

# THE DRAGON

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## Bay Area Blues : Problems Finding New Teachers in the Bay Area

By Kaz Murray | Staff Writer

**T**his school year, there has been a lot of fantastic new teachers at d.tech and in the Bay Area. But is it easy for educators to find employment? The answer: not quite.

As we know, the Bay Area is expensive, and even that is an understatement. Houses sell for an average of around \$1.30 million. This is due to how close we are to tech companies, such as Facebook, Tesla, and Oracle, and how we live on a peninsula, which means less land. Given that teachers in the Bay Area are paid the national teacher average of around \$65,000, a lot of teachers can't live here just on their salary.



School Director Melissa Mizel, gives us an inside look into how these struggles are presented in our own school. "It can [be] hard. I think it can be challenging to live in the Bay Area with the high cost of living, and unfortunately, education doesn't pay teachers enough to compete with folks in the tech industry," Mizel says. Though the new teachers are great, the interview process was more difficult than usual. "Yep, we did it all on zoom."

Even teachers at other schools face this issue. At Arroyo Upper Elementary in San Carlos, Jacey Phipps, a new 4th grade teacher, describes her own experience, "Due to COVID 19, a lot of schools didn't post jobs until the 19-20 school year was almost over. That added a lot of stress as I was applying for jobs, and not seeing a lot of options," she says. The principal of Arroyo, Mindy Shelton, agrees in the hiring process, "This year, we conducted our interviews over Zoom. It's not quite the same as in person because it's hard to make eye contact, etc. but it went okay." Both educators can agree that the results are nothing but positive, though, as Shelton claims she's very pleased with the teachers hired this year.

Bay Area Blues continues on page 7.

Illustration by Mackenzie Chan

## The WYN Times, They Are a-Changin'

By Kira Tarkiainen | Staff Writer



Illustration by Cynthia Shi

**S**ince December, d.tech's WYN time schedule has undergone numerous changes. One of the major changes was allocating specific WYN activities to certain days. WYN slots on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays are dedicated to teacher-led classes and independent work times. Slots on Wednesdays and Fridays are dedicated to club meetings and curiosity project work times, as well as independent work times. Club leaders and teachers are expected to abide by this schedule, and cannot offer their meetings on "off-days." Additionally, students now can only sign up for one WYN time per slot. They must ask the host of the WYN time to remove them if they wish to cancel their signup.

School director, Melissa Mizel, explains the motivation behind changing the schedule. "[The changes] started with the question: what can we do to create a little more structure?" According to Mizel, some kids had been using the WYN slots as "free-time" to hang with friends, rather than using it for extra curriculars. "The reason we have flexible scheduling (lab days, WYN time, Dragon Time) is for students to pursue interest, and we were finding that students didn't have the structure to do those things." With the changes, Melissa hopes students would be encouraged to attend more clubs as well as start more projects. The restrictions on signing up for and canceling WYN times were added to account for previous attendance issues.

Although the changes were implemented with positive intent, the new schedule has since been criticized by some students. Some are now finding it increasingly difficult to schedule their classes; others continue to use WYN slots as leisure time, as opposed to pursuing their interests.

The WYN Times, They Are a-Changin' continues on page 4.

## Happiness at d.tech

By Lydia Rak | Staff Writer

**T**he search for happiness is universal. While d.tech is not designed specifically for the purpose of providing happiness, we know that students perform better when happy, and that learning is stronger when infused with joy. So where, when and how do d.tech students find joy? Leda Dowd, an 11th grader says, "I think I find happiness at d.tech through my classmates and my friends." She added on by saying, "I think we have a strong sense of community here and I can really find the people who have similar interests to me and have a lot of fun with them." Freshman Maiko Ono explains that she finds happiness with her friends and during WYN time, and she believes that her friends would agree. 11th grader, Olivia Watson continues, "I find my joy probably most in my friend group. I feel like I have a really good social life at school and my friends mean a lot to me here. They help me get through my day and make me want to go to school more to see them."

It seems that the sources of joy are not specific nor universal. Instead, they are unique to each student. But some patterns and themes emerged. d.tech students share a general source of happiness from their peers and community, regardless of their grade. Sophomore Isobel Martin comments, "I like d.tech because they have two hours at the end of the day where we can work on what we need to. If we finish our homework during class time we get to use that time for socialization which most schools don't get to do."

Happiness at d.tech continues on page 4.

Illustration by Mackenzie Chan



## Kirin Guinto is Climbing up the Walls

By Lydia Rak | Staff Writer

**K**irin Guinto started rock climbing five years ago after quitting gymnastics. She originally started because her sister was already taking classes at Planet Granite and it was close to her house, but only a few months in, she really fell in love. After a year, she realized she could go far and she began to get serious.

Kirin's love for the sport continues to grow as it presents new challenges and obstacles. "Climbing is a sport that has no limits or boundaries, so no matter how good you are, there is always a challenge in climbing," Kirin exclaims. "I get this kind of endless desire to keep working hard to be better from the sport, which is why I've stuck with it for so long, and don't ever see myself stopping." After starting from the age of 12 Kirin says she has never found something she loves as much as rock climbing.

Rock climbing is an ancient sport, but we don't know the exact time it actually started. According to BBC, it was a recreational activity starting at the end of the 1800s. Climbing is broken into four categories: Mountain, Ice, Bouldering, and Rock. All of these use similar muscle groups even with being quite different. In the 1940s, climbing competitions started, emerged into world competitions, and were eventually added as an olympic sport in 2011.

Kirin talks about how d.tech encourages students to take on ambitious projects and take advantage of opportunities. She adds on by saying, "I am surrounded by other students that are pursuing projects I previously thought to be well beyond the capabilities of a highschool student, and it has taught me to embrace the challenges of my ambitions, and not to hesitate to pursue them." When thinking about her role at d.tech, Kirin shares that she wants to teach others about her diverse experiences and knowledge. She continues by saying, "I feel like a lot of what I do at the school is leadership-based, so I hope that my effort inspires others to take initiative, and implement their own passions into the community." This motivated Kirin to start her intersession class so she could teach others to explore different interests just like she did with rock climbing. Without d.tech's support, Kirin would never have the courage to start her own intersession. "I never thought it would be a possibility, because I didn't feel that I was responsible enough to independently manage my own class. My time at d.tech taught me that running this class actually is something I can succeed in doing, and that I should not underestimate my personal capabilities."

