

The CHARGER ACCOUNT



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School rule revamp

DESIGN BY ANTARA GANGWAL

Jaein Park and Anna Yue

With the goal of fostering a safer environment for the school's community, Principal **Harveen Bal** collaborated with staff, students and parents to draft and introduce new and improved policies. All bring changes to the school year, already garnering both positive and negative feedback.

According to Bal, most of the new regulations previously existed at the school but were inconsistently enforced, leading to safety issues—Bal detailed problems such as students vaping in restrooms and strangers refusing to leave the school. To solve this, Bal surveyed the campus and discussed student safety with staff members. As a result, old regulations have been cemented into new policies: to combat incidents of vapes and other substances used in bathrooms, bathroom passes are required; to maintain a safe campus, students must purchase parking permits—

which prevents strangers from parking on campus. Bal's administration has also emphasized marking students tardy when late to a class.

Yet there are some new policies that have not been previously enforced, such as the SJUSD technology policy—which discourages personal devices such as personal laptops in the classroom and encourages students to use the Chromebooks provided by SJUSD.

Additionally, many social media sites are blocked on these Chromebooks to avoid academic dishonesty at school. Some students, however, prefer personal laptops due to Chromebooks' slow hardware.

"I want to use my personal device during tutorial because it is faster and has fewer restrictions, but some classes only



allow Chromebooks. I have to bring both, which is very tiring," Sophomore **Saanvi Gunukula** said.

Weekly Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) presentations, which teach students to develop social skills necessary for their future careers, manage their emotions and build positive relationships, have also been implemented into students' schedules. The school requires all teachers to teach SEL presentations

on the same day in tutorial so that every student receives the lesson.

"SEL presentations help students increase prosocial behaviors such as sharing and kindness. I like how they match my classroom culture

SOPHIA RO PHOTO

of 'Open Heart, Open

Mind,'" **Ying Zhang**, Math Department, said.

Student feedback has also been taken into consideration. Students are no longer required to attend tutorials on specific days of the week; accessibility to all teachers, every day of the week, is ensured. However, mixed opinions have arisen regarding the policies as a whole: some students believe that they are too strict, while others understand why they were implemented. Parents and teachers, on the other hand, have given mostly positive feedback.

Through the new policies, Bal hopes to create an environment where students can be the best versions of themselves. She urges teachers, parents and students to share their opinions about the changes. This way, the school can continue to adjust to better benefit students, who are not only the target of the newly implemented policies, but also the facilitators.

Smiling, Principal Harveen Bal is ready to welcome students with new policies instated to improve the school.



Honoring Bubba

Catherine Nguyen

Bubba the cat died on May 22 at the age of 17, leaving a paw-print shaped mark on the school's history. The memories made alongside the orange and white mini-celebrity are a testament to his legacy at the school.

In 2006, when he was only nine months old, Bubba was



Quotebox:
Bubba's legacy

Compiled by
Catherine Nguyen,
Staff Writer

adopted from a shelter. Described as a quiet kitten, Bubba was anything but that—he would loudly protest being an indoor cat, and soon earned a reputation as a school cat.

"After deciding to let Bubba leave willingly from our back door, he always headed straight to my son's school, Bret Harte Middle School. Upon receiving countless calls from teachers and staff, I ended up buying a collar that read 'Leland and Bret Harte ok' to avoid confusions and concerns," Amber Marienthal, Bubba's owner, said.

Bubba quickly gained popularity among the school's

community. He would often be seen relaxing on the soccer fields and would even wander into classrooms to interact with students. Teachers offered him treats, a 2017 National Geographic book featured him and the school even gave him his own ID card in 2015. Once a picture of the card was posted online, Bubba became a

national celebrity, with his Facebook page quickly gaining over 60,000 followers.

"Bubba was such a friendly presence! I had the most interactions with Bubba my Senior year; he would always wander into our AP Government class and crawl under the seats and tables.

Bubba's presence brought an even greater sense of community to the school—he brought people together, both in and out of the classroom," Anahita Kashani-Gregg, school alum, said.

Ashwini Wagle, Marienthal's neighbor, grew to have a close relationship with Bubba as well. Five years before Bubba passed, Wagle lost her own cat and to keep her company, Bubba started to live with her. He was with her when he passed due to a fatal stroke. Wagle immortalized Bubba through a statue on what was known as "Bubba's Bench," where Bubba took many of his photos.

