Community reels from accidental lockdown

Students, faculty felt more prepared after initial alarm

by AUDREY PARK & KABIR JOSHI

Following the Nov. 27 accidental lockdown prompted by human error, the scheduled lockdown occurred as planned. For some students and adults on campus, the unexpected lockdown simulated a real-life situation, preparing students and faculty for the planned one and exposing possible concerns about future lockdown drill procedures.

Juliana Walker was in the bathroom when the alarm sounded on Nov. 27. Junior Juliana Walker was in the bathroom. She had been aware that a scheduled lockdown drill was approaching. However, she still thought the accidental lockdown was a real situation.

When the accidental lockdown alarm occurred Dec. 6 as planned.

Juliana said she felt more comfortable with the scheduled drill because of the accidental one.

“I felt really prepared for the drill,” she said. “Our teacher was going over our strategies, and I still thought the accidental lockdown was a real situation.

Juliana said students know to stay in the classroom in a planned lockdown drill, but in an actual crisis, they might be outside the classroom in places such as the hallway or bathroom.

Juliana said she was planning to leave not knowing what to do,” Juliana said. “There should be more planning in the first place.

“People were much more prepared to do what they were supposed to do, which speaks back to the fact that there is a lot of value in doing these practices in the first place.”

“People were much more prepared to do what they were supposed to do, Ms. Fojtik said. “Which speaks back to the fact that there is a lot of value in doing these practices in the first place.

“If you’re in a classroom, your teacher or adviser would tell you what to do. ‘Hide in the closet, turn off your phones.’ But if you’re in the hallway, you don’t have that guidance and would be left not knowing what to do,” Juliana said. “There should be more instruction because you could be in many different situations and not know what to do.

Similarly, ninth grader Giovanni Nicolai said the “run, hide, fight” instruction could be clarified, although he understands the unpredictability of these situations.

He said, “The accidental lockdown kind of showed me that no one knows what is going on, but the planned one went more smoothly, and I think expectations were clear.”

Juliana said it would also be helpful if the lockdown drill had occurred earlier in the school year because a situation could arise at any point in the school year.

Foreign language Xiaoli Zhou’s History teacher Christine Fojtik said the accidental lockdown felt like a “practice for the practice.”

“People were much more prepared to do what they were supposed to do,” she said. “Our teacher was going over our strategies, and I think expectations were clear.”

Juliana said it would also be helpful if the accidental lockdown had occurred earlier in the school year because a situation could arise at any point in the school year.

Students listen to instructions during the planned lockdown drill on Dec. 6. On Nov. 27, the Historic Campus experienced an accidental lockdown prompted by human error, sending many into panic.

According to Ms. Zhou, the door is the process of being replaced for the upcoming drill.

Ms. Zhou said, “I knew it was going to be replaced, so I just put two desks against the door.”

Optional standardized testing offers flexibility

by AUDREY PARK
Editor-in-Chief

In 2020, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions on continuing-in-person testing, colleges and universities expanded test-optional admission policies.

Most of these institutions extended the option up to the 2024 admissions cycle of longer, with many making the option permanent.

A short list of colleges still require test scores.

High school students face an evolving landscape in the college admissions application process as testing requirements and norms change, eliminating testing pressure for some.

College counselor Abigail Wagner said the pandemic gave colleges and universities an opportunity to see if they could evaluate applicants on other factors aside from their test score.

“Many colleges found that they could see if an applicant was ready for the environment based on just using grades and things like community service,” she said. “So maybe you’re not a great test taker then it gives you the chance to still showcase your other assets.”

For current seniors, Ms. Wagner said she will consider whether or not it is advantageous for a student to submit their test score, typically whether the score falls within the mid-50% range of what the college typically accepts.

As colleges have adopted test-optional policies, students’ participation in standardized tests has decreased.

She said, “If the student has a test score that is below what the college typically admits, it wouldn’t make sense for the student to submit the score because we don’t want to submit something that would drawback from the quality of that student’s application.”

Standardized testing is evolving in other ways, too. Starting in March 2024, the SAT will be digital.

Despite this change, Ms. Wagner said her guidance remains the same for students who decide to test. She encourages students to take the PRAX and a practice ACT to determine which one is better suited for them.

She said, “Whichever of these tests allows you to demonstrate your knowledge, a student should choose that test to go forward in preparing to take whichever that’s preparation on their own or through a tutor, they should plan to take it at least once or twice.”

Max Mathias, a senior who took the SAT, said he was satisfied with his score and plans to submit it to every college he applies to.

He said overall, test-optional admissions are good because students do not have to spend expensive resources to obtain a certain score.

“Still lets students who see it as a plus contribute to their application,” he said. “It can let students who are not strong test-takers emphasize other parts of their application.”

Max said he spent more time on it because one of the more selective colleges he plans to apply to requires a test score.

“I felt I needed a really strong math score because the school has a big emphasis on math,” he said. “I thought that my score was good enough to demonstrate my aptitude, and it was well within the average of the school.”

Junior Nutan Ganigara, who will apply to colleges next year, also took the SAT. Nutan said she plans to retake it because she worries colleges still value standardized testing.

Nutan said, “I fear a college will value a student with a score over another who chooses not to submit, so I want to get a good score.”

Ms. Wagner said she advises students not to compare applications to other students and to make the decision to submit a test score based on a student’s personal strengths and readiness.

“Consider what your best interests are,” she said. “Don’t spend a ton of money and emotional resources to test if it doesn’t feel like a strength of yours because there are plenty of other things you can grow and focus on aside from testing.”
Café Lab adds sustainability practices

New oil disposal system converts waste into fuel by VICTORIA WASHINGTON

Opinion Editor

Among several sustainability measures, Café Lab has installed a new system to recycle cooking oil and promote sustainability. The system has been used to remove oil from the kitchen and bring in clean oil, a process that has simplified waste disposal. It’s “really simple,” he said, pointing up a garden hose, executive chef Jonathan Sherman said.

