Russian invasion surprises, concerns Ukrainian students

by AUDREY MATEI
CONTENT MANAGER

In the early morning hours of Feb. 24, strikes against Ukrainian targets were initiated by Russian forces. This invasion comes after a long history of aggression from Russia toward Ukraine, starting in 2014 with Russia’s annexation of Crimea and the recent amassing of thousands of Russian troops at the Ukrainian border.

Like the rest of the world, people in the U-High community felt the repercussions of the attacks. While many teachers addressed the students in classes, students still feel anxious, concerned and hopeful of what is to come.

Sophia Shimanska, a ninth grader who started at Lab in September, has strong ties to her Ukrainian heritage and relatives in Ukraine. For Sophia, the news that Russia invaded Ukraine wasn’t something she anticipated.

“Just in general it was all really unexpected,” she said. “I was surprised and worried because I still have family that lives in Ukraine. My immediate response was, ‘Are my family OK?’”

Similarly, Andrew Razarov, a senior of both Russian and Ukrainian descent, said the invasion was a shock that he never foresaw as a possibility.

“We are very fortunate to live in the most peaceful times in human history, and you realize that all that can go away at the snap of a president’s fingers,” he said. “I was anxious because I relied on the supposition that everything would be resolved peacefully after the long-mounting tension at the border.”

UNITED UKRAINE.
Hundreds gathered in Ukrainian Village, Feb. 27 with flags and signs to protest the invasion of Ukraine.

Sophia’s cultural identity impacted her perception of the war profoundly.

“Ukraine is really shaped my outlook on this,” Andrew said that “It’s easier to be dismissive of events that happen halfway across the globe.

“But for me, even though this is happening geographically far away, it’s happening close to my cultural identity.”

Andrew said the conflict has been a part of his daily life for a long time, and because of that, he made sure to do his own research and news from both eastern and western sources to understand the war as best as possible.

“Whenever we’re at the dinner table with the entire extended family in Moscow, it’s always a topic of conversation,” he said. “We have input from a lot of different sides like my Russian and Ukrainian grandfather.”

The invasion is still developing, leaving millions wondering what’s to happen in the near and long-term future.

Sophia said that she has hopes for Ukraine to persevere through the attacks.

“Ukraine has been fighting for its independence for such a long time. I just wish for Ukraine to get what it wants, which is independence and freedom for its people,” she said. “I just want everything to be OK. I don’t want innocent people to be killed anymore.”

Andrew said he wants for Russia and Ukraine to be able to cooperate and coexist soon.

“What I would like to see come out of this is that there is peace and a long-term cultural understanding and a strong and durable political and economic relationship between Russia and Ukraine,” Andrew said. “Hopefully it’s moving that direction.”

Mistreated: Faculty of color speak out

They detail microaggressions, poor treatment, lack of accountability

by PETER PU
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

A remark from a colleague from Ukrainian heritage and relatives said, “I was surprised and worried because I still have family that lives in Ukraine. My immediate response was, ‘Are my family OK?’”

“The pingpong tournament in the senior lounge is a competitive and exciting way to connect classmates and faculty members.”

The invasion plan was published in June 2020. At the start of the 2020-21 school year, the school launched a bias reporting system to address harassment, discrimination, prejudice and other antagonistic behaviors.

Diversity, equity and inclusion remains a commitment. In an interview about this story, Laboratory Schools Director Tori Jueds, who joined Lab in August 2021, reiterated Lab’s institutional ambition to address issues of equity and inclusion.

“We are not unique in manifesting a culture that can make it really difficult for people of color, for women, for members of the LGBTQ+ community, for folks who identify in some respect with historically marginalized groups or backgrounds,” Ms. Jueds said. “We’re not unique in that. But that doesn’t mean that we don’t have an urgent obligation to make that better.”

Yet the concerns of faculty of color come in the context of a series of incidents communicated to the Lab community in the past few years including a social media post from late 2019 that was described as containing racist language and an instance in early 2020 of a high school student using what was described as racist language off campus.

The “Black Faculty Response to Recent Events” letter sent to the community following the 2019 incident raised the question of whether Lab’s institutional goals of diversity were actually upheld.

Another current faculty member of color, Person B, said microaggressions have been a contributing factor causing some faculty to lose their position at Lab. These microaggressions target personal characteristics such as racial identity and cultural heritage. While the frequency of microaggressions varies among schools, Person B estimated that some faculty of color face three to four racist remarks per week. As an example, a colleague assumed Person B held a support role at Lab.

“Another colleague looked at me and asked me if I was part of the custodial crew, and then asked me if I was the gardener,” Person B said. Yet another instance involved Person C, another current faculty member of color. Person C said that while the Lab community has been generally supportive, Person C remembered a faculty member suggesting last year that Person C was attractive because she had a light complexion for identifying as part of a minority group.

“If it was little scary, like ‘Oh is this how, you know, others perceive us at Lab?’ You know, are we just a number?” Person C said. “Are we a checklist?”

While faculty of color have avenues to report such incidents to the administration, Person B said they are often not reported. While Person B is comfortable seeking assistance from the principal, concerns deteriorating faculty of color from reporting these incidents include the potential repercussions of when the action of the report is disclosed to colleagues.

Please see Mistreated on Page 2
Robotics team qualifies for state

by WILLIAM TAN
ASSISTANT EDITOR

The robotics team Sprockets & Screws finished fourth in the First Tech Challenge state championship after competing in the Chi- cago regional Feb. 19. The WeByte team also finished with a winning record over the weekend after initial qualification rounds. Sprockets & Screws finished qualification rounds ranked fifth, according to its website, which then moved up to fourth. Then, through a series of complex alliances and rank- ing changes, the team placed in the semifinal bracket and won the first ever state championship in Elgin on March 12 for the state championship. The top three teams from the competi- tion will advance to the World Championship.

“At regions, it was a very stress- ful — very fun — day, a lot of fran- tic last-minute fixes and, you know, excellent driving by Pe- ter Bremer, a Sprockets & Screws team member, said. “We managed to get into the elimination rounds to qual- ify for state. Darren Fuller, robotics coach, said he was impressed with their achievements, especially as it was their first year competing.”

“The rookie team did incred- ibly. They were doing things that no one expected, total- ly unexpected,” he said. “There’s a part of the game that did that throughout the day.”

Both teams won additional awards. Sprockets & Screws took home the Award for the best en- gineering design process. They al- so won the Think Award that evaluated team spir- it and third for the Inspire Award, earning the team overall WeByte placed first for the Moti- vation Award and second for the Think Award.

In preparation for the state tour- nament, Sprockets & Screws will continue to hone their robot by adding new features, refining ex- isting characteristics and testing out their changes.

“Their goal is to fix the mechan- ics, refine their code and then al- so just driving practice,” Mr. Fuller said. “That’s the next three weeks — getting ready.”

After spring break, masks will be optional at school

by TEA TANABURU
DEPUTY MANAGING EDITOR

Starting March 21, mask wear- ing will be optional for Lab community members and guests 5 and older, according to a March 12 email from Director Tori Juhasz. While mask-wearing will be op- tional, individuals must bring a mask to campus in case it’s need- ed.

Individuals who test positive for COVID-19, or are identified as close contacts, are required to wear a mask for 6-10 days. If Lab experiences a COVID-19 outbreak, those exposed will be required to wear a mask.

This change follows an update to the Chicago Department of Public Health on March 3. Community members are encouraged to wear masks while inside and whether to wear a medical-grade or cloth mask, face shield or no mask may be determined by the door settings.

The email was sent on a Satur- day, hours before the Spring Fling door settings.

SHIFITNG POLICY. Students can currently only take off masks when eating, but masks will be optional all day starting March 21.

"I wondered if we’re opening ourselves up for a mass spread of COVID,” English teacher Ian Tay- lor said. "It was pretty even, about 50:50 for wearing masks."

"I was super surprised," Saul Ar- nold, Cultural Union president, said about reading the email. "I’d heard rumblings about it, but I didn’t realize how quickly it was coming. It did feel like a first step to going back to normal, which was cool.”

According to Saul, about half the students there choose to wear masks. "It was pretty even, about 50:50," he said.

Mr. Taylor attended the dance as a chaperone and observed students both with and without masks. "I wore my mask most of the time,” he said. "I thought there were too many students who are still not quite ready, so I kind of kept my mask on for that reason.”

