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TikTok Mania Overtakes d.tech Students and Staff

By Leo Belman

Section Editor



Frost and Daskalakis on TikTok.
Photo Sourced from TikTok

On the afternoon of Thursday, January 2nd, Math Teacher Alexis Frost and senior Sophia Daskalakis arrived at the Hillsdale Shopping Center, to be greeted by over 60 excited fans who had come from all over the Bay Area just to meet them. So how did

they become so popular? TikTok.

TikTok, for those who don't know (which is an increasingly shrinking population), is a relatively new and wildly popular social media platform where people post three to fifteen-second music, talent, comedy, etc. videos based on current trends.

One feature unique to TikTok, setting it apart from many other social media outlets of arguably similar function, is the idea that anybody who posts a video can become popular. The "For You" page (similar to Instagram's Explore Page), can feature videos that don't necessarily have a lot of views or likes. Nobody (outside of the TikTok staff) knows what algorithm TikTok uses to decide what videos make the "For You" page, but many creators started tagging their videos with "#fyp," theorizing that it will help them get on the feed. It should be noted that there is no proof of the validity of this practice.

Frost first became interested in TikTok in June of 2019, after one of her math students, Daskalakis (TikTok username 'sophiadaskalakis') started making TikTok videos called 'Daily Ms. Frost,' in ten-day increments. "I was like, 'oh Ms. Frost is pretty funny,' so why don't I just go up to her and say 'hey daily Ms. Frost, how are you today?'" said Daskalakis. Every day, Frost would respond with "I'm fine." When Daskalakis posted it, it went viral. "I didn't really think it was going to get that many likes, but I think it got 2.3 million views,"

continued Daskalakis. Frost didn't have a TikTok account, so she only found out when it was sent to her. "My brother, who lives three hours away, sent me a text message with the link in it, saying 'have you seen this?'" Frost remembered.

After the first 'Daily Ms. Frost' TikTok went viral, people wanted to see more. "All the fans were asking for more, so I kept making more and more and more of 'Daily Ms. Frost' videos," said Daskalakis.

After about day 20 of 'Daily Ms. Frost,' Frost decided to get her own TikTok account under the username of '_ms_frost_'. "I basically just started it to do my makeup and promote my website (lexloves.com)," said Frost.

After seeing a large amount of interest in her TikToks, Frost shifted towards making more videos for her growing fan base. "A lot of people were interested in watching my makeup videos, so I just started to do makeup. Sometimes I dance, but it's pretty cringy, so I'll only keep it up for 24 hours and then take it down," she said.

As of this article's release, Frost has over 364 thousand followers. Once she began rising in popularity, Frost commented that businesses started reaching out to her to advertise their products during her TikToks. "I do have several brands that reach out to me and give me free stuff and then tell me to make videos with their products," said Frost.

While most of her original videos concerned

makeup, Frost has since diversified. "I've had three different companies reaching out to me this week. I'm doing a campaign with this nonprofit for the flu shot," she said, "and then a skincare company that I'm working for [...] I've been doing some promotional stuff with them as well."

However, Frost's main goal on TikTok is to foster connections. She strongly believes that it helps people come together. "I definitely think [TikTok] has made me very very close to Sophia [Daskalakis]," she said.

"I went to her Greek festival, and I took my kids, and she explained all the food to me and talked to me about her Greek dancing. We're just super close now, and I don't think that would have happened without her doing the 45 days of her asking me how I was every single day, you know? I don't know, it sounds silly, I know, but it means something to me, and I would hope she would say the same."

In fact, Daskalakis shared a similar sentiment. "Ms. Frost and I have gained such a good relationship from TikTok, from making these TikToks with her. I feel like I've gotten way closer to her."

Not just limited to Daskalakis, Frost has formed bonds with many of her students through TikTok. "I want to show the world that I love my students so much and that this is what we can do together, and that [students] can have these types of relationships with [their] teachers," she said.

Tik Tok continues on page 6.

Australian Bush Fires Rampage Across Continent

By Roxie Baggott

Staff Writer



Koala and its baby avoiding fires.
Illustration by Roxie Baggott

Members and flames trickle into the skies of Australia as animals run from their homes, as the formerly abundant Australian forests find themselves ablaze. Currently, there are fires all over Australia, but the most devastating ones have been in New South Wales, Australia. Some blame the country's drought, while others blame it on bigger issues such as global warming, but one of the biggest issues has been the surprising lack of knowledge.

Yes, it seems as though it's blown up all over the internet, but the fires have been going on much longer than we have been concerned

about it. There are often fires during Australian summers — December to February — and this year, over 17 million acres of land have been burned to the ground; because of this, 26 people have died and 2,000 houses have been destroyed. Though fires aren't abnormal for Australia, these ones have been much more ferocious and have gone on much longer than usual. In addition, there are at least 140 fires burning in New South Wales, which means that the fires are concentrated in one area, and thus, harder to fight off. Though many of these fires have been caused by the hot and dry climate in

Australia, around 24 people have been caught-setting bushfires as well, which only contributes to the devastating wildfires.

The effects of these fires have been devastating to the Australian wildlife. In fact, it is believed that 30% of the koala population has been killed from the fires. Environmental Science Teacher Fannie Hsieh said, "Animals' habitats are being destroyed, we're losing a lot of trees [and] biodiversity, and that's going to contribute to global warming. We're releasing a lot of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere with all the burning, and meanwhile taking away the trees that are supposed to be sucking in that carbon."

Senior Alannah Forster added, "Australia is home to a lot of different types of species. It's an ecosystem that's very different from the rest of the world, so there's a lot of worry about [how] if those kinds of species are damaged there's not another population to fall back on."

Though the environment is a first priority for many animal lovers, there are other things that are of concern in this situation as well, such as crops being burned down. Because of this, the pricing for food is going to be higher in Australia throughout the next year, which could leave many families hungry. In addition, there is the mental trauma that fires can bring to people, and if it gets bad enough, people could end up losing their jobs and stability. Lastly, the fires are creating public health issues. Imagine the air quality during the California fires in 2018, but amplified. Many Australian citizens are being physically harmed due to smoke being inhaled.

When it comes to d.tech students' thoughts about the Australian fires, there are many who express their concerns, especially those with family in Australia. Sophomore Genevieve Crouch said, "I have family in New South Wales [...] the fires are nearly 20 kilometers away from my friend's houses [...] It's really touchy, it's really hard for people I know around there."

Another sophomore with family in Australia, Sophia Wigenstam, said, "The awareness about

the Australian bush fires haven't gotten out to the media [a couple of weeks ago], even though by then the fires in Australia were far more severe than any California fire ever, and those had way more publicity."

Seeing the seriousness of the fires, countries have started sending out reinforcements for the Australian firefighters, who have been working non-stop in order to save lives and the environment. The U.S. has sent out firefighters from California, and they've been in Australia since January 8th. Even the United Nations has gotten involved, writing news articles about it to spread awareness, offering support in other ways.

Though most d.tech students live far away from the fires, there are still things that students, teachers and parents can do to help those affected. One of the easiest ways to help is, as Wigenstam said, "There are different organizations where if they get enough shares or get enough likes, they [will] donate an allocated amount of money that help with the fire services, with rehabilitation, with addicted people whose houses burned down."

Though this is true, students should be cautious about whether the Instagram organizations are legitimate. To do this, a student should click on the link in the bio to read up and make sure everything is trustworthy; often times scams won't have a website or real information.

In addition to Instagram, there are plenty of other ways to help the people and animals of Australia. Former d.tech student, Lachlan Flint — who now lives in Australia and goes by Lily Anne — said, "The main thing is, vote. Vote for people will put the environment as forefront issue, people who believe in climate change. Donate if you can, if you have money to spare, to responsive action [...] The main thing is [to] address the root cause, which is climate change."

Student Life

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Robotics Kicks Off New Season

By Max Hofelmann
Co-Video Director

Robotics can at times be celebrated, at times be contentious, but at all times is a quintessential part of d.tech. For those who are unaware, in 2014, a group of passionate and driven students came together to found Team 5940 B.R.E.A.D—the robotics team. After all, would Design Tech High School even be complete without a robotics team?

For the past five years, the d.tech robotics team has participated in First Robotics Competitions around the country. Some may have noticed the lingering robots in the corner of the bottom Design Realization Garage (DRG). Team 5940 has built four competition robots since its creation, dubbing them with bread themed names: Focaccia, Ciabatta, Baguette and Croissant. Head of Programming and senior Jocelyn McHugo said, "We try and match some major structure to the shape of the bread," a statement that has held true for their most recent robot, Croissant, that had a croissant shaped intake.