"I hope that in taking the rock climbing course, students will develop a deeper understanding of not only the sport, but their personal capabilities both mentally and physically. I also hope that this class inspires students to be less hesitant to find new interests by trying a diverse range of activities."



Kirin Guinto maintains her footing on the rock wall  
Photo provided by Kirin Guinto

## Curiosity projects at d.tech

By Katya Olshansky | Staff Writer

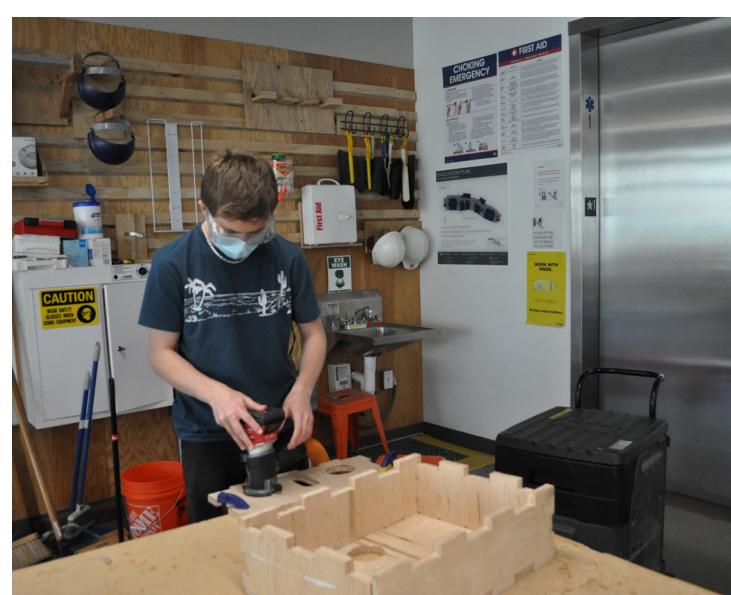
Have you ever had a random idea that you wish you could further pursue, but haven't had the opportunity to do so? Curiosity projects are perfect for that. These projects can be almost anything that you are interested or passionate about.

To give a few ideas of what you could do for a curiosity project, DRG Coordinator Brock says, "you could collaborate with a teacher on something the teacher is working on. You could join an existing project that other students have started. Visit the DRG to talk with DRG staff and discuss ideas." The possibilities are endless. He encourages students to at least consider doing one because "it is a chance to learn by doing, have fun with friends, and discover new interests. It is a great way to improve your ability to be self directed and build community with peers and teachers."

Samantha Oey, a junior, is interested in pursuing a curiosity project. She says she is, "thinking about starting a small business with some friends." She continues on to say that "curiosity projects are a great way to do something that interests you while still getting credit for it." She wishes she started earlier. That aside, with the right planning she still thinks it's definitely doable. She is hoping to begin this project soon and encourages others to do the same.

These projects are a great opportunity to try something new or pursue something you've had in the back of your mind. There is a lot of freedom and creativity involved. d.tech highly recommends at least considering doing one for the fun, new, and creative experience.

Working in the DRG  
Photo by Ty Gannon



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# Paul Cerra and the Business of Securing a School

By Steven Sutton | Co-Editor in Chief

**W**hen you go to the west side of the building, on the first floor, down the first hallway, you will find drawn blinds and a locked door. Behind that locked door, you might find Paul Cerra, d.tech's sole IT administrator. Within his den, he is constantly working away furiously at his keyboard, or perhaps on the phone, trying to solve one of the myriad of tasks awaiting him at his desk.

Cerra has been working at d.tech for 5 years now; he's seen it all, and done it all. Working at d.tech "has had its ups and downs" he says. Everyday there is a new problem he needs to solve; chromebooks to repair, projectors and printers that have stopped working, and the thing that's on his mind most: security.

## Network Security

Keeping the network secure is a big job, and Cerra does it all. Right now, he is testing a new program that could significantly increase his ability to secure the network, and might allow students to officially use their personal devices, a constant turmoil between students and staff.

Currently, d.tech uses Cisco Meraki to control school wifi networks, and the system works to secure them (for example, Meraki caught and blocked malware accidentally downloaded on February 18) but only to an extent. It's protection isn't all encompassing.

As a high school, d.tech is especially at risk to ransomware attacks that would allow the hacker access to an incredible amount of information. Now, you may think it doesn't really matter. After all, who cares if a hacker can see my grades? But it's not just grades; it's phone numbers, home addresses, HIPAA-protected medical information, and more. There could even be enough information to commit identity fraud. Remember, most students are not adults, and data protection law surrounding minors is strict. If someone with malicious intentions were to get ahold of this information and even threaten to release it, students and the school itself would be in serious trouble.

Meraki Systems Manager could close those gaps. Cerra has been working with a trial of the software, and it appears as though it would secure all this information behind a nearly unpickable lock. It would allow for the network to be monitored constantly for all forms of attacks and suspicious activity. Additionally, it would allow for greater security on all devices on the network, addressing the key problem surrounding students' personal devices. The "zero trust" policy the d.tech wifi networks are forced to use under the current system makes securing new devices difficult, but with this new system, all devices (including those new to the network) would be secured.

All this being said, Systems Manager is expensive and, critically, charges by device, so even if it is implemented, students may not be able to benefit. Personally, Cerra supports both the adoption of the system and allowing for students to use it for personal devices. He will be presenting the information surrounding Meraki Systems Manager to the school's board of directors later this year.

## The Building

"Who else is going to do this stuff?" Cerra, despite his job description being purely centered around IT, is d.tech's go-to for securing the building, and everyday there is something new.

Recently, a student's bike that was locked on the public racks by the d.tech staff parking lot was stolen, and there wasn't really anything that d.tech could do about it. The camera in the parking lot could only see the lot itself, so the thief couldn't be found. The student said that the reason why they didn't use the locked bike cage in the Oracle 500 Garage was because there was a rumor that you could get into the cage with a credit card. To Paul, this was ridiculous. Of course you can't get into the cage with a credit card; but nevertheless, he had to go out there and make 100% sure. Sure enough, you can't. And this wasn't the first time that dealing with theft had become part of his job.

Remember the "devious licks" trend? Paul Cerra does. Not long ago, he was out on the east patio and found that the bright red "emergency meeting area" sign had been taken down and laid out on the ground. Assuming someone had intent to come back and steal it, he picked it up and brought it inside. That sign has now been sitting inside his office for months. Who tried to steal it? Who knows. Why? Because they could. And Cerra found himself dealing with it.