While mask-wearing policies are changing, SHIELD testing will remain available for those unvac- cinated or identified as close con- tacts. Rapid antigen test kits will also be distributed to community members before spring break.

"I want to be optimistic about it but we’ll see about the covid,” Saul said, regarding Lab’s new COVID-19 mitigation strategies. "I feel like it can go to where it was or it can end up being a great thing where people don’t have to wear masks and COVID disasters.”

Mistreated: Colleagues avoid direct conversation

Continued from Page 1

But Micayla Sanders, a former lower school science teacher who left Lab in January 2022, said in an interview with the Midway that in her experience of reporting rac- istic incidents to the administration, the people who are involved are not held accountable.

“These teachers will say the N-word. They will hear about in- cidents of racism and not report it. My colleagues who identify as Black, said. “They will perform in- cidents of racism and think it’s OK, you know what I mean? It is the lack of accountability at this place that is the problem, rather than anywhere I’ve ever worked at.”

Nadia Owens, a former high school English teacher who left Lab as Black, cited an incident with a white colleague from an 11th-12th grade school year, her third at Lab, that she later said made her feel un- safe. She said the white colleague was in- considerate to human resources, which Ms. Owens said somewhat fixed the situation. She said that she asked, whether colleagues never checked on her and acted as if the incident “nev- er happened.” Ms. Owens said that among other reasons, her interac- tions with this colleague contrib- uted to her decision to leave her position at Lab in June 2021.

Ms. Owens, said, “I also very much felt like once the issue was over, that the school kind of aban- doned me, kind of left me to fend for myself.”

Another key issue that some fac- ulty of color have expressed is the averse conversation to re- solve professional disagreement. Thomas Toney, the service learn- ing coordinator for nursery to mid- dle school who identifies as Black, said his colleagues sometimes did not extend to him the profession- al courtesy of a direct conversation when they experienced difficul- ties working with him or took is- sue with the DEI conversations he held in class or the books he pur- chased for his curriculum. In an email response to questions Toney wrote that sometimes the DEI conversations were closed to faculty of color until they are brought up by an administrator or a profession- al development workshops oc- curring on the third Wednesday of each month. These workshops are currently organized by Nicole Wil- liams, DEI director.

“For some reasons, colleagues feel like they can’t come directly to me, and I think this is because that’s the large scheme of things very superfi- cial and minor,” Mr. Toney said. "That it rises to, like, ‘Let me call an emergency meeting with the prin- cipal.”

Person D, a current faculty member of color, independent- ly echoed Mr. Toney’s experience. When issues have arisen in the past, Person D felt "gaslighted" by colleagues reporting these issues to the administration rather than seeking resolution through a direct conversation. Person D described having to "be super mindful" of tone, clothing and body language.

“As a faculty of color, I feel un- comfortable having hard conver- sations with my white colleagues,” Person D said, “because they might turn it around and say I was attacking them or being aggressive.”

Middle school principal Ry- an Allen, who identifies as Black, said that he mediated issues of race among faculty about once every two or three weeks in the fall quarter of 2021. A measure to bring forward conversations cen- tered around DEI are profession- al development workshops oc- curring on the third Wednesday of each month. These workshops were currently organized by Nicole Wil- liams, DEI director.

Mr. Allen said that conversations addressing inci- dents involving a racial compo- nent or context can be uncomfort- able. While some parties are will- ing to hold these conversations, others are not.

"As a faculty of color, I feel uncom- fortable having hard conversations with my white colleagues because they might turn it around and say I was attacking them or being aggressive.” — PERSON D

"I think there’s a fear that microaggression, unequal- valued defines them as a person that is racist,” Mr. Allen said. "And so I think that if a person says, ‘Hey, this is a microaggression,’ people are so fearful of being the person that does that. Then, it’s really hard to have a conversation around that microaggression. People don’t want to be labeled or canceled.”

Music teacher Francisco Dean, who identifies as Black, inde- pendently expressed that it is very difficult to have conversations about race at Lab. He wrote in an email response to questions that every category of Lab’s member- ship has contributed to this cul- ture in some manner.

“It’s not just administrators, as some would purport,” Mr. Dean said. “It’s also faculty, staff, stu- dents, parents, whites and non- whites.”

The experiences documented do not reflect those of all faculty of color. Physical education teacher Pete Miller, who has worked at Lab for 25 years, said he has never felt any disrespect from his colleagues in terms of behavior or speech.

He agreed the 2019 “Black Facul- ty Response to Recent Events” let- ter out of solidarity with his col- leagues responding to racial issues at Lab. Physical education teach- er Michael Moons, a Lab alumni- us who has worked at Lab for 31 years, said his colleagues have al- ways treated him with respect.

Some faculty of color are sharing their experiences at Voices of Color at Lab, a faculty affinity group that meets monthly. Its mission is to create a safe space for faculty and staff of color to find solidarity and identity sources of racism policy, and ways in which voices of facul- ty of color are not utilized. Person D has formed a personal support group and has taken opportunities to reach out to new faculty of col- or to ensure they have a support group from the start.

“I am always uncomfortable at Lab,” Person D said. “There is not one moment when I do not think about who I am and whether I belong here.”

THURSDAY, MARCH 10, 2022
U-HIGH MIDWAY • UNIVERSITY HIGH SCHOOL, CHICAGO

RECREATING HISTORY. On March 4, senior Andrew Swiniger “stabs” English teacher Colin Rennert-May, dressed as Julius Caesar, with a prop knife as a crowd of students looks on. For the first time since 2013 the famous assassination of the Roman emperor was recre- ated in Café Lab. Students in the middle program dressed in togas.
SAT changes: Shorter, adaptive and virtual

by LUCIA KOURI

No. 2 pencils, grids of multiple choice letters and three hours in a testing room. Many juniors and seniors have personal experience taking what has historically been one of the most prominent national standardized tests — the SAT. Soon, however, the SAT won't look the same as most remember.

The College Board has revealed plans for a new format of the test, and while many underclassmen are anticipatory, others wish the changes had come sooner.

In January, the College Board announced that starting in 2024, the SAT will be fully virtual. While the test will still be offered in person at testing centers, it has been shortened to two hours, with scores made available within days. Calculators will be permitted for the entirety of the math section, and reading passages will be reduced in length with only one question per passage.

Perhaps most significantly, the test will be adaptive, meaning that students will be presented with different sequences of questions depending on the accuracy of their preceding responses. If a student answers correctly, the following questions will be more difficult. According to college counselor Patty Kovacs, there are still many questions to be answered regarding how the test-taking will play out over the following years. She predicts that the new system will benefit the College Board above all.

“The benefit is that they don’t have to write as many new test questions. Constructing the test is one of the most expensive things about any standardized test,” Ms. Kovacs said. “The technology will allow them to reorder, and to pull from a variety of different silos.”

Ninth graders such as Paola Almeda, who will have the option to take the new form of the SAT, are relieved not only that the test will be offered in a shorter form but also that the test may still be optional to submit at many colleges should they decide to take it. To Paola, the ability to take a test virtually with less dense reading sections makes the idea of a standardized test much more approachable.

“It’s nice — I feel really relieved now that it is easier,” Paola said. “It takes off a lot of the stress if it’s optional too.”

Ninth grader Hana Javed, who struggles with written tests, finds the switch particularly impactful. And classmate Ac Ma, who has multiple learning disabilities, feels that a test taking approach feels, that the new format is more manageable.

“I’m happy,” Ac said. “I’ve been stressed about the SAT since fifth grade.”

Rohan Chadha, a junior who has already taken the SAT, has mixed feelings about the timing of the changes.

“It is annoying for everyone like for the juniors and seniors that already have taken it,” Rohan said. “But kind of do like the idea. I feel like new students are getting to take it next juniors, like the upcoming classes.”

According to Rohan, these changes were a long time coming, especially given that the SAT has made some of the same components of the college application process. If nothing else, the changes may be the first of many changes to the SAT in coming years.

“Now they might keep modifying their tests in order to keep on making money,” Rohan said. “I think they probably do everything they can to stay relevant.”

Though many students are optimistic about the changes, Ms. Kovacs says some big important questions still remain. Namely, many are wondering what these changes will mean for the top college main competitor — the ACT — who have been working on their own version of change for some time. Others wonder how students who have already taken the SAT in the past years will be affected. Whether the new format will offer a more equitable experience for students with learning disabilities. Importantly, the question still remains as to whether testing will be weighed differently in college admissions setting as a consequence of the new format, or whether theSAT will act as a benchmark in the vastly changing college climate.