On the 4th of January, 2020, the team started the new year off early with a kickoff to this year's First Robotics Competition (FRC), Infinite ReCharge. In robotics competitions, teams are tasked with creating a robot that must meet a certain amount of goals that are presented in the yearly game. This year's being to protect your team's base from an impending asteroid using power cells (yellow foam balls), spinning a color wheel, and climbing the shield generator.



A member of the spirit team prototypes a Star Wars themed T-shirt design.

Photo by Miriam Dijamco

On the first day of build season—the kick-off—the official First Robotics Competition video is released, allowing teams around the world to learn the game of the year and begin brainstorming. This year, team 5940 spent kickoff day working on their strategies. After thoroughly reading the 125-page game manual, according to Head of Fabrication and junior Zachary Morley, "We were able to finalize a strategy for the season and design and prototype ideas for the season." Currently, freshman Max Goldson describes their ideas as consisting of a "Buddy climb and the platform idea," which would entail "a platform that comes out from the bellypan,

and a robot or two can drive on and we carry them." The team is also planning on using an intake system to store power cells and shoot them into the given slots.

As you read this, team 5940 is building prototypes, programming, and CADing their new robot for the 2020 season. According to Captain of Technical and senior Matthew Morley, the team's goals for this year are to "Build a robot, getting to champs would be cool [and] having kids to do the work for me, so when I graduate they can still be a good team in my absence." We wish you luck Team 5940 BREAD, may the force be with you.

New Athletic Director

By Miriam Dijamco
Section Editor



New Athletic Director Mr. Gutierrez.

Photo by Kasvi Singh

To most, Michael Gutierrez is known for his role in teaching US history, so it may surprise some to know that Gutierrez is also d.tech's newest athletics director. Marcus Marshall was the school's athletic director for the last three years at d.tech. After he left, Leslie Glore was brought in as a part-timer, but resigned in the middle of this school year, her position being filled by Gutierrez.

"I think [Glore] felt like it was a personal reason," Student Culture Coordinator Henry Lonnemann said, "It was just a lot of work [...] she was coming from the East Bay, and so she just couldn't do everything." December 20th, Gutierrez became the athletic director to fill in for Glore after her resignation.

As the former athletic director at Mercy High School for seven years, and the Recreation Athletic Supervisor of Daly City for 25 years, Gutierrez has plenty of experience in the field. "I've coached probably 150 different teams, different sports and everything for a long time,"

Gutierrez said.

Gutierrez started off his career in the same year he graduated from high school, refereeing basketball in 1978. After that, things just seemed to fall into place. "A guy in Daly City from the Recreation Department said, 'how'd you like to referee in our tournament?' I said 'sure,' So I did. And then I worked there for the next 32 years," Gutierrez laughed.

Eventually, in 2011, Gutierrez decided to retire from the center, which allowed him to follow a career he liked better; teaching. Gutierrez said simply, "Athletics is something I know and I love, [but] teaching is my passion." Gutierrez spends most of his time and efforts in teaching, and being the athletic director is a part-time job that he takes on out of the classroom. "When I got hired full-time Dr. Montgomery did ask me if I wanted to be athletic director. I said no," but Gutierrez agreed to this year, as he took to fill in the absence, wanting to "be there when needed."

In the process of taking up the torch so suddenly, securing locations to games is particularly difficult, especially as Glore had not reserved fields or gyms for upcoming games, which left Gutierrez scrambling to secure locations for teams to compete in. "Even for games like tomorrow, I'm looking for [soccer] fields [...] this late in time. It's very, very difficult," Gutierrez noted. Lonnemann is Gutierrez's associate in ensuring that communication runs smoothly. "I do communication with parents and students about sports issues. But he is definitely the head guy," Lonnemann added, "He's been doing a great job, with getting all the fields finalized and making sure we have all the refs and making sure everything is kind of organized."

The best part of his role as athletics director is that it's "The chance to see all these different people who love different kinds of sports." The job has its pros and cons. "[Being the athletic director] takes a lot of time." Gutierrez elaborated, "[I] get emails and texts saying, 'where are the referees?' 'are we scheduled for today?' 'can

we switch a game?' from different athletic directors and coaches all the time because athletics happens after school [...] That's when you have to be ready." Gutierrez reflected, "I appreciate the students', parents' and coaches' patience in the meantime, because [having everything run smoothly] will take a little time. Not having fields won't happen next year, because I'll know [locations for games] way in advance...just be patient with me, and we're going to all be successful."

As for basketball, "There's an arrangement made that we can use the gymnasium sometimes [...] so hopefully students can go over there and watch the teams play."

Gutierrez is unable to make it to games on his own, as he is currently in a wheelchair. Lonnemann and School Director Melissa Mizel are helping Gutierrez commute to games. Gutierrez hopes to eventually be able to "Go to more games and see all the different sports."

Besides the coordinating aspect of his role, Gutierrez sees sports as his way of advocating for passion. "People have to find their passion. Sports can be passionate for so many people in so many ways." In addition, sports "contributes to the success of a student [...] If [sports] is the only thing that keeps them into school [...] That's a good thing." Gutierrez is inspired by those who make sports part of their life—"That's amazing to me."

In the future, Gutierrez hopes to "Let people know about d.tech and hopefully our teams can compete." He continued, "Sure, do I love to win? Yes. But the most important [part] is to compete." He said, "I want to be as successful, if not more here at d.tech. I would love for d.tech to participate in the section playoffs, maybe even a championship, who knows?" Gutierrez added, "I would love to have an athletic program that people are proud of."

d.tech's new athletic director and administration hope the program will continue to grow and thrive with the new changes.

Student Projects

By Amrisha Maharaj
Staff Writer



Taliyah Huang with her Auto Flöte.

Photo by Taliyah Huang

Since its inception, d.tech, known for its creative, inspirational and passionate students, has always encouraged the creation of passion projects to help make the world a better place. By advocating for students to participate in programs such as the Innovation Diploma, and providing access to resources such as the DRG, helps inspire students to jump-start these projects.

Sophomore Taliyah Huang embodies such qualities and demonstrates her passion through many personal projects. Huang's personal favorite is her infamous automatic flute cleaner. Huang combined her passion for flute-playing and her love of creating to make the first-ever automatic flute cleaner, the Auto Flöte. She created it using 3-D modeling as well as electrical components. With the press of a button, the flute is cleaned by a spinning roller that it's placed on. Although Huang is ready to retire Auto Flöte and its many renditions for a new start, she hopes to expand her other project, a line of veterinary products called d.Vet.

Inspired by her two parakeets, Huang started a branch of projects, cleverly named "Care-a-keet," under d.Vet. This includes her very own temperature perch, which uses the bird's temperature to identify kidney disease or sickness, and a motion sensor, which tracks her bird's activity to decipher whether they are sick. Although Huang has her hands full with d.Vet, she is excited to see what the future has in store for her, and said, "As a passionate user of design thinking, I hope to change the world for the better."

Nicolas Gibson, another creatively articulate sophomore passionate about leaving his mark on the community, created d.fence. d.fence is an interactive installation consisting of 148 colorful wooden tiles that spin by gliding one's hands across them. Inspired by pixel art and kinetic sculptures, Gibson hoped his project would make the community livelier. Besides interactive projects, Gibson also has a newfound love of fonts and created his very own. Upset by the lack of creative fonts available, Gibson decided to take it upon himself to make a change. "I was also interested in working through the many limitations to create the perfect font," he said. It was also the impact of typography, as well as its art that further pushed him to create his own. Describing his fonts as simple, modern and reminiscent of mountains, Gibson said, "If you think about it, fonts are an art form. We use them as a form of expression."

With the rise of designers and creators at d.tech, we are able to get a glimpse at the new and hopeful future ahead of us. With the help of passion, today's designers can become tomorrow's change-makers. Their drive for creation can influence and impact the world.

Local

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Shen Yun: Enemy of China and Perhaps a Cult?

By Michika Yamamoto

Staff Artist

If you have taken public transportation, used the internet, or frankly opened your eyes, you have likely seen the vivid ads displaying a woman in mid-air, her colorful dress trailing behind her with the bold words of "Shen Yun." The advertisements are for tickets to see their dance and symphony, which is available in cities all over the world. The omnipresence of these advertisements has led to the show becoming a widespread meme, people even going as far as to call winter the "Shen Yun season" due to the influx in advertising. But behind the smiling faces of the picturesque dancers lies a more complicated history that the company tries to hide.