Add onto that all of the little things that can, and do, go wrong. Back in January, the credit card readers on the vending machines went out, and the vending company representative that was sent out to fix it was insistent on the idea that it was the fault of the cell network repeaters inside the building. There are cell service repeaters for all the major cell companies inside d.tech and the vending machine readers run on Verizon. Paul spent a long time attempting to fix the repeater itself, before he came to the conclusion that the repeater was functioning perfectly normally. It turned out that the "point of sale" devices inside the vending machines themselves were broken, and the vending company came back out to replace them, but not before a significant amount of Cerra's time and energy had been used trying to fix something that was never broken in the first place.

d.tech's building is packed to the gills with technology, and technology sometimes breaks down. Recently, Cerra found a broken GFCI on the west patio. GFCI stands for Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter, and they are critical security devices, preventing people from getting potentially deadly electrical shocks. Problems like this are dealt with by Oracle Technicians (after all, d.tech is on Oracle property), and thankfully they came through and fixed it without a hitch. But, while he was out there, Cerra found that the badge reader that opens the door to the patio from the outside had broken.

**There's always something broken, and it's Cerra's job to fix it.**

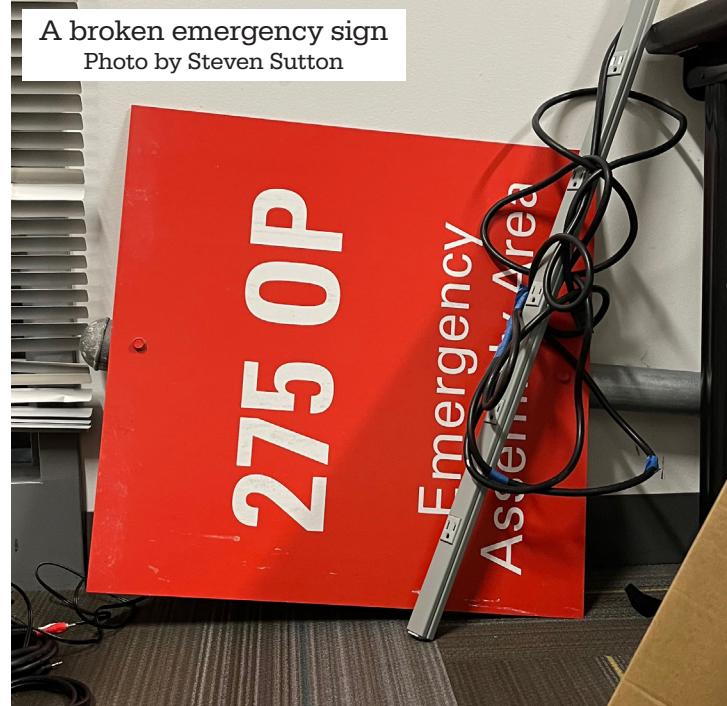
## Chromebooks

"We used to be able to do more."

Every single student at d.tech has a school issued chromebook, and it is Cerra's job to administer them and keep them running. But with only one man in charge of more than 500 devices, it gets difficult quickly.

"The Right to Repair movement hasn't quite reached Chromebook manufacturers," Cerra says. Our school chromebooks are notoriously difficult to repair when they break, which they do rather frequently. The expected lifespan of the Lenovo chromebooks held by current Sophomores and Juniors is only two years. Many years ago, we used chromebooks made by Acer, which had many more replaceable parts and were quite easy to repair. But now, many common points of failure are soldered directly to the motherboard of the computer, meaning if one thing fails, the entire computer is permanently dead.

**A broken emergency sign**  
Photo by Steven Sutton



When Cerra first started encountering these problems, he was unsure of what to do, and sought help from other education IT professionals. He called around to other schools to hear their policies and even joined the K12 SysAdmin subreddit group. There, he was forced to come to the conclusion there wasn't really anything he could do about it. Chromebooks don't last very long, and when they do break, they often can't be easily fixed. It may cost more in the short term, but when you factor in labor, time, and sheer frustration, replacement becomes the better option.

When the new 14in HP devices were bought this year for Freshmen and Seniors, Cerra understood the new reality of device repair, and he had the school intentionally overbuy chromebooks so that when they encounter fatal errors there will be replacement devices on hand. There are currently around 30 HP chromebooks still in their boxes in Cerra's office, ready to serve as replacements.

We were very lucky to have the new HP devices come in this year. Due to the worldwide chip shortage, there simply aren't enough chromebooks in the United States, and schools were quickly buying them up whenever they became available. And that same shortage has made acquisition of the parts we can replace more difficult and expensive. For example, replacement screens for Lenovos used to cost around \$50 each, but since d.tech went back in person, they have cost in excess of \$100 each.

Before the pandemic began, students would be billed for chromebooks repairs. That policy had to be changed when the pandemic started. "I can only imagine what it's been like for families in this pandemic," Cerra said. He decided to make payment for repairs optional. "It seems like the right thing to do," he said, and most families have managed to pay.

Paul Cerra and the Business of Securing a School continues on page 5.



Paul Cerra at his desk  
Photo by Steven Sutton

## Who is Summer De Mello?

By Mei Peters | Section Editor

**Y**ou may know her as an expert of Norse mythology or someone with an unlimited supply of random d.tech trivia. This year, d.tech is overjoyed to welcome Summer De Mello!

Although De Mello has been a staple member of this community for most of this school year, she has recently taken a permanent position. For a while, she was filling in for a number of teachers, including Mr. Groh and Ms. Pazin. Now that Ms. Pazin has shifted to part-time, Summer will be permanently assuming the role of 10th grade d.lab teacher on the days that Ms. Pazin is absent. Summer says, "for right now, I'm doing d.lab, but it depends on what they want me to do in the Fall. I'd be happy teaching basically anything." Although she isn't particularly experienced in design thinking, she has plenty of experience as a teacher.

Photo by Steven Sutton



"[I] worked at San Francisco State as a teaching assistant for most of grad school," and every summer, she "would teach with Upward Bound at Canada College, a program for all the local high school students, and [I] would teach English 1 and English 2, and sometimes Anthropology."

