

The CHARGER ACCOUNT

Liliana Chai and Ariel Lee



During the bustling month of March, ASB hosted the school's annual Wellness Week, with students looking forward to a much-needed break from academic stress.

Meg Walsh, Activities Director and Leadership Advisor, first began Wellness Week eight years ago to underscore the importance of students' mental health and uphold a safe, friendly environment at the school. What started as a simple discussion facilitated between teachers and students about the importance of mental health soon transformed into the Wellness Week students know today.

ASB students like Freshman **Arushi Yagnik** and Sophomore

Kali Gruenhagen worked to plan the event this year. To get more ideas, they asked people outside of ASB about what they do to relieve their stress. With this information, ASB finalized the activities calendar and advertised it through posters and social media campaigns.

From Tuesday to Friday, teachers hosted activities such as napping, meditating, doodling or making slime or bracelets during tutorial. At lunchtime, students received giveaways such as bubbles, stress balls and chocolate coins for St. Patrick's Day. The 3v3 basketball tournament in the gym also encouraged students to watch and cheer for their peers. Additionally, students could pie their teachers and throw water balloons to relieve stress.

"What I enjoyed most about planning Wellness Week was giving the entire student body the chance to participate in providing ideas. The event went quite well—a lot of people enjoyed activities such as

making slime or just going to the tutorials to have fun with their friends," Yagnik said.

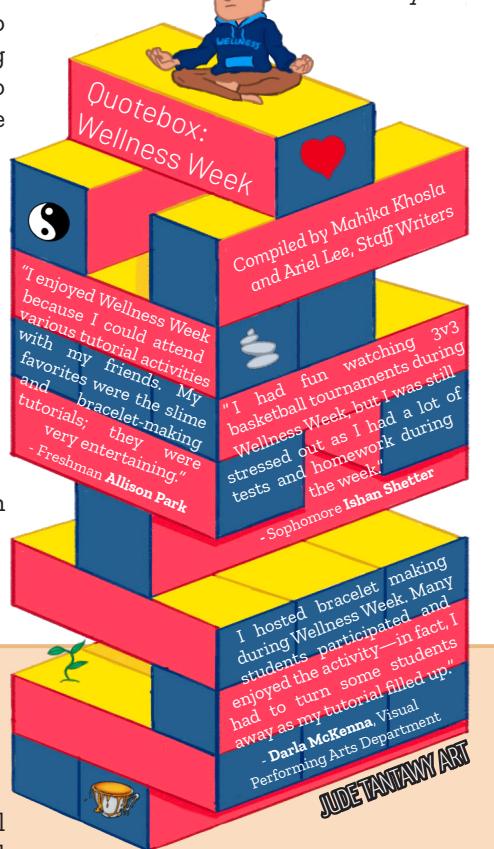
Some teachers, like **Sarah Lofgren**, Science Department, also hosted nature walks, something she hopes allowed students to relax as spending time in nature has been shown to reduce stress levels and improve cognitive function. Lofgren's group walked to the Los Alamitos Creek on Tuesday and spent time exploring while learning about plants and animals in the area.

"March was the busiest month of the semester for me, so I enjoyed de-stressing and spending more time with friends by participating in Wellness Week. Unfortunately, since many activities took place during tutorials, some people were unable to participate

as they had schoolwork and test makeups," Senior **Medha Nemani** said.

ASB was able to wrap up the week with most students feeling better about their mental health. Next year, the school

looks forward to hosting an even wider array of activities that is more enjoyable and accessible for everyone.



Left: Junior **Malia Sheaffer** mixes her freshly made slime during a Wellness Week tutorial. Right: Freshman **Amulya Tadimeti** and Sophomore **Emily Moen** create origami bookmarks.

Scheduling season starts

Eleanor Gil and Ariel Lee

A few weeks ago, the school was in course registration season, with students contemplating their schedules for the next year.

Like every year, counselors held course pathway presentations during students' English classes to detail the various course options and pathways available. Students then filled out a Google Form to input their desired courses, which the counselors will use as a cross reference to build schedules.

The school also partners with San Jose City College to offer courses such as Math 73/78, ASL, Japanese and Psychology/Sociology. However, Psychology/Sociology had

interest workshops and a lottery enrollment process this year due to its popularity.

Another unique pathway open to upperclassmen was the Silicon Valley Career Technical Education (SVCTE) program, which offers a myriad of interactive in-person courses. Enrolled students spend half of their day at SVCTE, while the other is spent at the school.

There are also two new courses being offered this year: weightlifting and Ethnic Studies US History (ES US History). While weightlifting will be offered to any student for a second year of P.E. credits, ES US History will be offered only to juniors.

"The History Department decided that Ethnic Studies may be a potential requirement for

high school graduation, so they want to ensure students have completed it. We will offer ES US History to juniors as another option to meet this requirement," **Alexander Tsou**, Counseling Department, said.

According to **Nathan Lee**, History Department, ES US History and US history have similar course content. However, ES US History will delve more deeply into the cultural contributions of different ethnic groups and how historical events impacted them.

A few weeks after the pathway presentations, course registration presentations took place during history classes. There, counselors guided students in inputting their courses into Infinite Campus (IC).

Both the Google Form and IC registration are due April 4 at 8 a.m.

When finalizing her schedule, Junior **Elinor Segev** admits she was influenced by her parents' opinions but still stayed true to her own future plans, recommending other students to do the same. Similarly, Freshman **Kashvi Garg** recommends choosing a balanced schedule.

"The workload of a course was a major factor in my decision-making process. I built a schedule that would allow me to focus on other aspects of my life, including my extracurriculars and social life," Garg said.

Now that course decisions have been made, students eagerly await next year's schedules.



Senioritis: A spreading syndrome

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Stanley cups

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Florida men doing Florida things

SAACHI BASAVARAJU ART
on page 12

COMMUNITY NEWS

DESIGN BY GWEN CARROLL

Securing a salmon salvation

Claire Chang

As the salmon population in the Pacific Northwest continues to deplete due to overfishing, overpopulation of humans and the construction of private dams, Indigenous tribes have struggled to not only bring food to the table, but also sustain their traditions. The Biden administration has come to the tribes' aid by implementing the Columbia Basin Restoration Initiative to reduce dam reliance and increase the salmon population.

Indigenous tribes on the West Coast—specifically the Yurok tribe—have been advocating since over a century ago for the removal of four dams along the Klamath River, which stretches from northern California to southern Oregon, and is an integral part of the Yurok lifestyle. For over 10,000 years, the Klamath River previously boasted the third-largest salmon population in the entire West Coast. It has since lost that title with the collapse of the salmon population, and three species now being listed as endangered.

Scientists of federal fisheries believe that the most efficient way to return natural habitat and spawning grounds to the salmon would be to remove dams built across the Pacific Northwest. Flood control dams such as the Chief Joseph Dam and the Grand Coulee Dam prevented anadromous fish—fish like salmon and trout which return to freshwater environments from seawater ones to spawn—from swimming upstream, decreasing the quantity of salmon capable of reaching their spawning grounds and reproducing. With less fish to go around, local

Indigenous people have been forced to alter their eating habits and are unable to pass on traditions to future generations. Meanwhile, according to CBS, one of four of the Klamath River dams in California have been taken down.

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife has been working to establish donor stocks to reintroduce the fish and develop hatcheries; the state agency reports that there are over 3 million hatchery fish awaiting their return to the wild. By shoring up salmon populations back upstream of the Klamath River dams, the tribal people will once again be reunited with a keystone of their culture.

Though the plan sets up for the eventual removal of dams, Republican lawmakers have pushed back, arguing that this will cause greater problems, such as interfering with irrigation systems in the surrounding area. As the provider of over a third of the nation's hydropower, taking the Snake River dams down will take away a significant energy resource.

"The federal government should take down one more dam to see if that worsens the soil deposit. If the salmon still cannot navigate, then there is no point in taking out all of the dams because the salmon are going to suffer anyway. The plan is encouraging Indigenous tribes and the government to work together more so that the government can take tribal traditions into greater consideration," Senior **Daniel Xu** said.

Earlier this year, 830,000 hatchery fish were introduced upstream of the Iron Gate Dam on the Klamath River, only to have died

after facing high water pressure and being trapped in dam tunnels that allow for the river to flow through. Future hatchery fish will be introduced downstream instead to avoid getting trapped while the dams are still in operation.

"This plan seems to try to make up for the wrongs that were done to Indigenous tribes in the past, and could serve as a catalyst for similar steps to be taken in the future since they have supporters standing by them in the government. Hopefully, this will give Indigenous people the



courage to speak up more," Sophomore **Adrian Murillo** said.

For much of U.S. history, the government has treated Indigenous people horribly by not giving them a voice in legislative processes or decisions, forcibly expelling them from their own land through the Indian Removal Act of 1830, assimilating Indigenous people into American culture by force through the infamous boarding school programs in the 20th century and countless other policies. Thus, Indigenous groups feel that attempts to restore the salmon population and protect their culture and traditions is one of the first significant steps that the American government has ever taken for them.

California crowds mess with mussels

Vira Patil and Gilina Voon

Staff Writers

Along the California shoreline, visitors can see the Golden Gate Bridge, Greyhound Rock Beach, Monterey Bay and much more. In recent years, a new tourist attraction has emerged: hunting for mussels. However, this can prove to be dangerous for aquatic ecosystems as it destabilizes the local food web.

As one of the most common invertebrates found on California's coast, mussels are important for the coastal environment because they form a mini-ecosystem for other sea creatures that live in mussel beds. Additionally, many important endangered California animals feed off mussels, such as sea otters and sea stars, so overharvesting harms the ecosystem. According to the Half Moon Bay Review, these visitors, many of whom have no prior experience with

harvesting seafood, gather along the coastlines of Half Moon Bay to harvest mussels for recreational purposes.

"To ensure ecosystem stability, regulations should be implemented such as permitting only certain methods of mussel harvesting and designating specific areas for harvest while closing off others. Rotating these designated harvesting areas would allow for consistent repopulation, ensuring a healthy mussel population," Freshman **Camille Jubert** said.

Currently, visitors can only take 10 pounds of California sea mussels and bay mussels in combination, are required to have a fishing license and can only gather them by hand—no crowbars, trowels or other tools are allowed. These regulations help maintain the mussel population; if it decreases too rapidly it will leave other species that depend on the mussels as a food source at risk of starvation.

However, these regulations are still being broken by visitors. One precaution put in place to help stop people from bypassing regulations includes a 'mussel quarantine,' which prohibits public mussel harvesting

from May 1 through Oct. 31. This is done to keep the mussel population at a natural level and to prevent people from getting sick from eating the mussels as they are toxic during this portion of the year. If someone is caught violating the mussel harvesting law by taking more than 10 pounds of mussels, they will have to pay a \$200 fine. California Department of Fish and Wildlife wardens

have also tried to monitor how many mussels each person brings back, but they are unable to ensure harvesting in the designated areas.

The consequences of breaking these regulations are very steep. According to TheWorldCounts, a company that works to bring awareness to problems faced by the planet, every organism plays a vital role in an ecosystem and altering this would risk ecological balance by increasing greenhouse gas emissions, resulting in increased global warming, water shortage and extinction rates.

"Some who are overharvesting the mussels

are selfish and do not care about the environmental impacts of their actions, while others may be unaware," Junior **Christopher Wu** said.

Because California's coastline spans a vast distance and the mussel population varies per area, it is challenging to create laws that are both enforceable and take into account the variable factors of mussels in the region. Therefore, there are currently no enforceable laws and punishments in place, so it is up to the integrity of the people committing such actions to maintain ethical harvesting practices. It is imperative to acknowledge that every part of the planet works harmoniously with the other, and even altering a small part of this balance can cause devastating consequences.



INVESTIGATIVE REPORT: Senioritis

Senioritis: A spreading syndrome

Eleanor Gil and Niru Shivakumar

The school bell has rung; it is mid-afternoon. One student—a senior who has just missed her literature class—is sprawled on the wool carpet, headphones firmly on and scrolling mindlessly through social media, with zero intention to do anything else for the next couple of hours.

Allegedly coined in 1957 per College Admissions Strategies, "senioritis" is a humorous term referring to high school seniors' substantial decline in academic performance and motivation. Students will often start off their high school career strong, taking a large number of APs, maintaining a high GPA and pursuing various activities, yet by the time senior year rolls around, many students witness a decline in academics—a phenomenon now commonly called senioritis.

According to Southern New Hampshire University, when senioritis sets in, students often experience a drop in their academic performance, which may have negative consequences such as academic probation or warnings from their school. In extreme circumstances, colleges may even retract admission offers if grades drop beyond a certain limit or if a student fails a class. One major reason for this phenomenon may be that as seniors know that high school is coming to an end, the urge to maintain high academic performance decreases, especially for those who have already been admitted to a top-choice college.

"Senioritis is not a byproduct of procrastination and laziness but something that exacerbates those traits; as students realize the stakes are lower in their second semester of senior year, they ignore assignments and skip classes. In fact, in today's digital age, where attention spans continuously decrease due to social media and short-form content on Tiktok, students are becoming increasingly unmotivated, something I find very worrying," Senior

Eric Yue, winner of Worst Senioritis, said.

Teachers have noted a significant decline in student performance largely with senior classes; missing assignments and lessened in-class engagement for seniors have been on the rise. For example,

AP

of entitlement exacerbates the psychological difficulties linked to senioritis by encouraging complacency and undermining students' academic achievement. Also, when students seek to reconcile their diminishing enthusiasm with their work, senioritis may lead to increased stress, anxiety and

freedom to pursue hobbies that I have been planning since last summer. For example, I have spent more hours on tennis, a sport I love, art and hanging out with friends, which has made this semester more enjoyable than the last," Du said.