In the back of the cafeteria there are two silos: one for clean oil and one for dirty oil. Instead of removing and dumping out 400 pounds of oil anywhere, Café Lab provides that oil to Tester Produce trucks for fuel, biodiesel.

Biodiesel is a renewable fuel that can be made from new and recycled oils, including waste oil from restaurants. Using pure biodiesel as an alternative for petroleum diesel can reduce carbon by more than 79%.

“We use it in the kitchen, because we’re not dealing with hot oil,” Mr. Sherman said. “The fryer, thestir fry bar.”

Mr. Sherman encourages mixing up offerings to keep people interested, particularly at the Stir Fry bar.

Jonathan Chen gets stir fry almost every day. He considers it the best option that’s available in the cafeteria because of the fresh options.

“I usually get chicken, teriyaki and garlic,” Jonathan said. “I hadn’t noticed the increase in options because I get the same thing, but it’s nice.”

Yellow and green bins are used to collect food waste for composting, and while most of the work is done behind the service area, cafeteria staff hope to get more of the students involved.

“We’ve worked in the past with the Green Team to educate them on doing an overall composting system for the entire community,” Alicia Calverson, food service director, said. “We’re hoping to re-visit that this year again.”

Mr. Sherman takes pride that all of the bowls and plates are biodegradable. Even though it comes at a higher cost, Mr. Sherman is confident that the lab community is making a difference and doing its part to move in the right direction.

“It’s a stepping process,” Mr. Sherman said. “Instead of sitting here and not doing anything. Of course we want to do more and more, but it’s a stepping process.”

At DEI conference, students learn how to foster inclusivity

by MILO PLATZ-WALKER

Reporter

A group of U-High students are hoping to make an impact on diversity, equity and inclusion programs after they attended the NAIS People of Color Conference, which took place in St. Louis from Nov. 29 to Dec. 2.

Engaging in workshops, discussions and diverse activities such as games, poetry and performances, the students gained valuable insights into fostering DEI in educational environments.

The conference was a meaningful gathering that brought together educators and leaders of color from across the country. The National Association of Independent Schools hosted the event to show support for the organization’s commitment to creating a fair learning environment for all.

Junior Christian Martinez found the event deeply personal and inspiring. “I’ve been fostering a newfound comfort in my identity for some time,” Christian, who identifies as Latinx, said. “The conference was very personal and inspiring. It was definitely a big self-confidence boost, and it made me comfortable with my identity.”

With a theme of “Gateways to Freedom: A Confluence of Truth, Knowledge, Joy and Power,” the conference was used as a platform to foster the outstanding large delegations.

I think a lot of people at Lab are tired of the DEI assemblies, but I think bringing back a lot of the activities we did in SDLC and the People of Color Conference is really going to help everyone be more involved in them. — Olivia Adams, junior

Throughout the conference, participants engaged in workshops and discussions about DEI core identifiers and policy culture. Activities included games, poetry, performances and guided discussions. Students were welcomed into aspects of creating an inclusive academic environment and how to educate others about DEI.

“At first we started with simple handshakes but eventually transitioned to talking about larger topics such as cancel culture and code identifiers,” Christian said. “We got a lot done in our groups and I found it very productive.”

Senior Aishah Adams found that the conference helped her feel more comfortable and seen. “Especially as someone who doesn’t always feel comfortable being one of the Black people in our institution, it really made me feel seen and heard,” said Olivia. “I truly felt like I belonged.”

The attendance students present- ed what they learned about DEI and identifiers to the Lab adults who also attended. The students aimed to recognize the importance of DEI to apply this knowledge to the Lab environment. In particular, Olivia feels this new knowledge can benefit the DEI assemblies at Lab.

“I think a lot of people at Lab are tired of the DEI assemblies, but I think bringing back the big activities we did in SDLC and the People of Color Conference is really going to help everyone be more involved in them.”
**After alarm, attitude must change**

**by CHLOÉ ALEXANDER**

Scrolling through TikTok’s “For You” page, you are bound to come across at least one video about University High School. A girl or a guy might be talking about the school, their favorite class, or an academic topic. In my opinion, these videos can be harmful and perpetuate harmful stereotypes.

There are a multitude of reasons why these videos are dangerous. First and foremost, they can be widely shared, reaching thousands of viewers in a matter of days.

These videos often feature actors wearing inappropriate clothing and engaging in behaviors that are not appropriate for a school setting. They may also include profanity and violent or harmful content.

Moreover, these videos can be seen by students who may not have access to a diverse range of educational resources or information about how to handle difficult situations. They may learn harmful stereotypes about certain groups of individuals, which can have long-lasting effects on their views and beliefs.

In conclusion, it is important for us to be aware of the content that is being shared on social media and to consider the impact that these videos can have on our community. We must work together to create a safer and more inclusive environment for all students.
Lack of snow causes alarm

by KATIE SASAMOTO-KURISU
Editor-in-Chief

Last year, while in Park City, Utah, over spring break 2023, Sofia Piccoli had the best day of ski she’d ever had. The mountain conditions were amazing: an abundance of open terrain, stable weather and soft, powdery snow. Zipping between trees on run after run, she didn’t want to stop.

But this was experienced under her understanding that at a ski like this, becoming more and more rare, a phenomenon propelled by a looming threat to ecosystems and winter sports everywhere: climate change.