“If the entire public system of testing is moving forward, how soon will we see it?” New York, Texas, Ohio and then the rest of the country?” Ms. Kovacs said. “This is at a moment of peak change, not just in testing in college admissions.”

ARTSFEST

Ninth graders Xander Maxy and Chip Moeheke intend to focus while shaping their clay on the spinning wheel in the Pottery Wheel Throwing workshop led by art teacher Brian Wildeeman.

JUMP INTO ARTSFEST

Sophomore Brandon Chang participates in the Chicago Boyz Acrobatics team’s gymastics performance during the ArtsFest opening ceremony in Upper Kovler Gymnasium on Feb. 24 for ninth graders and sophomores.

The group’s routine was interactive, allowing students to engage in many aspects during the group’s performance. Chicago Boyz Acrobatics team also led the Double Dutch and Super Rappers workshop, the opening ceremony marked the beginning of U-High’s annual ArtsFest activity, where students embark on a day full of workshors and arts activities.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Take-home COVID-19 tests to be distributed

Students will receive two rapid antigen test kits March 9 in advisory, so they can take a COVID-19 test before returning to class from spring break. Employees will also receive tests.

The tests are intended to be used March 20 and 21.

“We are hoping that students will take one test on Sunday after spring break and one on Monday morning, before they come back to Lab,” assistant principal Zilka Rivera-Vazquez said.

— AMY BEN

Students can submit social justice session

The form to submit a workshop proposal for Social Justice Week is open and will accept submissions until March 25.

Social Justice Week is dedicated to bringing the Lab community together by spreading awareness on various issues through workshops. This year’s theme is BELONG (Begin, Equity, Lean, Organize, Narrow, Gratitude).

Program leader Natalie Huliquis, senior, sees capacity to have meaningful discussion regarding current events and social injustices.

“The political climates are always changing, and this year right now as the US is going on as well as other things, there is a lot of opportunity in engaging in conversations that we might never have been able to have had in the past,” Huliquis said.

— KATIE SASAMOTO-KUISHU

Ethics bowl team makes it to regional

During a one-match playoff on Feb. 25 to determine the Illinois winner of the National High School Ethics Bowl Competition, U-High’s team took home the National School after receiving winning scores. They received an invitation to compete in the national competition at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill in early April. After not making it to the 2021 national competition, co-captain Zachary Gin, a senior, thought the team might have another chance.

The team, comprised of 10 students in grades 9-11, began competing at the end of February, and since then they have participated in two competitions.

In the state competition, half of the members will act as witness-exhibits for the case and the other half will act as current attorneys, according to co-captain Lena Stole, who runs the club with juniors Olivia Jesse and Staci Kana. The top six teams will advance to finals and the winner will go on to regionals.

— JOAQUIN FIGUEROA

Mock Trial will attend Illinois Invitational

The Mock Trial team will compete in the Illinois State Bar Association Invitational via Zoom at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign March 11.

Seniors and freshmen comprised of 10 students in grades 9-11, began competing at the end of February, and since then they have participated in two competitions.

In the state competition, half of the members will act as witness-exhibits for the case and the other half will act as current attorneys, according to co-captain Lena Stole, who runs the club with juniors Olivia Jesse and Staci Kana. The top six teams will advance to finals and the winner will go on to regionals.

— JOAQUIN FIGUEROA

Senior selected for state academic team

Two cross country and track and field athletes, Amanda O’Donnell and Zachary Gin, were selected to represent U-High at the Illinois State academic team.

The team recognizes academic and extracurricular achievements for senior student athletes.

One girl and one boy were nominated from each of the 800 IHSA participating schools. Student-athletes were required to have a minimum 3.5 GPA on a 4.0 scale and be regarded as exceptional individuals.

IHSA-sponsored varsity sports and academic teams were comprised of thirty high school seniors. IHSA members are required to represent U-High, they had to fill out an application.

They represent the top 4% of applicants from a pool of about 1,600

— LOUIS AUXENFANS

Juniors selected for state academic team

Two cross country and track and field athletes, Amanda O’Donnell and Zachary Gin, were selected to represent U-High at the Illinois State academic team.

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— LOUIS AUXENFANS
Self censorship threatens free press

As the Midway sees it…

Inconsistent Olympic doping rules are unjust
by SOPHIE BAKER
REPORTER

After testing positive for three substances used to treat heart conditions, one of which has been banned by global anti-doping offi- cials, 15-year-old Russian figure skater Kamila Valieva was allowed to compete in the Winter Olympics at the last minute. The minor differences in these cases — and of many anti-doping organizations, but also within those organizations themselves — are easily exacerbated. Thus, we find our desire for acceptance to be at odds with our desire, our imperative, to speak truth to power. While our teachers, administrators, and peers probably couldn’t get us expelled simply for criticizing them, their reactions to student activism can — and do — affect us, be feelings of guilt, hesitation or embarrassment. We’ve all had the experience of sitting in a classroom, listening to our classes, or even the teach- ers, take one of our articles to task. It’s not uncommon to learn that our community holds us to a high enough standard that work is worthy of critique, we’d be lying if we said it didn’t force us to work harder.

As the Midway staff hope to extend our platform to you, welcoming guest columnists and further diversifying our outputs, but beyond that, we see you take a leap of faith. That fundraiser, that cam- paign you’ve always wanted to run, now is the time to do it. It’s undoubtedly nerve wracking, but we are an undeniably cour- ageous community. The Midway is in our capacity to ques- tion, challenge and overcome. It’s only that students who are being targeted for their desire to find out more about us, our desires, or our fears begin to ask questions: Do we find our desire for acceptance to be at odds with our desire, our imperative, to speak truth to power. While our teachers, administrators, and peers probably couldn’t get us expelled simply for criticizing them, their reactions to student activism can — and do — affect us, be feelings of guilt, hesitation or embarrassment. We’ve all had the experience of sitting in a classroom, listening to our classes, or even the teach- ers, take one of our articles to task. It’s not uncommon to learn that our community holds us to a high enough standard that work is worthy of critique, we’d be lying if we said it didn’t force us to work harder.

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W hen I walked into my SAT testing room, I already knew nearly everything that would be on the test. I didn’t just know the specific content of the test; I could predict the phrasing of the questions, the tricks that would be employed to show me off and trick me. Knowing this would maximize my chance at getting a good score. All of this was because my parents could afford a private tutor who taught me everything I needed and gave me invaluable practice tests to master. My study had nothing to do with learning reading, writing or critical thinking skills, and everything to do with learning how to game the SAT.

My experience suggested that standardized tests can only measure how good you are at taking that particular standardized test. Students who come from families with an annual income greater than $200,000, have a one-in-five chance of scoring above 1,400, according to the Hechinger Report, a nonprofit journalism organization covering education. In comparison, students from poor families have a one-in-50 chance. Practicing the test even once has a substantial positive effect on the overall score, according to the College Board’s internal data. A testing-based college admissions system ultimately serves to help students with wealthy families get into elite colleges and pursue their wealth.

Primarily due to existing socioeconomic inequalities in American society, tests also overwhelmingly favor white, male applicants according to sociologist Joseph A. Soares. Although this results from circumstances outside the test, the inequality raises questions about the validity of tests which rely on the false assumption of equality. Thus, university claims of valuing diversity are undermined by the inequality that puts in question the validity of tests that eliminate standard test scores. Given the current state of the assumption of standardized tests as the gold standard is reasonable.

Imagine that a highly selective college accepted 2,000 students with perfect grade point averages but four below average standardized test scores. Given the current state of the SAT and ACT, with questions that are mostly fact, I would not blame standardized tests for being faulty. I would question those grade point averages and wonder why the admissions committee chose not to select those applicants who achieved perfect scores. I doubt this hypothetical scenario would ever occur, but without standardized tests, we would not even know when it did occur. That’s disheartening to say the least.

Now it seems that the current disparity between grade point averages and standardized test performance may be addressed by reforming standardized tests to more accurately evaluate students. In my experience, some of the SAT reading comprehension questions are written in a confusing manner, and the ACT science section seems to be especially susceptible to test-taking strategies. These issues are considered by many to be seen whether the newly digitized and shortened SAT will be an improvement.

At current state, standardized tests are an essential but imperfect component of the college application process. American colleges should recognize the value of standardized tests and thereby incentivize the development of test-taking strategies to be seen whether the newly digitized and shortened SAT will be an improvement. Standardized tests should remain as objective pillars in college application selection processes.