Summer spoke about how she started off covering for Mr. Groh between the months of October and December, during this time, she got to know a lot of the students. This was when she decided that she really liked d.tech. She says, "I like the teaching style, I like that it's not rigid, I like that you guys can go out in the hall if you want, or go for a walk if you need a break, or go outside if you need to. And I like that it's more hands-on."



What are some fascinating facts about her? As stated earlier, Summer enjoys learning about Norse gods and goddesses and even led an intersession class in February that focused on the topic. She is also a huge fan of theater. She has a masters degree in theater costume design and says that in her spare time, she makes them. Another fact about Summer is that she is a member of the Society of Creative Anachronism, "a group of people who recreate the middle ages," according to her. Lastly, she lives in the middle of the woods and every now and then, she rides her motorcycle to school.

Ultimately, Summer's uniqueness and the level of care she shows for her students makes her a perfect member of the d.tech community.

## Happiness at d.tech (Continued)

By Lydia Rak | Staff Writer

**d**.tech students are right on track to what experts say about happiness. According to the Stanford University website "Heaps of research suggest that social connections make people happier." Berkeley also talks about a recent study on happiness where they looked into people's happiness and life satisfaction based on the goals they have. They sorted the goals into two groups: personal and social. Personal could include quitting smoking or getting a better job, and social incorporated things like spending more time with friends and family, volunteering, meeting new people, etc. They conclude that "Ultimately, people who wrote down at least one social strategy tended to follow through and spend more time socializing that year, and they (in turn) became more satisfied with their lives." They continue by saying "People who focused on individual goals didn't improve their life satisfaction over the year." The results furthermore show us that social connections contribute to people's joy. This is essential to what d.tech students are saying. d.tech gives students a lot of chances to socialize which is increasing students happiness.

It seems there are a lot of things that bring students joy but one thing that stands out is that d.tech gives students time to talk and hangout with their friends at school. WYN time, sports and d.tech's overall atmosphere and schedule provides students opportunities to socialize which ultimately brings students happiness.

## Maeghan Haywood - Student Culture Coordinator

By Mei Peters | Section Editor



**E**ver since Natalie Delahunt's time as Student Culture Coordinator came to end last year, there has been some conversation about who will replace her. Well, in December we got our answer. The new Student Culture Coordinator is Maegan Haywood.

Previously, Haywood was the 10th grade Education Specialist, where she helped evaluate and improve lesson plans, as well as communicate with students, parents, and teachers. As the current Student Culture Coordinator following Delahunt's leave, she says that her responsibilities are "To help work with the community, being able to provide a more inclusive environment, oversee the clubs, work with Melissa on disciplinary issues." Additionally, she says she's currently working on "revising policies so that they're in line with our values that we hold as a school with anti-racism work."

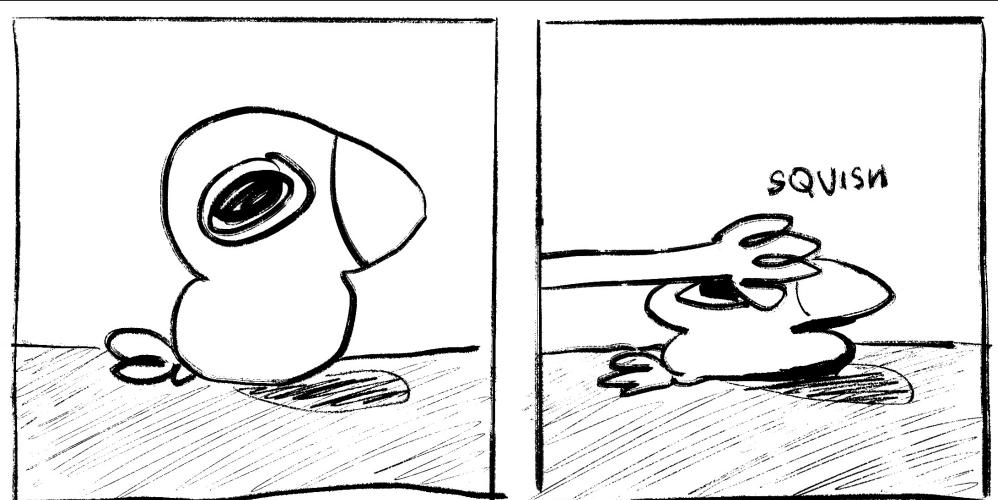
Does she have the proper experience and credentials? Haywood is fully prepared to take on this position; she said that she "ironically had the hopes of having this role 10 years from now" and "took the position, really having the hopes and dreams to help work with students with their voices being heard."

Is she the right person for this position? Haywood says that she understands her role as the Student Culture Coordinator, and comes with certain perspectives and experiences that help her connect with students. "I've always been an activist with work and making sure that the people who have been harmed are the focus, and that they're not further harmed in the future. That really comes with understanding and a platform to be seen." She adds on that she is fit for this role because of what she supports and stands up for. Since she has family members who focus on special education, she was influenced to go into special education to make sure students aren't negatively impacted from the system. "Having all those different lenses work in my favor for this role."

Haywood has fully contemplated the influence she wants to have on the students at d.tech, and believes that using a more restorative approach rather than relying on punishment will help them "understand the impact they hold as a community." Overall, she feels that her assortment of experience, values, and inspiration provides her with the foundation to be an effective Student Culture Coordinator.

## Squish

By Salem Jiang



## The WYN Times, They Are a-Changin' (Continued)

By Kira Tarkiainen | Staff Writer

**"People want to hang out with their friends, and that's the way they use the time," says sophomore at d.tech, Lia Joy Santos, two months after the changes were put in place.**

Lia also discloses the difficulties she currently faces when trying to meet with her teachers. "Now when I want to meet with a teacher on club days, I have to sign up for another club, then tell the club leader that I have to go to see my teacher, and then [the teacher] has to get slacked... it's just a really hard thing because I'm just trying to learn more." For students like Lia, this "structured" schedule seems to cause more of a hassle when coordinating classes.

The question remains: is this new schedule an improvement from the previous one? Many students and staff have contradicting opinions on this topic. While some believe these changes are necessary to provide students with more direction, others feel constricted by them. It's up for the community to determine if the benefits of this schedule outweigh its issues. Melissa encourages students to provide feedback through their advisors until the majority can agree on an effective and efficient WYN schedule.