Unbeknownst to many, the group was founded by religious cult members and continues to be affiliated with said cult, Falun Gong. The practices of Falun Gong include meditation and qigong exercises, with the aim to help heal and advance the body both physically and spiritually. The group initially received support from the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in the late 90s, when national medical costs became lower as more people turned to exercise over seeing a doctor. However, as followers increased, with over 70 million practitioners just seven years after the group's creation, the CCP began to see Falun Gong as a threat. Conflict simmered, eventually boiling over in April of 1999, when roughly 10,000 Falun Gong practitioners gathered at a central government compound in Bei-

jing for legal recognition and freedom from state interference. This only escalated the situation, as the CCP then banned Falun Gong practices. Following the ban, the CCP allegedly executed harsh state persecution on anyone affiliated with Falun Gong, including torture, organ harvesting, and other human rights violations. There has

Many viewers reported feeling displeased after viewing the show because they felt they had not received the performance they paid for, averaging at a hefty \$200 dollars. Shen Yun markets their show as a "colorful" dance and music performance, showcasing the "Divine culture [which] flourished in the land of

newspapers such as The Guardian and the New Yorker have published scathing reviews of the show.

Statements were released in 2012 from the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United States of America, expressing their views on Shen Yun. The following opinions were expressed as "Facts about the So-called "Shen Yun" Performance by the "Falun Gong." Not only was the performance reported as displaying "tacky taste" and "low artistic standards," they were also filled with "cult messages" and implied "attacks against the Chinese government."

Despite concerns and unfavorable reviews, some people genuinely enjoyed the performance, some even expressing pity for the oppressed followers of Falun Gong. Ultimately, it's up to the public to decide whether their curiosity about the huge, colorful advertisements outweighs the contentious aspects of Shen Yun's association with Falun Gong.



Illustration of a Shen Yun Dancer and followers of Falun Gong.

Illustration by Michika Yamamoto

been an estimate that tens of thousands of people following Falun Gong have been killed to feed the ongoing organ trade. Many members escaped to New York where they formed Shen Yun in 2006, as an extension of Falun Gong; they have been expanding and performing worldwide ever since.

China." In reality, the show incorporates cult-like practices and references into their performance. One attendee described it as "Nothing but a front for their religious propaganda!" The actual choreography has been reported as "Repetitive, schlocky, and definitely filled with proselytizing of the very bizarre Falun Gong cult." Additionally,

The Dragon Staff have become very interested in the origin and conspiracies revolving around Shen Yun. We are going to continue our exploration into Falun Gong and its relationship with the CCP. The Dragon Staff is continuing to interview d.tech students about their own personal experiences with Shen Yun as well as researching into adaptation of Buddhism. Prepare for a more in depth Shen Yun investigation coming soon...

Hillsdale Mall: Family Owned and Renovated

By Ellynah Suriben
and Michika Yamamoto

Staff Writer and Staff Artist



Pinstripes' new location at the Hillsdale Mall
Photo by Kelley Hill

Hillsdale Mall has changed the game for in-person shopping experiences that can't be replicated on the internet. In an effort to bring more consumers to the shopping center, the North Block was added in late November 2019 to introduce a fresh set of stores and entertainment for people to enjoy. Stores that are now open include Lululemon, West Elm, Apple, and Shake Shack. The redevelopment also includes a bowling alley and a brand new cinema. Apple and Lululemon were at the mall before but are now in upgraded locations.

It is not common knowledge that the Hillsdale Mall is a family run business, run by the Bohannon family. The Hillsdale mall was one of the Bohannon family's first projects. The family has been developing properties on the Peninsula since the 1920s and is a prevalent developer all around the bay. Depending on who you talk to, the family story can change. To some, they are community pillars worthy of naming schools after, and to others, they are more nefarious with allegations of blocking BART lines in order to

increase car traffic to their shopping mall. Either way, they continue to be responsible for bringing much of the development to the Peninsula as we know it.

Since opening its doors, the Bohannon family always kept an eye on the trends and constantly renovated the mall. The business has continued this and has been using different methods to bring more people to shop since the mall first opened. As more families began moving to the suburbs in the 1950s, the need for retail stores increased. The Hillsdale Shopping Center first opened in December of 1954, placing all the stores in one convenient spot. The mall featured the first suburban branch store of Macy's San Francisco. Now, once again, the Bohannon's have decided to expand the mall with even more stores amenities than there ever was before. The proposed plan originated in March 2013 but was put on hold due to "changing market conditions" in December 2013. The plan was modified and started up again in November 2014. The modified changes including scrapping the plan for a

three-story target and instead adding a bowling alley and a movie theater.

Cinépolis is a luxury theater with an enhanced movie-going experience. The theater was designed to be more elegant and clean than other theaters in the area. The ticket system is also different from other theaters, as the workers do not check your ticket until you are seated. The cinema offers a total of over 800 comfortable reclining seats and waiters who provide you with restaurant-quality food.

However, online reviews reflect that the brand-new theater still has room for improvement. Some students agree, like Junior Griffin Conley, "having the waiter stand right in front of me as the movie played was a bit distracting and I didn't like it very much" he stated.

Although the theater tells guests to come at least thirty minutes early to order, many people still decide to order their food during the movie. The high prices of the food and the inconvenience of ordering may turn some people away. Just three chicken tenders cost a whopping fifteen dollars. One customer on Yelp complained, "This place is clearly poorly managed. I might not have minded the high prices if the service and food were worth it. Sadly, this isn't the case. I doubt if we'll be returning any time soon."

Pinstripes, a new entertainment and food venue, has also opened right next to Cinépolis. They provide made-from-scratch Italian American cuisine and entertainment, with bowling and bocce. Pinstripes is popular around the country with numerous locations in eight states. According to their website they "were built from a passion to gather, to celebrate, and to experience sophisticated fun."

In addition to these brand new entertainment areas, popular restaurants such as Shake Shack opened in the mall, to accompany the rest of the brand new restaurants that have made their way to Hillsdale. Shake Shack is well-known for its lines that go down many blocks and this will be the third location open in the Bay Area. The North Block is also looking forward to



Founder David D. Bohannon
Photo courtesy of Bohannon Companies

"The Hillsdale mall was one of the Bohannon family's first projects."

more restaurants, as Belmateo Meat Co, Ethan Allen, Palette Tea House, and The Refuge are also coming soon. The Belmateo Meat store is a meat company both running casual dining and a butcher store for customers to be able to enjoy the meat both as the restaurant and at home. There is also the Palette Tea House which is a family-owned restaurant of the Ng family who had immigrated from Hong Kong and is steadily increasing their business. The Refuge is another restaurant owned by a small family. They opened their first in San Carlos and have decided to expand toward bigger projects. The outdoor area was also another major change as the area allows people to relax while enjoying the daily water shows, another new commodity that was added to the mall.

A New

Songs of the Past Decade

By Isabella Gamez

Staff Writer

How do we measure musical legacy and worth? Throughout the past decade, many artists and songs left memorable impressions, earning them a place within lists for top songs of the decade. The process of deciphering how songs fit into this past decade is no easy task. The number of ways to judge a great song are endless. All the songs earning themselves the title of "top songs of the decade" have a variety of enjoyable qualities, whether it is the ability to listen to it on repeat without ever getting tired of the recurring melody and lyrics or something you can only listen to when you wish to submerge yourself in feelings. It may even initiate a whole new style and sound. One thing is for sure; the 2010s had it all.

Snagging the number one spot for the most popular song of the decade according to multiple sources, including *Billboard*, is "Uptown

Funk," by Mark Ronson, featuring popular artist Bruno Mars. Released on November 10th, 2014, the song is a funk-meets-pop mash-up with a spirit comparable to the signature 1980s-era sound. Its upbeat lyrics tackle fashion, self-love and "traditional masculine bravado." Across the globe, "Uptown Funk" reached number one on the charts of 19 countries and the top ten of 15 others. "Uptown Funk" resided at the top of the *Billboard* Hot 100 list for 14 weeks.

In a poll at d.tech, "Somebody I Used to Know" by Gotye was the most popular song, with 36% saying it was their personal favorite song of the decade, with "Uptown Funk" as a close second. Sophomore Madeline Hsu reflected fondly on the song when describing her middle school science experience. "My eighth-grade teacher assigned us to make a parody covering the material from that unit. My friends and I immediately and unanimously settled upon "Uptown Funk." Its upbeat, catchy tune made it an easy choice for us," she said in-between laughs, "It

will forever be one of my favorite memories of the decade."

Accompanying "Uptown Funk" in the top ten, sitting at the number seven spot is "Old Town Road," released on December 3rd, 2018. The song immediately gained immense popularity on TikTok, and by March of 2019, reached the number 19 spot on the *Billboard* Hot Country Songs chart before the organization disqualified it for not being true to the genre. This ignited a contentious debate concerning the true definition of country music. Critics of *Billboard*'s decision to remove the song from the country charts include artists such as Moses Sumney and Billy Ray Cyrus. These artists argue that the removal of the song is proof that the music industry doesn't enable black artists to have the same creative license as white artists. The remix featuring Billy Ray Cyrus eventually hit number one on the flagship *Billboard* chart, the Hot 100, for a record-breaking 19 consecutive weeks. All over the world, multiple renditions of "Old Town

Road" have topped the national singles charts. Since then it has been nominated for record of the year and Best Pop Duo/Group Performance at the 62nd Annual Grammy Awards, with its music video receiving a nomination for Best Music Video. Creator Lil Nas X is the first LGBTQ+ artist to win a Country Music Association (CMA) award. He was also nominated for six Grammy Awards. Despite the song not being her style, freshman Margaux Knobel commented: "It was a great song, but it was so overplayed people started to hate it."