Even juniors like **Annika Park** express their simultaneous excitement and nostalgia as they enter their very last year of high school in just a few months.

"I definitely look forward to my second semester of senior year after college applications are completed, because I will be able to relax and engage more with school events, like prom, compared to in my junior year," Park said.

Nevertheless, it may be possible to alleviate senioritis by providing more in-class time to work on assignments, and when students go to college, senioritis will likely pass. **Elizabeth Taylor**, English Department also says that teachers can pivot their curriculum to accommodate for the anticipated decline in senior motivation.

"When students claim to have senioritis, they are just no longer inspired. All of their activities are done so they are just in some sort of limbo while waiting for college decisions. Also, they may not feel challenged anymore. Does that mean it is time to find something new to get rid of the redundancy? Yes. I do not believe in senioritis—it is just an excuse not to do certain things. Some might say that it is a byproduct of burnout, but in that case

just call it what it is. People should just own up to being exhausted instead of claiming they have senioritis," Taylor said.

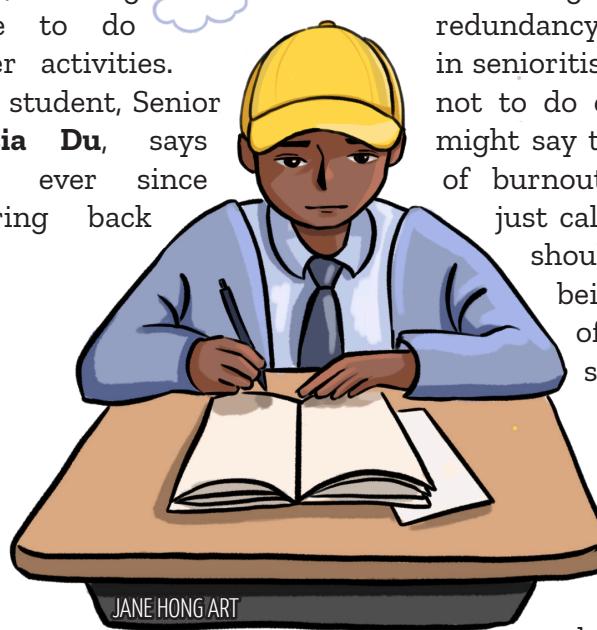
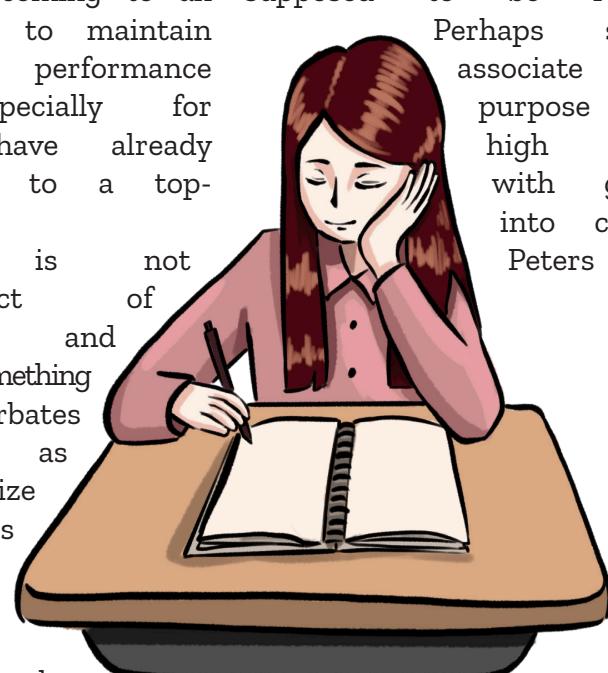
Although senioritis has decreased engagement in class, for many, it has provided great relief from the pressure and stress of sustaining a high academic performance. Thus, senioritis may not be as disastrous as previously thought, and it may be time for the stigma surrounding it to shift into a positive idea: students are finally able to find peace and have fun in their final months of high school.

Literature and Composition instructor **Samantha Peters**, English Department, has observed that as a result of senioritis, there has been a significant increase in absences and tardies.

"In comparison to my sophomore class, my senior class is significantly less engaged and does not complete homework; in particular, they are not reading the books they are supposed to be reading. Perhaps seniors associate the purpose of high school with getting into college," Peters said.

feelings of inadequacy among students. Therefore, in order to lessen the possible detrimental effects of senioritis on students' academic performance and mental health, experts and educators emphasize the importance of retaining concentration and devotion during the senior year.

However, some students enjoy senioritis because they feel less stressed and crunched for time, allowing for more time to do other activities. One student, Senior **Elysia Du**, says that ever since hearing back



Furthermore, as discussed in the College Admissions Strategies article, senioritis may encourage students to have a misplaced feeling of entitlement since they think that getting into college automatically absolves them of the need to study hard and be diligent. This feeling

from colleges, she has become more laid back. Nevertheless, this change is minor for her; Du continues to dedicate similar hours to studying and completing work on time.

"In a way, I enjoy the feeling of senioritis because I feel less pressured to build up my resume for college, which gives me more

OPINIONS



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Life and the law at their lowest

Ella Polak

Lifestyle & Feature World Editor

Supreme Court ruling is just one of several examples of this trend," Freshman Jaylee Sandoval said.

A range of bipartisan opposition has emerged in response to the ruling. Democrats across the country, including President Joe Biden, have decried the ruling and drawn parallels to the overturning of Roe v. Wade, which had constitutionally protected the right to abortion.

Strikingly, Republicans and pro-life politicians have also come out in support of IVF, including former President Donald Trump. Many were initially silent about the ruling but quickly reversed course once they realized how unpopular it was among their constituents. Seeing as many Republicans have also pushed for anti-abortion legislation, the personhood of embryos seems to be something they define based on political convenience.

"The government should not be able to put labels on ambiguous concepts like an embryo's personhood. Ultimately, medical decisions should be left to the affected person or their guardian," Senior Carlo Del Rosario said.

After weeks of uncertainty, the Alabama legislature passed a new bill protecting IVF providers from being prosecuted for damaging embryos, resuming some IVF treatments. Notably, the bill did not reject the court's definition of fetal personhood—maintaining the legal standard that embryos are considered human beings. Moreover, Republican senators have blocked nationwide IVF safeguards, which could lead to other states ending up in Alabama's situation and threatening even more people's reproductive rights.

The Alabama case, along with the overturning of Roe v. Wade, signifies an increasing pattern of courts shaping American policy, but in a democracy, only elected representatives should have that power. Allowing courts to make policy decisions for Americans without their support, particularly using religious justifications, risks morphing America into a political oligarchy. Without more direct oversight of the courts, the U.S. risks continuing down a path where a small group of unelected individuals have the power to make or break America's future.



Learned helplessness vs. learned industriousness

Achieving success through a shifted mindset



Two dogs are placed in a pair of harnesses, each hidden from the other. As part of an experiment, the dogs are shocked randomly—but one of the dogs can stop the shocks by pressing a lever in its harness. The other dog is given no opportunity to stop the shocks on its own. To this "helpless" dog, the shocks seem to cease randomly, while in reality, they stop when the other dog pushes its lever.

Each dog is then transferred to another kind of harness, which is divided into two sections by a low wall. The dogs then continue to be shocked randomly—but they can escape the shocks by jumping over the wall. When American psychologist Martin Seligman performed this experiment in 1967, he found that the dogs who were able to stop the shocks with their lever attempted the jump, while the "helpless" dogs tended not to make any escape effort despite having the ability to.

The Charger Account Editorial Staff

This experiment was the root of the theory of learned helplessness, which states that individuals conditioned to believe they have no control over a situation may be discouraged from making an effort to change any future situations for the better. Uncontrollable negative events result in a perceived lack of control, which in turn results in helpless behavior—a lack of effort to improve. In the context of education, learned helplessness creates a negative feedback cycle where students who experienced some early academic failure feel that they are unable to succeed. This makes them less likely to put effort into schoolwork, decreasing academic performance and culminating in subpar motivation as well as competence.

However, learned helplessness is not the only way we can condition ourselves. University of Delaware psychology professor Robert Eisenberger developed the theory of learned industriousness, or the idea that rewarding hard work creates a positive feedback loop of higher effort and higher performance—in other words, the opposite of learned helplessness. According to Eisenberger, when one works hard to achieve a positive result, the effort becomes associated with reward

Feburary issue corrections

Opinions:

"Harvard's profound presidential plights"

- "student body" is incorrectly written as "study body"

Entertainment:

"Golden Globes spin back to success"

- Mingyue Xiao is incorrectly credited as Mingyue Zhao

"Mean Girls"

- "story beats" is incorrectly written as "storybeats"

rather than difficulty, and making an effort to achieve a goal becomes a reward in and of itself. Thus, when we work hard on one task, we are more inclined to work hard on others, increasing our likelihood of success in all cases.

To shift our mindsets from learned helplessness to industriousness, we can set goals that are challenging yet attainable to achieve through small steps that can foster a sense of accomplishment. Developing methods to make learning itself engaging can also link positive interest to hard work, and high levels of reinforcement on vigorous tasks can develop a growth mindset.

By being aware of how our perspectives change our learned mindsets, we can effectively perpetuate a cycle of growth.

The downfall of local newspapers

Joshua Yan

Staff Writer

In recent decades, the world has undergone a mass digitization, causing a decline in traditional journalistic mediums. Perhaps the most prominent example of this is the downfall of local newspapers, which has contributed to misinformation and polarization in the media.

A third of the nation's local newspapers have disappeared since 2005, along with two-thirds of their journalists being laid off, according to a study by Midwestern University. The same study found that of the U.S.'s 3,143 counties, 1,562 have only one local newspaper, and another 204 have none at all.

This is largely the fault of the digital migration, which has sidelined local newspapers as financially unviable. With time, readers and advertisers have opted for the digital alternative, resulting in a sharp decline in revenue for paperback news sources. Local newspapers have consequently been forced to take measures like laying off their employees, causing 43,000 journalists to lose their jobs since 2005, according to a Northwestern study.

The resulting model of journalism is one in which people care less about what is going on around them and more about events taking place across the globe. Not only that, but news websites today use sensational headlines for their articles, creating a disconnect within communities as local news stories appear less interesting. Even more, algorithms on social media have created echo chambers perpetuating readers' favored viewpoints, widening the gap of political polarization between already divided citizens.

"I never read local newspapers. Almost all of my news comes from Instagram because of how accessible it is," Sophomore **Angela Fong** said.

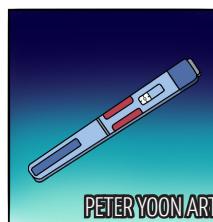
Without seeing issues from both sides, people will empathize less with one another. Being

able to understand each other is what allows society to function; a lack of empathy means that people cannot work together and make progress. Furthermore, political corruption will rise without enough journalists to keep elected officials in check.

"Newspapers are an important resource for spreading information to the public. We need them to exist so that they can address violent situations and social justice issues," Freshman **Logan Jones** said.

If local newspapers disappear, citizens lose the ability to be informed about important issues within their own communities, undermining the purpose of the news as a whole. News sources exist to inform the public to hold higher-ups of society accountable. As such, it is necessary to ensure that local journalism is preserved, whether it be through increased government funding or philanthropic support. This extra investment does not pose a big financial burden, as the return of embezzled funds exposed by local journalists would return money back to the community. Additionally, residents should go out of their way to support local newspapers to keep them running through donations.

The death of local news will harm individuals, communities and the country as a whole. It is up to everyone to keep local newspapers alive to preserve journalistic integrity and keep tight the bonds that unite the nation.



Tiktok's terse and tarnishing tones

Antara Gangwal

On Feb. 1, TikTok users were met with a shocking discovery: videos featuring hit songs had been muted. Since then, every song released by artists licensed with Universal Music Group (UMG) has been removed from TikTok's audio library. UMG explained its decision to end its contract with TikTok, citing concerns such as artist compensation and AI use. This incident has prompted a deeper look into TikTok's influence on the music industry, one that is harmfully altering modern music.

TikTok is home to billions of short videos, with music forming the backbone of most. Going viral can catapult unknown artists into stardom, such as South African singer Tyla, whose 2023 single "Water" served as the background for a popular dance challenge.

"TikTok makes the music industry more accessible. Serving as a platform for smaller artists to share their work and find success, it diversifies users' tastes, exposing them to artists they would not usually find," Junior Calista Shih said.

However, a study conducted by Pentos found that the average duration of viral TikTok song snippets is only 19.5 seconds: a number that continues to decrease as users swipe past content that does not capture their interest within the first seconds. Thus, songs with catchy hooks and short play times are often most popular on TikTok. For example, the repeated chorus lines in Harry Styles's 2022 hit "As It Was" primed for success.

By seeking to inorganically recreate these features, music companies forgo artistry for virality. The Washington Post reports that average song length has decreased by almost a minute since 1990 and Far Out Magazine finds that modern pop songs use fewer chord changes.

While there is no perfect length or structure for a song to be considered sonically complex, these developments represent a decline in the music industry's creativity. When a song is created just so a 15-second snippet can go viral on TikTok, it loses its artistic value to the corruption of corporate influence. Music has historically had strong

cultural value, bridging people

School News & Entertainment Editor TikTok—many companies now require their artists to maintain a presence on the app. However, artists have spoken out against this expectation; in an interview with NME Magazine, singers Halsey, FKA Twigs and Charli XCX expressed their frustrations at this form of promotion, believing it to be inorganic.

TikTok trends exacerbate how songs and artists are being reduced to products of consumption rather than artistic innovation. Music companies must recognize the negative effects of focusing all their efforts into TikTok virality to spearhead music popularity and reevaluate what truly makes a song a success. Yet change starts with the consumers. By

listening to lesser-known artists or discovering songs from places other than social media apps, users can begin to reverse the harm that TikTok has on music. Music teachers like **Rian Rodriguez**, Visual

Performing Arts Department, also stress the importance of listening to historical genres of music untouched by TikTok fame.