Throughout his life, Bubba's personality warmed the hearts of his students and his family alike. The impact he left on the school community will endure for years to come; may he rest on in stories eternally.

A beloved part of the school community, Bubba was loved by many and his legacy will live on.



San Francisco's autonomous adversary

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Barbenheimer: Bombshells at the box office

on page 6



Microchips by Big Parma

KAYLA CHOI ART

on page 10

COMMUNITY NEWS

"Le Petit Prince"



Gwen Carroll

Community News & Feature School Editor

Translated into over 500 languages and regarded as an icon of classic French literature, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's "The Little Prince" is a short book recommended for children ages six and up. Despite its low reading level, people around the world admire it for its lessons. Christopher Barros, Foreign Language Department, is one such person.

"The Little Prince" follows the story of a young, recently heartbroken prince who leaves his beloved rose on his home planet to set off on an adventure. As he visits several planets, each individual he encounters teaches him a valuable lesson. For instance, he runs into a lamplighter, whose job of lighting a lamp every dusk and putting it out every morning sounds simple until the prince realizes that the planet's days are one minute long. The lamplighter has no time for rest and wears himself out, teaching the prince that exhaustion comes with faithfulness to one's job. The encounter that struck a chord most with Barros, though, was with the businessman.

"The businessman is obsessed with counting things and is convinced that he owns all the stars, which the prince cannot comprehend; the prince understands loving a single rose, but not owning all the roses in the world. It is an excellent critique on the selfishness of adults—since many have forgotten how to share—and on what makes something worth loving. Too many people have forgotten how to love things for the sake of them, not for how much money they can make," Barros said.

As he read the book, Barros saw himself in the prince—both love exploring beyond their comfort zones to encounter new people and places and discover themselves in travel. The book's message that beauty is unveiled by seeing with one's heart, not just one's eyes, especially resonated with Barros.

"One major message in the book that has always stuck with me is that the most important things are invisible to the eye. To really understand somebody, one must feel, not just see," Barros said.

Barros finds the book's lessons valuable, which is why he reads the book with his senior AP French students. Having first read the book in his college years, "The Little Prince" had left a strong impression on Barros. Knowing students in AP French are about to leave the nest and experience the wonders of the world, Barros uses the book as a way to teach them to never forget how to make friends and to never leave behind the child within.

James Li

Transportation has come a long way from the horse-drawn carriage; today, people can travel across the world in hours or have packages delivered to their doors by drone. One new innovation, which has become more widespread in recent years, is autonomous vehicles—which first appeared at the 2004 Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency Challenges, an event the U.S. sponsored to spark innovation amongst engineers. The challenges consisted of designing a fully automated vehicle navigating different types of terrain by itself. Since then, autonomous vehicles have expanded into mainstream society.

Autonomous vehicles, also known as driverless cars, are not entirely novel. Driverless cars work through a series of macro and micro decisions. Macro decisions calculate optimal travel routes by using a network similar to GPS, accounting for factors such as traffic, general direction and climate. On the other hand, micro decisions dictate when to move based on data from novel sensors, including Light Detection and Ranging cameras and other sensors feeding real-time data into the car. The technology has been in development for over 30 years, yet it has only recently become advanced enough for the public market.

However, driverless cars are far from flawless. Within just a week of California regulators approving the unrestricted use of driverless taxis in San Francisco, a car from the self-driving car company Cruise crashed into a fire truck. The truck was responding to an emergency call, which gives it the right of way at every intersection. However, Cruise's software failed to recognize the situation and entered the intersection at a green light, colliding with the fire truck. Cruise was

driverless cars that do not necessarily guarantee their safety, causing them to pay less attention to the road, which can lead to more accidents," Junior Zachary Rodrigues said.

Indeed, many residents of San Francisco have expressed dissent towards the autonomous vehicles in their city, emphasizing that the city is being used as a testing ground for the technology. Some have taken to sabotaging car testing through a method known as "coning," where protesters place a cone upon the hood of an autonomous car to confuse the driving system and render it unable to move.

The city is no stranger to testing new transportation technology—some citizens recall that when the scooter sharing company Lime tested their scooters in the city; some were damaged while others were outright destroyed. Complaints are not just limited to residents of San Francisco,

Poll: On a scale from 1 to 5, how likely are you to take a driverless taxi?