Claiming top album of the decade is Adele's *21*. Since its initial release date of January 24th, 2011, it has been praised by critics for its underrated production, vintage aesthetic, and vocal performance. *21* took the number one rank on the top charts in more than 30 countries. It became the world's best-selling album of the year for 2011 and 2012, including in the United States. In addition, *21* spent the most weeks on *Billboard*'s 200 charts of any album by a woman.

Books of the Past Decade

By Jemma Schroder

Section Editor

In the 2010s, the Young Adult market had large shoes to fill after the worldwide hit of the Harry Potter series. With the gold rush of literary opportunities, authors filled the YA novel appetite, expanding into what has become the many beloved books we know today. Overall, the 2010s were a decade of evolution, representative of the rapidly changing values of the common teenager.

While everybody may have their own opinions on the best ten YA novels of the decade, here is the Dragon's list, compiled by cross-referencing multiple online sources (in no particular order).

Ready Player One - Ernest Cline - 2011

Ready Player One is a dystopian novel that works. Set in the future, yet rife with references to 80s pop culture, the book has both a nostalgic feel and complex storyline, appealing to gamers (like the protagonist, Wade) and non-gamers alike.

The Hate U Give - Angie Thomas - 2017

Gut wrenching and frustratingly familiar, *The Hate U Give* tells the story of gun violence through the eyes of an African-American girl. Balancing the life of a teenager with political activism, the story powerfully allows readers to realistically experience systemic racism.

The Fault in Our Stars - John Green - 2012

Whether you love it or hate it, *The Fault in Our Stars* is a defining text of the decade. Green's brainy yet youthful humor is a perfect juxtaposition to his story tackling the inevitability of death—the modern tale of the star-crossed lovers.

Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda - Becky Albertalli - 2015

In her debut novel, Albertalli explores the life of Simon, a gay teen who is not out of the closet...yet. Free of stifling cliches and filled with unforgettable characters, *Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda* is a novel stuffed with humor, heart and the true reality of the modern gay teenager.

We Were Liars - E. Lockhart - 2015

Cool, bitter and emotionally raw, *We Were Liars* explores the life of seventeen year old Cadence Sinclair who appears to hold every privilege, yet whose family is broken and selfish. Lockhart shatters the illusion of the perfect family, uncovering ugly secrets to reveal a stark and dispassionate world.

This Is Where It Ends - Marieke Nijkamp - 2016

A harrowing and moving narrative, *This Is Where It Ends* takes place during a frame of 54 minutes: a school shooting. Detailing the experiences of students trapped inside the school and out, Nijkamp's theme is patently clear: America must take a stand against gun violence.

To All the Boys I've Loved Before - Jenny Han - 2014

To All The Boys I've Loved Before is a fresh look on the teenage love story, (mostly) free of the ever present adolescent angst. Exploring Laura Jean's experiences with love as she strives to maintain a connection to her Korean heritage,

this book is undeniably a decade classic.

Code Name Verity - Elizabeth Wein - 2012

With vibrant, relatable characters and a perfectly constructed plot, *Code Name Verity* stands out as a must-read. Set during World War II, it tells the story of a British Allied pilot and her captured spy best friend, and manages to channel humor amidst the tragic reality of WWII.

Children of Blood and Bone - Tomi Adeyemi - 2018

Children of Blood and Bone is a divergence from the Greek and Roman myths that defined fiction during the late 2000s. Drawing from African folklore, Adeyemi tells the story of a young woman avenging her mother's death in a world both magical and dangerous.

Eleanor & Park - Rainbow Rowell - 2012

Rowell's debut YA novel, *Eleanor & Park* embodies dark and heavy themes with a light and youthful touch. A romance novel set in 1980s Nebraska, *Eleanor & Park* is greater than the average teenage romance: a narrative embodiment of light at the end of the tunnel.

Movies of the Past Decade

By Samantha Mah

Staff Writer



Movie collage
Collage by Max Hofelmann

In recent years, Hollywood has seen more diversity than ever before, with inclusivity towards race, the LGBTQ+ community and women. In addition, box office records have been ousted year after year. This is The Dragon's list of the most impactful movies of the past decade. The following movies not only cover a range of different genres, but have also received

positive critic reviews and Rotten Tomato scores.

Disney's animated film "Coco" is the first movie to have an all-Latino cast as well as a nine-figure budget at 175 million dollars. In addition, it showcased the beauty of Mexican culture and discussed death in a different light.

"Moonlight" became the first film to have an all-Black cast. It also won an Oscar for Best Picture, making it the only film about an LGBTQ+ character to win an award of such prestige.

However, "Moonlight" wasn't the only riveting movie to feature an LGBTQ+ character. "Carol," a drama and romance film, was released in 2015. It received over 200 industry and critic nominations and over 90 awards and accolades. It won the Independent Spirit Award for Best Cinematography as well as being the best-reviewed film of 2015 on Metacritic.

Besides increased LGBTQ+ characters, there has been a rise in leading female protagonists as well. According to the Center for the Study of Women in Television and Film at San Diego State University, 40% of the highest-grossing films in the US from 2019 contained a lead female character.

Disney's "Frozen" shocked audiences by straying away from the typical "damsel in distress" trope. "Frozen" is now the third highest-grossing

animated film with a worldwide gross at 1.276 billion dollars. Its successor, "Frozen 2," is the second-highest-grossing animated film at 1.328 billion dollars. Coming in first is "The Lion King" at 1.657 billion dollars.

Disney dominated the filmmaking industry this past decade, starting with the purchase of Lucasfilm on October 30, 2012, in addition to their ownership of Pixar and Marvel. Disney and its franchises have released six out of eight of the highest-grossing films in 2019 alone. With its release in the last year of the decade, "Avengers: Endgame" is the highest-grossing film ever at 2.797 billion dollars. Its predecessor, "Avengers: Infinity War," placed fifth at 2.048 billion dollars. The only other film released this decade in the top five highest-grossing films is "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" at 2.068 billion dollars, which was another Disney release.

The indie film, "Boyhood" did something unheard of: the same cast was filmed every year for 12 years. This wasn't the only unconventional thing about "Boyhood." Director Richard Linklater wrote the script during production. Each year, he would incorporate changes that he saw in the cast. Linklater also allowed major actors to include their life experiences into their characters' stories.

Another indie film regarding adolescence is "Eighth Grade." It follows the last week of middle school in the eyes of a socially awkward girl, Kayla. The film received 99% Rotten Tomatoes and was praised for its non-romanticized outlook.

Some of the most talked-about movies of the decade also received incredible Rotten Tomato scores such as "Get Out," "Parasite," and "Lady Bird."

A thriller/mystery film, "Get Out" received 98% on Rotten Tomatoes and successfully merged both horror and one's experience with racism. "Parasite," a drama/mystery, has a whopping 99% Rotten Tomatoes score. "Parasite" is a Korean film by acclaimed Director Bong Joon-ho that according to one critic review "blends a common story with a tale of suspense, to uproarious and enlightening effect."

"Lady Bird" impressed critics just as much as "Parasite" with a 99% Rotten Tomatoes score. It's known for its lovable mother-daughter relationship between Marion McPherson (Laurie Metcalf) and Christine "Lady Bird" McPherson (Saoirse Ronan).

The strides that the filmmaking industry has made in the 2010s leaves an impression of high hopes for the next decade.

Decade

Benji's Crystal Ball to the 2020 Decade

By Benji Chang

Contributor

Let's face it, the 2010s were a cretinous bunch of frankly disgusting years and for wooden-headed people whose skulls were full of unsanded, unattractive, unacceptable oak wood. If you enjoyed the 2010s, you are clearly not very cool or good because they were awful. Thankfully, the Roaring Twenties are poised to be the most action-packed decade since the 1770s, when the God-blessed U.S.A. was founded. Luckily for you, reader, I happen to know all about the coming decade. Come, gaze into my crystal ball with me.

Without a doubt, the most influential event of this decade will be the landslide victory of Dr. Ken Montgomery in the 2024 presidential elections. He will, of course, win on the platform of Design Thinking and will instigate sweeping reforms in the government and the nation itself. His first act as president will be to found the Department of Design Thinking and appoint d.tech's director, Melissa Mizel, as its Secretary.