## Mental Health Specialists @ d.tech

By Kaz Murray | Staff Writer

**M**ental health is an important aspect of human lives that doesn't often get taken care of, especially during adolescent years. But with the help of the school's mental health specialists, Ryan Perisho, Casia Ravi, and Simi Samra, the task of bringing awareness and support to d.tech is being tackled.

"There are a wide variety of topics that come up in school based therapy," Perisho describes the many topics she and Ravi cover: depressive or anxious symptoms, dealing with relationship trouble with friends or family members, identity issues, being overwhelmed from school work, being diagnosed with mental health disorders, and many more. "The goals that we work on are made collaborative and really depend on what the student would like support with."

The two counselors have worked at other educational sites as well, such as Woodside High School, La Entrada Middle School, and even local government. "For me it was a career change to become a therapist, so before that I did a few other things, including working in local government (in San Mateo) and working in the field of education research and consulting on a national and international level," Ravi says.

Simi Samra has a similar story, "Prior to d.tech, I was working in Intensive Mental Health Services at Momentum for Health as well as school districts in Livermore, Pleasanton and Dublin."

d.tech is a progressive school, with time after classes to spend on extra classwork people may have and more extended classes to keep everyone engaged. But even with the lack of stressful afterschool busywork, many students are still caught up in other stresses and at-home issues. "Our mental health is a process, not an end state. It is not a sign of weakness to seek out support or people to talk to, but rather a mental strength, humility and resilience," Ravi says.

These wonderful specialists help people who feel like they need somebody to lean on, all confidential and welcoming to everyone. Contact either Simi Samra ([ssamra@dtechhs.org](mailto:ssamra@dtechhs.org)), Casia Ravi ([cravi@dtechhs.org](mailto:cravi@dtechhs.org)), or Ryan Perisho ([rperisho@dtechhs.org](mailto:rperisho@dtechhs.org)) to set up a one-time appointment or more regular scheduled appointments. Samra adds, "I believe everyone can benefit from therapy and I hope that it can be a safe place for individuals to heal, learn and grow."

Casia Ravi  
Photo from Yearbook

## Paul Cerra and the Business of Securing a School (Continued)

By Steven Sutton | Co-Editor in Chief

### Paul, Personally

Cerra started working at d.tech part time in January 2017 and went full time in October of that year. He was here when d.tech moved from the warehouse campus to its current building, and that transition was difficult. The move created new responsibilities surrounding security infrastructure that he wasn't expecting.

**Working at d.tech has been stressful, but for Cerra, the benefits outweigh the downsides.**

"This is a cool community ... I can really help [students]," he says. "When I came to work at d.tech I didn't understand I was coming to work at a school ... I just thought I was turning wrenches and fixing chromebooks. I said to the Class of 2021 that they were the first class where I knew them more than I knew their chromebooks. When I first came to work here there was a stack of broken chromebooks with students' names on them; the joke used to be that I knew students' chromebooks more than I knew you. Over time that's really changed. [...] Eventually, as I met more of you [I realized] there's a lot of cool people here."

Helping students with tech issues, keeping classroom technology running, even just unblocking websites for students who need them can be rewarding. And the pressures have become easier with time, and he can see it making a difference and mitigating stress. "[In life] there are things you can control and things you can't [...] you learn to stop stressing over what you cannot control."

Getting to know us, he says, "has been far more fulfilling than fixing a screen and a trackpad. This is actually a job about people. I have the word support in my job title, and I believe in that. The community is more important than a chromebook."

**"I'm not gonna get many more opportunities to say 'Hi' to students like Kasvi Singh; along with the rest of the class of 2022, she'll be graduating soon. But one day, when I'm out of this job, I'll remember the students."**

Paul lives nearby with his wife Stephanie in a home they recently moved into. Stephanie is a former college professor and one-time intersession teacher who recently got a job writing Google Support pages. She likes to read mysteries. Paul introduced her to author Agatha Christie's detective character Hercule Poirot a while back, and she fell in love with the art. It's no surprise then that her one foray into intersession teaching was about the mystery writers of the early 20th century.

If you see him in the halls, feel free to say hi, but not much more. He is probably very busy.

Stacks of replacement chromebooks  
Photo by Steven Sutton



Paul Cerra holding an auction sign  
Photo by Steven Sutton

Ryan Perisho  
Photo from Yearbook





Illustration by Nicolas Gibson

## Op Ed: The Sun's Brighter than I Remember

By Katherine Ioffe | Contributor

**I**t's a warm, spring day as I watch the marsh flow calmly past. The sun's bright today, brighter than I remember it being. Perhaps I shouldn't be staring at the sun. Nearby, a crow caws atop the unmistakable reflective glass of Design Tech's pristine campus. It's quiet, pensive. What a strange time it's been. Sometimes good, bad, or wonderful.

### *What's wrong with strange, anyway?*

I remember how I was four years ago. Enthusiastic, yet timid. A true believer in the that childish notion that deferring happiness now creates increased results in time. I was young, so I can be forgiven for thinking that that, along with the Star Wars reboots, were a good idea. Still, through it all, I'm immensely grateful for the challenges and experiences I've gone through during my adolescence. These years have changed me. They have made me.

Here, I shall reveal to you those past four years, painting my highest highs and my lowest lows. You shall be privy to details both irrelevant and inane, such as the fact that I presided over a Doctor Who fan club when I was fifteen. In return, I ask only one favor of you: have hope.

My first year, by all accounts, was like one of those modern rockets. What goes up, must come down in a fiery explosion of magnificent proportions. I interned at Stanford, and spent the summer working with white haired professors and graduate students in a basement laboratory. I excelled in my classes, which I balanced with fencing and homework and studying for the SAT. I was, I hope, a model student. But I suppose I must have been a very sad human being, because, as the old saying goes, there's no such thing as a free lunch. The price I payed for this focus was a simple lack of enjoyment of my youth. I didn't really stop to try to connect with people, or to enjoy the moment.

### *Enter Covid.*

As you all know, the world as we know it ended two years ago. It was a bad thing, of course. Only a monster would say that Covid, the cause of countless deaths and a sort of collective societal madness, might actually be a good thing.