Compiled by Anna Yue
Staff Writer

124 students polled

of the fact that the technology is still in its early stages—with more training, the sensors are likely to become better adapted to the unpredictable reality of driving.

Fields utilizing heavy machinery have also been exploring the use of unmanned vehicles. Farmers have been able to decrease the risk of injury and become more efficient by using autonomous machines. Such equipment has also aided in construction and mining operations by navigating dusty terrain and working around the clock, reducing time and money spent on projects.

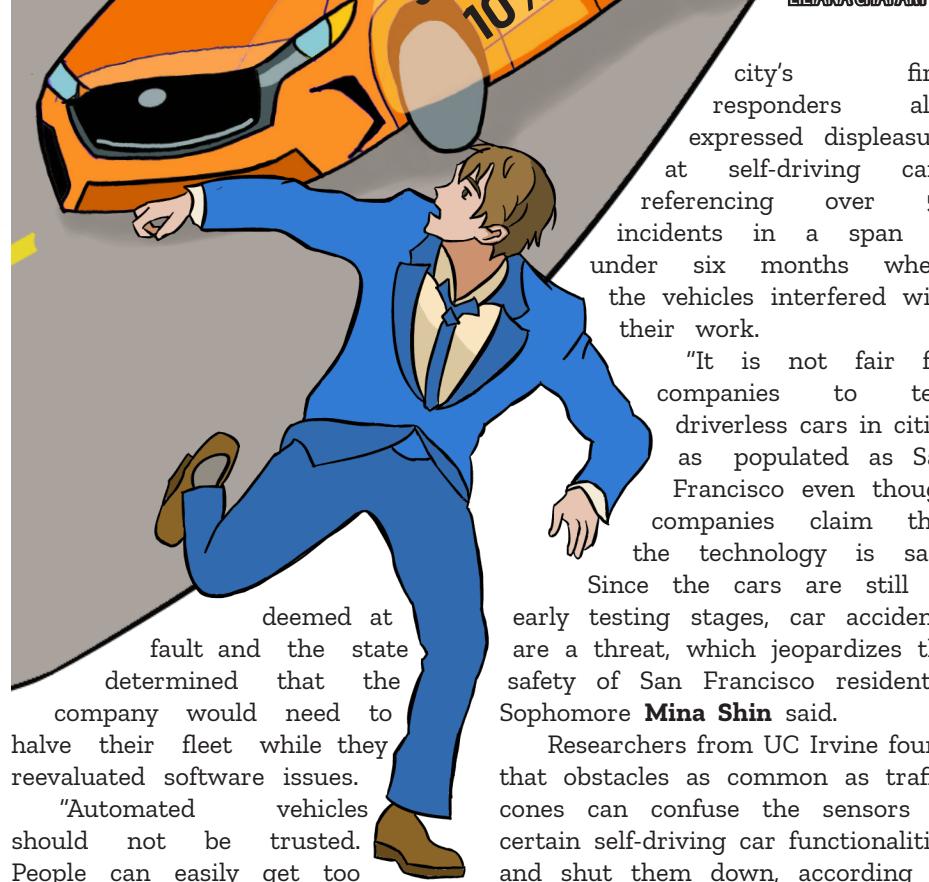
Despite the advantages, the

introduction of autonomous vehicles has been controversial among workers and city residents alike.

Initial costs of self-driving cars can be worrisome as well; Valiente Mott estimates that autonomous vehicles cost around \$250,000—more than five times the cost of a new car in America. Autonomous taxis also pose a risk to the jobs of people in the transportation sector, especially taxi drivers and public transportation workers. Driverless cars have already begun doing impacting such jobs, as companies connect driverless vehicles and ride sharing. For instance, the rideshare company Uber has begun testing their autonomous vehicles in Phoenix, Arizona.

"Self driving cars are a promising positive development. Although many people fear that automation may replace humans, such concerns are ultimately unwarranted. Since autonomous robots usually work alongside human supervision, their presence alone is unlikely to ruin job prospects. Automation is a positive change, not unlike other types of technology like tractors, which are just tools that humans can use," Senior Ethan Ransing said.