With Mizel at the head of the DoDT, d.tech will be directly incorporated into the federal government and will become a chain. New d.techs will pop up all over the U.S. and then spread throughout the rest of North America. They will reach a global scale by 2029 (the start of Montgomery's second term) and become the new McDonald's of the world. In fact, each d.tech will have a drive-through where people can pull up and order various products, which

will be made by students in state-of-the-art DRGs. It's not child labor, trust me.

d.techs will become the shining beacons of hope and innovation in the world and pave the way to a better future. Unfortunately, they won't be able to solve everything, namely climate change. This will mostly be due to the fact that the students will be so busy making products and combatting DBL: the new grading system in which students must design their own grading system for every assignment they complete.

With the lack of awareness of climate change from the d.techs, the effects of climate change will not be possible to stop. Unfortunately, climate change will progress much faster than scientists previously thought. Fortunately, climate change actually won't end up being a huge problem. Temperatures and seas will rise which will force people to move inland, but the temperature rise actually won't kill off any animals or cause natural disasters to become more intense. Instead, the newly risen seas will give us more room to install giant floating bouncy castles all along the coasts. Also, all the submerged cities will become inhabited by talking octopuses with whom we humans will build a positive and constructive relationship.

Speaking of entertainment, a major source of it will be banned by constitutional amendment 611 on August 15, 2025. As in the prohibition era, mobile phones will be made illegal to use or possess. The process will be spearheaded by the Society In Turmoil, Uproar and Panic Since Teens Really Are Into Gaming with Hellish Telephones



DRIVE THRU >

Miriam Brody.

Photoshop by Max Hofelmann

organization. The goal of the anti-telephoners will be to create a more friendly and caring society by getting people to engage with the people in their personal lives.

Obviously, this will lead to the development of speakeasies for phones. However, instead of being in bars, most speakeasies will be concealed in schools. For example, the original d.tech (now doubling as a monument) will have a speakeasy in the secret chamber behind the paper towel dispenser in the bathroom. There will not be any alcohol in these speakeasies, instead, there will be a wide array of smartphones available for

people to play games on and text their friends. Thusly, the plans of the Society will be thwarted by those meddling teens and their telephones.

Oh boy, oh boy, what a decade the 2020s will be. They will be so action-packed that it is impossible to cover all of the events that will happen in just one article. Hopefully, you're excited for all of the good times to come and have a plan to combat the raging wildfires that will inevitably reach your home. In any event, you can rest easy knowing that the decade will end with a Hulk Hogan sized bang, but don't even worry-fret, bro.

Horoscopes

By Phoebe Rak and Lily Chambers

Co Editors-In-Chief

Aquarius: January 20 – February 18

Love is in the air for you, Aquarius. This is the time to confess your feelings for the person you think never notices you. It is the time to proclaim this love, run through the halls screaming or make an enormous poster admitting your feelings. Don't deny your passion, and don't let others make you feel bad for your giddy sentiments of love. Sing if you want to. Dance if you have to. Live. Laugh. Love. That is what this year is about: living your absolute best life and not letting judgments affect your positive outlook.

Pisces: Feb 19 - March 20

In the new year, you will explore your creative side. Look for opportunities to see a show or visit an art exhibit, for this is where you will find your inspiration. Focus on this, stop worrying about that relationship that is on the rocks. Dwelling in your sadness will only prevent you from moving forward. A friend will need you soon, and this newfound creativity will help you to think of unique solutions for their problems and prove you to be a true friend. Trust in your intuition when creating solutions and interacting with opposing viewpoints. If you can avoid procrastination induced by fear, your productivity will flourish.

Aries: March 21 – April 19

This year is all about perseverance. Saturn takes over mid-year, making you unusually ambitious. Try to be realistic about your goals, Aries. It's not realistic to try to cure cancer with some ayurvedic herb or to build a robot capable of human emotions. Pace yourself. You will be very busy, but remember to take a break when you need one. You will build strong relationships throughout the year, due to your loyalty and friendliness. Don't be afraid to let go of a relationship that has lasted too long, however.

Taurus: April 20 – May 20

2020 is a year of mental clarity for you. It is time to do some reflecting on what is and

isn't working in your life. This is a great time to channel your inner Marie Kondo and decide which aspects of your life are bringing you joy and which are not. This is a year of power, the time to speak your truths and burn all your bridges. Uranus, the planet of change, will be moving steadily along with you, indicating that you should be aware of the change in your life and welcome it.

Gemini: May 21 – June 20

This is a year to improve yourself, Gemini. Neptune makes you feel refreshed throughout the year, as you find inner peace and personal growth. Try not to resent people from your past, and instead look forward to building new, solid relationships. You will find yourself busy this year, making stable money and calm decisions. Try not to let your ego get the best of you, and turn to your close friends to give you a reality check once in a while. In this phase, you may find your head in the clouds and may need some guidance on keeping grounded in the real world.

Cancer: June 21 – July 22

Yet again Cancers, your sign is linked with the emotional moon, which, while taking you on a roller coaster of feelings, also gives you an elevated intuition. Go with your gut this year. Going with your gut may be trusting yourself when you are suspicious about a significant other's secretive texting, or just having a feeling that the old yogurt in the fridge probably isn't the best choice, do not doubt that your mind is powerful.

In the past, you may have ignored some of these telltale signs, but 2020 is the year to take back your life and trust yourself.

Leo: July 32 – August 22

Last year was a year of failed relationships for Leos, but don't fret, you can turn it around this year. It may be a rough couple of months during the beginning of 2020, but mid-year, your moon will align with Jupiter, giving you powerful energy. Use this energy to meet new people and work on building the existing relationships that have served you well. Leos sometimes have tendencies to focus on the negatives; stay away

from this and work towards training your brain to be more positive and intentional with your thoughts and actions. Before saying something, think. This negative energy can latch onto others, so being self-aware is very important for Leos.

Virgo: August 23 – September 22

This is a year about letting loose. You are usually very practical and level headed, but this year you will find yourself being more open and spontaneous. You may find yourself with lots of excess energy, use this to do important things like getting work done and improving your home. Remember to stay true to your thoughtful nature, but let yourself trust your instincts. You will develop wonderful relationships this year, keeping friends close, but making new ones along the way. Getting outdoors and trying new things will bring you inner peace.

Libra: September 23 – October 22

Libras, this is not your year. You have had great ones in the past. 2019 was a time of finding yourself and achieving success, but 2020 will not be the same. You may have vengeful days and in these, you are not meant for human consumption and should keep to yourself. You may want to try getting a job in which you are in solitude for extended periods of time. Examples of this include tax auditor, actuary, or truck driver. These jobs may still provide financial security and independence without the worry of interactions with other humans. A positive benefit is that you will

come to some deep philosophical conclusions from your time in solitude. You will discover deep truths about life and this world. Try some new hobbies this year, maybe go to one of those rage rooms where you can destroy old lamps. This will pass, just try to stay afloat, and take some deep breaths.

Scorpio: October 23 – November 21

Scorpios, this is your year! You are absolutely T.H.R.I.V.I.N.G. It's the year to finally be financially independent and to live your best life. The world needs to watch out for Scorpios this year, as you will be given immense luck and greatness. Put yourself out there. Go out and enter lotteries

and contests. You may find yourself winning an absurd amount of awards. Empathy warrior who? You are about to join John Legend and Whoopi Goldberg in the elite EGOT squad, winning Emmys, Grammys, Oscars, and Tonys. Random strangers may walk up and compliment you, or you may find \$5 dollar bills on the ground. It may be difficult, but it is imperative to be careful to not let this newfound success get to your head. Stay humble Scorpions.

Sagittarius: November 22 – December 21

Last year you were handed a lot and it went to your head due to the planetary influences of last year. You need to understand that you are not the sun and be given a reality check. Yes, you are important, you are valued, you are enough. But reminding yourself that we are all mere specks of dust in the universe, while frightening, can be a helpful grounding activity once in a while. Last year you stepped up, were vocal and had great success. This year, it is time to step back and give others the chance to shine. This is not necessarily a negative thing, open your eyes and realize the impact people other than you have on the world. It's okay to not be number 1, or do the most all the time. Once you understand this, you may feel a sense of relief, and feel free to work on being your best self, and know that doing the best you can is enough.

Capricorn: December 22 – January 19

Capricorns, it's time to break free of what is holding you back and try new things. Even if they are scary, push yourself. This can mean a range of things depending on what it is that scares you. It could mean finally admitting feelings to your crush or trying scuba diving. It is time to get out of your shell and express your feelings. It means being honest and vulnerable, telling someone that they have something in their teeth, or telling a friend how much they mean to you. Capricorns have a tendency to doubt their worth and feel they are not enough even though they are incredibly important people. Capricorns, tell yourselves: "You are MORE than enough."