"By relying on platforms like TikTok to promote music, we are sanitizing the creativity of music. Classical pieces and scores that my students play are much longer and more structurally intricate than the pop songs boosted on TikTok. It is important to continue exposing newer generations to this music so they can understand its true cultural value," Rodriguez said.

Quotebox:
How has social media affected your music taste?

Compiled by Liliana Chai and Catherine Nguyen
Staff Writers

"The majority of my music taste derives from short, catchy excerpts of songs that I find on Instagram Reels,"

- Freshman Eleanor Wang

"My friends' stories and posts on Instagram will often have songs that grab my attention, but I will often skip songs if they do not quickly catch my interest."

- Sophomore James Lee

together and transcending language barriers through the emotions conveyed with creative arrangements of sound. A song is truly successful when it universally touches an audience's hearts, not when it captivates their attention for a mere five seconds.

Forgoing connection for profit is also prevalent in music marketing, another facet being transformed by



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Leland Parent Club

Senior Scholarship Awards

Leland Parent Club is proud to offer Scholarship Awards to our senior students, recognizing their non-academic achievements, leadership, community impact, etc., during their high school tenure.

Eligibility: All Leland Seniors (Class of 2024)

Deadline: April 15th, 2024

Awards:

- 1st Place: \$1000 (1 award)
- 2nd Place: \$500 (2 awards)
- 3rd Place: \$250 (2 Awards).

Additionally, we will raffle off 3 free tickets for the graduation night party. Awards will be announced and presented at the Senior Awards Ceremony on May 16th, 2024.



Click on the Code to access the application or visit <https://www.lelandparentclub.com/senior-scholarships>

For Questions: Email: lelandseniorawards@gmail.com

ENTERTAINMENT

DESIGN BY ANTARA GANGWAL

"Superdish"



Anna Yue

Staff Writer

Hunan Sichuan style cuisine, characterized by its bold use of intense spices and savory flavors, traces back to Chinese culinary history over two millennia ago and has been passed down to this day. There on the edge of Oakridge Mall in Almaden, San Jose is Superdish, an Asian fusion restaurant specializing in the Hunan Sichuan style cuisine with modern touches of delicacy and care.

The neat and organized space stood out as I entered the brightly lit room. Modern pendant lights hung from the ceiling above every table, and walls were decorated by canvas arts of Be@rbricks, a collectible Japanese designer figurine, as well as paintings depicting traditional Chinese opera scenes, perfectly matching the description of the restaurant—Chinese Hunan style cuisine with contemporary twists.

Upon seating, we were served water and small appetizers of pickled cabbage and stir-fried peanuts. After placing our order online through our phones, the dishes were slowly served. Several bowls of rice are a must in a Hunan style restaurant as dishes are extremely spicy. Oddly enough, each dish varies widely in portion size, so be careful: the Stir Fried Spicy Pot was sufficient for five people while the Wild Pepper Beef was for at most two, as much of its average-sized portion consisted of chili peppers.

The Shredded Pork with Garlic Sprouts presented a pleasant combination of the flavor and texture of each ingredient. The bits of spice and the freshness and crunchiness of the garlic sprout, an ingredient mainly unique to Chinese recipes, perfectly capture the fusion of traditional Hunan and modern cuisines.

I strongly recommend the Minced Beef, Egg Drop and Chinese Parsley Soup after your meal, as it gives your burning taste buds a moment of relief from the intense spice and flavor with its almost bland yet still savory taste. The soup was thick and stomach-warming, presenting another combination of textures signature to Chinese cuisine.

Superdish is a decent restaurant featuring modernized Hunan style flavors and techniques, serving a cohesive blend of tradition and contemporary fusion.

"Superdish" (3/5)

how fan-taste-ic was it?



- + decent taste
- average service
- expensive

Mahika Khosla

Division in Eurovision

Staff Writer

A revered celebration of music and cultural diversity, the annual song contest Eurovision will be hosted in Malmö, Sweden from May 7 to May 11. This year's contest promises a grand showcase of talent from 37 European and non-European countries. However, this lineup is under fire from politicians and artists from all over the globe, who are protesting Israel's participation and song entries due to their war in Gaza.

Each participating country has until mid-March to select a song and artist, either through direct nomination or televised national auditions. However, as countries started to submit their entries, Finnish and Icelandic artists called to ban Israel from the competition, citing the civilian impacts of Israeli military actions in Gaza. Some countries threatened to boycott the competition if Israel was not suspended.

Israel's original song entry, called "October Rain," further added fuel to this fire. Many criticized the song choice on social media, believing that it alluded to the Oct. 7 attacks on Israel by Hamas and was thus "too political" for Eurovision—which has long stressed that it is an apolitical event. Subsequently, The European Broadcasting Union (EBU) rejected this song and Israel's backup song "Dancing Forever," although they did not ban the country from participation. In response, Israel and its representative singer Eden Golan agreed to change the title of "October Rain" to "Hurricane" and rewrote the song as a romantic ballad.

Still, several countries continued to call for Israel's suspension from the competition, and London has decided not to host its annual Eurovision screening party due to Israel's participation.

"Politics should not be involved in music. Everyone should be able to enjoy music without having to worry about political events or unintentionally supporting or opposing specific movements," Sophomore Arianna Rashid said.

Despite Eurovision's claims to be strictly apolitical, the contest has not been immune to political tensions throughout its history. Notable instances include conflicts between Armenia and Azerbaijan in 2015 and 2016, as well as ongoing tensions between Russia and Ukraine, which have occasionally broken the competition's spirit of unity.

Music has long been a powerful medium for expressing political sentiments and sparking social change, providing a platform for diverse voices. Examples range from Jimi Hendrix's "Machine Gun," which protested the Vietnam War, to "Worker's Blood" a song created by Cambodian youth to highlight unjust worker treatment.

Some believe "October Rain" was similarly written to give a voice to Israeli victims of the Oct. 7 attacks—Yoav Tzafir, the director of Israel's delegation to Eurovision, stated that both "October Rain" and "Hurricane" were meant to be songs that "Israelis can relate to." Yet, others accuse the song choice of downplaying

the experiences of Palestinian civilians in the decades-long conflict between Israel and Palestine.

"All art forms hold the power to send social and



political messages, and music is no exception, as it can be used to raise awareness about issues and inspire change. For example, rapper Kendrick Lamar has always used his music to advocate for the Black Lives Movement and criticize police brutality," Junior Suhan Lai said.

Israel's participation in Eurovision continues to face opposition as it wages a war in Gaza. Nonetheless, in the context of Eurovision, political songs reflect the complexities that exist within the participating countries and the socio-political climate of their time, highlighting the contest's significance beyond music.

"Not a country album, a Beyoncé album"

Winston Chu

Staff Writer

Following its surprise release during Super Bowl LVIII, Beyoncé's single "Texas Hold 'Em" has ascended to No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100. As the name suggests, "Texas Hold 'Em" is a country song, marking a pivotal change from Beyoncé's usual style of music—and sparking mixed reactions from fans over Beyoncé's authenticity in representing the country genre.

At the young age of nine, Beyoncé formed the Rhythm and Blues (R&B) group Destiny's Child, kickstarting her acclaimed career in the music industry as the group quickly rose to fame. Their album "The Writings on the Wall" (1999) earned the group two Grammy awards and sold more than eight million copies in the United States. In 2003, Beyoncé left the group to go solo, and Destiny's Child disbanded in 2006.

Since then, Beyoncé has released a myriad of record breaking albums, garnering fans of different ages and origins. While she is recognized as one of the biggest pop stars of her time, many believe her music also pulls elements from R&B, hip-hop and rock to create a unique, energetic genre. For example, her studio album Renaissance (2022) received praise for integrating

aspects of many different genres of music to portray self-expression. Beyoncé's versatility represents her distinctive talent as a music artist, making it very difficult to categorize her diverse music.

Yet, when Beyoncé ventured into the country genre with "Texas Hold 'Em" and "Carriages," the response was not as well-received. Many fans did not appreciate her exploration of country, believing the songs were too different from her traditional style of music. Additionally, because country artists are predominantly white, some critics saw Beyoncé's song as cultural appropriation. As a result, some radio stations banned the song from airing from their country stations.

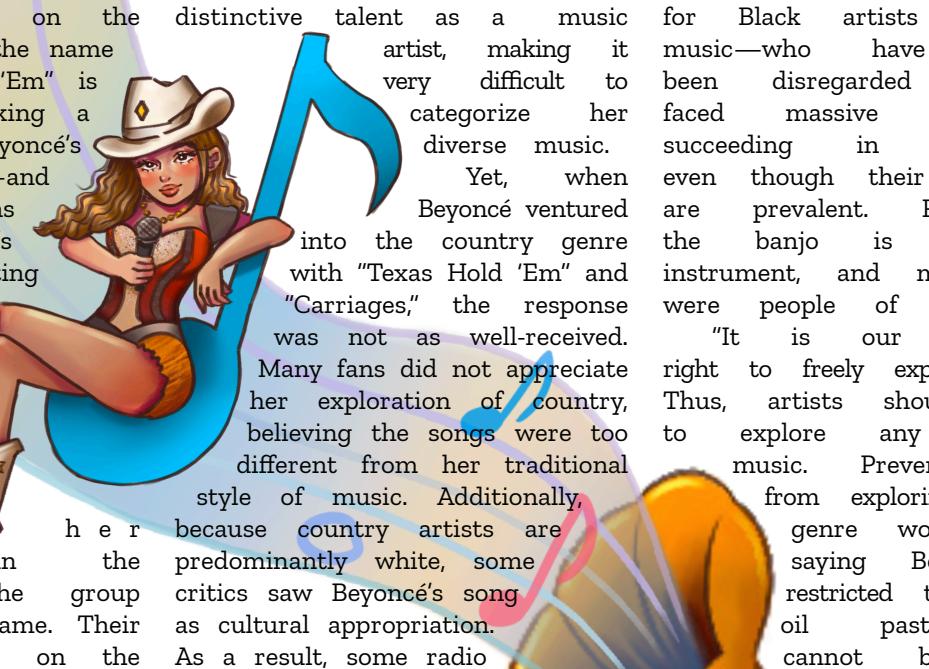
"The purpose of music is to communicate emotions. This makes it illogical to restrict an artist's genre, since genre directly relates to the emotion of a song," Freshman Aliza Quareshi said.

Despite the backlash, this is not Beyoncé's first appearance in the country genre. In the past, she has nodded to her Houston roots by performing at the Houston

Rodeos in 2004. Experts see Beyoncé's work as paving the way for more representation for Black artists in country music—who have historically been disregarded and have faced massive barriers at succeeding in the genre, even though their contributions are prevalent. For example, the banjo is an African instrument, and many cowboys were people of color.

"It is our constitutional right to freely express ourselves. Thus, artists should be able to explore any genre of music. Preventing artists from exploring a specific genre would be like saying Bob Ross is restricted to using only oil pastels—expression cannot be restricted by a single category," Sophomore Shivani Kini said.

For now, Beyoncé is the first Black woman to hit the U.S. No. 1 spot with a country song. Her success may be integral in inspiring other artists of color to not only explore country, but other genres of music where they are overlooked.



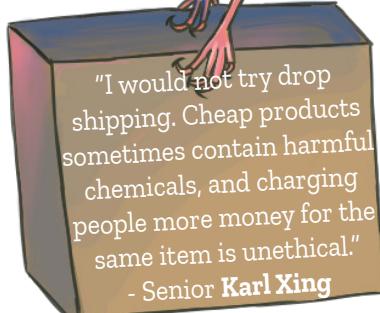


The rise of dropshipping

Anna Yue
Staff Writer

Quotebox:
Would you try dropshipping?

Compiled by Nirupama
Shivakumar and Eleanor Gil
Staff Writers



- Senior Karl Xing

The ability to access the internet from nearly anywhere in the world has shone a light on a new pathway to prosperity. For those of any age and experience, the promise of low input and high rewards streaming in from the comfort of home through a laptop has proved incredibly enticing. This is dropshipping, or at least what dropshipping is envisioned to be.

Dropshipping is an e-commerce business model recently growing in popularity and market size—estimated

to reach \$1,921.24 billion by 2032 as reported by Precedence Research—and is appealing for its high profits and low requirement of specialized skills. Under this model, dropshippers act as the retailer of products, directly promoting discounted goods to customers, and earning profit from markup prices. After consumers place their order, retailers buy the items from the supplier and have them shipped directly to the buyer's delivery address. This business model is mutually beneficial, as the suppliers can sell their products without worrying about finding an audience who is willing to buy them. At the same time, retailers can gain a profit without the technical skills to manufacture the products. Around 27% of online retailers, ranging widely from office and home products to accessories and pet supplies, had adopted this business model by 2023, states Ecommerce Platforms.

Under this simple structure, success stories have arisen; Malaysian entrepreneur Tze Hing

Chan made over \$19,000 in just over two months selling boba plushies on Shopify. Harry Coleman earned around \$5 million in 2018 with his three dropshipping stores. Many had become content creators as a side hustle, teaching and spreading the dropshipping culture through video platforms or sold courses.

Inspired, several young peers, such as YouTuber Paul Han, have chosen this profitable yet competitive career path at the expense of dropping out of university.

"It is somewhat problematic how perfect people are advertising dropshipping, as much of it is survivorship bias. Only the people who have succeeded get to share their story, overlooking those who do not, giving the impression that everyone in the market is thriving,"

"For student hustlers, dropshipping is like leaving your house, and you can brag about being a CEO while you are still in high school."
- Junior Luke Raimondi

Sophomore Selina Dong said.