Despite the plentiful snow conditions and stable weather Sofia experienced on this trip, those conditions were by no means the norm throughout her time skiing. Just two years prior, the 2020-21 winter, was one of Utah’s driest on record, resulting in little snowfall and significantly fewer open trails.

“Park City, Deer Valley had no snow. It was really really like, bare,” Sofia, a junior, said. “There was not a lot open, and I think that was kind of sad because they have some great terrain out there. Building indoor skiing slopes, was just too little.”

This effect of less snow and lower average temperatures across the winter season has been felt across the world: climate change.

Some areas, European destinations in particular, are being hit particularly hard. For example, in the alpine resort in Italy and has experienced these drastic effects in recent years. “As an alpine skier that has experienced the effects of climate change in her lifetime, the difference is undeniable,” Bea wrote in a text message. “In the past years, we have been able to find places with snow outside of the season.”

To solve the problem, resorts have had to turn to alternative solutions for making snow, including automating the process by using snow machines and even building indoor skiing slopes. Bea doesn’t think these actions, at least at their current stage, are feasible as long-term solutions.

“Indoor skiing stations are being built, but they are extremely expensive to maintain since the indoor temperature varies from +2, to -2, and aren’t able to efficiently replicate natural snow yet,” she wrote. “If the climate situation continues degrading at this pace, skiing will definitely be one of the first sports that will suffer the consequences as it already is now.”

In addition to naturally warmer temperatures and less average snow coverage, climate change has also made weather conditions on these trips more variable.

Senior, Alex Fogel, who has been skiing since they were about 7 years old, has noticed changes in weather patterns across their various trips.

“I remember when I was younger, it was just kind of what you’d imagine, a typical snowy day on the mountain. But there are times where it seems icy, and it’s less safe for people to ski in certain areas,” they said. “It’s definitely making a lot of weather unpredictable and possibly dangerous for a lot of people because they aren’t prepared for it.”

Last winter, Mammoth Mountain in California received over 75 feet of snow, a record high compared to 33 feet in a typical season. But the record season kept the resort open until early August, compared to the typical late-spring closing. As a result of the unprecedented surplus, Sofia and her family were able to ski during mid-July.

“It’s really fun to ski during the summer, but I think that’s not sustainable because it was really unpredictable,” she said. “No one saw that coming the year ahead.”

The combination of decreasing snowfall, average and increasing variability in weather conditions for winter sports has made students and families more aware of the real effects, and subsequent consequences, of climate change.

“I’d like to go skiing and such in the time that I have,” Alex said. “It makes me want not to take the time I have for granted.”

Sports documentaries immerse fans in new perspective

by KABIR JOSHI
Assistant Editor

When the sports documentary “Olympia” by Leni Riefenstahl debuted in 1938, it captured the 1936 Olympic Games in depth and provided an angle never seen before. The part documentary series was released by Netflix showcasing compelling or exciting,” ninth grade Taara Saidel said. A new documentary, “Beckham” also offers valuable insight and entertainment to fans. “Beckham” also helps fans experience historic moments, for example, his kick against Greece that secured qualification for the World Cup.

Drive to Survive” allow viewers to see behind the scenes, making the drivers feel more human instead of unrealistic.

As the topic of sports documentaries among students continues to grow, the surge in popularity is a testament to the life lessons and opportunities for inspiration these documentaries provide to athletes and fans.

They expose another layer of plots that many fans love to see, providing a deeper understanding to the sport. As these stories unfold, students are able to find themselves not only as spectators watching far from the bleachers but also as participants to the history of their idols, taking inspiration and gaining valuable knowledge in their own journey to greatness.

Students see their sports threatened by climate change

by KATIE SASAMOTO-KURISU
Editor-in-Chief

It’s definitely making a lot of weather unpredictable and possibly dangerous for a lot of people because they aren’t prepared for it. Alex Fogel, senior

The combination of decreasing snowfall, average and increasing variability in weather conditions for winter sports has made students and families more aware of the real effects, and subsequent consequences, of climate change.

“I’d like to go skiing and such in the time that I have,” Alex said. “It makes me want not to take the time I have for granted.”

To be in the locker room, to hear what that great player is like, or to hear what that great coach is like — it just gives you more of a sense of, ‘Wow, that person is amazing.’”

Joshua Potter, head soccer coach

“Drive to Survive” allows viewers to see behind the scenes, making the drivers feel more human instead of unrealistic.

“It can allow viewers to see what is going on behind the scenes.” Taara said, “And into personal connections between players and teams, but it can also provide a second angle as when you are watching sports you are only really listening to the commentators, while you are watching documentaries you are getting the perspective of the athletes themselves.”

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PERSONAL PERSPECTIVES. Today, as fans and athletes look for clear faces of heroes and favorite players, sports documentaries offer inspiration and provide a different format of film experience to fans. “Beckham” also helps fans experience historic moments, allowing them to start understanding the drivers feel more human instead of unrealistic.

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Days of Diplomacy

Tabletop board game offers players strategic, communal experience

by CLARE M. ROBERTS
Features Editor

It had been six months. Six months of meticulously plotted strategy. Attacks and counterattacks. Vanquishing alliances and ruthless betrayals.

At last, a victor emerges from the rubble. The war is done. Ultimately, there are winners and losers.

“But everyone cheered anyway, because we were just happy it was over,” Diplomacy Club president Sam Pastor said of the club’s tournament from last fall. “And then we started a new one.”

Diplomacy is a World War II simulation game where players, representing different countries, vie to control Europe. For U-High’s Diplomacy Club, the dramatic and community-building game can take months. That’s part of the fun.

“I think it’s nice just to have an extra something to talk about with your friends over a long period of time,” Sam said. “Also, the fact that the game goes on for so long means that we get to have more time to get invested in it, which we all think is fun.”