Reviews

January 28, 2020

dtechdragon.com

Jesus Is Born: Kanye... Almost

By Nicholas Boyko

Section Editor

Since his first foray into music, Kanye West has been one of the most contentious modern musical artists. Although he wasn't always motivated enough to create a fully religious album, his obsession with the spiritual and the powerful has long been at the forefront of his music; in one of his most famous songs, the single "Ultralight Beam" from his album *The Life of Pablo*, the recurring lyric, "I'm tryna keep my faith" is repeated throughout the whole song ("Ultralight Beam" is also covered on *Jesus Is Born*). As West's nine studio albums have garnered millions of fans, his personality and political opinions have garnered millions of critics. Whether you love him or hate him, his music is undeniably a staple of modern hip-hop and pop.

In September 2019, West drew widespread media attention by announcing that he would no longer be releasing any secular music; meaning that, moving forward, he would only be producing religious albums and music. So far, West has held true to his word, with the release of his wholeheartedly religious *Jesus is King* on October 25th, 2019. Despite receiving a fair amount of critical feedback from listeners, West followed up shortly after with the production of the album *Jesus is Born*, featuring the Sunday Service Choir, a gospel choir that West formed in January 2019. Released on December 25th, 2019—the day of Jesus's birth—the album ignores the hip-hop roots of West's other work, instead providing 84 minutes of sprawling choral gospel.

Jesus is Born opens with the vocal-and-piano only "Count Your Blessings," a soaring introduction to the album, with the choir singing shock-

ingly high, grand notes, setting the stage for the religious epiphany of the rest of the album. "Revelations 19:1" introduces other instruments, such as drums and horns, for a more classic gospel feel. The lyrics are undeniably Christian in nature, proclaiming "Hallelujah, salvation, and glory, honor and power unto the Lord, our God." "Back to Church" makes me feel like I'm at church, but I suppose that's sort of the point of the album. As *Jesus Is Born* progresses, it becomes clear that a familiar aspect of the



Kanye's signature bear in church
Illustration By Roxie Baggott

typical Kanye album is missing; his voice. In fact, West is hardly musically featured in the album. Instead, West's production and command of the skilled choir carries through his religious message with impressive clarity.

Despite its overwhelmingly religious message, the album is surprisingly accessible to the average listener. It often references existing songs, like "Sunshine," which references "Master Blaster" by Stevie Wonder, or "Follow Me - Faith," whose synth stabs and progression sound like it

could be a modern pop song with a bit of work. Although the style of the album is markedly different from West's usual, eschewing 808s and trap beats for vast choral expanses and funky drum and bass grooves, it still maintains a familiar atmosphere, harkening back to the sample-infused classic *My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy*, often considered West's magnum opus. JIB's renditions of familiar songs are strongly reminiscent of West's usual sample-heavy style, with songs different enough to feel novel, but familiar enough to feel comforting. Although *Jesus Is Born* doesn't explicitly sample anything, the covers of gospel and soul classics like "Total Praise," a cover of the 1996 gospel classic by Richard Smallwood, harken to the sentiment of sampling, the chorus' voices acting as a familiar-yet-different reappropriation of the tune.

Although the album is jam-packed with works of classic gospel choir music, the runtime is probably its ultimate demise. The 84-minute, 19-song-deep release eventually feels somewhat grating, the repetition of the huge and loud vocals growing tiresome after an hour spent with them. Some songs feel like they could be removed entirely without changing the feel of the album in the slightest, such as "Lift Up Your Voices" and "Sweet Grace," which flew by in my listens of the album without so much as a second thought. Despite these shortcomings, *Jesus is Born* is still a satisfying listen for fans of gospel, RnB, soul and funk. Although it may not be exactly what diehard Kanye fans are looking for, it still carries through his spirit (both figuratively and literally) and is definitely worth a listen.

7/10

Cats: Musical Turned Movie Fail

By Samantha Mah

Staff Writer



Creepy human-cat hybrids in "Cats"
Illustration by Nicolas Gibson

The film "Cats," released on December 20, 2019, has been notorious for its egregious critic and audience reviews. The musical fantasy film is based on the musical of the same name composed by Andrew Lloyd Webber, which is based on the 1939 poetry collection *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* written by T.S. Eliot. Several well-known singers appeared in the film including Jason Derulo, Taylor Swift, and Rebel Wilson.

Numerous critics jabbed at the CGI effects, plot, and tone. In addition to having 21% on Rotten Tomatoes and a score of 2.8 out of 10 on IMDb, the film is expected to have a \$100 million dollar box office loss according to *Variety*. The film's original release consisted of multiple CGI errors. Universal Studios responded to this by urging cinema owners to replace it with an improved

version. This was unheard of, and not particularly effective considering the film had already been released worldwide.

The film begins with a cat named Victoria (Francesca Hayward) being left as a stray in an alley. There she encounters a tribe of Jellicle cats who annually attend the Jellicle Ball in order to choose which cat can ascend to the Heavside Layer and be born anew. The name, "Jellicle," comes from a poem written by T.S. Eliot called "Pollywicks and Jellicle Cats."

I recently watched the movie myself (and dragged a friend along with me) to see what all the buzz was about and ten minutes into the movie, I began to understand why it was getting so much backlash. Everything seemed so unimportant and extremely boring, and by the second song, my friend and I had dozed off. If I had not

read a plot overview I wouldn't have understood the point of the movie. Instead of developing a character arc for Victoria, the whole movie consists of random character introductions, lacking structure and ultimately confusing the audience. The only reason we stayed to watch was because of the strange musical numbers that never failed to crack us up. My personal favorites include 'Mr. Mistoffelees' and 'Bustopher Jones.' In addition, the CGI is very unsettling and the scale between actors and scenery shifts is off. Although the film uses cutting edge technology to give actors feline characteristics, it comes off as more disturbing than realistic, but it doesn't end there. There aren't only cats in the movie; there are also mice and cockroaches who all have humanlike features. In the middle of Rebel Wilson's performance of 'The Old Gumbie Cat,' a line of tiny human cockroaches march into the frame and a group of mice children sing along as Jennyanydots (Rebel Wilson) unzips her catsuit revealing yet another more bedazzled catsuit.

The subsequent appalling reviews that "Cats" has received has dragged down many well-acclaimed actors like Idris Elba, who has played several killer antagonists in other well-known films such as "The Jungle Book" and "Star Trek Beyond." His role in the movie seems absurd and does not compare to previous roles he has played.

A highlight from the movie was Jennifer Hudson's performance of 'Memory,' which was utterly breathtaking. Hudson plays Grizabella, a formerly glamorous cat who looks back to when she "knew what happiness was." Singing with pleading eyes, telling a story of sorrow with such intensity you almost forget about the eerie human-cat hybrids.

Tik Tok Cont.

By Leo Belman

Section Editor

The general feeling that Frost has been trying to create, about how students and teachers can build relationships, is very popular, with several comments on each of her TikToks noting how great it is that a teacher can have strong bonds with their students. In this spirit, Frost founded a TikTok club that meets every Thursday during lab days which, as of now, has 12 members. During winter break, Frost took several of the students in the TikTok club to the Hillsdale Shopping Center to a meet and greet with fans. "I posted on my TikTok account that Sophia and I would be at Hillsdale Mall at [2:00], and if they want to come by and say hi they could," she said.

60 people ended up attending, some from as far as Hayward, to meet Frost. "Basically what we did was just take pictures. I made TikToks with a bunch of them," Frost said.

Even with so many followers, Frost was a bit surprised by the response she got. "I honestly didn't think anybody was going to show up," she laughed. "They don't even know me, but love me so much, and they were scared to talk to me."

While Frost and Daskalakis feel that TikTok can help build relationships, other students at d.tech feel a little differently.

Senior Zach Nemirovsky actually introduced



Frost and students at fan meet-up
Photo courtesy of Sophia Daskalakis

Daskalakis to the world of TikTok, but unlike Daskalakis, he joined simply because he was bored. "I joined [TikTok] because I broke my toe, and I was bored at home because I couldn't really do anything," Nemirovsky mentioned. "For the first couple of months, I was liking it. I was using [it] as more of an inside joke thing," he continued.

However, unlike Frost and Daskalakis, Nemirovsky stopped for the same reason they continued. "Once one of my videos kind of took off I felt more pressured and [...] it felt less like a fun little thing to do and more like 'I actually have to try to make things.'"

In the end, Nemirovsky uninstalled the app. He commented that he did so because, "It made me self-conscious a little bit. Just, everyone you know puts their best foot forward and everything and you see this tailored content on your page [...] it doesn't make you feel great."