### *Still, it was a good thing, wasn't it?*

That's not to say that lockdown and the subsequent isolation was entirely pleasant, nor the resulting chaos of a global pandemic a preferable outcome. Still, I take comfort in the notion that things can always be worse. A perverse sort of optimism, I suppose. Lockdown was a strangely enlightening period. I went from a socially inexperienced introvert, lost in the confusion of the rush of modern society, to an introvert who at least interacted on a semi-weekly basis with other introverts. The mechanism for this was a science fiction club which became oddly popular during the pandemic. Students from different high schools, and later, colleges, would all meet on our Friday video calls to discuss everything science fiction. It was a blast. We regularly stayed up into the wee hours of the morning debating the physics of space stations. Eventually, I had to say goodbye to these people who had become my friends in a time of meandering crisis, as they went off to college campuses and into the world. I still miss them, sometimes.

There is a modern hysteria surrounding social media, a sort of moral panic not seen since the Salem witch trials. But I developed a rather more literal wariness of technology, something which I might only call a sort of "techno-phobia". If I even touched a device so much, I felt the need to run to the bathroom and wash my hands. It was as though all technology had become abhorrent to me. I eventually came to an epiphany. The reason I felt this way was not because of the technology itself, but what it represented. Isolation and cold inhumanity. A calculating mechanicalness that exacerbates the image of isolation. And through this realization, I overcame that fear. And do you know what I realized?

### *I need you.*

Yes, you. All of you. And we all need each other. We all need a hand to hold, someone to talk to, to laugh with. Forget everything. Just for a second, forget it all. Maybe it matters, maybe it doesn't, but do you know what really, truly matters?

### *You.*

All of us, we matter. And if we matter to each other, then that's human connection. That's compassion, and friendship. It's easy to forget that we need something so simple. But when you're deprived of water for two years, all the world's an ocean.

So please. Smile. Laugh. Give someone a hug, tell your loved ones that you love them. Because you know what?

Bad things can happen. Good things can happen. You can be afraid, or sad, or angry, sometimes. We're only human. But that sure as heck doesn't mean that you have to stop being happy. "Eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we might die," as the old saying goes.

The sun keeps on shining, and it's probably brighter than we remember. Just don't stare directly at it.

## Senior Reflections

"Looking back as a senior at dtech, the thing that instantly comes to mind is the community. While I did learn some normal school things like algebra and combat theatre, when I look back at dtech I'll think about the little things - the rocket-shaped chair, the laughter at the advisory skit at the freshman camping trip, the people I held as they were living through what felt like their worst moments, the excitement of putting on makeup for the first time minutes before my senior photo gets taken. When I was a freshman at dtech I had made perhaps two real friends from middle school, and only one of those I'm even vaguely in contact with, but at dtech, I can't help but feel that the community is one of the nicest things I've had the pleasure of participating in. Also I'm a woman now." -Elizabeth LeCuyer

"I owe a lot to dtech, it's given me a lot of good memories. But in truth the best parts of dtech aren't intentional. The admin jumps from blunder to blunder as students such as myself are stuck in the confusion. I wouldn't recommend it to other students entering highschool, but I don't regret coming here for a second. I love dtech, I hate dtech, and I'll definitely miss it when I'm gone." -Michael Kholmer

"Arriving on campus, I knew I was in for a unique ride. It was nothing like I had imagined, nothing in the movies compared. Honestly, it felt like middle school all over again. The environment was easy-going and lax. This feeling trickled down to the teachers and students too. Though many things I wanted were not offered and everything on display never peaked my interest, I did get out experiences such as self-direction and avocation. Mixed emotions hit me as I recollect, there were plenty of aggravating times, and also exciting times. Though this school had been forced upon me by my parents, I am grateful that I attended this unique school." -Razi Motalib

"My time at Dtech has been an overall great experience with a few bumps along the way. The biggest one of course was Covid which slammed straight into the middle of my sophomore year and took my entire Junior one. I'm honestly grateful that we get to be back for Senior year and graduation. I think Dtech does a really good job of having supportive teachers who really want you to succeed. My college admissions process was less stressful than I had been stressing about. (that sounds weird) I was so worried about getting stressed and not doing well that I put it off for as long as I could. We wrote our Common App essays in English class which really helped me since I couldn't put that off. I wasn't sure mine was good but I sent it in the way I had written it since it seemed genuine. There is honestly nothing better than getting accepted somewhere, even if it's not your first choice. College applications and admissions can seem so scary but there are always other options if you don't get into your first or even second choices." - Riley Bennett

"I feel like freshman year I didn't do anything, I didn't find my crowd and it really just wasn't the vibe, haha. I wasn't the most confident person and was just finding my way into life. I think after quarantine, I got to recharge and now, I'm a lot more involved with the school. I'm helping with planning Formal and Prom, a very stressful but fun process. I think I'm a lot more social and also just more confident in general. I genuinely love d.tech and the people in it. College apps were pretty easy for me, I had a lot to write about. Although, I feel like they weren't very strong, looking back at them, -oop. Luckily, I'm not too worried about where I end up, so it's all good. I'll miss everyone at d.tech, especially the younger classmen :(" - Ryan Quisol