Nationally, board game sales in 2022 were up by about 28 percent compared to 2019, before the pandemic, according to market research company NPD Group. Like Sam, a member of the Diplomacy Club, Max Gurinas, said he appreciates the unique length of the game. Players become more invested and more detail-oriented.

“I like how invested you can get in a drawn-out game,” Max said. He added later, “the game is always there for you to think about and distract yourself from other, less fun things.”

Despite the increase in popularity of board games during the pandemic, players have also realized that online games have taken over the world of strategy gaming.

“I would actually say that it definitely has happened,” Sam said. “I’d say that clubs like Chess Club and Diplomacy Club would have more members if people didn’t have video games to play.”

And, without a doubt, there are reasons for this. Max said that the benefits of online strategy games are evident.

“Online games tend to be longer, since they’re not as often limited to how much you can play in one sitting, and they also allow for asynchronous play,” Max said. “That allows for more time to strategize.”

Sam said that online gaming also has its faults.

“I think online games are more mentally taxing than board games,” he said. “You have to put your full effort into them at all times, stay focused, and they do sort of hurt your eyes and stuff like that.”

Amid the pros and cons of strategic gaming online, Max said that the real-life connections are what ultimately matter.

“Online might be a ‘purer’ form of a game than in-person,” Max said. “With that said, nothing online comes close to replicating the experience of hanging out in person. For that reason, I don’t think that people will ever stop playing in-person board games.”

Sam said that the longevity of traditional board games proves its value.

“I think, that the fact that so many people are still sticking with these more, quote-unquote, old-fashioned, traditional games, shows that some games can actually stand the test of time.”

Even if it takes six months.

New York Times games bring opportunities to connect

by ZARA SIDDIQUE
Sports & Leisure Editor

As sophomore Maggie Ya
gan does her homework, there are times she finds herself overwhelmed.

Whether it’s a long history read-
ing or a complicated science ques-
tion, the work or task can feel un-
approachable. But sometimes all it takes is to make them doable. A minute or two of the Mini Cross-
word or finding a few words on the day’s Spelling Bee.

Searching for a solution for the relentless stress high school stu-
dents inevitably face, many stu-
dents have sought refuge in their New York Times subscriptions, specifically the mindful and captivat-
ing games that come with news, opinion and sports head-
lines. From the charming jin-
gle-punctuated success of the Mini Crossword, to the queen be buzzing across the screen af-

er one finds all the words in the daily word hunt, these games can be seen and heard through hallways of U-High. Whether at lunch or in the minutes before a math test, students have turned to these puzzles as a momentary reprieve before plunging back into their studies.

The New York Times games, in-
cluding The Mini, Wordle, Con-
nections and Spelling Bee, present themselves as a successful ally in a student’s daily battle against stress and feeling overwhelmed.

“It’s a nice break from all the as-
signments,” Maggie said. “Espe-
cially with the crossword or the Spelling Bee, you can do a little at a time, and then go back to home-
work.”

The games also help friends connect. While lunch can sometimes be a continuation of the stress of class, with students com-
paring assignments, and complai-
ing about their next classes, some groups have started to use this time to decompress. Maggie and her friends play the New York Times games together.

“We send each other our scores quickly stop being relaxing and in-

from the crossword or the Spelling Bee, you can do a little at a time, and then go back to home-
work.”

Wordle is a day-long game that gives the player six chances to guess a random five letter word.

Connections is a day-long game requiring players to sort 16 words into four even categories.

Spelling Bee is a day-long game consisting of players finding words from seven selected letters.

Mini Crossword is a day-long game replicating the original New York Times crossword, but instead on a smaller 5x5 grid.

--- compiled by Zara Siddique

New York Times games bring opportunities to connect

New York Times games bring opportunities to connect

BRAIN TEASERS. Many students have sought refuge in their New York Times subscriptions, specifically the mindful and captivating games that come with news, opinion and sports headlines. These interactive puzzles not only offer entertainment but also serve as a refreshing break while staying informed about current events.

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Lab classroom, library practice freedom of expression, choice

by TABRAH AHMED

There are always attempts to ban books in Illinois in 2022 alone, according to the Chicago-Area American Library Association. Many targeted books include identities and themes from the LGBTQ+ community and communities of color.

But within the Laboratory Schools, students have access to controversial books in the high school library and even in the classroom. In English classes, students do more than just read these books. They participate in discussions and analyze complex topics, requiring students to think and reflect on their own.

English teacher Christine Himmelfarb teaches “Fahrenheit 451” by Norris Laren, which contains a racial slur and profanity. Mr. Himmelfarb said he believes his discussions around the book are important to the students.

The classroom is a great place to have these discussions because “the book both means and serves as an example of something,” Ms. Himmelfarb said. “It’s really difficult for them to grasp. Ms. Himmelfarb said she believes these books are designed to provide readers with new perspectives and to challenge the more uncomfortable parts of “Fahrenheit 451.”

“I am a firm believer in reading a variety of books. That way, it’s a safe place to not hold our opinions and keep them to ourselves,” Ms. Himmelfarb said. “In life, we both not about us, and it is about what we can learn from it.”

Ms. Nielsen said she believes these books are essential to the learning process.

Mr. John Green, 2005

The term ‘book ban’ is a misnomer describing a number of events, including school, banned books were a problem in the United States during the year 2022. According to the American Library Association, 67 attempts were made to ban books in Illinois in 2022. This number highlights the ongoing struggle between artistic freedom and censorship.

The following list features some of the books that were challenged in 2022, according to the American Library Association.