Advocates for mandatory testing policies claim that colleges need objective measures to determine college readiness. In my experience, some of the SAT reading comprehension questions are written in a confusing manner, and the ACT science section seems to be especially susceptible to test-taking strategies. These issues are considered by many to be seen whether the newly digitized and shortened SAT will be an improvement. At current state, standardized tests are an essential but imperfect component of the college application process. American colleges should recognize the value of standardized tests and thereby incentivize the development of test-taking strategies to be seen whether the newly digitized and shortened SAT will be an improvement.

I’m optimistic that the concordance of standardized tests and grade point averages will reflect the assessment of attained education.
Senior diver sets records, supports teammates

by COLLIN LESLIE ASSISTANT EDITOR

When senior Will Maharry won the IHSA state diving championship on Feb. 19, he became the first U-High diver to qualify for state and broke his own record in the process. But according to his coach, Darlene Novak, Will wasn’t focused on himself. To her, it seemed like he was more interested in congratulating his teammate, sophomore David Ren, who finished in second.

That’s who Will is.

Will had a historic season, setting several records, breaking them again, and participating in the state meet Feb. 26, but what sets him apart, according to his coach and teammate, is his infectious dedication and support for his teammates.

Will said the importance of a strong mentality cannot be overlooked in diving.

“It’s really not very physically hard at all, but if you’re not in the right headspace to do a dive, it’s gonna be bad,” Will said. “Supporting team members is the primary aspect, like being on the pool deck while someone else is doing a dive, more so than giving pointers is just giving them support.”

The emphasis Will places on mental support is obvious, according to David. As a relatively new diver, David credits much of his improvement to Will, who he said pushes and motivates him.

“I was really bad at diving and he told me to just keep trying, to get the same dive over and over again,” David said. “For me, that helped a lot because it just gave me a reason to keep going.”

Will’s dedication is contagious.

“He brings lots of fun energy. Like, every time I practice, he’s always ready to get going,” David said. “He also motivates people, like, to do it again until you get it perfect.”

Ms. Novak said she trusts Will to advise and support his teammates just as she would. According to her, if she does not see someone’s dive at practice, she is confident the advice Will might give is the same as what she would say.

“As a teammate, he’s incredibly supportive,” Ms. Novak said. “Because of the knowledge he has of diving and has acquired, he can help his teammates.”

While Ms. Novak is confident in Will’s ability to coach, Will said he does not think he would have gotten to where he is now without his coach’s help.

“I’m just proud to have gotten that good. I also think a portion of the credit has to be given to Coach Dar,” Will said, referring to Ms. Novak. “She really has helped me improve a lot this season.”

Will’s accomplishments this year come after taking two years off from diving. He quit after his freshman year because, he said, he just did not feel the same as when he started in middle school at Homewood-Flossmoor Community High School in Flossmoor, Illinois.

“It just seemed really stressful for me, honestly,” Will said. “The social elements that had been present when I started was kind of gone, because as opposed to having 10 other people there were like two other people there.”

According to Ms. Novak, Will had to learn a collection of new dives this year to prepare him for a trip to the state competition. Learning flips is something that Will has always liked. His trampoline and tumbling background is beneficial for diving.

“The main thing that I kind of got into was trampolining and tumbling,” Will said. “I kind of taught myself how to do a lot of the flips there, but at that point, I’d also already been doing diving for a while, so those skills kind of translated and built off each other.”

Ms. Novak believes Will’s attitude and mindset will take him far in anything he decides to do.

“He’s courageous. Fearless. He’s just absolutely fearless, and he has a desire to try new things,” Ms. Novak said. “He enjoys the accomplishment of learning something new, and then mastering it.”

“Mr. Weiner said. “I forget that I have the keys community and giving back to Lab,” Ms. Jenkins said. “And just trying to foster kids who want to not just play basketball, but you know, learn sports and I really am an advocate for kids playing sports.”

Ms. Jenkins said she still keeps in touch with players who have graduated and feels she’s had a positive impact on many of the girls. She wants the girls on her team to learn how to be leaders and has enjoyed watching many of them develop from new players in ninth grade to senior leaders.

“Your life on the court and off the court is just so similar to how you play basketball, in it’s learning accountability and trust, and ultimately love, you know, loving each other,” Ms. Jenkins said. “And do whatever you need to do on that court to succeed and just have a heart and you have a goal and you set to do something.”

Like Mr. Weiner, Ms. Jenkins said the school today still feels much like the school she attended 13 years ago. Though she does note that there have been advancements in the opportunities and support for girls sports teams at Lab.

Though not much has changed about the school, from the faces of the kids to the gym building itself, these graduates certainly have changed, even if sometimes they forget.

“It’s different being here as an adult,” Mr. Weiner said. “I forget that I have the keys to things. I’m like, ‘Oh yeah, like, let me get that.’ Kids are like asking me for stuff. It’s surreal.”

Giving back to Lab, former U-High athletes coach where they once played

by AN NGO CITY LIFE EDITOR

“Honestly, Lab is kind of in a time capsule,” Ellen Weiner, an assistant coach for both the boys and girls soccer teams, said.

Laboratory Schools alumni, like Mr. Weiner, who have returned to the school to coach the sports teams they once played on, now work alongside many of the teachers who they knew during high school.

Mr. Weiner and girls basketball head coach Alexis Jenkins returned to Lab in hopes of passing on the lessons they learned through playing sports at Lab.

This past summer, Mr. Weiner returned to the Laboratory Schools to work in the athletics department, 14 years after graduating from U-High in 2007. Many of the faces at Lab have remained familiar to him, like Sharon Hooninger and Terry Shark, who both worked at Lab while he was in school.

During his time at Lab, Mr. Weiner played on the soccer team coached by Michael Matuses, who is still a PE teacher at Lab. Similarly, Ms. Jenkins graduated from U-High in 2009 and was coached by PE teacher Meghan Janda.

When Ms. Jenkins found herself back home in Chicago with the opportunity to coach a U-High basketball team, she happily took it with the hope of giving back to the team she played on. After she graduated from U-High, she played basketball at Illinois State University.

“Definitely enjoy giving back to the community and giving back to Lab,” Ms. Jenkins said. “And just trying to foster kids who want to not just play basketball, but you know, learn sports and I really am an advocate for kids playing sports.”

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Students build friendships through fantasy basketball

by ETHAN SWINGER

The ideal season comes down to the wire. Only 20 seconds remain in the head-to-head match. Nearby, tied, the numbers on the scoreboard rise and fall. The blinding light from their phones flashes on their faces. The seconds tick down to the end.

In an instant, the last game this season epitomizes the excitement and magnitude of the fantasy basketball season.

This intense scenario epitomizes the excitement participating in a fantasy basketball league brings, and the hopefulness of participating in the games, Eddie Christensen, senior, who participated in the tournament. He already entered the final score was separated by just a point. In an instant, the last game this season epitomizes the excitement and magnitude of the fantasy basketball season.

Fantasy basketball, a game enjoyed by many U-High students, said he recommends choosing undervalued and undervalued players who can have a breakout year.

Even if you do not have a large interest in basketball, William Meyer, a junior who is also in a fantasy basketball league with other U-High students, appreciates how fantasy sports can bring people together and spur conversation.

PADDLE POWER. Returning a hit, senior Johnny Patras plays against classmate Theo Arado during a ping pong tournament at the end of the year. Arado lost to Patras 12-10 in a winner-take-all match. Patras is frequently played casually in the lounge, and overall, just being something to look forward to and contribute to the positive atmosphere has been just really awesome. The single-elimination bracket Eddie randomized pits 36 seniors and faculty members against each other. Matches between contest-ants will be played during open periods and lunch, and the overall winner will receive a $50 Amazon gift card.

Senior Aaron Kim is competing in the tournament. He already enjoys playing ping pong during his free periods and looks forward to playing against his peers. It’s always nice to be in some of these tournaments because, obviously there’s a record, but also, you see a lot of people who normally wouldn’t be playing ping pong, joining in, and you know, being able to play with them and talk to them,” Aaron said. “We kind of just bring half of the class together.”

For Eddie, the tournament was relatively easy to organize, especially because this is the second one he has arranged this school year.

“We basically just threw up a post on Schoology asking people to sign up,” he said. “Just kind of went with how many people signed up. We got about 40 signups the first time, and this time around we have it.”