As the race to capitalize on the ever-growing market intensifies, concerns regarding the safety of this technology will remain in the forefront. Companies such as Cruise that are already heavily invested in development may need to reallocate resources to refine their autonomous technology to mitigate potential risks associated with driverless vehicles in order for the technology to take off.



deemed at fault and the state determined that the company would need to halve their fleet while they reevaluated software issues.

"Automated vehicles should not be trusted. People can easily get too comfortable with features on

city's first responders also expressed displeasure at self-driving cars, referencing over 50 incidents in a span of under six months where the vehicles interfered with their work.

"It is not fair for companies to test driverless cars in cities as populated as San Francisco even though companies claim that the technology is safe.

Since the cars are still in early testing stages, car accidents are a threat, which jeopardizes the safety of San Francisco residents," Sophomore Mina Shin said.

Researchers from UC Irvine found that obstacles as common as traffic cones can confuse the sensors of certain self-driving car functionalities and shut them down, according to NPR. However, this might be because

INVESTIGATIVE REPORT: Special Education

Preparing special education students for a bright future

Vira Patil

In an effort to serve students of all backgrounds, schools around the world have special education departments which support the unique needs of students with various learning disabilities so each can reach their academic and non-academic goals.

Special educational opportunities are important in order to provide for children who deal with different levels of learning difficulties. According to Kids Health, students are eligible for special education if learning is affected by physical, cognitive, behavioral or emotional conditions like depressive disorders or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Furthermore, severity of learning difficulties lay on a spectrum and are generally categorized into mild, moderate or severe. Cognizant of the differing abilities of these students, the school's special education system ensures that all who are eligible receive a free public education alongside their peers that fits their needs.

Special education teachers create daily routines, make lesson plans and foster independence in a way that prepares students for inside and outside the classroom. There are unique qualifications for teaching special education students that can be earned in universities across the U.S., such as San Diego State University and Vanderbilt University. For example, researchers from the

University of Virginia, which offers a range of degrees for prospective special education teachers, structure their educational programs to facilitate students' understanding of their environment and how their experiences fit into society—allowing them to feel more comfortable in the world. Furthermore, students in the U.S. can apply for the Individualized Education Plan (IEP), which provides individualized help to public school students with special needs.

"There are two different programs here at the school, the IEP, where students get specialized plans depending on the extent of their disability, and the 504 plan, which is for students who need some accommodations in class, such as medical assistance for children who are diabetic.



"Learning disabilities and the appropriate plan of action lie on a spectrum depending on the students' specific needs," Principal **Harveen Bal** said.

Special education classes at the school mainly focus on language and cognitive development. **Stacy Fernandez**, Special Education Department, emphasizes the importance of the IEP for her students.

Some examples of topics covered in the IEP include fundamental math, building independence and maintaining eye contact. For example, if a student has autism, teachers may work with them on nonverbal social cues. Fernandez describes how the IEP allows the students to form deeper connections with their teachers on an academic and personal level, allowing for greater

patience between the two while helping students trust their teachers.

"Individual learning scaffolds the learning process so students are better able to see their progress. Scaffolding is a process in which teachers gradually provide less support until the student is independent. When students see they are successful in something, they feel motivated to work harder," Fernandez said.

A trait the school values the most in special education teachers is compassion because these teachers will work with students with diverse needs. Most importantly, Bal explains that they need to have an asset based mindset, meaning they are able to recognize and highlight the strengths of students, opposed to a deficit mindset which focuses on what students are unable to do.

In addition to general classes, students in special education also learn in smaller classes with a higher teacher student ratio, allowing more one-on-one attention from the teacher. Overall, the special education department at the school accommodates students with a spectrum of learning disabilities, whether that be through individualized learning programs or building social skills on top of regular schoolwork. Regardless of the difficulties that students struggle with, the school's special education department strives to be there every step of the way.

Inclusive insights for unique learners

Gilina Voon

In a step towards equality, California's public school system prohibits districts from relocating a disabled child unless school district specialists determine the child is cognitively incapable of engaging in standard classes due to the severity of their disability. This commitment to supporting children of all learning capabilities not only influences educational dynamics but also reflects a cultural movement to embrace diversity.