Although dropshipping has some promising prospects, the low barriers to entry result in the high level of competition. Thus, the success rate of first-year dropshippers is only 10 to 20%, as stated by WebinarCare, not to mention other variables like unreliable suppliers

that add another layer to navigating around this market as a newcomer.

"Dropshipping is a valid way of building one's wealth and career and a by-the-book definition of entrepreneurship. Although I would not go as far as risking my education and career on this, as long as people are aware of the risk, it is a very solid way to start a side hustle," Senior Ihyun Jeon said.

Despite the opinions and choices that have risen, the dropshipping trend has inevitably demonstrated the possibilities of careers the internet has opened up for the generation.

Stanning Stanley cups

Lauren Wilson

Investigative Report & Last Word Editor

Once known for their durability, Stanley cups recently emerged as the latest TikTok-driven obsession. Starting as outdoor gear and originally associated with men, these steel bottles have transformed into accessories, influencing discussions about sustainability and shopping trends.

Stanley cups are stainless steel water bottles manufactured by the 110-year-old brand, Stanley. These cups are offered in a variety of sizes, with the \$45 40-ounce choice being popular among consumers. The large sizes reduce the need for refills and allow for ample hydration and convenience, especially for outdoor and athletic activities.

Many regard Stanleys as environmentally friendly because they decrease plastic waste as a reusable alternative to single-use plastic bottles. This stands in stark contrast to popular water brands like Fiji Water, which heavily rely on plastic packaging and create environmental pollution and waste. However, some believe Stanleys perpetuate consumer culture and are unnecessary because other reusable bottles possess the same positive aspects, such as Hydro Flasks—a past trend that also emerged from TikTok.

"As a track athlete, I use a ThermoFlask, and it is satisfactory enough. I do not understand the hype surrounding Stanleys, as there are cheaper options that provide the same benefits," Junior Dean Isani said.

Furthermore, the popularity of these cups has been increasing, as CNBC estimated sales reaching over \$750 million last year, a staggering increase compared to the average of \$70 million annually before 2020. The surge was amplified by TikTok, as influencers uploaded content supporting the cups on #Watertok, a

section of TikTok dedicated to hydration and skincare.

"Before Stanleys were trending, I purchased one because it had a handle and could fit in a cup holder. Although their design is very convenient, they are overpriced as there is nothing special about the quality," Traci Perez, Special Education Department, said.

Despite their prevalence, controversy arose surrounding potential lead exposure from the cups. Despite the company's assurance that the lead is completely enclosed within the stainless steel, three lawsuits were filed against Stanley's parent company, Pacific Market International (PMI). Jack Caravanos, a professor of public health at New York University specializing in lead studies, conducted testing on Stanleys using an X-ray fluorescence detector, declaring that the lead within the cups poses no threat to human health.

Ultimately, Stanley Cups exemplify the complexities of modern consumer trends. While some appreciate them for their convenience, others question their popularity and have concerns surrounding lead pieces in the cups.



Ariel Lee

Amidst the constant development of new technology, hydroponic gardens have bloomed as a new form of gardening. Using scientific ideas, this new water-based method of growing plants without soil has been growing in popularity.

Hydroponic gardening is a method of growing plants without soil, but rather in water. Instead of drawing nutrition from the minerals in the soil, plants grown using hydroponics gain nutrients from mineral-rich water solutions. Recently, hydroponic gardening has become a preferred method of growing plants because it enables year-round cultivation and uses less water than traditional soil-based systems. Furthermore, hydroponic gardening is space-efficient; gardens can be kept either indoors or outdoors and utilize less space than traditional gardening methods. Different types of hydroponic gardening include the wick system, deep water culture system, vertical drip system, ebb and flow system and more.

"Hydroponic gardens give people who have less space for planting larger, traditional gardens with an opportunity to grow their own food and have that same experience," Sophomore Kelton Green said.

Additional benefits of using hydroponic gardens over traditional soil-based gardens include being locally grown, the prevention of weeds, and a greater crop yield due to their faster growth in efficient

Hydroponic gardens

Staff Writer

spaces, which becomes helpful for people in urban environments. Hydroponic gardens are also more high-tech than traditional gardens; they have sensors for the temperature and nutrient levels, which helps the plants grow more efficiently. However, there are still drawbacks: hydroponic plants can use up a lot of energy, and certain plants, such as potatoes or radishes, cannot be grown in this type of system. Since these plants are tubers, they develop within the soil of traditional agriculture, a key element missing in the hydroponic process.

Hydroponic gardens also have an impact on the health of people who use them. For instance, they are good ways to bring fresh food to urban residents since they can be grown directly in their homes. According to registered dietitian Liz Amission, fresher foods are healthier because fruits and vegetables begin to lose their nutrients within 24 hours of being picked. Produce grown to be sold in grocery stores is harvested before it is fully ripe, allowing the food time to ripen while being transported. The food's nutritional value changes because of the fluctuation in air, artificial light, and temperature changes during transportation. Alternately, hydroponic gardens provide fresh food in real-time, increasing the nutritional benefits.

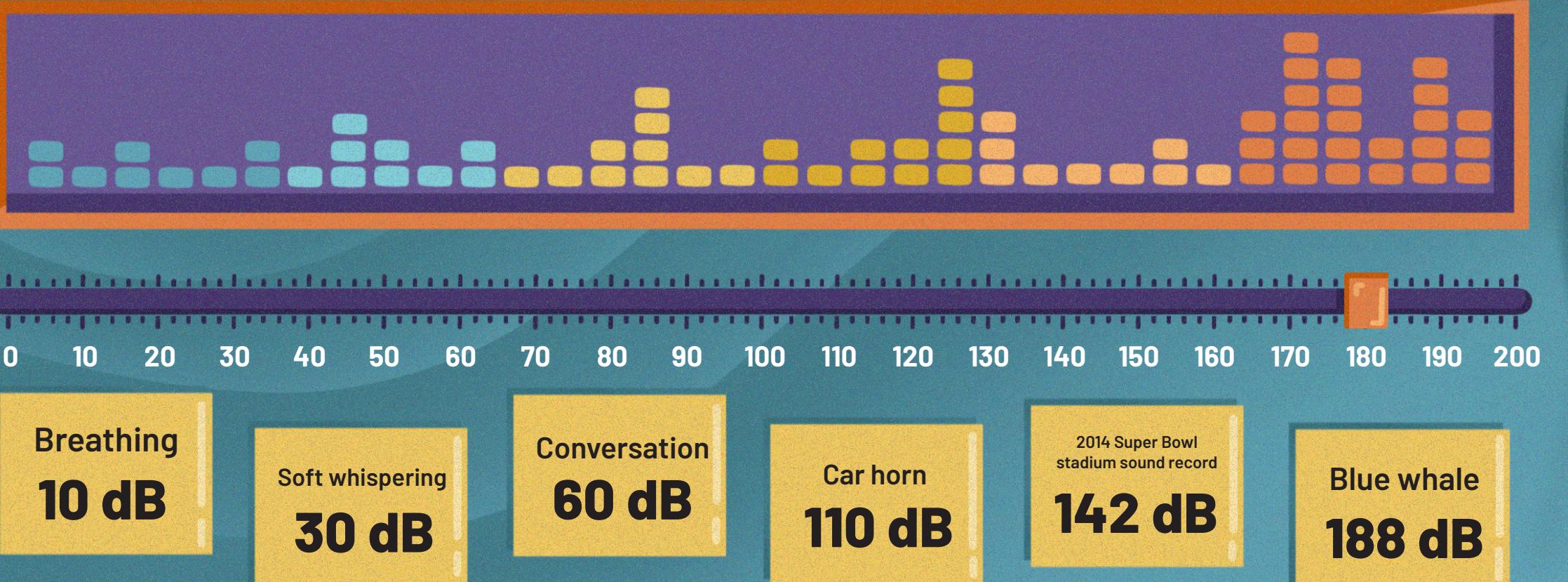
"Hydroponic gardens are useful because they allow for more gardens to be produced in a smaller amount of land. This could potentially address hunger in third-world countries," Junior Tommy Li said.

Hydroponic gardening represents the future of the upcoming era, full of technology. With soil degradation threatening to devastate traditional agricultural yields, hydroponic gardens offers a unique solution to this growing issue.



How loud are sounds?

Compiled by Vira Patil and James Yu
Staff Writers



The discography of sound recording

Sound recording permeates our daily existence, found on the television playing each morning, melodies streaming from smartphones and the broadcasters on the radios in our cars. The transformative journey of sound recording—fueled by relentless technological advancements—has carved a monumental path, reshaping the very fabric of the music industry.

Sound recording originated in 1857 with the invention of the phonograph by Edouard-Leon Scott de Martinville. The phonograph, composed of a cone to capture sound as vibrations and a pen-and-paper contraption connected to it, recorded sound as written lines. However, the phonograph could only record sound, not reproduce it. 20 years later, Thomas Edison was inspired by Leon Scott's phonograph and invented the phonograph, which could both record sound and play it back. Following Edison's invention came the rise of another one of his breakthrough inventions, wax cylinders—the first commercial recording medium. This device recorded sound by being rotated along a stylus that cut a groove into it; as the pitch of the sound changed, the changes in vibrations would cause the stylus to move slightly up or down—like a three-dimensional phonograph.

The digital revolution in the late 20th century saw the rise of the first digital consumer audio format, Sony's Digital Audio Tape (DAT), which became widely popular in studios and radio stations. The compact disc (CD) was the next to come in August of 1982.

"The oldest sound recording device I have used is a CD player. When I was little, I listened to it when I was in places with no internet. It felt nice listening to music out loud instead of blasting the music through my earphones," Sophomore Adalyn Lin said.

The 1990s brought about the invention of the Alesis Digital Audio

Tape machines which were able to record eight tracks of digital audio and the MP3 player, which was able to store up to 12 songs and included a screen that displayed what song was playing.

Inspired by Edison's inventions, Berliner used a cylinder to record sound on a spinning disc. Following Berliner's vinyl discs is the rise of recording companies, with the first recording company being the Edison Phonograph Company—formed in October 1887 to market Edison's machine.

Early sound recording was quickly trampled by electrical recording as the scientists in Bell Laboratories, a now-American premier research facility owned by Finnish company Nokia, made the first electrical recordings in the 1920s. In the same years, magnetic recording technology was developed in Germany, using steel wires that were magnetized by the recording head. The steel wire quickly became replaced with magnetic tapes and such technology became a popular commercial format for the next decade.

Furthermore, the digital revolution allowed for greater accessibility and affordability of recording equipment, leading to these devices being integrated in personal computers, software and MIDI technology.

The 2000s marks the shift to digital streaming platforms like YouTube and Netflix. However, it has also sparked controversies surrounding piracy and fair compensation for artists, challenging traditional inventions and prompting discussions on the role of labels.

"I believe digital streaming platforms have a positive impact on artists and labels. They allow artists to gain more exposure and reach people across the world that may like their music," Junior Daphne Nguyen said.

Without a doubt, sound recording has evolved significantly. With breathtaking technologies in virtual and augmented reality that are currently being tested by large corporations like Apple, the future promises even more immersive audio experiences in a three-dimensional sound field.

In the deep, dark depths of the abyssal waters, nothing is visible—the world is pitch-black. Yet, whales have no problem finding their way around and catching prey. Similarly, bats thrive in dark caves, able to efficiently hunt during nighttime. Whales, bats and other nocturnal animals use echolocation, or acoustic location, to estimate the distance and size of nearby objects by releasing a sound wave and processing the returning echo. Gradually, this usage of sound waves is becoming a part of human technology.

Different animals have different methods of echolocating. Dolphins produce clicks through their nasal passage, which are reflected off nearby organisms that could be potential food sources. The echoes are received by the dolphin in the acoustic window of the lower jaw and are ultimately transmitted to the brain, allowing them to easily locate prey. Bats produce a wide variety of high frequency sound pulses in their larynx and emit them into the air. The reflecting pulse waves are used to determine the size, shape and texture of surrounding objects to avoid obstacles.

Humans have never possessed echolocation as a natural trait. However, according to WebMD, 20% to 30% of

Echolocation scores a resounding win for the blind

Amie Ahn
Staff Writer

"People could make use of echolocation in investigations, like locating missing people. Echolocation technology could be used to more quickly and effectively search for missing people, especially in confined spaces and dark areas such as caves," Freshman Melody Chong said.

Contrary to animals like dolphins or bats, there are still many inherent barriers to authentic human echolocation. Human ears have a very limited range compared to echolocating animals. Due to these constraints, echolocating technologies are advancing to assist the visually impaired, including the Sunu Band and Lidar. The Sunu

Band is a band worn on the wrist that uses echolocation and sonar to detect the objects around the person, and it emits vibrations to inform them of objects in their proximity. Lidar bounces eye-safe laser beams to bounce off surrounding objects. The reflected light waves return to the sensor, where it calculates the distance of the objects from the person.

"Echolocating devices are not safe to completely rely on yet—imperfections in the system could result in misjudging the distance from or completely missing oddly shaped objects. Due to this occasional inaccuracy, an individual relying solely on echolocation could be injured fatally such as by a moving car. However, making use of such technology alongside already existing guide techniques has the potential to make life much safer for visually impaired people," Senior Matthew Rodrigues said.

Echolocation technology has many challenges to overcome before it will be safe to function independently—even signals from sonar, which is not used by humans on a daily basis, have impacted the environment by interfering with the echolocation abilities of whales and other marine life. Nevertheless, the human world will continue to see a growing role of echolocation in many aspects of human life—the ongoing study of echolocation has the potential to unlock new knowledge about the human brain. Ultimately, echolocation serves as a representation of how the understanding of human perception is constantly evolving.