One way this tournament that differs from the first one is some faculty will now be participating. Science teacher Francisco Saez is set to play a match against fellow science teacher Kevin Nihill, and his strategy is already developed. “The result is just being a little bit more defensive and trying to improve the defense. Yeah, that’s my only chance, you know with Dr. Nihill, just to have a good defense against him,” Mr. Saez said. “And maybe he’s a little bit off. Then I have a small chance.”

Whether it’s a close game against Dr. Nihill or a casual match between two senior peers, over the next few weeks the senior lounge is sure to be ringing with the sound of pingpong, bringing more students and faculty together ever-ey match.

FANTASY FRIENDS. U-High students use platforms like the ESPN app to track a fantasy basketball league with friends. Then based on the real-life perfor-mances of players in games, taking into account statistics such as points per game, rebounds, assists, and steals.

According to junior Henry Koyner, who plays fantasy basket-ball with other U-High students, each week participants are pit-ched head-to-head against each other. Whichever has the most points at the end of the week wins. At the end of the season, the win-ner is determined by the team with the best winning percentage. Participants in fantasy basketball value the skill and strategy that comes with drafting players manually.

Ameya Deo, a junior, who participated in both fantasy basket-ball and football leagues, uses a specific strategy for drafting players to a team, which involves taking numerous factors into account to ensure an optimal lineup. “Are there any trades happen-ing? Is there any off-season sign-ing that’s going on?” Ameya said. “And then once you have that, you should have a pretty good idea of maybe your first- and second-round pick of who you want and who you realistically think you’re going to get.”

Nathan Kilkus, a junior who plays fantasy basketball with other U-High students, said he recommends choosing undervaluated and undervalued players who can have a breakout year.

Although fantasy basketball cer-tainly involves skill, Henry believes it is not necessary to follow sports closely or research players. Fanta-sy sports certainly do not need to be a large commitment.

“It’s really, like you don’t have to be super into sports,” Henry said. “I certainly wasn’t, in the first cou-ples of fantasy basketball leagues that I was in, where you sort of drafted the team and you may not be a big fan of any of your players, but other-wise, it’s very low commitment.”

Senior Eddie Christensen is organizing his second ping pong tournament this year with that ex-act purpose in mind. With both se-niors and faculty members par-ticipating in the games, Eddie hopes the tournament will provide much-needed excitement and competition.

“I see this tournament as very competitive and oppositional. But I think that somehow brings people together and makes it so fun.” — EDWARD CHRISTENSEN

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Top Picks:
1. Nikola Jokic: Denver Nuggets
Averages: 25.8 points, 157 rebounds, 8 assists, 1.4 steals, 33.1 minutes
2. Joel Embiid: Philadelphia 76ers
Averages: 29.7 points, 11.1 rebounds, 4.5 assists, 1.0 steals, 32.9 minutes
3. LeBron James: Los Angeles Lakers
Averages: 28.9 points, 8.0 rebounds, 6.1 assists, 1.6 steals, 36.7 minutes
4. Giannis Antetokounmpo: Milwaukee Bucks
Averages: 29.4 points, 13.1 rebounds, 6.0 assists, 1.0 steals, 32.8 minutes

Even if you do not have a large interest in basketball, William Meyer, a junior who is also in a fantasy basketball league with other U-High students, appreciates how fantasy sports can bring people together and spur conversation.

“It’s just something that we can all do together, it’s something that you can talk about with people,” William said. “If you don’t know what to talk about you can always bring up your fantasy team and talk about how your players are performing. It’s a shared value that you are able to connect with peo-ple about.”

by WILLIAM TAN

A quick flick of the wrist sends a small white ball spiraling over a long table, the hollow pinging of racket-to-ball increasing in fre-quency and magnitude as two players hit back and forth over the net. This is the sound of table tennis.

More commonly known as ping pong, the game is fast and fun and is frequently played casually in the senior lounge. But for some seniors, ping pong has become an es-sential part of their school life cul-ture, more than just a casual pas-time.

With the senior lounge design-at-ed as its home base, the game of ping pong has evolved to be-come a means of connecting with classmates as a daily outlet to de-stress and have fun.

Senior Eddie Christensen is organizing his second ping pong tournament this year with that exact purpose in mind. With both seniors and faculty members participating in the games, Eddie hopes the tournament will provide much-needed excitement and competition.

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Decoding the metaverse: Key questions answered

With Facebook changing its name to Meta, countries announcing virtual embassies and teenagers making millions of dollars developing virtual land, the metaverse is the newest buzzword taking over the tech space. The potential applications in business, gaming, education and investing excite many. But will this idea remain a Silicon Valley fever dream, or is it the future of the internet?

by SEBÖK OTTO
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The metaverse is a decentralised society, which allows users to access computers, the metaverse places users directly in them. This allows users to "live" essentially any experience through avatars or virtual representations of people. Like the internet, the metaverse does not consist only of a single service or company. Rather, the term describes the totality of experiences and services in virtual or augmented reality.

Why should I be excited?

The metaverse has a multitude of uses. Microsoft invested heavily in the gaming industry, most recently through its $68.7 billion acquisition of Activision Blizzard. The metaverse will revolutionise video games as they become more immersive, realistic and fun to play.

The company is focusing on making working from home a more viable option for everyone. Microsoft’s vision for the metaverse includes office spaces, schools and productivity-related software, all in virtual reality. Bill Gates even claimed that most business meetings would occur through the metaverse in two to three years.

The metaverse could also be a gateway for people to gain new, previously inaccessible experiences like traveling the world, attending digital festivals, socializing with new people, reliving historical events among other interesting applications. The latter is what Meta (formerly Facebook) is focused on developing. The unparalleled accessibility of these experiences could revolutionise education.

Another reason some people are rooting for the metaverse is the opportunity for money to be made with virtual land. Billions of dollars, cryptocurrency investment, stocks for metaverse companies and more.

Why are companies excited?

Because the metaverse is completely immersive, companies involved in its development will be able to harvest data on every aspect of your life, from business to entertainment. This also includes data on your physical movements as virtual reality headsets will come with hand (and eventually foot) trackers to register real-world movements. This data can be useful for companies and governments, primarily hyper-targeted marketing. The all-encompassing access that companies and governments will have into personal lives triggers privacy and security concerns in some experts and consumers.

Does the metaverse exist today?

No, not exactly. Although softwares like Zoom may seem like an example of the metaverse, that's not quite it. By definition, the metaverse must be immersive and 3D. Gaming is where the metaverse is most developed. Major companies have been pouring money into developing VR gaming as consumer graphic chips become more powerful and VR technology improves. Games like Roblox already have VR modes, social opportunity and robust in-game economies.

The all-encompassing accessibility of these experiences could revolutionise education.

Who owns the metaverse?

By definition, no one company can own the metaverse just like no one can own the internet. Massive companies like Google control large swathes of total traffic, and the same may become true for the metaverse.

Is the metaverse inevitable?

The metaverse is in its earliest stages of development, meaning that there's still a lot of uncertainty. Questions over privacy, security, feasibility, climate change and consumer demand means that widespread use of the metaverse is far from reality. Still, technology companies are pouring billions of dollars into overcoming these challenges, making it a serious possibility.


Glossary

Graphical processing unit: A computer chip that renders graphics for display on an electronic device. CPUs act as a sort of engine to process that graphical content on computer or VR screens. All metaverses will rely on GPUs.

Blockchain: The blockchain provides a decentralized solution to verifying ownership of digital assets. The metaverse will require use of the blockchain for all transactions.

Cryptocurrency: A digital currency that is not backed by a centralized authority, such as a government or central bank. Cryptocurrencies will become essential to buy basic digital goods and services in the metaverse.

Artificial intelligence: With all the new data that companies will have access to, AI will become more predictive than ever. With data on physical movements, virtual AI people in the metaverse could quickly become indistinguishable from human users.

3D reconstruction: 3D reconstruction technology, developed by companies like Google and Masterport, allows users to scan real-world environments into digital ones. Using this technology, houses, stadiums and even cities will be realistically transformed into virtual space.

Augmented vs. virtual reality: AR places digital objects into the real world using a lens, like a phone camera. VR is an immersive experience that transports the user into a digital world using a headset. Both are part of the metaverse, but VR is much more immersive.