The school's Special Education Department collaborates with other teachers to place special education students in classes with the rest of the student body. These teachers are provided with the student's specialized learning plans so they can make appropriate accommodations. Furthermore, special education aides, responsible for providing support to special education students in class, often visit classrooms to ensure students receive the necessary support. In addition to attending these general classes, there are different support classes based on a student's grade level and needs like Transition, TL2C and Social Cognition, all to ensure the student's academic success and increase their self esteem and motivation to excel.

Beyond classrooms, the school promotes inclusivity by welcoming students into clubs and sports, fostering students' social interaction and collaboration. For instance, this

year, the cross country team includes two students with special needs.

"We try to accommodate athletes with various backgrounds and aim to help special needs students feel like they belong in the program. Students on the team learn to build relationships and work as a part of a team. While they have to follow modified workouts, my efforts are focused on building their confidence and talent," **Rudy Montenegro**, Cross Country Coach, said.

With the help of teachers and coaches, students in special

education, such as Senior **Leonardo Rosales, Jr.**, feel included and supported at school. They meet great friends from the general classes and are supported by the teachers who provide the students with more time to complete assignments and tests.

"I feel included at school since I have nice friends, like Jeyda Sloneker, who compliment me when I do well but also check in on me regularly. The staff from my transition classes and the aids are helpful when it comes to helping me succeed, from walking me through the

assignment to giving me tips on the work," Rosales said.

However, students like Rosales would appreciate it if more peers could show them around school and check up on their progress because it helps them feel heard and supported. Likewise, the special education teachers believe that it is important for these students to receive additional check-for-understandings in general classes to ensure they are keeping up with the concepts. Furthermore, they work with general teachers to break down their students tasks into chunks so they can learn in a more simplified manner.

While the school works to include these students, special education students are still often treated differently from others. According to

Stacy Fernandez, Special Education Department, it is crucial to not single out these students. She states that some students do not like being a part of the special education class because they feel like an outcast when the only difference is they need additional support to help them succeed. For example, they may deal with stares and judgment from other students.

The school serves as a safe place for all students, including those in special education.

Overall, the school integrates special education students into a wide variety of activities in the student body to help them feel included. However, there is potential for growth to further foster a sense of belonging and community among these students.

"When helpers for students in special education come into a class, they should introduce themselves and the student so everyone else at the table is familiar with them and able to collaborate better."

—Sophomore **Emily O'Neal**

"We need more awareness of neurodiversity and physical diversity and more activities that pull in all students, as a lot of ASB activities tend to be popular among outgoing students. For the more introverted students, not just special education, we should work towards increasing inclusivity for all."

—Trevor Hart, Special Education Department

Quotebox: How can the school be inclusive to special education students?

"Creating more opportunities for collaboration in class can be a great way for students with learning disabilities to feel comfortable with their classmates."

—Junior **Mridini Kulkarni**

Compiled by Amie Ahn, Jaein Park and Ariel Lee
Staff Writers

"We should help students with learning disabilities with time management and give them extra time to finish their work."

—Freshman **Breanna Chakraborty**



OPINIONS



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Off the board: Transgender women in chess

James Li and James Yu

Amid controversy regarding transgender individuals participating in athletics, one unlikely sport has etched its mark upon these debates: chess. The International Chess Federation (FIDE), which acts as the governing body for all international chess tournaments, decided to ban transgender women from competing in the women's chess divisions on Aug. 14—a blatantly transphobic and misogynistic decision that reflects poorly upon the professional chess world.

FIDE cited a high number of requests for gender recognition from

transgender members as the reason for restricting transgender women from competing until the federation can further analyze the situation, which NPR reports could take up to two years. This arbitrary number is inconceivable—their haphazard and transphobic excuse combined with a lack of clear reasoning undermines FIDE's credibility.

"Chess has always been a fun way to exercise my brain and meet new people, so it is a shame that FIDE seeks to exclude women from participating. Chess belongs to all of us, what gives FIDE the ability to exclude anyone?" Senior Hillary Chen said.

Many in the chess community have rebuked the decision, with the German Chess Federation releasing a statement on Twitter which said that

"If a person is legally recognized as a woman, it is incomprehensible to us what FIDE still wants to check and why it needs two years for this." FIDE's ban on transgender women from competing in women's divisions ignores the voices of the chess community and halts the progress that chess has made in women's spaces in recent years.

The guidelines are insulting not only to transgender women, but toward all women. FIDE's assumption that transgender women possess an intrinsic advantage over cisgender women insinuates that cisgender women are inherently less capable at chess and thus naturally less intelligent.