SCIENCE & TECH

Emulation devastation



Kyan Wang

Science & Tech & Feature US Editor

Eighty seven percent of retro video games have disappeared in a few short decades. Nintendo, the world's most iconic video game company, decided that setting fire to its history is the best way forward by suing the developers of Yuzu and Citra, two video game emulators for the Nintendo Switch and Nintendo 3DS platforms respectively, crippling video game preservation efforts.

Video games have historically been limited by hardware, and when said hardware disappears off shelves, an entire library of games is inaccessible without buying costly—and limited—secondhand items. To combat this, programmers have created video game emulators—often open-source—that mimic consoles, allowing otherwise unplayable video games to be played on modern hardware. However, the actual games are not included with most open source projects due to copyright concerns, necessitating the extraction of game data from genuine cartridges, which may be difficult and expensive to obtain for the masses.

Piracy emerged as a solution to the unavailability of physical copies, as the data ripped from old games is shared online to increase reach. While extracting video game data from one's own game is not illegal, distributing it is, resulting in limitations on library style services sharing video games online. Nintendo owns the rights to its published games, and sued the developers of Yuzu and Citra for "facilitating piracy at a colossal scale" of its intellectual property, per lawsuit documents. Notably, Yuzu emulates a console still being sold by Nintendo, which Nintendo claims encourages piracy of its games. A settlement was reached between Tropic Haze LLC, the company behind Yuzu and Citra, and Nintendo for \$2.4 million.

The future of emulation is in question as big companies can profit by releasing their own emulators with their own games, as Nintendo has with its Nintendo Switch Online subscription. However, the service provides access to only a small fraction of Nintendo's historical library, and none past the 16-bit era. Although Nintendo's claims of piracy were based in reality, the lawsuit struck a huge blow to video game preservation because the now obsolete 3DS hardware provided millions of gamers with a way to play thousands of games without shelling out a fortune.

If companies continue to strike at emulators without providing viable solutions, older video games may never see the light of day and be recognized by the masses, especially if companies continue to crack down on existing projects hoping to make a quick buck. Emulator developers are operating at great risk, and if their work may be ruined by companies so thoroughly at a whim, the progress of current projects may stall forever.

Vira Patil and James Yu

Despite their unassuming appearances, cardboard packages often excite shoppers whenever one is delivered to their door. However, the waiting time for these goods may frustrate many. Shipping company FedEx reports that packages delivered through their services could take up to five days to deliver. Even worse, orders made from international sellers take even longer to ship: according to Guided Imports, an American shipping company based in China, deliveries to the U.S. can take up to 45 days, along with steep delivery prices. In order to reduce shipment times, delivery services and online marketplaces are beginning to adopt drone technology to fulfill orders.

"The worst part about online shopping is the wait to receive my order. Although online shopping provides a wide variety of products I would not be able to obtain shopping in-person, waiting days on end to receive my order makes online shopping an inefficient method of buying goods," Junior Dominic Vu said.

Amazon already maintains two PrimeAir trial drone delivery services across the U.S.—one in Lockeford, California and the other in College Station, Texas—that have been operating for over a decade. However, news publication Axios reports that drone deliveries remain limited due to

federal regulations preventing drones from flying without a visual spotter—someone being able to see the drone. However, the Federal Aviation Administration authorized drones to travel long distances without a spotter last September, paving the way for drones to be incorporated into package delivery services on a larger scale. Other companies like Walmart have joined Amazon in developing drone delivery systems, although they utilize third-party drone services like "DroneUp," as opposed to company-specific networks.

While Axios reports that drone deliveries can theoretically reduce delivery times to as little as 30 minutes after the package was ordered, there are still various limitations. For instance, Amazon has a five-pound limit on goods shipped via drones and also requires sufficient space for the package to be delivered at a landing spot, such as a large front yard. Furthermore, drones also have flight altitude limits and must maneuver through flight zones, taking the most direct path while avoiding crashes or interfering with other

Staff Writers
drones and aircrafts. On the bright side, delivery drones are fully capable of autonomous flights and can travel a maximum distance of five kilometers, according to CNET.

Drone delivery technology is also seeing global adoption. For instance, in 2016, Zipline Systems, an American drone delivery company, began using autonomous drones to deliver blood to rural hospitals in Rwanda, helping to reduce mortality rates in the poverty-stricken country.

"While drone deliveries can offer some benefits such as faster delivery times, they raise some ethical and environmental issues such as privacy concerns, disruption of habitats and risk of colliding with wildlife," Sophomore Nainika Srinivasan said.

Despite these hurdles, drones will likely see increased usage by delivery services in the coming years. Fortune Business Insight predicts that the commercial drone market will become a \$54.8 billion industry by 2030. However, until issues involving capacity and space concerns are resolved, consumers' dreams of making online shopping faster than physical shopping may never fully reach the open skies as regulations drag the tech world's dreams back to Earth.

OpenAI Sora revolutionizes videography

Joshua Yan

From disco-dancing kangaroos to Petri dish pandas, OpenAI's Sora has recently emerged as a massive pioneering force pushing AI development, being capable of generating lifelike videos and sparking both new excitement and concerns over its wide range of possibilities.

OpenAI announced Sora on Feb. 15 alongside almost 50 videos generated from a variety of text prompts about wildlife, city scenes and more. However, OpenAI is currently making Sora available to industry insiders to identify and remediate security weaknesses. A number of visual artists, designers and filmmakers also are giving input to ensure that Sora can be improved to better serve artistic and creative fields. Although the company has not determined a set release date for Sora, some speculate that it will be available to the public some time later this year.

"Though there are a lot of possibilities for misuse, Sora could be a mostly beneficial technology depending on how it is used, with many creative applications. As long as it is just used to make cool things and not to steal or emulate other people's art, I do not see it as anything particularly threatening," Junior Alexia Lee said.

Despite its potential, the software does have some considerable limitations. According to OpenAI's website, the model currently struggles with spatial directions, such as specific

camera movements or prompts involving rights and lefts. Sora is also not fully capable of rendering certain details for videos with more complex physics, particularly with cause and effect instances, like the missing chunk after a person bites a cookie.

Many of these faults are caused by an foundational problem with generative AI: it does not produce original media. Instead, Sora draws from databases to replicate patterns and anticipate what will happen in the succeeding or preceding frames to create imagery. Because of this, however, Sora is able to extend videos forward and backward in time; this allows the software to create perfectly looping videos and create seamless transitions between two distinct videos.



Movie of cat playing

Staff Writer
abilities such as learning and problem-solving. That kind of technology still remains a dream of science fiction, but in the meantime, Sora will serve as a powerful tool in videography and cinematography. Public access to the technology will democratize these fields, but will also potentially hurt existing professionals in the process.

Indeed, experts agree that AI will have a massive impact on a variety of fields. A Goldman Sachs report stated that along with its productivity benefits, AI has the potential to force workers out of upwards of 300 million full-time jobs by the end of the decade. Additionally, they believe that the majority of jobs in the Western world, like those dealing with reception and retail, will be assisted or automated with AI to a degree, and that a quarter will be entirely automated.

"AI-generated videos find themselves in a similar position to AI art. Sora and other such video-generation tech like deepfakes need extremely tight regulations, higher than those on AI art. AI-generated videos have an exponentially higher potential in spreading misinformation, meaning users need to be held accountable when utilizing them to prevent the escalation of conflict," said Sophomore Harry Yin said.

As AI tools such as Sora become increasingly powerful and accessible, they will continue to have massive implications on almost all facets of society, serving as both a convenient utility and game changer in artistic, industrial and technological fields.



Prom affordability meets environmentalism

Niru Shivakumar

With the average American family spending over \$900 on prom, this cornerstone event to the high school experience often becomes difficult for many families to afford, causing several different problems for students on a personal and community level. Considering the prices for dresses, the ticket itself, as well as transportation, the bill can turn out to be unaffordable for many. However, under the Instagram account @lhsprom.rent, Senior **Sara Icaza** helps prom attendees buy, sell or rent gently worn gowns online at an affordable price in a way that promotes environmental sustainability. Through the account, buyers can get stylish dresses at a fraction of the original price and sellers may find a new home for their gently used clothing.

"I wanted to sell my prom dress, and I had other friends who wanted to sell theirs too. It gave me the idea to create a platform where other students can also sell or rent their dresses in hopes that it would also help people who did not want to spend or are not able to spend too much money on a prom dress," Icaza said.

By encouraging a sense of community and shared responsibility, Icaza is a catalyst for change, making sure that everyone can take part in this iconic high school event without going over budget or adding to needless trash. Financial



obstacles often accompany prom attendance as many students and their families find the costs of the event to be prohibitive. The work of the account is particularly significant in light of the differences in prom attendance among students of different economic backgrounds—

many students are excluded from the event because the high price presents a financial burden, which reinforces social and economic inequality.

Prom attendance has a substantial environmental cost in addition to financial ones, largely due to the one-time use nature of prom dresses. The gas and chemical leachates that emerge during the decomposition of clothing pollute the air, soil and groundwater and negatively impact the environment and the health of humans and other species. However, by prolonging the lifetime of prom dresses by renting out or reselling them, students can help curb this problem of textile waste.

@lhsprom.rent is more than just an Instagram account; the platform redefines how high school students approach prom wear by promoting eco-friendly fashion and fostering a feeling of community and support among students. This effort, with its creative approach, shows that affordability and environmental awareness can coexist, breaking down financial barriers of entry to prom and increasing sustainability all the while.

Blood drives mitigate blood droughts

Caitlynn Sue

The school library bustles with activity—but instead of students studying and working at the computers, the tables have been cleared and replaced with foldable cots. Purple-clad masked nurses welcome students and staff into the room. On the side, there is a long table covered with chips, cookies and drinks.

On Feb. 15, ASB hosted a blood drive in collaboration with Vitalant, a non-profit organization that provides blood and transfusion medicine to hospitals across the U.S. In the morning, Vitalant workers set up the equipment while ASB prepared documents for the blood drive. Participants came in throughout the day for their appointments.

Before drawing blood, Vitalant workers made sure each participant's iron levels were safe for donation. Then, participants did one of two types of blood donation: whole blood or Power Red. Whole blood is the most common type of blood donation, where the blood that is collected is separated into transfusible parts—red blood cells, plasma and platelets—after it is shipped to its destination. Power Red uses an automated process to collect double the concentration of red blood cells as whole blood, and the blood is immediately separated into its 3 components. After a Power Red donation, plasma and platelets are returned to the donor.

Donated red blood cells are usually given to patients with chronic anemia or surgery patients

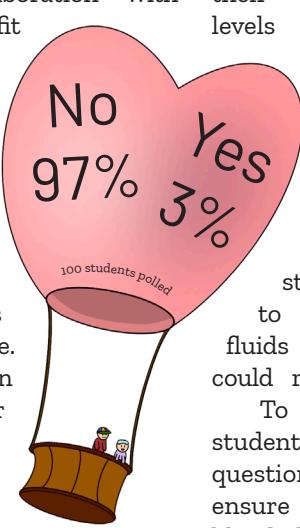
to make up for lost blood. Platelets—essential to forming blood clots—are given to patients undergoing chemotherapy, which suppresses bone marrow and thus prevents it from producing platelets naturally. Meanwhile, plasma helps patients with serious burns or severe blood loss by boosting blood and fluid and replenishing clotting proteins.

The donations took around one hour per person. After their donation finished, participants were encouraged to stay for 15 minutes to eat snacks and drink fluids so that their bodies could readjust.

To sign up for the blood drive, students and staff had to fill out a questionnaire and permission slip to ensure their health was suitable for blood donation. The blood drive was organized by Junior **Songhee Rha**.

"I love to work in ASB's service events where we give back to the community. I worked in the blood drive last year and found it to be an inspirational event, so I wanted to chair it this year. The experience turned out to be very rewarding," Rha said.

Preparation for the blood drive began in December, when ASB reached out to Vitalant—whom they worked with to host the blood drive last year as well. ASB advertised the drive through social media, word of mouth and physical



Poll: Did you donate blood with Vitalant?

posters; unfortunately, they were unable to receive the participation they had been hoping for. While their original goal was to have 32 donors, only 27 donors participated

in the end, a few from walk-in appointments on the day of the blood drive. According to Rha, this was likely because most of the students do not fit the requirements to participate in a blood

drive or are unwilling to miss class to participate. Due to this, in addition to several students reporting that they felt pressured by Vitalant staff to do Power Red donations despite not signing up for it beforehand, ASB does not plan to host a blood drive next year. Nevertheless, the blood drive was a positive, meaningful experience for most participants.

"The blood donation was simple and quite relaxing. I had no inconveniences during the whole process, and the online application was also very straightforward," Sophomore **Solomon Chang** said.

With over 5 million people in the U.S. in need of blood transfusions, the school helped change the lives of these patients through the generous donations of both staff and students.

Compiled by
Gilina Voon and
Joshua Yan

Staff Writers



PETER YOON ART

Social symphonies



Gwen Carroll

Community News & Feature School Editor

Music has been an integral part of the life of **Rian Rodriguez**, Visual Performing Arts Department, for as long as he can recall. From his father playing rock songs to alleviate the boredom of chores to his grandfather playing country while babysitting him to the symphonies he regularly attended during elementary school, music has been a constant for Rodriguez since his birth, nestling itself snugly in his heart.

Whether alone or with friends, for a little-known local orchestra or a worldwide sensation, Rodriguez thoroughly enjoys attending concerts. He often takes note of minor details that catch his eye—or rather, his ear—during performances, such as a particularly interesting trumpet solo, an instrument he always pays special attention to. Be it listening or playing, Rodriguez basks in the social aspect of music: that which allows all music lovers, regardless of their level of training, to experience the joy of collaborating with each other to play a piece bigger than themselves.

