway

After years of controversy, delay, project begins with traffic jams

by LUCIA KOURI
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

After a nearly four-year-long federal review of the Barack Obama Presidential Center took place, construction began in August — just five blocks away from the Laboratory Schools campus in the Woodlawn neighborhood. A ceremonial groundbreaking took place Sept. 28. The construction comes with traffic jams, but it also comes at the tail end of a series of objections and lawsuits regarding the center's location.

The Barack Obama Presidential Center is an architectural project overseen by the Obama Foundation and aimed to commemorate Barack Obama's presidency.

The center will be located in Jackson Park along Stony Island Avenue between 60th and 63rd streets. Included in the 19-acre facility will be a museum, plaza, women's garden and wetland walk, activity center and a children's play area.

The project is not set to be completed for another four years, and since construction began, many Lab students, such as senior Ashley Hannah, have noticed massive traffic jams on their way home from school.

"They've blocked off an entire street to build it, so for that reason, it's definitely been something I've noticed," Ashley said. "After school, the traffic is way worse than it was previously."

"They've blocked off an entire street to build it... After school, the traffic is way worse than it was previously."

— ASHLEY HANNAH

Concerns about the Obama center reach far beyond traffic jams. Following the release of preliminary plans in 2017, many community members foresaw problems with the location of the center, worrying that the project could worsen gentrification in the area.

In 2017, the Obama South Side Community Benefits Coalition, composed of 19 activist groups, sought a community benefits agreement that would require the Obama Foundation, along with the City of Chicago, to provide jobs for South Side residents, protect low-income housing rent from increasing, aid local schools, and support and create Black businesses.

Up to this day, the Obama Foundation has not fully agreed to a community benefits agreement. The foundation has shown dedication to community hiring.

An estimated 28% of 4,945 short-term construction jobs and about 2,175 of the 2,536 long-term jobs for the Obama center will be given to South Side residents.

In July 2020, Mayor Lori Lightfoot and local Alderman Jeanette



MIDWAY PHOTO BY ANDREW BURKE-STEVENSON

CONTENTIOUS CONSTRUCTION. Onlookers at the Obama Presidential Center's ceremonial groundbreaking Sept. 29 loudly argue about President Obama's impact, including the environmental affect of the center's construction. Former President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama, Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker and Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot all attended the groundbreaking.

Taylor reached an agreement with the CBA Coalition on a compromise ordinance, assuring that 30% of units on 52 city-owned lots in Woodlawn would be reserved for residents making between 30% to 50% of the area's median income. They also required that the city's

Department of Housing request \$675,000 in federal funds to support a local program that will promote homeownership among current residents.

While much is still to be determined in the coming years of construction, senior Alma Moskowitz,

a Hyde Park resident, is optimistic about moving forward.

"I'm looking forward to the library opening," she said. "I think that the fact that the center is dedicated to hiring those in our community is a step in the right direction."

Love Fridge tackles mass food insecurity through mutual aid

Fridges around Chicago built for food donations

by ANATHEA CARRIGAN
MANAGING EDITOR

"If every family at the Lab Schools bought one extra bag of groceries one time, we collectively could fill the nearest Love Fridge for 6 years," Sarah Hoehn, manager of the Love Fridge at Augustana Church, said.

But, for this to begin to be a possibility, students at Lab first must become aware of the Love Fridge, its mission and why it exists. The Love Fridge is a mutual aid group based in Chicago that builds structures to house community fridges and pantries that are filled by others in the community.

The Love Fridge is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to anyone. There are no restrictions as to who can use it.

Dr. Hoehn is a physician at Comer Children's Hospital and part of Solidarity Lab, which wants to address food insecurity in Hyde Park. When Solidarity Lab learned of the Love Fridge last fall, they reached out to the organization and began to research locations where they could place the fridge.

"We met with university leadership, but many sidewalks are owned by the city," Dr. Hoehn said. "One of our own Lab parents, Yael Hoffman, found both the fridge, which was donated by a Lab family, and the location at Augustana Church."

Many of Dr. Hoehn's patients' families struggle with food insecurity.

"We once saw an adolescent who was not speaking much, and was just laying down in the exam room," Dr. Hoehn said. "Once we offered her some juice, she shared that she had not eaten in three days since she had no access to food."

As the manager of the Love Fridge in Augustana Church, Dr. Hoehn checks



MIDWAY PHOTO BY MATT PETRES

TAKE WHAT YOU NEED, LEAVE WHAT YOU CAN. Hyde Park's Love Fridge is located at the Augustana Lutheran Church on 55th Street between Woodlawn and University avenues. The fridge and pantry are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week for anyone to drop-off or pick-up food. Donations made to the fridge are usually consumed within 24 hours.

"If you have yogurts in your fridge that are not expired but you will not eat, then just drop them off at the fridge and they will be consumed within 24 hours."

— SARAH HOEHN, LOVE FRIDGE MANAGER AT AUGUSTANA LUTHERN CHURCH

the fridge two to three times every week, manages the volunteer and donation sign-up website and cleans the fridge weekly. The goal is for the fridge to be stocked with a variety of options for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Community organizations have

helped to keep it stocked.

"Many community gardens have contributed fresh fruits and vegetables, and we are very appreciative," Dr. Hoehn said. "There is a pantry for dried goods, pasta, soups and hygiene products, and then both a fridge and freezer."

Donating to the fridge is fairly easy.

Dr. Hoehn said, "if you have yogurts in your fridge that are not expired but you will not eat, then just drop them off at the fridge and they will be consumed within 24 hours."

The need for the Love Fridge is apparent, as most donations are gone within 24 hours.

"I think of the fridge as an extension of my family," Dr. Hoehn said. "The goal is for the fridge to be stocked just as our own are at home."

HYDE PARK JAZZ FESTIVAL



MIDWAY PHOTO BY ANDREW BURKE-STEVENSON

VIBING. The Hyde Park Jazz Festival hosted more than 20 vendors between the two Midway Plaisance stages. Vendors sold food, shirts, accessories, home goods and more.



MIDWAY PHOTO BY ANDREW BURKE-STEVENSON

BUNCH OF TREBLE MAKERS. Festival-goers listen to one of 29 performances at the jazz festival. The two-day festival returned in person for its 15th year on Sept. 25-26.



MIDWAY PHOTO BY ANDREW BURKE-STEVENSON

ALL ABOUT THAT BASS. Chicago native and bassist Junius Paul performs on the Wagner Stage with Regina Carter and Tomeka Reid as the New String Trio.