Misogynistic ideas like this have long dominated the world of competitive chess. Chess is a sport which girls are discouraged from playing as many believe that chess is a man's pastime, resulting in women being underrepresented. For example, in 2021, only 15% of registered members of the United States Chess Federation were women.

The Guardian reports that in 2015, Chess Grandmaster Nigel Short said that "men are hardwired to be better chess players than women," despite successful women in chess such as Judit Polgar ranking eighth highest in the world and holding a winning record against Short. Polgar expressed to The Guardian that women are

just as capable as men in chess, but societal boundaries often block women from thriving.

FIDE further ruled that transgender men with pre-existing titles will have them stripped upon transitioning, but transgender women will still retain their titles. This discrepancy stems from lessened requirements associated with obtaining a women's title versus an open title. However, this raises question as to why the women's division has reduced standards in the first place. Propagating these lessened expectations suggests that FIDE views cisgender women as incompetent. Former FIDE president, Garry Kasparov, perpetuated this belief too, saying women were "too emotional" for chess.

"Equality in chess as of now simply does not exist. If FIDE allows transgender women to participate in women's divisions on the premise

that women and men do not have differences in mental capabilities, then what is the point of having a separate women's division in the first place?" Junior Lin Jang, Secretary of Chess Club, said.

FIDE's lack of transparency towards any evidence of advantages transgender women have over cisgender women in chess drives discussions about the misogyny that defines competitive chess. The women's division's current stigma as a "lesser" division to the open division combined with the skewed logic behind the ban makes it apparent that FIDE needs to make ethical and logical changes.

The perils of helicopter parenting

A loss of empathy in the pursuit of perfection



Thousands of teachers walk out of their classrooms, mourning fellow educators and their powerlessness in the face of parental abuse. Persistent, demeaning criticisms from parents have pushed South Korean teachers to the brink, with 100 dying of suicide from January 2018 to June this year per CNN—including a 23-year-old primary school teacher who tragically took her own life in July after expressing distress over disparaging complaints from parents. Incidents like this not only sparked protests to lobby for the protection of teachers' rights but underscored a larger phenomenon as well: the damaging repercussions of overbearing parents.

In South Korea, academics are given the utmost importance. Their notoriously difficult eight-hour-long college entrance exam is so vital to students' futures that heavy traffic is banned and planes are grounded during the exam to minimize distractions. As such, many South Korean parents often seek out the best, most "perfect" education for their children.

This obsession with academics may drive parents to become overbearing, even infringing upon teachers' freedoms. Numerous cases of parents accusing educators of child abuse for warranted actions have proliferated across South Korea. One teacher, for example, chastised a student for deliberately whispering offensive comments toward a hearing-impaired classmate. The teacher was blamed by the reprimanded student's parent for "favoring students with disabilities" and was subsequently condemned by the principal, revealing an unjust lack of protection for teachers. Complaints are also aimed at teachers who give students poor grades—Korea's cutthroat academic culture can cause families to prioritize higher grades over an accurate representation of their student's performance.

Such behavior reveals how some parents view teachers as merely an education service; their lack of empathy toward teachers makes it easier for them to lodge damaging complaints. In addition, parents' overprotectiveness, combined with the sentiment that their own children cannot be wrong, can lead them to unfairly blame teachers and can result in administrations catering to families rather than accurately reporting academics.

This overbearing disposition, however, is not just limited to South Korean parents. Micromanaging

The Charger Account Editorial Staff parents, also known as helicopter parents, are found across the world and constantly monitor their children in an attempt to ensure that nothing stands in the way of their success.

While the situation in South Korea highlights the terrible effects helicopter parenting can have on teachers, the effects it has on children can also be damaging. Helicopter parents' "hovering" will prove detrimental to the children in the long run by degrading their sense of autonomy, depriving them of decision-making experience and barring them from learning how to handle failure and criticism on their own.

In a world where many facets of life, including education, have become commodities of sorts, it is vital to practice empathy and recognize the humanity of those around oneself. Part of South Korea's situation stems from a parent-teacher relationship marred by a lack of understanding—too often, teachers are not treated and respected as people. This fosters an environment where selfishness thrives, allowing helicopter parents to relentlessly push their children toward academic success while ignoring the well-being of both students and educators. Only when parents and teachers recognize that they have the same goal—to prepare their children for the future—and strive to treat each other with compassion will they be able to harmonize best.