1. “All Boys Aren’t Blue” by Malea Augustine - A memoir that challenges traditional gender norms and explores the themes of identity and gender identity.
2. “Gender Queer: A Memoir” by Jason Reynolds - A memoir that documents the author’s journey of self-discovery as they navigate the complexities of gender identity.
4. “Gender Queer: A Memoir” by Maria Testa - A memoir that challenges traditional gender norms and explores the themes of identity and gender identity.
5. “Lawn Boy” by Jonathan Evison - A novel that explores the themes of class, race, and sexuality.

In the modern world, censorship of LGBTQ+ writers is a growing concern. When a book is banned, it can limit the ability of students to learn about and understand diverse perspectives.

While some fight against book bans, others oppose them. The term ‘book ban’ is a misnomer designed to shame and define parents and their children. When a book is banned, it can limit the ability of students to learn about and understand diverse perspectives.

The following books have been challenged in Illinois in 2022:

- “All Boys Aren’t Blue” by Malea Augustine
- “Gender Queer: A Memoir” by Jason Reynolds
- “Out of Darkness” by Suzanne Collins
- “Lawn Boy” by Jonathan Evison

While some fight against book bans, others oppose them. The term ‘book ban’ is a misnomer designed to shame and define parents and their children. When a book is banned, it can limit the ability of students to learn about and understand diverse perspectives.
Chicago ends subminimum wage for tipped employees

IMPACTFUL INTERACTIONS. Harper Foods owner Alex Bharucha stands at the cashier, waiting for customers to complete their transactions. Mr. Bharucha enjoys his customer interactions with members of the Hyde Park community, and students passing through his store recognize his hard work.

by SKYE FREEMAN

At the little market on East 57th Street between South Harp-
er and South Blackstone Avenues, U-High students flow in and out after school. They fill their hands with affordable food options, everything from varying flavors of candy to fresh produce.

Alex Bharucha is there to see it all, day after day, from his inside point of view.

Mr. Bharucha is the owner of Harper Foods, the convenience store located at 1455 E. 57th St. He has seen, assisted and talked to hundreds of students’ conversations.

He says he loves the location, specifically the community.

“They look out for each other, so I like that,” he said. “Even strangers on the street, if they see somebody they don’t know, they might just go for help. I like that about the Hyde Park community.”

The community loves him, too, with most people knowing him just by his first name: Alex. He knows their pets by name. He asks how relatives are doing, gives life advice and always greets customers with a smile.

Not only Lab students and neighborhood residents but students at nearby schools share con-
nections with him. He says he’s seen his employees grow up in the last four years and has watched as certain snacks became favorite regular purchases.

Senior Ana Grieve, one of those students, who has been purchasing snacks from Harper Foods for seven years, has noticed his presence.

“I’ve talked to a lot of people who’ve said that they’ve started stocking things just because they remembered me. I’ve even seen their students grow up in the last four years and have watched as certain snacks became favorite regular purchases.”

When he was about 10, Mr. Bharu-
cha and his family moved from India to the United States. They first lived in Atlanta then moved all over the country, to whatever business called.

Working in his dad’s retail stores, Mr. Bharucha found a love for the business and the interac-
tions between customers and the communities his family had oper-
ated in.

Mr. Bharucha majored in busi-
ness at the University of Tennes-
see, then he and his family moved to help with business opportu-
nities.

“I just kind of followed my dad’s footsteps. He had always been in the convenience store business, and I’ve been doing this since I was 14, helping in the store, help-
ing right after school, whenever,”

His parents, who also enjoy in-
teracting with customers, occa-
sionally drop in to help out.

While Mr. Bharucha enjoys his job and its emphasis on daily in-
teraction, it has its downsides. Es-
picially during the pandemic, the store was hit hard due to protests and robberies.

Despite the presence of shop-
lifters or intoxicated people wan-
dering in, the store is his only source of income. All he can do is accept the complications. Despite the negatives, he has hope for the future.

“In the future, I want to open up a similar kind of store or maybe buy the one already in operation,” he said. “I’m looking to open up a couple more grocery stores in the coming years.”

For now, he enjoys his lifestyle and the window he is given to our growing generation from behind the convenience store counter.

A customer walks in, his dog on a leash. Exchanging friendly hel-
os, Mr. Bharucha goes to ring up the dog food he’s holding. “How’s he been?” he asks, motioning to-
ward the dog. The man smiles, appreciating the recognition, and mentions his dog’s veterinarian visits the past week.

As the man leaves, Mr. Bharu-
cha wishes them both well, then waves goodbye with a simple “See you next time!”

by VICTORIA WASHINGTON

“Tipping is a necessity,” he said. “I think some people forget that we’re humans too.”

Owner of Harper Foods observes, students recognize by SKYE FREEMAN

On Oct. 6, the Chicago City Council voted to phase out a practice that allowed establish-
ments to pay service workers less than the city’s standard minimum wage by making a small deduction from their wages to boost their earnings. Such workers could be paid as little as $9.48 an hour, far less than the $15.80 mini-
mum wage required for most oth-
er workers.

Prior to the change in October, if employees were unable to make up the remainder in tips, employ-
-

ers were mandated to cover the gap.

Beginning in July 2024, the wage for tipped employees will increase each year until 2028 when it will be the same as the regular mini-
mum wage. This change impacts an estimated 100,000 workers across the city.

Senior Santana Romero, a host-

er at a Chili’s restaurant on 95th Street, has noticed that her tipped colleagues receive ill treatment without tips.

“They servers at my work deal with so much,” said Santana, who as a hostess receives a standard wage without tips. “Whether it’s someone just being really obnox-
ious or someone actually being re-
arly aggressive, the idea that that item,” she said.

While the community and at-
mosphere of the store are appeal-
ing to him, he admits a dislike for the number of hours he has to put in.