Other students, like senior Steven Varghese, feel similarly to Nemirovsky. "I think at one point I was really always on [TikTok], but at this point I'm not addicted now."

Varghese mentioned that he stopped mostly because of the work in high school, but did acknowledge that he thinks TikTok has a strong community.

Some, like Frost, love TikTok for the ability to connect and influence people, and others, like Nemirovsky, dislike it for that same reason, while others still, like Varghese, aren't super invested. Does this say something about the world as a whole? Is d.tech a big enough sample size to extrapolate? Luckily for the reader, this article is not about that. In terms of TikTok, only time will tell what happens next.

OPINION

January 28, 2020

dtechdragon.com

Hustle Culture: The Bay Area's Doctrine of Workism

By Jemma Schroder
Section Editor



Overwhelming work load.

Illustration by Nicolas Gibson

Follow your passion. Advice given to almost every student, this phrase characterizes an extremely subtle yet critical shift in the perspective of millions. In the mid-1900s, economists such as John Maynard Keynes wrestled with the problem of how future humans would occupy their free time, seeing the rise of automation as an indicator of a shortening work-week. This assumption was natural: historically, wealthier classes worked less than the poorer ones, simply

because they had the means to do so. However, within the last 40 years, rich, college-educated men have begun to work more than their counterparts: by 2005, the richest 10% of married men held the longest workweek. An ahistorical phenomenon that has risen proportionally to the decline of traditional faith, the concept of "work" has morphed from a necessity to a purpose—a modern religion. Meet workism, a term first

coined by Derek Thompson, a staff writer at The Atlantic and self-declared workaholic.

In his article "Workism Is Making Americans Miserable," Thompson writes that "A culture that funnels its dreams of self-actualization into salaried jobs is setting itself up for collective anxiety, mass disappointment, and inevitable burnout." In the Bay Area, this has proven to be true on all three counts.

As senior Ben Gao described, "There's definitely a fetishization of suffering in the Bay Area. People brag about their sleep schedules and homework load." Naturally, this dogma of "workism," as pushed by students' communities, parents, and peers, has disastrous consequences. According to the National Institutes of Health, nearly one in three of all adolescents ages 13 to 18 will experience an anxiety disorder, and a study conducted on behalf of the American Psychological Association found 31% of teens reported feeling overwhelmed. Constant stress has become the norm, with anything else seen as a detriment to one's future. "When I'm getting enough rest and I'm not feeling stressed out, I feel like I'm doing something wrong," expressed junior Rikako Ono. "I feel behind."

Some students, like senior Zach Nemirovsky, resist this pressure: "I will always advocate for putting down the homework and sleeping instead of fighting on." However, Nemirovsky represents a minority of students, and even he isn't totally immune, and stated that he does "Feel some pressure to pick up more classes than I can handle just because I look around and see similar kids taking more classes than I am." Others, like junior Madison Shem, agree with Ono, and expressed that "When I get a good night's rest and take time for myself, I feel like I'm not achieving what I should be."

The reason why workism is so prominent within the lives of Bay Area students is not entirely clear: some see the startup culture as being a main cause, while others see the community dense with accomplished individuals—often immigrants who had to face seemingly insur-

mountable challenges to build a life for their families—as being another contributing factor. As Gao noted, "It's important to understand that one of the root causes might be because there's a lot of immigrants in this area [...] and they want to show their family back at home that they're doing a good job [...] this culture inevitably spreads to kids." Others, like Ono and junior Frances Wong, credit social media as a platform for many students to "flaunt the things that they have" and "flex to see how stressed and busy they are."

Regardless of its origins, it is imperative that the Bay Area community takes steps to negate the all-consuming doctrine of workism. This effort has already begun, with the administrations of many high schools—d.tech included—taking steps to reduce homework loads and increase counseling and mental health resources. According to senior Jacob Cohen, "d.tech especially does a better job than most schools. [The administration] encourages curiosity projects [...] and for students to have a life outside of school." To some, however, this focus on independent projects is a double-edged sword. "I think that the mission here at d.tech kind of encourages kids to think a lot bigger and reach for things that other kids at other schools maybe wouldn't think of doing," Shem explained, "so there's that extra pressure of like 'I have to save the world' or 'fix this issue.'" While these efforts have impacted some students beneficially, they have yet to crack unwavering expectations for students to achieve their fullest potential.

At the conclusion of his article, Thompson notes that "Americans have forgotten an old-fashioned goal of working: It's about buying free time." Amidst the stress about college and achievement, maybe students too have forgotten the reason for their studies: to learn about the world, becoming better community members and global citizens. Perhaps the Bay Area needs to reframe its perspective: school shouldn't be our totalizing purpose in life; it should give us the tools to find it.

Iran, the US, and Indiscriminate Slaughter

By Corwin Davidson

Staff Writer

On January 3rd, 2019, Iranian Lieutenant General Qasem Soleimani was killed by a US drone strike. That much is not in dispute. What also isn't in dispute is that the situation snowballed from there. Both Iran and the US threatened each other with various dire fates, and the internet was abuzz with various memes about an impending world war. What is there to make of this?

Here's what to make of it: this isn't just bad because killing people is wrong, it's bad because we are repeat offenders. This is far from the first incident of this country's tendency to ruin everything it touches overseas. However, a complicating factor: Qasem Soleimani was, in a nutshell, not a nice guy. At the moment, the Iranian government as a whole is not winning any human rights awards. Put nicely, it's an unhinged theocracy with terrible laws targeting women and LGBTQ+ people. However, here's a reverse-complicating factor: The Islamic Republic is arguably the US' fault. A bit of history: in 1953, Mohammed Mossadegh was the elected prime minister of Iran. He decided to nationalize Iran's oil industry. He was then overthrown by Iran's Shah (think constitutional monarch), in a USA-backed coup, in an early example of the utterly reprehensible behavior this country has been executing with impunity ever since. The Shah, and later his son, proceeded to institute a comparatively repressive regime. Said regime exhibited a sufficient amount of corruption and

incompetence that it was overthrown in the Iranian Revolution of 1979, ushering in Ayatollah Khomeini and a regime much more repressive than the Shah. I repeat; Iran had a stable democracy until the US got involved, and we've been paying the price ever since. Now, that bill comes back to us.

The aforementioned pattern of imperialism has held true for many decades, and continues to carve its bloody path through history with this latest murder in Iran. This is no isolated incident: it's another attempt of the United States of America deciding it can push people around. Spoiler alert: we can't, and whenever we decide we can, a lot of people die. To get the complete picture of what's going on here, we must look back. The trail of blood remains clear, and Uncle Sam is standing over the body with a smoking gun in one hand and a bloody meat cleaver in the other. The bodies are piling up, and after all these incidents nobody can say that it was all self-defense.

Why do we continue to think we can take other people's stuff? Well, there's a precedent: we've been doing it for a very long time. We took Mexico's stuff, took Spain's stuff, then transitioned into myriad bloodbath-inducing proxy wars, slaughtering (and being slaughtered by) other people in a country chosen by some third country as a battleground. Said proxy wars have been in the Middle East since the 1990s. It should also be noted that the information above does not include the various instances of this country aiding far-right dictators in overthrowing dem-

ocratic governments, including, but not limited to our involvement in Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Bolivia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Paraguay, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Brazil, and of course, Iran.

And that's the thing with interventionism; it isn't actually totally cut and dry. The other side has rarely had their own hands clean in recent conflicts. The Viet Cong committed their share of war crimes, and anyone reading this probably knows of the issues with North Korea. Sometimes, even often, the other side really are the bad guys. Sometimes there's even a theoretical justification. However, what happens when we try to do something about this is pretty invariably horrific. Take, say, the My Lai Massacre of 1968 during the Vietnam War, where US soldiers brutally murdered hundreds of unarmed civilians, children included, as well as raping many of them, children included. That's nowhere near the last atrocity we've committed either. And let me be clear, we don't have a monopoly on war crimes, far from it. This is where the problem with interventionism lies: when this country sends soldiers overseas to stop the bad guys, we become the bad guys.

There's the situation. Question is, what are we going to do about it? On the surface, the answer is simple: get the hell out of the Middle East, stop sending people to die for nothing, and if we're going to send somebody to the Middle East, send the imbecile politicians who are making said decisions. If only it was that easy. As we saw in Syria, when we pull out and leave a void it

creates a power vacuum and carnage ensues. The people who create the carnage when we pull out are pretty much always our fault, but that pragmatically speaking that does remain in the past. A genuine case can be made that by pulling out now, we create even more deaths than we would otherwise. However, the key issue is perhaps that if we don't pull out, we're the ones creating death. This radicalizes people and then we get the same cycle all over again, we saw this already with ISIS. The cycle's got to break sometime.