"I could never call music 'just a hobby.' Music has always been my livelihood, even more so now that I teach it here. I love the way it brings like-minded people together in such a way that accepts mistakes and encourages people to help each other. It is undoubtedly one of the best social activities," Rodriguez said.

"I could never call music just a hobby.' Music has always been my livelihood [...] I love the way it brings like-minded people together..."

Rodriguez discovered his love for musical collaboration as early as elementary school, where his music classes and the opportunity to join the school's band captivated him almost immediately. He particularly thrived while conducting for his classmates, having discovered his passion for the art while serving as a substitute conductor.

"Teaching was not always my career goal; I initially wanted to be a conductor. When I first took up teaching, I saw it as an opportunity to be a conductor all day, with the addition that I had to teach sometimes, too. The teaching part grew on me quickly, though, and each year I am at the school, I enjoy it more," Rodriguez said.

Indeed, Rodriguez grows fonder of his role and his students as the years go by. He still keeps in touch with former students who continue to pursue music in college, traveling to attend their concerts and show his support. Having come to love music through his core childhood experiences, he now works tirelessly to pay it forward, doing his utmost to deliver the same passion to the school's band members.

Florida men doing Florida things

Catherine Nguyen

Staff Writer

The sun beats down, the haze blurring the scene of men with mullets, shirtless overalls and patriotic hats running through backyards. They sprint over fences and onto streets as police officers pursue them with handcuffs...from a sex toy shop. People cheer the men on from under tented seating at Francis Field in St. Augustine, shouting profanities and clutching their beer bottles. This is not a grand heist, nor a fever dream—it is the "evading arrest obstacle course" of the Florida Man Games.

Dreamed up by Pete Melfi, the owner of The 904 Now media outlet, the Florida Man Games—which made their debut on Feb. 24 this year—are a series of wacky competitions meant to embrace and poke fun at the absurdity of the Florida Man phenomenon for a prize of \$5,000.

Florida was a "rogue's paradise" in its conception, with robbers making up a significant portion of its population at the time. This created a culture of outrageousness that paved the way for the rise of the "Florida Man" in the early 2010s, as the Twitter (now X) account @_FloridaMan shared eccentric headlines pertaining to comical crimes committed in the Sunshine State—from crashing ambulances to using human-sized floating

hamster wheels to cross the Atlantic Ocean. Memes and internet challenges in honor of Florida Man began to circulate, including the Florida Man birthday challenge, where people search up what outlandish crime was committed that day in Florida on their birthday.

Melfi wanted to embrace the weirdness of Florida and play into the Florida Man punchline through the competition. He had originally envisioned a 0.5K Beer run, before eventually expanding it into a broader contest. The judges for the event were "American Gladiator" stars Dan "Nitro"

Clark and Lori "Ice" Fetrick, and the emcee was Josh "Wicks" Robinson, also known by the social media handle @OmgItsWicks for his "Only in Florida" videos. To compete, the teams

had to submit a promo video for consideration—and in true Florida spirit, the craziest ones were picked, including one of a man pulling an alligator out of a lake.

"The Florida Man Games are a fun celebration of Florida's crazy culture. The variety of events is especially exciting, because it reflects the sheer amount of outrageous acts that represent the Florida Man; but of the various competitions, the mullet contest stood out to me because judging haircuts seems hilarious," Senior Jahan Garg said.

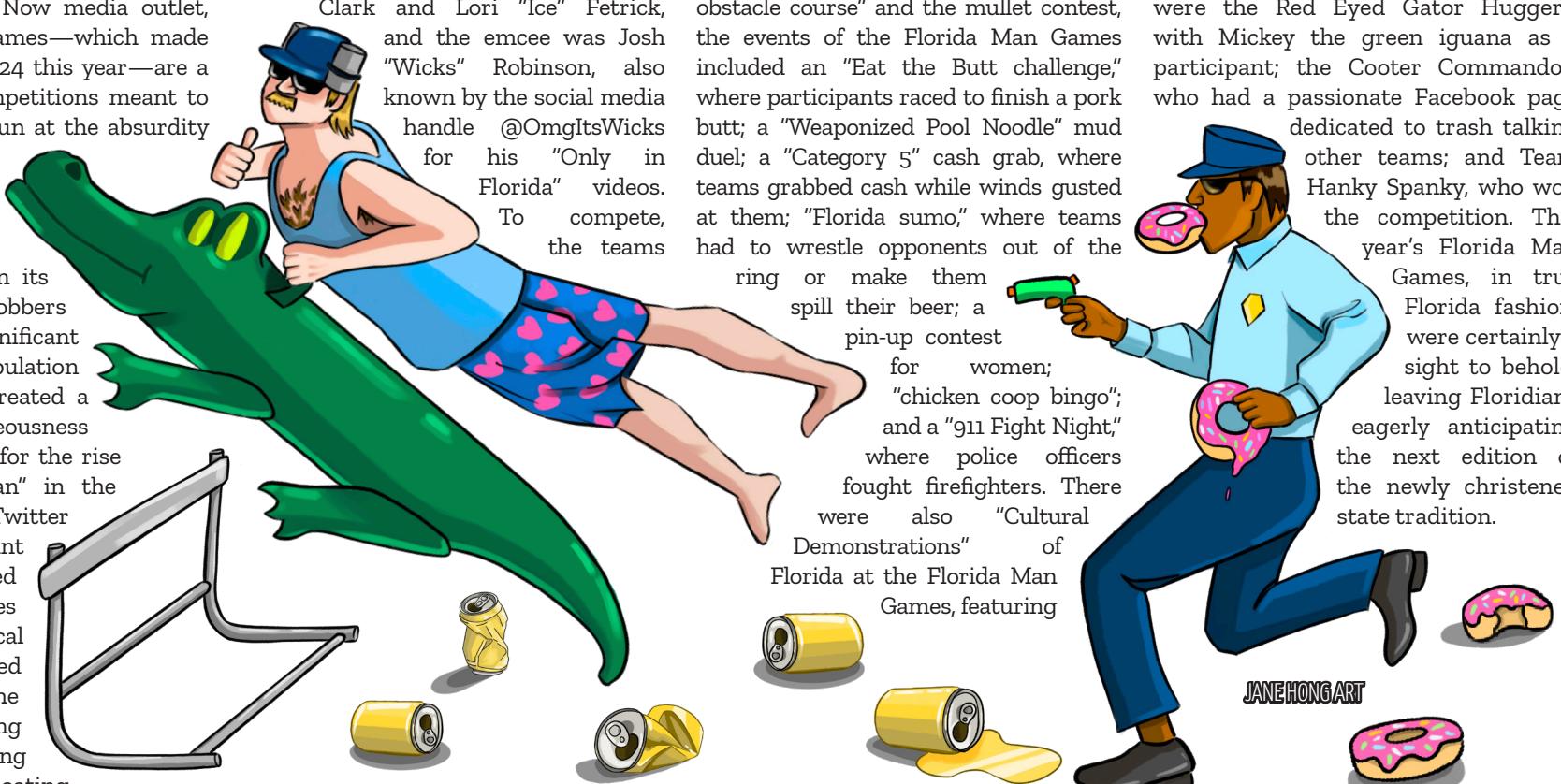
In addition to the "evading arrest obstacle course" and the mullet contest, the events of the Florida Man Games included an "Eat the Butt challenge," where participants raced to finish a pork butt; a "Weaponized Pool Noodle" mud duel; a "Category 5" cash grab, where teams grabbed cash while winds gusted at them; "Florida sumo," where teams had to wrestle opponents out of the

ring or make them spill their beer; a pin-up contest for women; "chicken coop bingo"; and a "911 Fight Night," where police officers fought firefighters. There were also "Cultural Demonstrations" of Florida at the Florida Man Games, featuring

live alligator shows, datil pepper vendors and SWAT vehicles.

"I would have been absolutely keen on joining the Florida Man Games, because they offer an exhilarating experience that fits my preference for highly exciting events. The "911 Fight Night" is particularly appealing to me due to its intensity, and I would be eager to participate in the "Category 5" cash grab because it seems like a fun way to earn money easily," Freshman Katherine Zhang said.

Tickets cost \$45, and sales exceeded \$5,000. Notable teams that competed were the Red Eyed Gator Huggers, with Mickey the green iguana as a participant; the Cooter Commandos, who had a passionate Facebook page dedicated to trash talking other teams; and Team Hanky Spanky, who won the competition. This year's Florida Man Games, in true Florida fashion, were certainly a sight to behold, leaving Floridians eagerly anticipating the next edition of the newly christened state tradition.



The standoff at Eagle Pass

Andrew Duval

Sports & Charger Follies Page Editor

With his thumbs hooked into his pockets, a Texas State Trooper gazes towards the border, searching for movement along the concertina wire that divides Eagle Pass, Texas from Mexico—a section of the border that has been hit hard by the rapidly growing migrant crisis. Eagle Pass has been the center of a standoff between the Texas National Guard and federal Border Patrol agents over a long-running dispute regarding who has the right to control the portion of the border.

On Jan. 11, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott announced an emergency declaration at Shelby Park—one of the most heavily trafficked areas of Eagle Pass—in response to increased unauthorized crossings. The area was previously an immigration processing center run by Border Patrol agents, but since the declaration, Texas National Guard and State Troopers began to deny Border Patrol agents access to Shelby Park.

The border crisis and Texas's discontent with the federal government's response are not isolated to Eagle Pass. In December 2023, arrests for illegal border crossings reached an all-time high of 249,785, largely due to the termination of Title 42, which allowed officials to expel migrants to curb the spread of diseases such as COVID-19. During the Trump administration, the

provision was used to turn migrants away and deny them the ability to seek asylum. However, as the coronavirus pandemic began to subside, the Biden administration lifted Title 42, leading to increased border crossings.

To reduce the influx of border crossings, the Biden administration has reversed course on previously loosened border restrictions. The administration negotiated with the National Border Council Union, a bipartisan group of senators that has largely been critical of Biden's policy, to create a bill that included over \$20 billion dollars in border security funding. However, former President Trump pressured Republicans to vote against the bill to prevent Biden from succeeding in an area that he has claimed is one of Biden's greatest policy weaknesses.

"Texas should have the authority to conduct its operations or deploy its troops to the border if it sees fit, but interfering with federal agents was unconducive to the situation and only created conflict," Sophomore Lauren Law said.

In 2021, Abbott launched Operation Lone Star, which gave state law enforcement officials the authority to arrest migrants for crimes such as human smuggling and trespassing, resulting in 420,800 apprehensions and over 30,500 felony charges as per The Office of the Texas Governor. Other Republican-led states

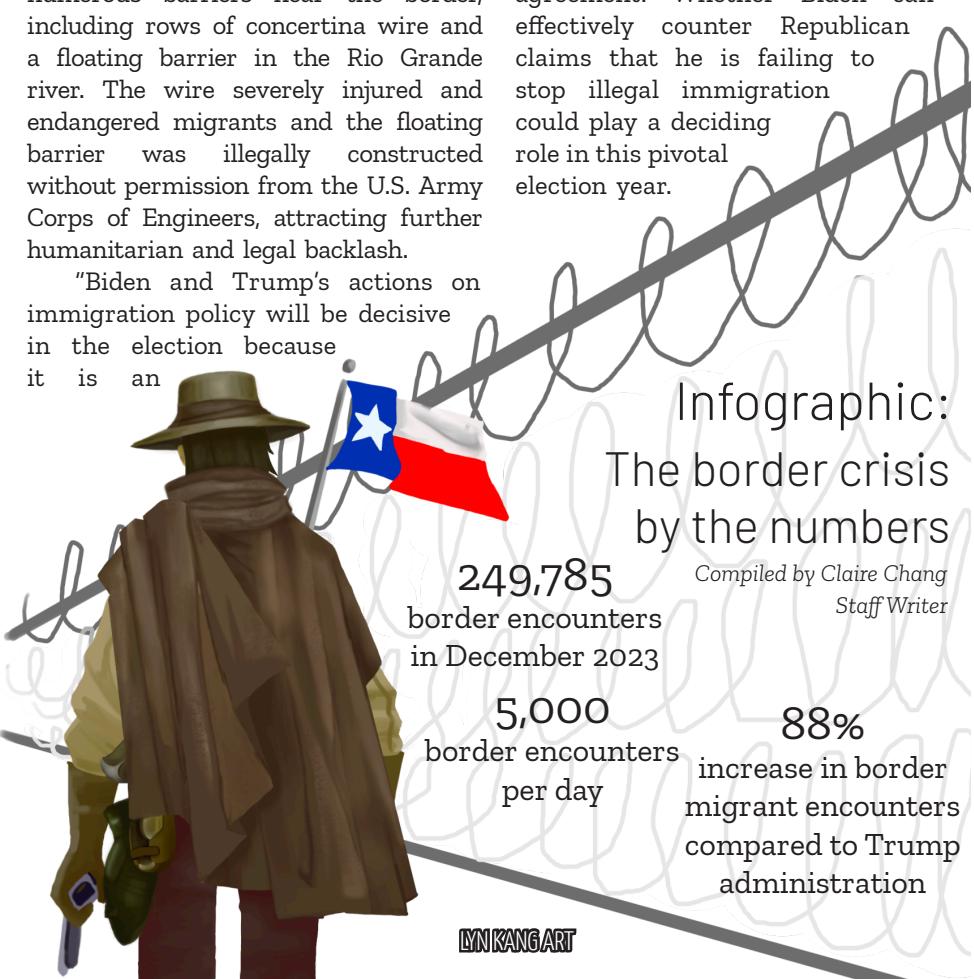
such as Iowa and Florida have sent their own Guard members to Texas to aid in these arrests.