Amie Ahn and Ariel Lee

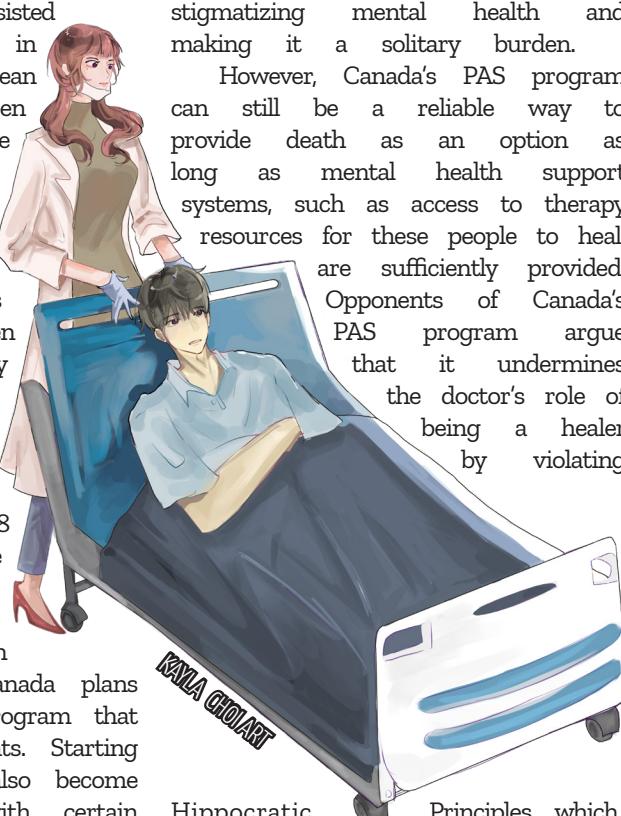
Ever since physician-assisted suicide (PAS) was legalized in several states and European countries, there has been controversy surrounding the program's ethics. While PAS is often confused with palliative sedation, they differ significantly. The latter solely relieves refractory symptoms when the patient is extremely close to death, while the former terminates a patient's life.

Traditionally, PAS requires patients to be 18 years or older, be capable of giving consent and have a terminal disease resulting in death within six months. However, Canada plans to enact a new PAS program that expands these requirements. Starting March 2024, PAS will also become available to patients with certain mental illnesses, such as some forms of dementia and depression.

This decision has been met with backlash; its opponents argue that offering suicide as a solution to mental health disorders takes away from focusing on providing resources for these patients to heal. Instead of addressing the root cause, it could shift responsibility from society and healthcare systems to the individuals themselves, effectively

stigmatizing mental health and making it a solitary burden.

However, Canada's PAS program can still be a reliable way to provide death as an option as long as mental health support systems, such as access to therapy resources for these people to heal, are sufficiently provided. Opponents of Canada's PAS program argue that it undermines the doctor's role of being a healer by violating



Hippocratic Principles, which state that healthcare providers shall never give drugs that can lead to the death of anyone despite their will. Additionally, they criticize the potential for PAS's overuse without thorough consideration of alternatives.

However, Canada's PAS program can still be a reliable way to provide death as an option as long as mental health support systems are sufficiently provided. The process avoids unnecessary physiological pain for the subject but

the effects on the patient's family cannot be underestimated. Nevertheless, PAS could be a safe idea if protective measures are taken. For instance, patients should always be thoroughly informed of all the options available to them, which could include experimenting with new medications or treatments.

"If I had a disease where I knew I was going to die within 6 months, I would live out the remainder of my life, but for patients who qualify for PAS, the decision should be up to them. It is the patient's choice because the decision does not affect anyone except the person undergoing the treatment," Junior Lucas Sepe said.

What medical practitioners must prioritize first and foremost is their patients' autonomy; PAS is a valuable tool in ending a patient's suffering and protecting their dignity by giving them the right to make their own choices regarding their life.