# Opinion: Please Calm Down in the Parking Lots. Please.

By Steven Sutton | Co-Editor in Chief

**"We are skating on thin ice with Oracle."**

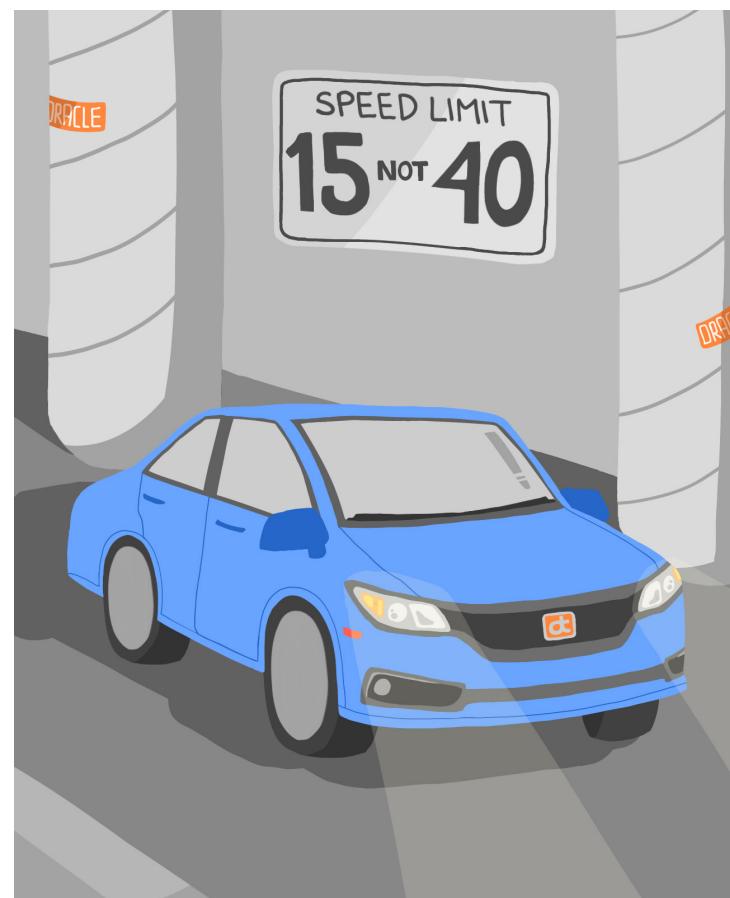


Illustration by Cynthia Shi

every day hot, sweaty, and exhausted. I take concurrent enrollment classes, I do off campus internships, I go places after school. I need the independence I get from driving myself to school to maintain my mental health, and as silly as that sounds, it's 100% true.

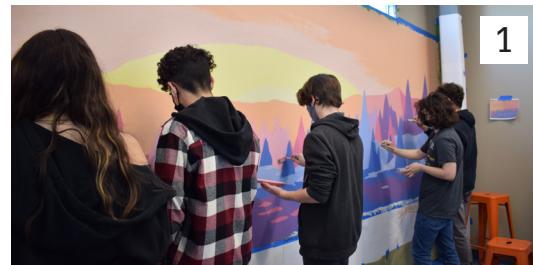
By racing in the Oracle garages and misusing them like this, my independence and that of dozens of other students is being put in check. Even if just 1 or 2 students are doing these things, Oracle is going to get angry. It is their property, and we can't be misusing it like this. They give us permission to park there, and they could just as easily take that away.

So please, don't ruin it for us. Don't take away our ability to easily get to concurrent enrollment classes, jobs, sports, volunteer sites, internships, and all the other things we drive to after school. Don't take away the little bit of independence that some of us rely on. And please don't make it so that the current freshman and sophomores won't have the option to express their independence and drive to school when they turn 16.

Please.

## Feb. Intersession Highlights

Photos Provided by Yearbook (Taliyah Huang)



[1] Painting a multicolored landscape in Murals [2] Students practicing martial arts in Greg Fenner's Capoeira class [3] Working together in Art Expression : Quilling & Doodling [4] Drummers standing at the ready in Drumming [5] Students peacefully crocheting in Language of Thread

## Your Horoscopes

By Steven Sutton | Co-Editor in Chief

*\*\*Please be aware that the following is completely satirical, and solely for the entertainment of the reader. Neither the author nor the Dragon News intends to offend with the following, and any relation to actual events is purely coincidental. Again, this is, in its entirety, satire.\*\**

Aries (Ram): March 21–April 19

While it may amuse friends, neighbors, and mailmen alike, it will soon become clear that having your pet baboon answer the door for you is a bad idea.

Taurus (Bull): April 20–May 20

Everything may seem perfect now, but be on the lookout for strewn banana peels at 1:37pm April 27 outside your bedroom door.

Gemini (Twins): May 21–June 21

Love is around the corner! But beware, because in this case the stars may have taken the term "cougar" a little too literally.

Cancer (Crab): June 22–July 22

The stock market will come through for one you this week! Which one, you ask? I don't know.

Leo (Lion): July 23–August 22

Prepare for a visit from Jim McCarthy's evil twin, Mim McCarthy, as you receive a summons to appear before the House Too-American Activities Committee regarding your practice of setting off fireworks from jet skies.

Virgo (Virgin): August 23–September 22

Do you know what a North Highland Cow is? Well, you should learn, and soon.

Libra (Balance): September 23–October 23

Remember that thing you said in fifth grade when the teacher asked you about geography? Now you do.

Scorpius (Scorpion): October 24–November 21

The stars think you'll undergo significant changes this week, but quite frankly, they don't really care.

## Bay Area Blues (Continued)

By Kaz Murray | Staff Writer

The fear of going back in the classroom after so long on Zoom was a universal fear that Phipps, and other teachers felt. "As a brand new teacher, I finished my Masters program during COVID, it has been difficult to find long term positions," Long term substitute teacher, Summer De Mello, tells us about her struggle finding jobs after graduating during the pandemic. "Most schools want staff with experience, which is logical. However, to get that teaching experience, one must work somewhere."

But not all new teachers, including Joe Schneider, one of the new Spanish teachers at d.tech, had a scuffle finding jobs. "It was surprisingly easy to find a job teaching in the Bay Area. After a year [of] student teaching virtually at a school in Sunnyvale to earn my credential, the interview and hiring processes were fairly straightforward," he tells.

As students, it may be difficult to imagine the struggles of finding long term jobs, to earn money to pay bills for our houses and to feed ourselves on a certain budget. But for our teachers, who have come this far in terms of finding a stable teaching job in the Bay Area, it's been proving harder now than ever.

Sagittarius (Archer): November 22–December 21

This week you will find yourself face-to-face with one of the rarest and most dangerous creatures known to humanity - Minnesotans.

Capricorn (Goat): December 22–January 19

Despite the animal associated with your sign, please be aware that your homemade Kombucha is most definitely not the G.O.A.T.

Aquarius (Water Bearer): January 20–February 18

The stars are sure that the mood swings, excessive anxiety, sudden outbursts of depression, and uncouth intrusive thoughts are the fault of your lunar cycle, and not signs of a major psychiatric disorder.

Pisces (Fish): February 19–March 20

"You scream, I scream, we all scream for ice cream!" is not now and will never be a legal defense for arson.