Furthermore, as part of his controversial immigration policy, Abbott made efforts to bus migrants to Democratic cities such as Chicago and Los Angeles, for which he was criticized for using the migrants as political pawns with no regard for their humanity. Texas also constructed numerous barriers near the border, including rows of concertina wire and a floating barrier in the Rio Grande river. The wire severely injured and endangered migrants and the floating barrier was illegally constructed without permission from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, attracting further humanitarian and legal backlash.

"Biden and Trump's actions on immigration policy will be decisive in the election because it is an

important issue for both sides of the political spectrum. A huge portion of Trump's appeal comes from his campaign promises regarding immigration policy," Senior Mia Nguyen said.

Likewise, Biden has recognized the importance of the border this election. In his State of the Union address, Biden urged Trump to join him in passing the bipartisan border agreement. Whether Biden can effectively counter Republican claims that he is failing to stop illegal immigration could play a deciding role in this pivotal election year.



Alexei Navalny's last stand

James Li and Adrian Tomaszewski

The receiver of an office phone, the lining of some clothes, a steaming cup of tea—each one of these items can be poisoned at any moment by Russian-made polonium or Novichok poisons. This constant fear of death plagues anyone who dares criticize Vladimir Putin's regime, as exemplified by Alexei Navalny, who reportedly died of Sudden Death Syndrome on Feb. 16 in a Russian penal colony. His death, coming a month before the Russian general elections in which current president Vladimir Putin is running virtually unchallenged, has raised suspicions of foul play.

Navalny began his political career through the anti-Putin Yabloko party in 2000. As part of Yabloko, he experienced his first significant pushback by the regime when a series of his televised debates on a state-run news channel were censored. In 2007, he established the Anti-Corruption Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to exposing corruption throughout the Russian government. In the 2013 election for

the mayor of Moscow, Navalny gained almost 30% of the vote despite facing a likely rigged election, complete media censure and manufactured embezzlement charges by the government. He also tried to run in the 2018 Russian presidential election but was stifled by trumped-up corruption charges.

The Putin-led United Russia Party dominates Russia's political structure. In many elections, only government-sanctioned parties are allowed to run, ballots are tampered with and non-Putin voters are intimidated, Reuters reports.

Knowing he could not win in the unfair elections, Navalny resorted to

other means of creating change, such as organizing various protests against electoral fraud and exposing corruption, causing him to be jailed over ten times.

"Navalny's actions show that opposition to the Russian government is possible and Putin is not as all-powerful as he believes," Junior **Kaleo Gonzalez** said.

Beyond legal battles, Navalny also suffered physical attacks. While

he was campaigning, disinfectant was thrown at his face, temporarily blinding him. On a flight in August 2020, Navalny fell rapidly ill, forcing the plane to make an emergency landing to provide him with medical attention. He was flown to Berlin,

where doctors concluded that he had been poisoned by a Soviet-era nerve agent. Upon his recovery, Navalny accused the Russian government of an attempt on his life.

In 2023, Navalny returned to Russia and was immediately detained and charged on counts of misconduct, embezzlement and extremism,

triggering hundreds of sweeping protests across the country against Putin's corruption. According to the Associated Press, the move emboldened Putin's government, instigating the arrest of many other leading opposition figures. Navalny was soon transferred to an Arctic penal colony, where he remained until his death this year.

On Feb. 16, Navalny went out for a walk while feeling ill and died for an unknown reason, according to prison authorities. His body was not released to his family until 10 days later, raising suspicions that it was tampered with. His mother and other supporters have not ruled out foul play, with some even outright accusing the Kremlin of "murdering" Navalny. The lack

of information provided about his cause of death also sparked controversy. Though every meter of the prison is covered in cameras, no evidence has been published about his last moments.

"Navalny's death is a clear show of Putin's totalitarian rule. If he can get rid of any prospective political opponents, it removes any doubt of him remaining in power for the foreseeable future," Senior **Eugene Marsavin** said.

While Navalny was Putin's most outspoken opponent, his death has not led to the end of the opposition movement. Throughout Russia, thousands arrived to mourn Navalny during his funeral in Moscow, even as many of the processions and memorials for him were silenced or removed. Navalny's widow, Yulia Navalnaya, has vowed to continue his work. The political organizations that he led have also continued to operate without him.

As one of the most prominent opposition leaders to any totalitarian government in recent history, Navalny has almost certainly earned his place in the history books. Perhaps the most important thing he left behind, however, is the torch of hope in the hearts of the Russian people for a better life under a fairer and more just government.



Javier Milei, the Chainsaw Man

Jay Li

Opinions Editor

Amid Argentina's decades-long economic crisis, a so-called "madman" has burst onto the scene wielding a sometimes-metaphorical, sometimes-real roaring chainsaw, prepared to mince the central government that he holds responsible into tiny pieces. This chainsaw man is no shonen manga protagonist; he is the all-new anarcho-capitalist and avowed anti-socialist president of Argentina, Javier Milei.

From Rolling Stones cover artist to raging television pundit to populist politician, Milei defies the conventional image of a president.

His theatrics earned him the

title of "El Loco" (The Madman) as a child, emblematic of his bombastic personality put on full display during his presidential campaign, which consisted of chainsaw waving and profanity-laden rants against the "political caste" which he promises to eradicate. Such fiery, anti-establishment rhetoric echoes that of other far-right populists such as Donald Trump and Jair Bolsonaro, who have expressed staunch support for Milei.

However, unlike Trump and Bolsonaro, Milei won by running from his third-party political

coalition, Libertad Avanza (Advancing Liberty). He broke the firm grip that the left-leaning Peronists held on Argentine politics since the 1940s by riding the tsunami of intense voter frustration with the established political elites' inability to address the enduring economic crisis.

In a country where 45% of the population lives in poverty and inflation tops over 150%, as reported by the Associated Press, Milei has promised to fix Argentina's drastic

economic downturn by instituting equally drastic reforms, which he has dubbed "shock therapy." His radical reform package, embodied through the iconic chainsaw that accompanied him at campaign rallies, aims to ferociously shrink government spending by eliminating the Central Bank and half of all government ministries. Milei also seeks to cut welfare programs, government jobs, spending and subsidies and even replace the Argentinian peso with the U.S. dollar.

"Argentinians have undeniably been dealing with incredible economic hardship under prior administrations, so it is only natural

for them to rally behind a leader who defies the mainstream by touting radically different policies," Junior **Sophie Azari** said.

Sophie Azari said.

and protests and strikes from citizens, Milei's economic reforms have yielded the first monthly budget surplus in the country since 2012. Nevertheless, his "shock therapy" will likely be far from painless. After he slashed the value of the peso in half in December, annual inflation jumped to 250%, a number economists expect to rise in the next few months. According to Reuters, the move will likely cause increasing prices of goods and the weakening of salaries, savings and spending power.

"While it is definitely clear that Milei has his nation's best interests in mind with his "shock therapy" policies, his overly antagonistic approach with the legislature will make it incredibly difficult, if not impossible, to garner political support to drive any economic change for the people," Sophomore **Advi Wehzan** said.

Milei's vision boils down to one thing: a complete upheaval of the status quo. Argentina's economy, for better or worse, will undergo drastic changes as a result of Milei's unprecedented reforms. But whether these controversial chainsaw tactics will make it through Congress and be the solution his voter base has been anxiously awaiting remains uncertain.



Sports cards: From attics to auction houses

James Li

Staff Writer

The evolution of card collecting began in the early 1900s with the advent of baseball card production. Before it was a massive industry, sports cards were simply made to advertise the product that they came with. For example, baseball cards in the 1940s came wrapped around tobacco and gum. This often caused the cards to be poorly preserved, leading to them being highly valued in later years due to their rising rarity.

However, it was not until the 1950s when the sports card industry truly expanded. Sy Berger, a Topps executive, and graphic artist Woody Gelman worked together to design a set of cards meant to encourage the sale of Topps bubble gum. The Topps pack of gum came equipped with baseball cards, adorned with colorful face shots of players, facts and statistics about their playing careers, logos and autographs from the players. Their appeal caused the baseball card industry to explode, especially with kids. Children scrambled to obtain their favorite players, opening packs and trading with their friends in order to cultivate the best possible collection. Cards in mint condition are hard to come by from this early era, thus increasing their value.

From the 1950s to 1970s Topps was the dominant force in the card collecting industry. But in the 1980s, a monopoly lawsuit led to other companies such as Upper Deck, Fleer, Donruss and Score entering the scene. This time also saw an increase in the "collecting" hobby, as card collecting games such as Magic the Gathering and Pokemon exploded in popularity. In an attempt to corner the market, card collecting companies oversaturated the amount of cards in production, and as collectors began to lose interest, the price of cards fell.

"As a child I participated in card collecting games, such as Pokemon cards and other sports cards. While this hobby has not stuck with me, I can understand the allure that draws collectors into the industry," Senior Sunay Patel said.

Nowadays card collecting has evolved again, as many collectors buy the cards not for the face of the player on them, but for the value of the cards themselves. Collectors work on flipping cards—buying and selling them in order to gain the most money out of these transactions. The rarest cards can

be sold for upwards of a million dollars, providing life-changing money to the seller.

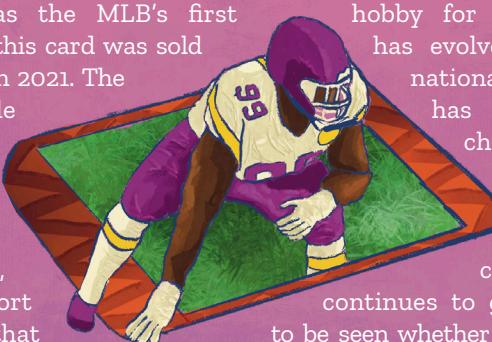
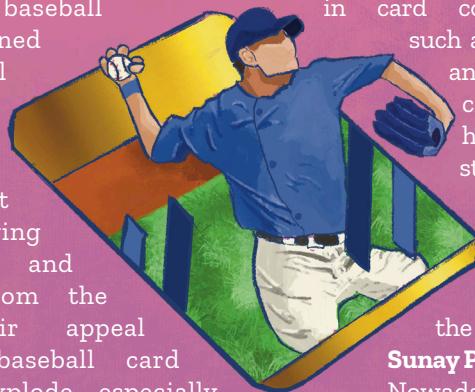
"Though it may be shocking, the possibility of selling a card for a million dollars is fascinating. This hobby that is so simple yet so lucrative goes to show that it can be enjoyed at every level, and I think that is great," Junior Amber Lee said.

Some of the most expensive baseball cards include the Goudey Gum Company Babe Ruth, Topps Mickey Mantle and American Tobacco Company Honus Wagner cards. The Babe Ruth card was released in 1933, part of a 240 card set following his final World Series title. Ruth was the MLB's first superstar, and this card was sold for \$4,212,000 in 2021. The Mickey Mantle card was released in 1952. Mantle had a storied MLB career, albeit cut short by injuries that led to his decline, and his card was sold for \$5,200,000 in 2021. The most expensive baseball trading card of all time would be the Honus Wagner card, sold at \$6,606,000

in August 2021. The production of this card was halted, due to either Wagner's abhorrence of the sale of tobacco with his card, or his desire for a larger cut from the company.

With the inception of new technology in the 21st century, the card collecting industry continues to grow, as can be seen by the recent large sales mentioned above. Online sites such as eBay have allowed for markets to flourish, ushering in more economic opportunity. Card collecting has also been influenced by the Professional Sports Authenticator (PSA), which authenticates and grades collectible items such as autographs, memorabilia, trading card games and baseball cards. PSA provides assurance to buyers that the products are legitimate and encourages individuals to invest in products, as they are given a guarantee that they receive their money's worth.

What started as a simple hobby for young children has evolved into a large national industry that has the ability to change lives and fortunes. As the practice of digital card trading continues to grow, it remains to be seen whether the industry will be positively or negatively impacted. Nonetheless, card collecting may always have its die-hard hobbyists willing to fork over millions for their favorite players.



Sporting and shooting

Winston Chu

Staff Writer

After the Kansas City Chiefs won Super Bowl LVIII in the last few seconds of overtime, ecstatic fans paraded the streets in support of their victory. However, echoing through the crowd alongside the cheers and chants of people were the sounds of bullets and gunshots.

Two men have been arrested and charged with second degree murder following the shootout at the Kansas City Chiefs parade. Released statements document the two men engaging in verbal argument, which quickly escalated to pulling out their handguns and firing. One person was fatally shot, and 22 people were injured as panicked fans fled the scene.

While the cause of the shooting has not been directly connected to the Super Bowl, this, unfortunately, is not the first instance of violence in a sports setting. In 2023, individuals at the NFL Dolphins-Patriots game engaged in a physical scuffle, resulting in one fatality. In 2011, after the NHL Stanley Cup, upset fans took to the streets, throwing bottles, burning cars, looting and stabbing civilians, which left around 150 civilians injured.

Recently, critics have been pinpointing alcohol

as the root cause of sports violence. For example, after Super Bowl XLVIII in 2014, a fan parade through the streets of downtown Seattle started out relatively orderly, but once the crowd felt the full effects of intoxication, they smashed champagne bottles and lit furniture on fire, as documented by Business Insider. This is especially an issue in sports culture, as high rates of alcohol use and violence are found in many athletic populations, with around 80% of major college football schools selling alcohol at games.

"I feel that this violence sprouts not only from alcohol use, but is more deeply rooted in negative aspects of American sports culture, such as hyper-competitiveness and toxic fan culture. A combination of an unhealthy lifestyle paired with an escalating situation can result in innocent people being harmed," Sophomore Daniel Xu said.

Mob mentality also plays a large role. Large scale riots and other forms of mass violence allow people to feel powerful when they know they will not be held responsible for their actions.