He works with grocery suppli-
ers that send sales reps to help re-
stock the store. But, most of the time, he ends up having to work late restocking shelves or going out and purchasing items on his own time.

The store — open from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., seven days a week — is al-
most always run by Mr. Bharucha.

“It’s just a lot of hours. Consis-
tently. If one restocking guy doesn’t show up, then you know, it’s just like, I have to do this after hours,” Mr. Bharucha said. “Some-
times until midnight.”

When he was about 10, Mr. Bharu-
cha and his family moved from India to the United States. They first lived in Atlanta then moved all over the country, to whatever business called.

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Chicago ends subminimum wage for tipped employees

by the numbers

$15.80

Current hourly minimum wage for most Chicago workers

$9.48

Hourly minimum wage that some tipped workers can be paid prior to new mandate

Source: Chicago.gov

At Medici, most customers are friendly to baristas and choose to tip. Poppy said she observes that even though customers aren’t required to tip, many feel obligated to, especially when they pay with a card.

One takeaway Poppy has from working a minimum wage job is the importance of customers un-

derstanding the hard work of those who assist them in restaur-
dants.

The hours are long. Patience is a necessity.

“They kind of just treat us like we’re there to serve them, and they forget this.”

15% 18% 20%

How much to tip?

From luxury meals to quick stops at Starbucks, gratitude provides a natural end to dining experi-

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THURSDAY, DEC. 14, 2023

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uhighmidway.com • University of Chicago Laboratory High School
Students enjoy country music — but not at school

by AUDREY PARK

At first, junior Keira Harter was skeptical. Her sister was playing "That's My Kind of Night" by country music artist Luke Bryan and making fun of the lyrics. But, after listening longer, she said something changed.

"I was like, ‘Oh, this is kind of catchy,'" Keira said.

Since then, Keira has occasionally listened to country music and, in particular, enjoys country-pop. Despite their fandom, many U-High students who listen to country music say people often equate the genre with politics, the Southern United States and other stereotypes, when really, it is evolving, giving more country music artists choosing to steer away from politics.

Country music developed its conservative and political reputation during Richard Nixon's presidency. It has faced backlash for containing anti-black, anti-LGBTQ, pro-gun and domestic violence rhetoric and themes, and employing racism as a marketing tool.

While such controversy certainly is reinforced and prevails among some of the most popular songs — most recently with "When It's All Said and Done," where country artists challenge the genre's stereotypes or distance themselves from politics and religion. The genre's modern growth is also due to its experimentation with other genres, including pop, rock and hip-hop.

Country music streams have risen almost 20% in the last three years, according to Luminate, an entertainment industry analytics company. Country music artist Morgan Wallen's song "Hard to Make You Love Me" is responsible for 40% of the growth.

After using a racial slur in 2021, Mr. Wallen's music videos were banned on major platforms. Instead, country stars like Mr. Wallen and Luke Combs include more relatable themes of sobriety and goal-chasing in their music.

Keira said she has observed such changes in the country music she listens to.

"I think it is kind of moving away from politics because some artists are starting to make music geared toward pop so it fits a wider audience," Keira said. "But there is definitely a lot of stigma with it."

Junior Juana diSabato listens to different genres depending on where she is. At school, she tends to play pop and rap and listens to Travis Scott or Drake. But at home in River Forest, a Chicago suburb, country music is her genre of choice, with her favorite country artists being Mr. Wallen and Mr. Combs.

Juana said she rarely plays country music at school because her classmates judge the genre.

"We were listening to pop and rap, and I was like, ‘Hey, can I queue a song? I play Devil Don't Know,' and my friends were like, ‘Oh, no, turn this off,'" Juana said.

"People tend to assume all country music is political," Juana said that this is a common misconception and not all country music centers on politics.

"I don't think it's right to associate all country music with that type of political view because if you really listen to more of the contemporary songs, it is not at all political and loving Trump and God as well," she said. "There are some country songs that are based on those views, but those aren't the songs I'm listening to."

Similarly, U-High ninth-grader Bryce Poston, a fan of Mr. Wallen, said people are quick to associate country music with racist themes without giving it a chance.

"I can understand where the stereotypes come from, but it's like any stereotype — it's not always true," he said. "I wouldn't associate myself with that, and I still listen to country music for.,"

For sophomore Cruize Lickerman, listening to music sometimes means "separating the art from the artists."

"A lot of times, the regions where country music comes from are the same as the regions that are more right-leaning and in favor of certain views," Cruize said. "But I do think, it is possible just to enjoy the music without the political aspect."

Juana said she encourages people to be open-minded, especially with the genre changes.

"I would tell the people hesitant to listen to country music that just because they like how they try to convince people to listen to pop and rap that are pretty well listened to in Chicago, they have the same mindset for country music," Juana said. "You might surprise yourself and like it."

Sporadically listening to country music has led Keira to enjoy some new songs. However, social limitations and lack of relatability limit her from listening more frequently.

"I wouldn't block country music out immediately just because it is good to try new things and see if you like it," Keira said. "There is a lot of country music that I listen to and I don't think the style is for everyone."
Stress is eating away at physical health, life spans

by CLARE M. ROBERTS

It’s no secret that stress permeates every aspect of our lives—both on and off the job. But the consequences are far reaching and can be incredibly serious. Day by day, stress is undermining our mental and physical well-being.

According to the American Psychological Association, stress affects more than 75 percent of American adults. It is estimated that 80 percent of people working in the U.S. experience high levels of job-related stress. While stress has been a part of life for as long as humans have lived, the way we experience it has changed significantly.

Stress is a natural response to a perceived threat or challenge. It is our body’s way of preparing us to face a situation. However, when stress becomes chronic, it can have a profound impact on our health and well-being.