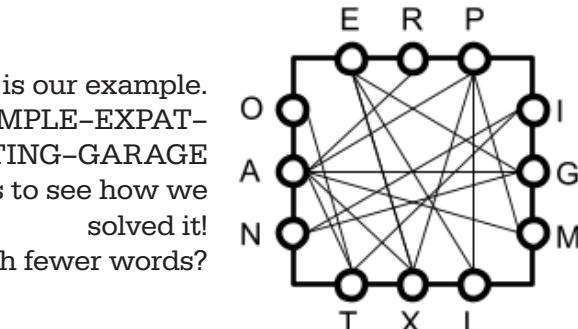
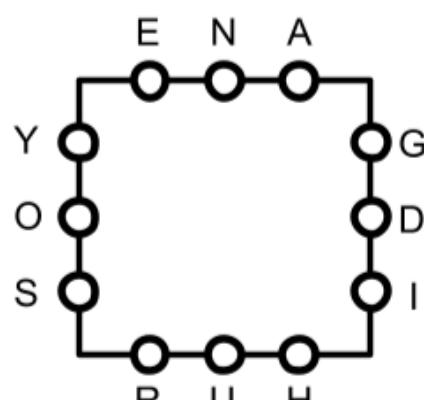
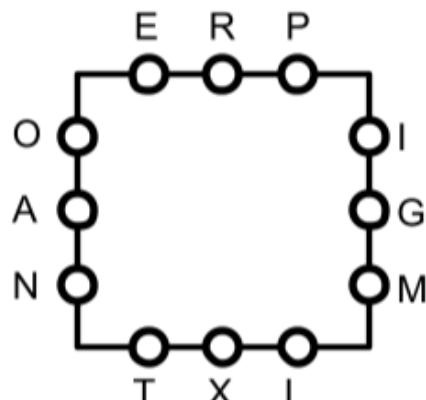
## Letter Boxed

Make words by thinking inside the box.

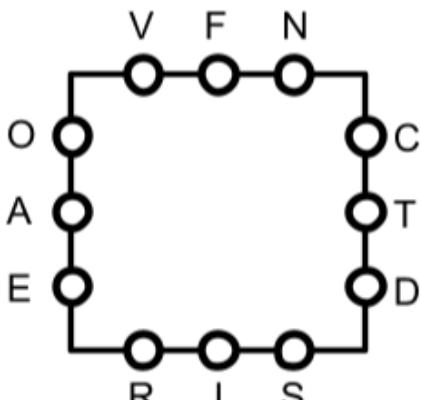
Draw lines to connect the letters and form words!

- The last letter of the first word becomes the first letter of the next.**
- Consecutive letters cannot be from the same side

- No letter may be used twice in a row
- Letters may be used more than once
- Words cannot be hyphenated
- Once you've used all the letters, you've solved the puzzle!



Here is our example.  
Words used: EXAMPLE-EXPAT-TOTING-GARAGE  
Follow the lines to see how we solved it!  
Can you solve it with fewer words?



Stuck? See below for our solutions. • Idea courtesy of the New York Times. • Puzzles made by Steven Sutton

## Word Search



### Word List (20 words total)

acne	half
behavior	initial
close	mosquito
compose	plea
default	referral
discover	replace
empathy	restaurant
expertise	rule
fish	spam
gradual	surgeon

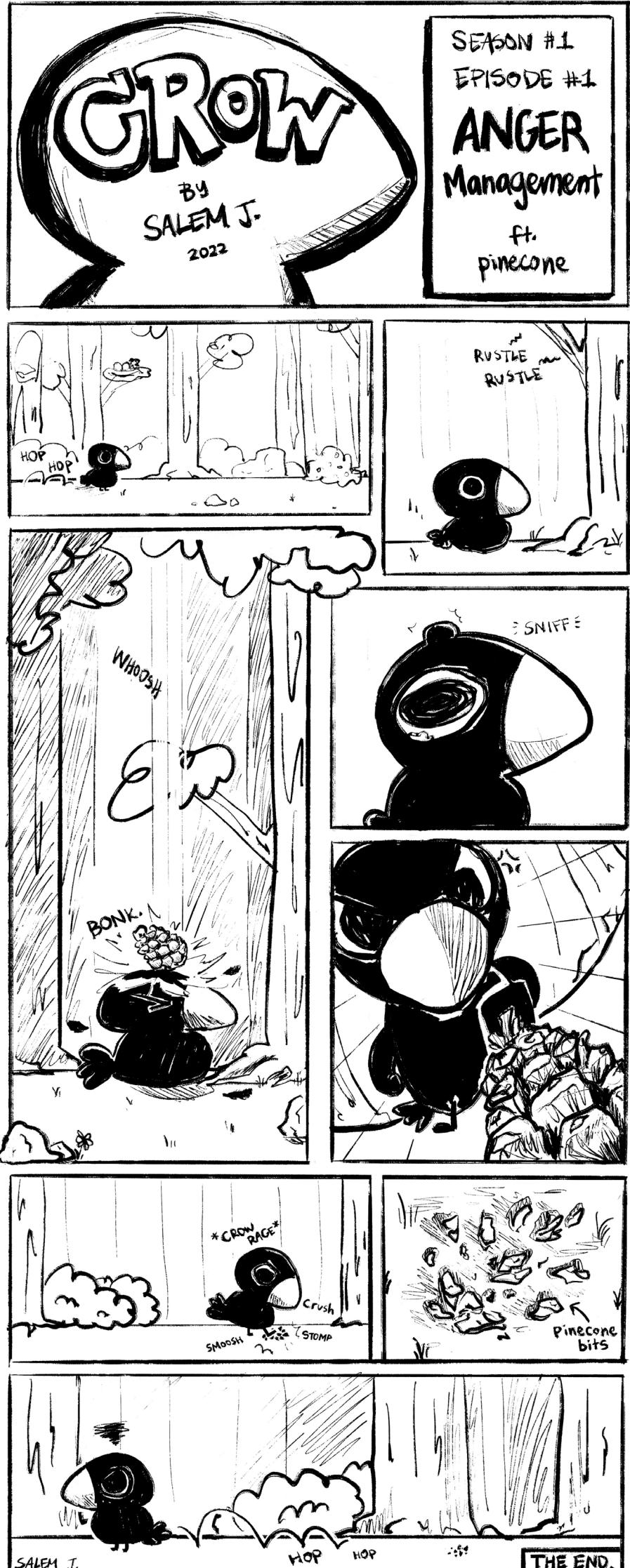
## My Dad's Haikus about Jury Duty

By Steven's Dad

Uh oh, a summons  
To the courthouse I must go  
Nah, it's in the trash

Jury duty now,  
Sadly, I cannot attend  
The cat's on my lap

Alone in the house  
My wife has jury duty  
Thank god its not me



Our Solutions:  
Left - EXAMPLE-EXPAT-TOTING-GARAGE  
Middle - EYING-GARSH-HOUSE-EGAD  
Right - DEFINITION-NAIVE-ERADICATES