Internet of things: The IoT is a network of physical objects which connect to the internet. "Smart" products — speakers, thermostats, TVs, phones, refrigerators — are all examples of the IoT.
Metaverse investments offer big wins, bigger losses

by CAROLINE HOHNER
FEATURED EDITOR

The term metaverse keeps popping up in headlines, tweets and conversations, but what do specific instances of it actually look like today? In order to talk about the metaverse as a whole, it is important to look at some of the preliminary offerings. Here are overviews of four different virtual worlds with varying purposes and uses. Each brings users to enter virtual worlds with varying purposes and uses. Each brings users to enter virtual worlds with varying purposes and uses.

Metaverses ought to stay decentralized .

by ERICH RAUMANN
CONTENT MANAGER

Imagine a world where you can chat together with friends on a tropical beach, party in the Palace of Versailles, fly or fight dragons. Envision companies holding board meetings on the moon with people from across the world, in the ability for educators, architects and artists to conjure up buildings using different prototypes from nothing. This is just a small sampling of what if one Metaverse might be.

The platform that would lead to a democratic revolution: its primary component is social interaction. Social media platforms like Facebook, YouTube and Twitter routinely increase engagement at the expense of mental health. The only reason these companies are still around despite scandal after scandal is that they have a complete monopoly over online social interaction, with over 70% of social media users subscribing to these companies. This leaves disgruntled users with financial education. I feel like there’s this gamification of investing right now, and it’s doing more harm than good.

“Feel like there’s this gamification of investing right now, and it’s doing more harm than good.” —REBECCA MAXCY, FINANCIAL EDUCATION INITIATIVE DIRECTOR

The world of internet money-making is a bit of a black zone full of lives ruined and fortunes made overnight. The chance, however small, for massive reward often entices people, particularly those without financial education, to invest large amounts of their money into the next big thing. Currently that opportunity is the metaverse. However, it is currently too early, too risky and dubiously legal for high schoolers to be investing in the metaverse.

Investment opportunities on the cutting edge of internet technology are often characterized by a lack of understanding from investors about exactly what the product is, and the metaverse is no different. Lack of information about the technology has driven investment but also apprehension about potential returns. Some tangible ways exist to invest in the metaverse. Companies making processes, like AMD and Qualcomm, have products that would be necessary for the functioning of the metaverse. Therefore, these companies have the potential to see stock share prices increase if the development of the metaverse continues.

Microsoft, Meta and even Roblox have been heavily involved, both verbally and monetarily, to create a footprint in the metaverse. Meta has just released its $10 billion in metaverse-related development, and Microsoft purchased Zidoo for a large sum of money that they believe will “provide building blocks for the future.” These companies’ involvement in the metaverse space could improve their performance if it develops properly.

A variety of less established projects have also cropped up in the metaverse space. The Sandbox. Both of these projects allow users to buy virtual plots of land, which are secured as NFTs on blockchain. These investments are much different from conventional investment methods, so it’s hard to know how they’ll do. While some metaverse investments remain in this state, financial educator Rebecca Maxcy, the founder of Financial Education Initiative, cautions people to think before they invest. Ms. Maxcy recommends that the average person be a passive investor with a diversified portfolio. Avoid the temptations of purchasing single stocks and believes the same holds true for metaverse investments. There are also concerns about the involvement of young people in making these digital investments. Ms. Maxcy said, “I don’t think kids should be investing like this. If they want to pay money for virtual real estate, they should get financial education. I feel like there’s this gamification of investing right now, and it’s doing more harm than good.”
Dance enriches and transforms lives
by AMY REN

REPORTER
With a raised hand, glittering costume and bells around her feet, junior Zara Baig enchanted her audience through her gestures, expressions and movements. For hours, she and two others danced for their graduation, switching between solo and ensemble performances.

2022 is designated as the “Year of Chicago Dance.” The citywide, yearlong focus on dance is the first initiative of its kind and will include dance performances and aims to encourage Chicago’s dance industry to address critical issues facing dancers and their field.

U-High is home to several dancers, but they don’t work on a standard program to learn more about dance. They’ve been dancing for years, and continue to invest time and effort in their craft.

Sophomore Celine Deroit has danced since it was first, it nevertheless has lived up to many viewers’ expectations. While slow-starting and perhaps unseasoned glow when the hazy blue light hits it at just the right angle, glitter glistens on her cheekbones, and bells around her feet, junior Zara Baig has cemented the role of Rue’s drug dealer and friend, Fez, seems to be more in line with an action movie than an accurate portrayal of teenage drug dealers.

While some might argue that “Euphoria” does not have to be realistic in order to get its point across, its primary message is often lost in the swirls of glitter and high-speed car scenes. While season one tackled dense issues not usually addressed in other shows, it often stays too far from its original theme addressing the perils of addiction, instead presenting story elements such as cop chases, evading drug sales, and un-necessary romance to keep viewers entertained.

The excessive violence laden throughout season 2 can distract from within if you really want to be a good storyteller. You have to try and empathize with others through Kathak. The root word, “Katha,” actually means “storytelling,” and Kathak focuses on exactly that. “The main purpose of a story, whether that is about love, sadness, gods, things like that,” she said. “Facial and hand expressions, as well as gestures, are really important to help portray the story.”

Zara emphasized how critical understanding the story behind a dance is. “You have to really understand the story from within if you really want to be a good storyteller. You have to try and empathize with others through Kathak. The root word, “Katha,” actually means “storytelling,” and Kathak focuses on exactly that. “The main purpose of a story, whether that is about love, sadness, gods, things like that,” she said. “Facial and hand expressions, as well as gestures, are really important to help portray the story.”

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Dance has enriched and transformed the lives of these four students, and although much of the city won’t see the months of preparation leading up to a performance, “Year of Chicago Dance” is an excellent opportunity to learn more about these artists.

“Euphoria” Season 2 promotes unrealistic standards
by NOA APFELBAUM

HEALTH & WELLNESS EDITOR

Her eyes gleam with foiled eye shadow and contrasted colors in her tousled hair. Sparkles embedded in her eye’s inner corner cast an indescribable glow when the hazy blue light hits it at just the right angle. Glitter glistens on her cheekbones, and bells around her feet, junior Zara Baig has cemented the role of Rue’s drug dealer and friend, Fez, seems to be more in line with an action movie than an accurate portrayal of teenage drug dealers.

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“Euphoria” Season 2 promotes unrealistic standards
"Being in theater keeps me motivated to work on it, because I know that everything has to come together. It's just something that I really love, and that's why I keep doing it."

— INGA DOMENICK, SENIOR

"She has a lot of really cool costume designs that I think she was able to showcase well in "SET." She really cares into the design of the costumes and kind of like making sure that each one fits each actor and, like, fits the role they're going to play."

This year, as head of the SET board and theater manager, Inga was responsible for the timing of rehearsals and production and oversight almost everything.

"As head, I have to make sure that everything goes to schedule," Inga said. "I also have to create that schedule as well.

Lucia Ambrosini, the faculty adviser who works with SET, has worked with Inga since she was in ninth grade. According to Mrs. Ambrosini, Inga developed her time-management skills well.

"You have to have a calendar view of something, and you have to be able to organize not only for the entire time period, but you have to organize weekly," Mrs. Ambrosini said. "And then, you have to organize what happens that day, and see from day to day that you are able to get to your goals. That's a very important aspect she's learned."

Additionally, Mrs. Ambrosini noted Inga's strong communication skills.

"In order to become a strong leader, you have to be able to communicate things that are needed, whether it's something that's needed in the moment or overall picture, or something that's needed next week," Mrs. Ambrosini said.

According to Mrs. Ambrosini, Inga took on the SET need- to-be performed over Zoom last year from day to day. So people on the crew, you know, you get to know them pretty well."

"Butter" portrays mental health struggles of high school students

New film aims to positively impact teenagers and address social issues

by AUDREY PARK

California activist Julia Bram remembers a day six years ago when her brother, Paul Kaufman, said he wanted to visit and tell her about his latest project. He came over with a well thought out, striking presentation, depicting what would be the family's next passion project.

Mr. Kaufman, winner of the Canadian Screen Award and an Emmy Award, adapted the book "Butter" for the screen, which he also produced and directed. Released in theaters on Feb. 25, "Butter" was inspired by the young adult novel by Eric Jade Lange.

The movie was filmed in 2020, with a small crew and cast. In order to make a difference in the world, who wanted to promote kindness and who wished to advocate for mental health, she said. The process also entailed ensuring the movie was not romanticizing mental health.

"If you see someone different from you, realize they are a person, a human being like you who has feelings, a brother, sister, parent, is a person, like many of the same things you do."