Stress-related illnesses include heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and even mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety. It has been linked to chronic pain, digestive issues, and even certain types of cancer.

In recent reports, national health experts have emphasized the importance of managing stress. They suggest that strategies such as mindfulness, regular exercise, and social support can help alleviate stress.

Mindfulness meditation, for example, involves focusing on the present moment and paying attention to sensations, feelings, and thoughts without judgment. It has been shown to reduce stress and improve overall health.

Regular physical activity, such as walking or yoga, is another effective way to manage stress. Exercise releases endorphins, which are chemicals in the brain that act as natural painkillers and mood elevators.

Social support is also crucial. Spending time with friends and family, or even joining a support group, can provide emotional comfort and help reduce feelings of isolation.

While these strategies can be beneficial, it is important to recognize when stress is becoming overwhelming. When stress becomes chronic, it can lead to physical and emotional exhaustion. It is important to take steps to manage stress before it becomes unmanageable.

In conclusion, stress is a natural part of life, but it is important to manage it effectively. By incorporating strategies such as mindfulness, exercise, and social support into our daily routines, we can reduce stress and improve our overall well-being.

Stress management apps support student mental health

by ZARA SIDDIQUE

These four applications stand out as tools for aiding students in managing their mental health. Similar to U-High provided app insight, these apps offer user-friendly platform consisting of guided meditation videos, sleep induc- ing podcasts, also known as sleepcasts, and breathing exercises, making integrating mindfulness into everyday life achievable. The app targets a range of issues, from stress reduction to self-awareness to improved sleep. Headspace is a mindfulness and meditation app dedicated to supporting and uplift- ing one’s overall mental well-being. The app offers a user-friendly platform consisting of guided meditation videos, sleep inducing podcasts, also known as sleepcasts, and breathing exercises, making integrating mindfulness into everyday life achievable. The app targets a range of issues, from stress reduction to self-awareness to improved sleep. Headspace is a mindfulness and meditation app dedicated to supporting and uplift- ing one’s overall mental well-being. The app offers a user-friendly platform consisting of guided meditation videos, sleep inducing podcasts, also known as sleepcasts, and breathing exercises, making integrating mindfulness into everyday life achievable. The app targets a range of issues, from stress reduction to self-awareness to improved sleep. Headspace is a mindfulness and meditation app dedicated to supporting and uplift- ing one’s overall mental well-being. The app offers a user-friendly platform consisting of guided meditation videos, sleep inducing podcasts, also known as sleepcasts, and breathing exercises, making integrating mindfulness into everyday life achievable. The app targets a range of issues, from stress reduction to self-awareness to improved sleep. Headspace is a mindfulness and meditation app dedicated to supporting and uplift- ing one’s overall mental well-being. The app offers a user-friendly platform consisting of guided meditation videos, sleep inducing podcasts, also known as sleepcasts, and breathing exercises, making integrating mindfulness into everyday life achievable. The app targets a range of issues, from stress reduction to self-awareness to improved sleep.
Holiday activities form festive comradery

by LIGHT DOHREN
Assistant Editor

It’s December 2023. Hayla Shah sat on the corner of the hallway, surrounded by the wintery chill in the air and holiday decorations adorning the walls. Amid the texter’s notifications, a small, festive paper caught her eye. She unfolded it, noticing a small, festive sticker affixed to it. It showed a classic holiday greeting: “Merry Christmas!”, with a large, red ribbon and a pair of scissors. Hayla grinned, feeling a sense of nostalgia wash over her. It was a familiar presence for many students, a symbol of the holiday season.

Hayla fondly remembers last year’s holiday season, when the school community came together to celebrate the end of the term. The halls were decorated with Christmas lights, and the classroom walls were covered in festive posters. The air was thick with the scent of pine and the sound of laughter filled the halls. It was a time of joy, of togetherness, of sharing.

The premise of white elephant gifts came to mind. It’s a form of gift-giving games like Secret Santa and white elephant, where participants bring wrapped items and take turns either selecting a present from a pool or receiving a gift from someone else. One of the enjoyable aspects of the game is that participants can be creative in their choice of gifts. The aim is to find something either humorous or unwanted (or both), so when someone picks it up, they aim for something else. Secret Santa has a slightly different basis, involving group members randomly assigning a person to whom they will give a gift while keeping their identity as the giver a secret. Hayla fondly remembers last year’s holiday season, when the school community came together to celebrate the end of the term. The halls were decorated with Christmas lights, and the classroom walls were covered in festive posters. The air was thick with the scent of pine and the sound of laughter filled the halls. It was a time of joy, of togetherness, of sharing.

Even though the season had ended, we still felt like a team who still did things together, and it was really fun to sort of still be friends with them. Hayla Shah, sophomore

DIALECT ENDEAVORS. A student plays a game on Duolingo, a language learning app. However, its gamification has U-High students questioning whether the app helping them learn a language or if it’s really just a game.

“During the holidays, you’re not necessarily spending time with friends because you’re at home with your family instead,” Eliza beth said. “It’s nice to celebrate the holidays while you can with others who, while they may not be your family, are still significant people in your life.” As the school day ends, Soha rushes to her locker to gather her belongings. Amid the excitement of the season, books, binders, and loose sheets of paper, she notices a small, festive package nestled inside her locker. She unwraps it to discover the hair clips. Grinning, she slips them into her backpack and walks home, a wintery chill in the air and holiday spirit all around.