The central thesis remains this: the USA still has a tendency to ruin everything it touches overseas. It's not a guarantee, but it's a definite likelihood. The fundamental axiom: killing people is bad. The secondary axiom: two wrongs do not a right make. Qasem Soleimani had blood on his hands. We didn't make anything better by killing him as well, and we certainly didn't make Iran less inclined to want to kill us. Ultimately, I do believe withdrawal from the Middle East is the correct option, but it must be handled very carefully. You can't just leave overnight, but if you do it slowly and carefully, I believe it can be done. And maybe, just maybe, we can hope that things will improve with us out of the picture. This is a long shot, but with the United States of America in the picture, the shot becomes even longer.

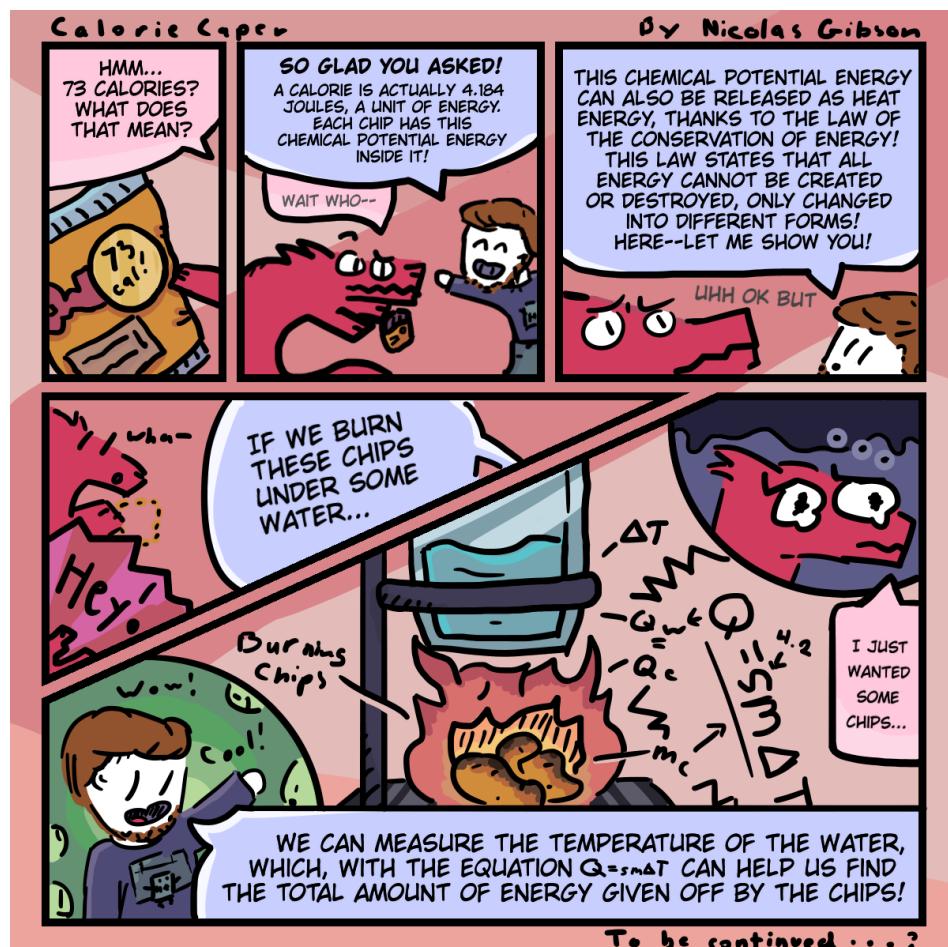
The Dragon's opinion page provides a platform for individual and personal perspectives on issues relevant to the d.tech community. The pieces here are reflective of the opinions of those respective writers and do not necessarily represent the views of the Dragon Editorial Staff or the school. Given current events, The Dragon Staff believes the ongoing conversation around Iran in Washington D.C. is significant news and is relevant to all citizens, including those of the d.tech community. News on this topic is evolving, and new information is emerging daily. We encourage our readers to check credible online sources for updates to stay informed.

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Calorie Caper Comic



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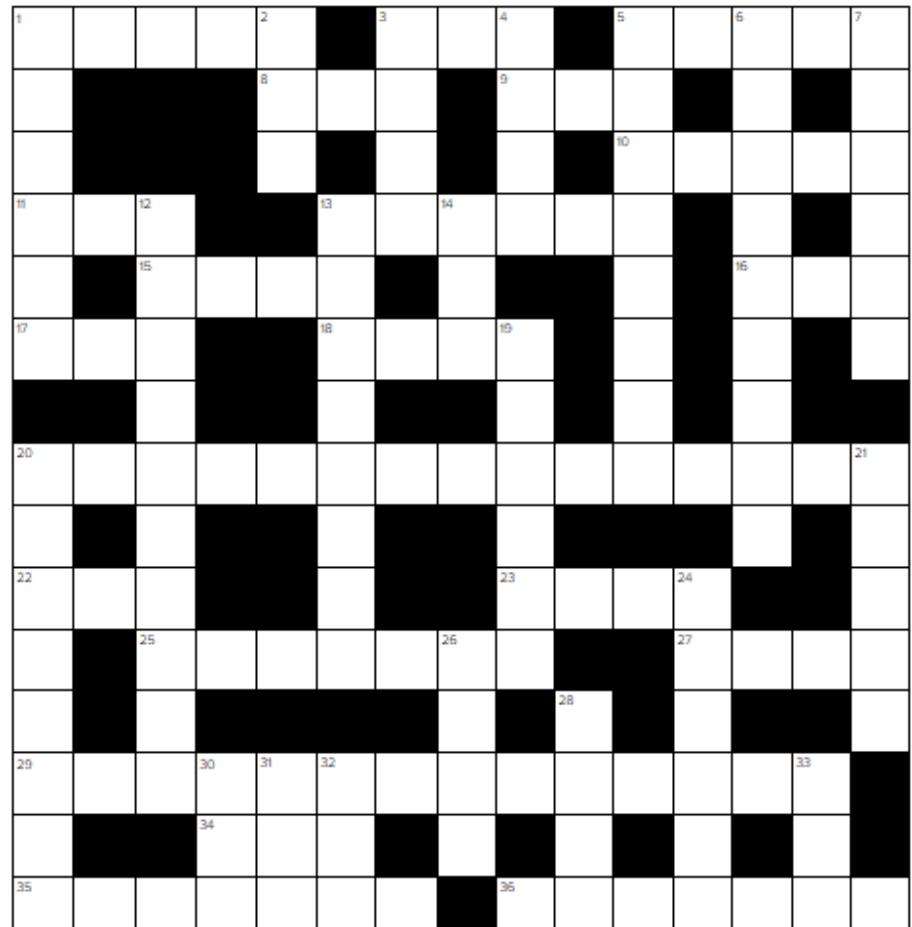
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Two Across: None



Across

- 1 - Modern insult, or a holiday beef cooking method
- 3 - Ambitious new year's goal location, often with 12-down
- 5 - Car parts used to get your skis to Tahoe, or torture devices
- 8 - Singular
- 9 - Purple fruit from the Philippines
- 10 - Solar _____, stellar event with a release of light
- 11 - Primitive boat propulsion method
- 13 - Food construction algorithm
- 15 - Word for auditory repetition?
- 16 - Pressure unit, for short
- 17 - Ntdo's. first console
- 18 - Udon or Gazpacho, for instance
- 20 - Frigid water new year's or boy scouts event
- 22 - Vietnamese new year
- 23 - Multiple female deers
- 25 - To look up to, as a role model
- 27 - How we input this stuff into here
- 29 - Stellar patterns, often used to determine horoscope
- 34 - A buddhist electrician's mantra?
- 35 - Performance affiliated with a Chinese dissident cult (read the rest of the paper!)
- 36 - Amp, electrical unit

Down

- 1 - To gain new life through being _____, as in religion or mythology
- 2 - Foot phalange, you probably have 10
- 3 - Name with Eu-, or biology topic
- 4 - How to get from point A to point B in San Francisco, sometimes even successfully
- 5 - Mandatory lab day appearance
- 6 - Effervescent celebratory beverage, 21+
- 7 - What a view of fireworks over the beach is
- 12 - An annual promise to visit 3-across
- 13 - Pasadena January football event
- 14 - Processor
- 19 - Reason to close streets for floats
- 20 - Parties where everyone contributes
- 21 - To be really good at something, often spreadsheets
- 24 - Swimming method or medical debilitation
- 26 - A southern African ethnic group, one of whose battles was made into a 1964 movie
- 28 - Opposite of liberal arts, a bay area stereotype
- 30 - Male offspring
- 31 - Archaic "your"
- 32 - Large Australian bird and military victor
- 33 - Bring legal action against

Crossword by Nicholas Boyko

By Nicolas Gibson