"Sports organizations can tackle mob mentality by

increasing security around larger crowds. That way, if riots break out, and they can actively be controlled, and less people will be likely to join in and fight," Freshman Trevor Hull said.

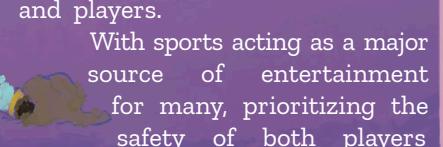
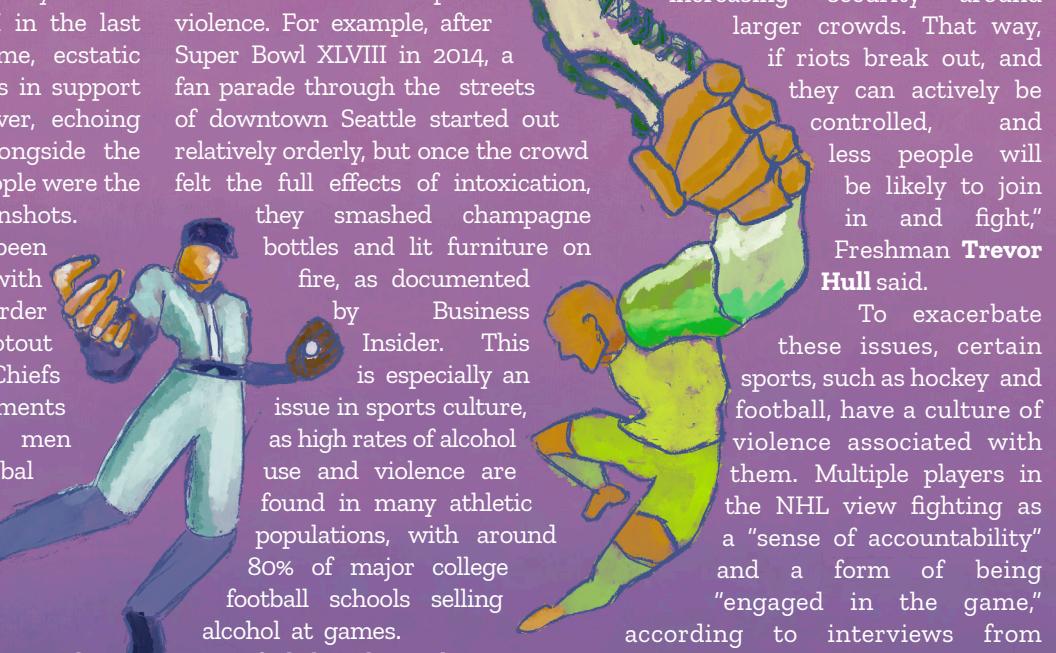
To exacerbate these issues, certain sports, such as hockey and football, have a culture of violence associated with them. Multiple players in the NHL view fighting as a "sense of accountability" and a form of being "engaged in the game," according to interviews from the Associated Press. Sometimes, underlying racial and social tensions can spark brawls, such as during the July 1969 FIFA qualifying matches between Honduras and El Salvador. With each match, more and more riots between the two rival countries

occurred in the stands and on the fields, and 1,700 police were required to attend the game to prevent widespread violence, as per the BBC.

In order to prevent sports violence, teams have started implementing security rings with metal detectors and screenings for potentially dangerous people. Some venues, including the Madison Square Garden in New York, have started using facial recognition to identify criminals, as reported by the New York Times. Furthermore, relegating fans who drink into areas with tighter security can prevent altercations. Adequate facilities with large spaces will also lessen the chances of interaction between two people who are in a violent mood and pose a danger to fans and players.

With sports acting as a major source of entertainment for many, prioritizing the safety of both players and spectators by fostering an environment of respect and sportsmanship through effective crowd control is imperative.

DANIEL CHOI ART

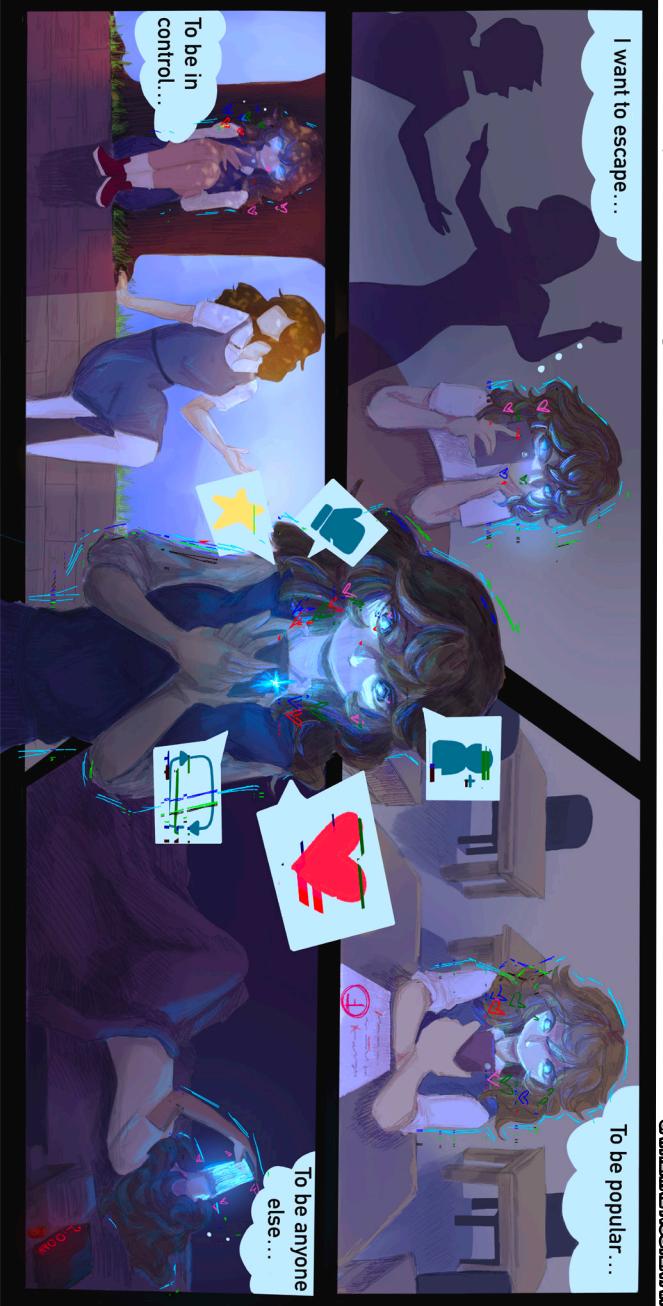


Rapunzel word hunt

DIA BOOMA DESIGN

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Limo
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Prince
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Rapunzel
Romance
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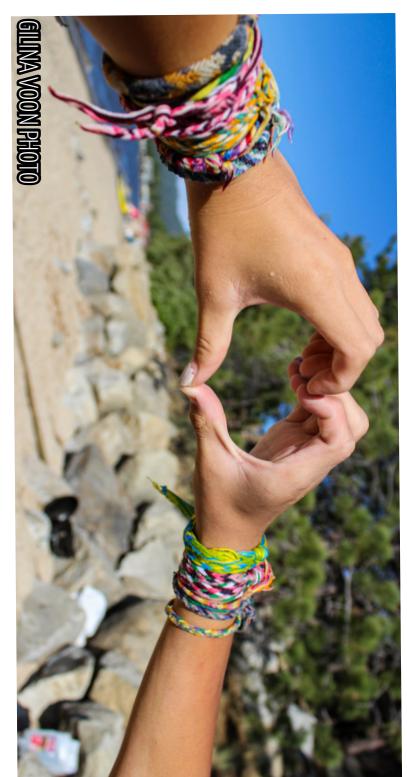


Heart-pounding

CATHERINE NGUYEN ART

Link the dots!

REEVE CHAND DESIGN



James Yu

In light of Women's History Month, I found it fitting to review the soundtrack of a blockbuster film celebrating women—the "Barbie" movie. Featuring a diverse set of contemporary music superstars, "Barbie The Album" offers listeners a tune to jam out to for every occasion.

Opening both the album and the film, Lizzo's "Pink" is proficient in not only introducing Barbie Land in the movie but also setting the theme for the following songs: energetic, classy and bold. Similarly, the following track, Dua Lipa's "Dance The Night," catches listener's attention through a disco melody.

Building upon the theme set by the preceding songs, Nicki Minaj, Ice Spice and Aqua's "Barbie World" utilizes Minaj's lionhearted rap, Spice's classic "Jersey Club" beat style and a sample from the iconic original television "Barbie World" song to synthesize a dauntless hip-hop song that gets listeners bouncing to the beat.

Ricocheting out of "Barbie World," Charli XCX's "Speed Drive" accelerates the album's tempo to the max. Charli XCX's static yet nimble vocals blast through listeners' ears, joined by an ecstatic synth instrumental. Slowing down the rhythm, Ryan Gosling's "I'm Just Ken" delivers an emotionally exhilarating track which perfectly encapsulates Ken's desire throughout the film for recognition from Barbie. Although the quicker instrumental interlude momentarily distorts Gosling's riveting vocal performance, overall, "I'm Just Ken" perfectly accompanies Ken throughout the film. Moreover, Gosling's "Push" on the "Best Weekend Ever Edition" of "Barbie The Album" enhances Gosling's desperate vocal performance, as Ken makes use of his enthralling guitar skills to win Barbie's approval.

Recognizing Barbie's accomplishments, Dominic Fike's "Hey Blondie" mixes Fike's affectionate voice with lovestruck lyrics. Similarly PinkPantheress' "Angel" blends PinkPantheress' unique sweetheart vocals with a country-inspired instrumental to form an angelic tune.

On the other hand, HAIM's "Home" and Billie Eilish's "What Was I Made For?" shift the mood from joyous to serene. Eilish's "What Was I Made For?" trades in the album's speed and rhythm for a lonely piano accompaniment to Eilish's wispy voice, flipping the album's script by twisting the mood from snappy and upbeat to sentimental and tender.

By covering any potential feeling a listener could possibly be desiring, "Barbie" beautifully recognizes the diverse accomplishments and unique experiences of women.

was i vibin?

"Barbie: The Album" (5/5)



"Barbie: The Album"



Staff Writer

James Yu



- Transportation -

Aristocratic aircraft takes off

Adrian Tomaszewski

Staff Writer

As Super Bowl LVIII came to a sudden and exciting end, air traffic control officers spotted flight radar screens light up with little green dots shooting out of Las Vegas, radiating out in every possible direction. These dots were not birds, but rather private jets containing a striking number of A-list celebrities ranging from singers like Taylor Swift and Lady Gaga to actors like Brad Pitt and Henry Cavill.

The history of private jet travel goes back to the first flight of the Wright Brothers at Kitty Hawk. In the early 20th century, almost all airplanes were used for either personal enjoyment or military use, since they were simply too expensive and impractical to use commercially. The introduction of the relatively cheap and reliable Lear 23—known more commonly as the Learjet—in 1964 began the trend of celebrity jetmania, with Frank Sinatra being the most famous jet aficionado.

Most importantly, private jets save time for the flier. For the price of \$495,000—around \$5 million in today's money—celebrities could avoid all the car traffic on the ground, the slow and destination-limited railcars when one travels by rail and the geographical limits of traveling by yacht or boat. Even when compared to commercial airlines, private jets save time, as they allow passengers to bypass fussy security clearances and the associated two-or-so-hour wait necessary at the airport before boarding the flight. While a private jet flight, and the plane itself, is expensive, ranging from \$2,000 to \$14,000 per flight hour, when one's time becomes worth more than that—say a singular concert paying \$20,000 an hour—buying a jet becomes an obvious financial choice.

For celebrities especially, a primary reason for buying a jet is to avoid the plague of paparazzi that gathers around every celebrity's vehicle. Other reasons include the simple comfort of a private jet flight—avoiding the screaming babies and nonexistent legroom when flying commercial—and the flexibility that comes with being able to choose one's flight times.

However, these jets are inefficient and environmentally damaging, releasing almost five kilograms of carbon dioxide per mile traveled. Private jets, despite making up a slim minority of travel, release around 900,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide a year, accounting for almost 1% of all civil aviation's emissions. Per passenger, private jets pollute almost 14 times more than public aircraft and 50 times more than trains. In a time of increasing climate change awareness, many people have begun criticizing private jet users.

"If everyone were a celebrity and could afford a private jet, they would always fly private. Who wants to go through the annoyance of public airports and uncomfortable encounters with fans when they can shoo it away with money? However, their 'time-saving' measures take time away from future generations' access to a habitable and safe Earth," Senior **Sonya Prabhoo** said.

The largest target of emission-based arguments against jets is singer-songwriter Taylor Swift, to the point that several people have created private jet trackers specifically for her jet, and thousands have created comedy bits on TikTok mocking her jet usage. Taylor Swift is estimated to have emitted 8,300 metric tons of carbon dioxide in 2022—more than 576 times the average American uses in their entire lifespan. Still, others argue that this level of emissions is necessary to keep up the quantity of concerts she has done during her tours and the volume of music she has released.

"The Taylor Swift private jet debate is mostly people contriving reasons to dislike her. There are countless others who use their own private jets and she does not deserve such backlash just because of people's personal opinions about her music and sudden spike in popularity," Junior **Bryant Vo** said.

Other celebrities such as mega preacher Kenneth Copeland have also received backlash related to their exorbitant private jet use. These televangelists lead tax-free megachurches and collect donations to buy private jets that are often used for non-clergy-related flights, such as Copeland's visit to his \$700 million vacation home in a private Fort Worth escape.

Still, as environmentally taxing as they are, private jets are certain to stick around in the near future. However, with recent developments in hydrogen-powered aircraft, jet emissions may become a thing of the past, perhaps ushering in yet another golden age for private jets.