— PAUL KAUFMAN, DIRECTOR

"Butter" was created on a shoestring," she said. "The movie's production was completely independent, and we are really proud of being on budget and on time."

"Butter's Final Meal" is based on a young adult novel by Eric Jade Lange.

After reading the book, Mr. Kaufman said he could personally relate to the topic of mental health discussed as he had two teenagers at the time.

"I wanted the film to have a positive social impact, and I wanted it to be that film specifically helping teens while being entertaining by being funny, too," he said.

After securing the rights of the book, Mr. Kaufman initiated the process of fundraising. Ms. Bram said the process attracted the interest of many people, including cast and crew members, as well as financial support outlets.

"These were people who wanted to help others to identify if a friend needs help, an idea discussed on "Butter's" UK campaign.

"I see someone different from you," he said, "realize they are a person, a human being like you who has feelings, a brother, sister, parent, is a person, like many of the same things you do.""
S

The director:

Kara Tao

The Advanced Journalism students each wrote a story around 300 words long, each focused on a universal theme and a unique individual. Lives in 300 words is a compilation of six of these pieces, showcasing the reporters’ writing and the messages in the narratives.

The director's chair.

They are nervous and smiling, giddy even.

rector’s chair. Selecting the direction she wanted to go, the on her own, movement and entries and exits wishes of those around her. But even then, was not laid out clearly for her. Choose this make and the people she couldn’t let down.

She was anxious about the quality of talented actors that encircled her director’s

“Whenever you’re ready,” she said.

— NOA APPELBAM

Lives in... something new: Catherine Cheng

She stands over the countertop, head- She talks with her patients in primary care, prescribes medicine and

First assembling, then measuring, she finishes by carefully sprinkling in a new type of

Preparing through her thick-rimmed glasses, she crosses the orange-infused breath off

And day by day, she wakes up to drop her kids off at school. Then she drives to the clinic she works at. She has nearly perfected her

Catherine Cheng

“Always try something new,” she says.

She jots down a few notes, ingredients, art supplies.

— ETHAN SWINGER

...SLIDERS

Dressing the part:

Linsbert Reynolds

Like every other morning, senior Lins-

He lost soccer first. Lost volleyball, chas- and moments from high school. Through
duals during class to larger projects over the summer, he continued to show aspects of his life when

He no longer cares what others think —

— ADRIANNA NEHME

something new: Ethan Van Ha

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duals during class to larger projects over the summer, he continued to show aspects of his life when

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FAMILY: Nico Ahmed

In the bad matches, there’s no groaning, just a slow deflation, rubbing of foreheads, In the good matches, there’s no cheering, just a little jump up and down, a small celebration.

For Nico, for a few others, it’s far more

— ERICH RAUMANN

Lives in 300 words is a compilation of six of these pieces, showcasing the reporters’ writing and the messages in the narratives.

The Advanced Journalism students each wrote a story around 300 words long, each focused on a universal theme and a unique individual. Lives in 300 words is a compilation of six of these pieces, showcasing the reporters’ writing and the messages in the narratives.
MSI exhibits the artistic potential of Lego blocks

Art of the Brick exhibit garners nostalgia, praise

When most people think about Legos, they think back to their days as children where they used these small, colorful bricks to build their own unique sculptures. Most would not imagine Legos could become a form of visual art. Yet, at the Museum of Science and Industry, crowds gather in the middle of a dark room, looking up and admiring the work of Lego artist, Nathan Sawaya.

The exhibit, open until Sept. 10, emphasizes the expression of emotions through art, specifically Lego bricks. Not only do the two gal- leries of the exhibit bring out these emotions, which are in the end what allows viewers to express their emotions by making their own Lego builds, but the works of one artist, Nathan Sawaya, the artist, has.

The middle of the second gallery holds a small display of six emotion art projects. The viewer to appreciate the creativity found among simple objects in art.

The exhibit opens on Sept. 5, emphasizes the expression of emotions through art, specifically Lego bricks. Not only do the two galleries of the exhibit bring out these emotions, which are in the end what allows viewers to express their emotions by making their own Lego builds, but the works of one artist, Nathan Sawaya, the artist, has.

My first sight of the Legos instantly brought back memories of me making the messiest structures and made me truly appreciate the effort put into the exhibit because of the attention to detail in every piece of art. The exhibition brought out a feeling of joy more than any other emotion. I enjoyed seeing how something so simple, a Lego, can be adapted to make an entire exhibit of art.

For adults who are not members, museum admission is $21.95, and admission into the exhibit is $14 more. The museum does offer free days only requiring paid admission into this exhibit.

The jokes about life at Lab also become a form of visual art. Yet, at the Museum of Science and Industry, crowds gather in the middle of a dark room, looking up and admiring the work of Lego artist, Nathan Sawaya. The exhibit opens on Sept. 5, emphasizes the expression of emotions through art, specifically Lego bricks. Not only do the two galleries of the exhibit bring out these emotions, which are in the end what allows viewers to express their emotions by making their own Lego builds, but the works of one artist, Nathan Sawaya, the artist, has.

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It's OK to moisturize: Guys seek to rethink skin care

by KRISHITA DUTTA

Through face-mask selfies at sleepovers and Glossier pink billboards that feature girls dripping serum under their eyes, the skin care phenomenon is a part of people’s daily lives. Such skin care can be easily oriented toward girls and women, but increasingly, boys and men are targets for a skin care routine, too.

Male students at U-High engage in facial skin care, yet limited to keep their routines at a more hygienic rather than aesthetic level. According to students, this is fueled by a lack of talk about men’s skin care and the presence of feminine connotations of more extravagant facial routines.

Students say they engage with a variety of skin care products and brands to help them feel clean and provide them with a satisfying routine to end their day. According to senior Jasper Billingsley, having a skin care routine helps him to feel more confident.

“I do skin care because it makes me feel good, and when I feel good I feel a lot more confident. I think there is no difference between washing your face and putting on moisturizer, and washing your hair and taking a shower,” Charlie said.

“I feel cleaner and better, but most- ly it’s just for hygienic purposes.”

However, skin care for men in the public discussion — especially in the media and skin care advertisements — isn’t treated the same as skin care for girls at all. According to Charlie, men’s skin care is not talked about enough — and when it is, it’s not done right.

“I think there is a problem with these products that are advertised as so manly, like musky and char- col and such terms, but in reality you destroy your skin,” Charlie said.

“I feel like the industry making men’s skin care products so stereo- typically masculine isn’t helping. It’s not helping the stereotypes surrounding skin care, and it’s not helping your skin either.”

Senior Will Trone has had a sim- ilar experience being disappointed with how men’s products are presented and plan fundraisers. “It’s nice to know that people can come to us with ideas and questions and we can present them to the whole group.” Ashley said. “Everyone’s really open to new ideas and open to listening to each other. It’s nice to have all those ideas ricochet off of each other and just working together.

One of the fundraisers the prom committee facilitated was for the Class of 2022’s Scholarship Fund, where the goal was to receive donations from 50% of the class.

“I don’t know if I’d say it’s stigmat- ical because I also want to have nice skin, but in middle school, when I’d go to the store I would never go to the men’s section of women’s beauty products, go into an entire section of men’s skin care. I feel like the industry making men’s skin care would be. So I just never knew about any of it.”

“I enjoy planning it because I know that night’s gonna be great,” Tarini said. “I know that once it happens and it’s over, the thing I’m going to miss most is the planning process and meeting with these people every week.”

Those who donated received a “Class of 2022” baseball hat.

“We had a couple of days of the week where we would all wear our hats together, so that kind of solidarity among Prom Com is what really allowed us to get our fundraisers to where we’re at because just having everyone on the same page, all having the same spirit and enthusiasm, has been really great,” Tarini said.

Along with fundraising for the class scholarship fund, the com- mittee held a Dippin’ Dot fundraiser to help offset some prom expenses.

“We’re all dedicated to fundrais- ing, and we’re all kind of sup- porting each other and helping each other.” Charlie said. “It’s one of the most rewarding aspects of being on the prom committee.

“The products are geared toward women, which is really stupid because I also want to have nice skin, but in middle school, when I’d go to the store I would never go to the men’s section of women’s beauty products, go into an entire section of men’s skin care.”

“I would say confidence and hygiene go hand in hand for me,” Jasper said. “I’m not overly concerned with my looks, that makes me more confi- dent.”

Similarly, junior Charlie Ben- ton uses skin care as a way to feel cleaner and more confident.