GIFT GIVING. During the holiday season, festive and community-building games like Secret Santa and white elephant are popular at U-High. No one likes to be the one who got the worst gift, so participants are often creative in choosing the worst gift. The aim is to find something either humorous or unwanted (or both), so when someone picks it up, they aim for something else. Secret Santa has a slightly different basis, involving group members randomly assigning a person to whom they will give a gift while keeping their identity as the giver a secret. Hayla fondly remembers last year’s holiday season, when the school community came together to celebrate the end of the term. The halls were decorated with Christmas lights, and the classroom walls were covered in festive posters. The air was thick with the scent of pine and the sound of laughter filled the halls. It was a time of joy, of togetherness, of sharing.

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“During the holidays, you’re not necessarily spending time with friends because you’re at home with your family instead,” Elizab
Trend generates student interest in high-end cologne
by SAHANA UNNI
Editor-in-Chief

At a young age, Michael Sawaqed developed an interest in various fragrances after having spent quality time with his older brother shopping for cologne. While Michael used to think he was one of the only guys wearing cologne at school, he’s noticed this to be more common over the years. Now, he relies on TikTok to introduce him to new scents. He even created an album on the app and filled it with colognes he hopes to buy.

“More people are interested than you would expect,” Michael, now a senior, said. “Like, some of these accounts have millions of followers, millions of likes.”

Like many of his classmates, sophomore Dominic Vaughn was introduced to the world of fragrances after watching a YouTube video on the topic. “I saw a lot of people talking about colognes, and I sort of got into them,” Dominic said. “Then I asked for my first cologne for Christmas a couple years ago and just started shopping for colognes and stuff after that.”

Besides initiating students’ interest in fragrances, social media also helps students, like sophomore Mo Liy-Ojo, find new colognes. Mo started wearing cologne after his uncle gave him a bottle last year.

Now, he relies on TikTok to introduce him to new scents. He even created an album on the app and filled it with colognes he hopes to buy. Social media has also influenced sophomore Ty Quiles. While he first sought out cologne in shops because he wanted his own signature scent and to smell good, he now watches TikTok reviews of scents with different purposes.

“There will be videos like, ‘Oh, this one cologne, you need this cologne to smell good and this one to talk to people,’” Ty said. According to Michael, the new-found popularity of cologne has caused brands to begin advertising in different ways.

“A lot of brands are starting to make colognes and advertise colognes that are ‘safe scents,’ like office or school scents,” Michael said. “It’s not really associated by age but more with setting. So, school is a setting where there are going to be a lot of young people and students, so I think that’s where the advertising comes in.”

Other than social media, ninth-grader Sale Sufi believes the increased popularity of cologne is also due to word of mouth.

“Definitely don’t blind buy anything just off what you hear on TikTok,” Michael said. “Either sample it, because there are a lot of sampling options that are cheaper, or just go into a store and see what you like and see what smells good on your skin and see how long it lasts on your skin.”

And then start spraying.

SNiffing out scents. More sophisticated colognes are replacing less exclusive deodorants as high-end fragrances become popularized for young men through social media.

Student model balances school, artistic expression
by LIGHT DOHRN
Assistant Editor

Adorned in a shiny red dress composed entirely of plastic grocery bags, Lyra Luu stepped out onto her first runway on May 20 amid camera flashes and applause. A matching wide-brimmed hat sat on her head, and glittering red makeup dripped from her eyes like tears.

“It was ‘trashion revolution,’ so all of the pieces were made out of single-use plastic,” Lyra, a junior, said. “The outfit I wore was made out of plastic grocery bags from this specific store in Milwaukee.”

For the past two years, Lyra has been balancing the artistry of modeling and the grace of ballet in her vibrant pursuits outside of school. Lyra’s achievements exist beyond the classroom, as evident in her navigation of intersections between artistry and physical expression.

In addition to modeling, Lyra has been pursuing ballet as a form of artistic expression as well. She started ballet at the end of her ninth grade year and is now a certified dance studio instructor. The 15-year-old is also interested in different aspects of the dance world. For now, she’s both part of the company and on pointe.

“I’ve always been into fashion,” Lyra said, “but I think when the idea of modeling got started, it was after America’s Next Top Model came out on Netflix for two seasons, and I watched it. I didn’t like it at all, but it was nice to have something to gauge.”

After being inspired by the television series, Lyra decided to attend a Chicago Fashion Week show. There, she met Florinda Flore and Flo—i.e., the creative director at the Fashion House of Flore & Company, and now one of Lyra’s mentors. Ms. Flore took an interest in Lyra and immediately recognized her passion and taste for fashion.

“She was working there, and I met her there. She thought I was a model,” Lyra said, “and I was kind of like, ‘Oh, I didn’t really realize that was something I could do.’”

In terms of ballet, Lyra expresses her love for dancing combined with her distancing herself from the culture of it. The constant activity of a dancer can easily catch up to them, in many cases leading to issues like anxiety and depression. Ballet in particular has certain body standards that have caused eating disorders and negative body image, especially among young female dancers.

“It’s just the dancing itself, you know? The movement, the visual. It’s definitely not the culture,” Lyra said, her head tilted to the side. “I think we all know that ballet culture is less than ideal. Actual dancing and moving and letting the music flow through you—that I really enjoy.

Lyra also emphasizes the connection between dance and fashion, occasionally leading to collaborative opportunities where her dance or fashion abilities have been integrated into various projects.

“They’re both deeply artistic,” Lyra said. “They both have this aesthetic element to them, so there aren’t any real boundaries.” As photographers and designers who have been interested in me because I can dance, and they’ve put me in things related to dance. I also wrote a history paper on the history of ballet last year, and I really really enjoyed it.”

As cheers and camera shutters lingered in the air from her first runway show, Lyra gazed out, taking the first stride down the carpeted strip. It was the first step of a journey, and with each new step she takes, she continues to move towards a future of artistic expression and pushing the boundaries of conventionality.