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Melatonin usage is rising: experts push alternatives

by LOUISE AUXENFANS
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

In the hour just before dawn, thoughts are still racing around in your head. With your eyes still wide open, she is on the verge of pulling an all-nighter before the next day. How many melatonin gummies she takes every night has run out.

Melatonin supplement usage has doubled in America over the past decade, according to a study recently published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, and while some U-High students take melatonin to help sleep, others use methods like journaling, reading and staying off electronics before bed to imitate a natural response and practice healthy habits.

Melatonin is a hormone that is primarily produced during low levels of light, like nighttime, to regulate sleep cycles. While melatonin supplements have clinical short-term uses for jet lag or shift workers, Dr. Esra Tasali, associate professor of medicine and director of the Sleep Research Center at the University of Chicago, cautioned taking melatonin supplements is not a cure-all.

"When the secreted hormone levels are low, when you add the supplement, then it can be helpful," Dr. Tasali said. "But when there is too much light in the evening, adding more melatonin is not going to help on a routine basis to help for your sleep issues, in many cases the first recommended use of it." Dr. Tasali said some side effects of taking melatonin are drowsiness, fatigue, or headache.

While melatonin is available over the counter, the long-term effects of melatonin supplements are still unknown. Additionally, because melatonin pill production is not regulated by the Food and Drug Administration, the amount of melatonin content per pill can deviate as much as -33% to +478% from the advertised amount, according to one study.

Instead of taking melatonin pills, Dr. Tasali strongly recommends natural sleep methods, like staying away from electronic devices an hour before sleep because the blue light emitted from screens may suppress melatonin production. Even though Anna takes melatonin supplements, she also tries to implement natural sleep methods like shutting off screens and reading an hour before bed.

Anokha Nathan, a junior, took melatonin occasionally last year, but now journals before going to sleep. "She has a bullet journal to doodle and write her to-do list, and a regular journal to express herself and get down her feelings on paper, which makes her feel relaxed before going to sleep. It's just something that helps me kind of de-stress and get my brain out of this, you know, mindset where I'm like, I gotta solve this problem, or I gotta turn this in on time," Anokha said.

Anokha likes journaling more than taking melatonin because it serves as a natural cue for her to recognize when to sleep.

"It's more low key, you know. It's not kind of like, 'Oh, I have to take this,'" Anokha said. "I feel like it's kind of a nice transition from doing my homework to going to bed, and with taking melatonin I didn't feel that," she said.

Junior Joe Breiter tries to stay off screens half an hour before sleep and stop homework at 10 p.m. in order to rest. He said he developed these habits over the pandemic.

"My sleep habits just sort of deteriorated to the point where I was going to bed at like 2 or 3 a.m. every night," Joe said.

Before falling asleep every night, Joe also sets the app Murmur to record an audio journal as a meditative practice to get down any thoughts or concerns still racing around his head. While high school has a lot of homework, Dr. Tasali reiterated the importance of sleep for cognitive function and academic achievement.

"The same homework that you would be able to do in 20 minutes, you're spending an hour on it, because you're sleep deprived," Dr. Tasali said. "But if you were to get more sleep, it's not a waste of time. It is actually making you more efficient to accomplish the same task in a shorter amount of time."

Joe's suggestion to students: "Don't just have a wake-up alarm, also have a go-to-sleep alarm."

Melatonin usage is rising: experts push alternatives

by RAHANA UNNI
CONTENT MANAGER

Chicken tenders. Cheeseburgers. French fries. Salads. Gummy bears. Alex Cheng looks at the hot lunch and says, "There's a lot of junk food you can eat, but there's also a lot of healthy food."

"Something I would like to change is add the variety. There's not a lot of junk food," Alex said, "so instead of having all the fried food, they offer whole grains, even having popcorn as an alternative.

The cafeteria staff prepares much of the food served in the cafeteria, allowing them to limit the preservatives often seen in processed foods.

"A lot of it is made in-house, and by us doing that — yes, obviously in a cookie there's butter, a muffin there's butter, but there's no preservatives. It's just natural cooking," Mr. Welstead said.

Despite the variety of food options served in the cafeteria, students would like to see more nutritional food options outside of salads.

"There's a lot of junk food you can eat, but there's also a lot of healthy food."

— MAYA MUBAYI

"There's a lot of junk food you can eat, but there's also a lot of healthy food."

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Cafeteria food may sacrifice health for convenience

by LOUISE AUXENFANS
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

"I think the way that it's set up is more convenient to just get chicken and fries is messed up. It's not as accessible due to the lines that accumulate outside certain areas, forcing many to grab something from the fried food section instead.

"I think we need more real food in the cafeteria," sophomore Adam Cherna said. "The way that it's set up to be more convenient to just get chicken and fries is messed up. It's not as accessible due to the lines that accumulate outside certain areas, forcing many to grab something from the fried food section instead."

Others students enjoy the multitude of options provided.

"I think the cafeteria has a lot of different options so you can really decide," se-
TORTURE SURVIVORS SEEK JUSTICE, HEALING

Chicago Torture Justice Center supports victims

by AUDREY PARK
ASSISTANT EDITOR

I t was the summer of 1981. Mark Clements, Black and at the age of 16, was ac-
cused of setting an apartment building on fire, killing four people. There was no evidence, no witnesses. A resident who lived near-
by had told the police they saw Mr. Clements shortly after the incident occurred. He had been living across from the building that had caught on fire. Desperate to blame some-
one, the police officers in charge arrested Mr. Clements. After being brought to the police station, Mr. Clements was beaten by a detect-
ive until he confessed.

An accusation, a coerced con-
fession fabricated by the Chica-
gro Police Department under Jon
Burge’s command, and the col-
or of his skin were enough for Mr. Clements to be convicted on four
counts of manslaughter and sen-
tenced to prison for the rest of his natural life. He would be the sec-
ond Illinois juvenile to receive this sentence. His case was later rein-
vestigated, and Mr. Clements was freed after unjustly spending 28 years in prison.

Fast forward to today, and Mr. Clements stands in front of the Woodlawn Health Center, which the Chicago Torture Justice Center
will be moving into in March. They have outgrown their old Englewood location where they have assisted over 1,000 victims of torture.

“Torture is the legal and mental torture of an individual or group,” Mr. Clements said. “We still want people to have faith in the judicial system. We want people to have faith that torture survivors have justice and that their wrongdoings are accountable.”

The CTJC assists over 1,000 victims and hopes to grow its im-
pact. To accommodate the organi-
ization’s goals, specifically the in-
crease in outreach and staff, the center will move to a bigger loca-
tion in mid-March.

“Still want people to have easy access to our center, includ-
ing those who are nonwealthy, from nonwealthy communities, and are also looking to expand our support,” Mr. Clements said.

“Many of Chicago’s first-genera-
tion Ukrainian immigrants came to the United States as dis-
placed persons’ camps after World War II. The community that was formed in the camps led to the for-
mation of the communities in the United States as well as the forma-
tion of the museum.”

“We are trying to keep their morale up, and then there’s also videos we’re sharing of just incredible courage and bravery, and that is a morale booster amongst us.”

— OLYA HRUSHETS’KYY

SLAVA UKRAINI.

People rally in support outside Sts. Volodymyr and Olha Church, which is across the Ukraine National Museum.

PHOTO BY MATT PETRES

Ukraine’s culture highlighted, preserved at National Museum

by AMON GRAY
ARTS EDITOR

Speakers blare “Slava Ukraini!” in Ukrainian this means “Glory to Ukraine!” Glory to the hero’s confession.

Hundreds of members of Chica-
gro’s Ukrainian Village communi-
came together with supporters on Sunday, Feb. 27, to show sup-
port for Ukraine against Russian invasion. Across the street, people from in and around the communi-
ty came together with the Ukrainian Na-
museum and learn about Ukraine’s history and culture.

Since it was established in 1952, the Ukrainian National Museum has been a cultural hub where members of the Ukrainian Village community teach about their cul-
ture and history. Since the Rus-
sian invasion, the museum has be-
come a place for members of the community to come together and spread awareness about ways to help.

As part of this, the collection, as well as funds for the museum, were do-
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HOMETOWN JUSTICE. Mark Clements stands in front of the Woodlawn Health Center, which the Chicago Torture Justice Center will be moving into in March. They have outgrown their old Englewood location where they have assisted over 1,000 victims of torture. The museum has seen an increase in outreach and staff, and the center will move to a bigger location in mid-March.

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