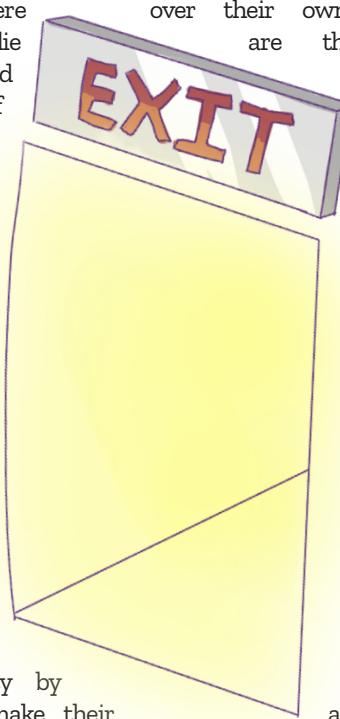
"PAS patients must undergo tests to confirm that patients are mentally fit enough to make that decision, as conditions such as depression may impair a patient's judgment. However,

PAS is valuable in the sense that it helps terminally ill patients put an end to unnecessary suffering," Freshman Christina Flynn said.

The expansion of PAS has been met with fierce resistance. However, its proliferation is not necessarily undesirable because patients should have full authority over their own fate because they

are the ones consenting to PAS. Thus, if patients are willing to undergo the treatment despite others' ethical qualms, then they should be allowed to do what they feel is right no matter where they are in the world.

However, PAS must be given a clear, and applicable definition through strict legal conditions and safeguards to ensure it remains a safe practice and benefits patients. PAS was initially created for morally just reasons; should it become a prominent and widespread medical practice, it must only be used with great responsibility.



A grim future for humanity without the humanities

Antara Gangwal and Eleanor Gil

Donning bright white lab coats, computing complex equations and writing intricate lines of code, students today race to declare science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) majors. Overlooked by many as unprofitable, humanities majors such as linguistics, philosophy and history continue to drop in enrollment. In the past decade, the amount of students pursuing a major in these fields declined by 17% in the U.S., per the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. This trend made a tangible impact at West Virginia University (WVU), which plans to cut over 32 humanities majors, setting a problematic precedent; a future of humanity without humanities.

The largest public university in its state, WVU released a news report on Aug. 11 recommending the removal of 32 majors—which comprises 20 graduate-level and 12 undergraduate majors and represent 9% of the programs offered by the school. These cuts would impact 434 students enrolled in these majors—2% of the student body—and render 169 staff members—7% of the university's faculty—jobless.

WVU enacted these recommendations to account for a 10% drop in the WVU student population since 2015 and a \$45 million budget shortfall, partly due to the declining government funding from Virginia, reports NPR. As the fifth-poorest U.S. state, West Virginia is unable to provide sufficient education

funding—leaving public schools to suffer the consequences.

While factors such as inflation and pandemic-induced dropouts are out of WVU's control, the administration also bears responsibility; the proposal is partly a result of WVU's financial mismanagement and lack of institutional transparency. Professor of Political Science Scott Crichlow told the New York Times that the school short-sightedly spent money on building and athletic renovations, accumulating debt rather than combating the enrollment crisis. Students in humanities programs recommended for removal—who led protests in response to the cuts—believe that the university is erasing their voices in favor of monetary gain.

"It is critical for students to be given a variety of opportunities and program offerings so they have options when deciding their future. My sister plans to pursue a career in art, and if schools continue to cut humanities majors, I am concerned that she will not be able to study what she loves," Freshman Caitlyn Benedek said.

One especially concerning cut outlined in the school's original report is the removal of the entire world languages department, on the basis of

declining student interest. Professors and students expressed outrage at this decision; foreign language classes prepare students for communicating abroad, opening up new opportunities in their career path. Especially in the United States, where 80% of citizens are monolingual losing access to foreign languages majors will greatly limit these opportunities, leading to a decline in linguistic diversity and literacy.

In response to heavy backlash, WVU updated its recommendations on Aug. 25, planning to continue Spanish and Chinese instruction—only two of the 24 languages previously offered.

These recommendations depict

the start of a concerning trend in higher education—which stems from the belief that liberal arts education is useless.

Other flagship universities, such as Louisiana State University, which is facing state population decline and a potential budget loss of \$400 million, as per Louisiana Illuminator—may follow suit in cutting humanities majors to account for budget cuts.

As interest in English and world languages declines nationally, it becomes increasingly crucial that the invaluable nature of the humanities be widely acknowledged to sustain the

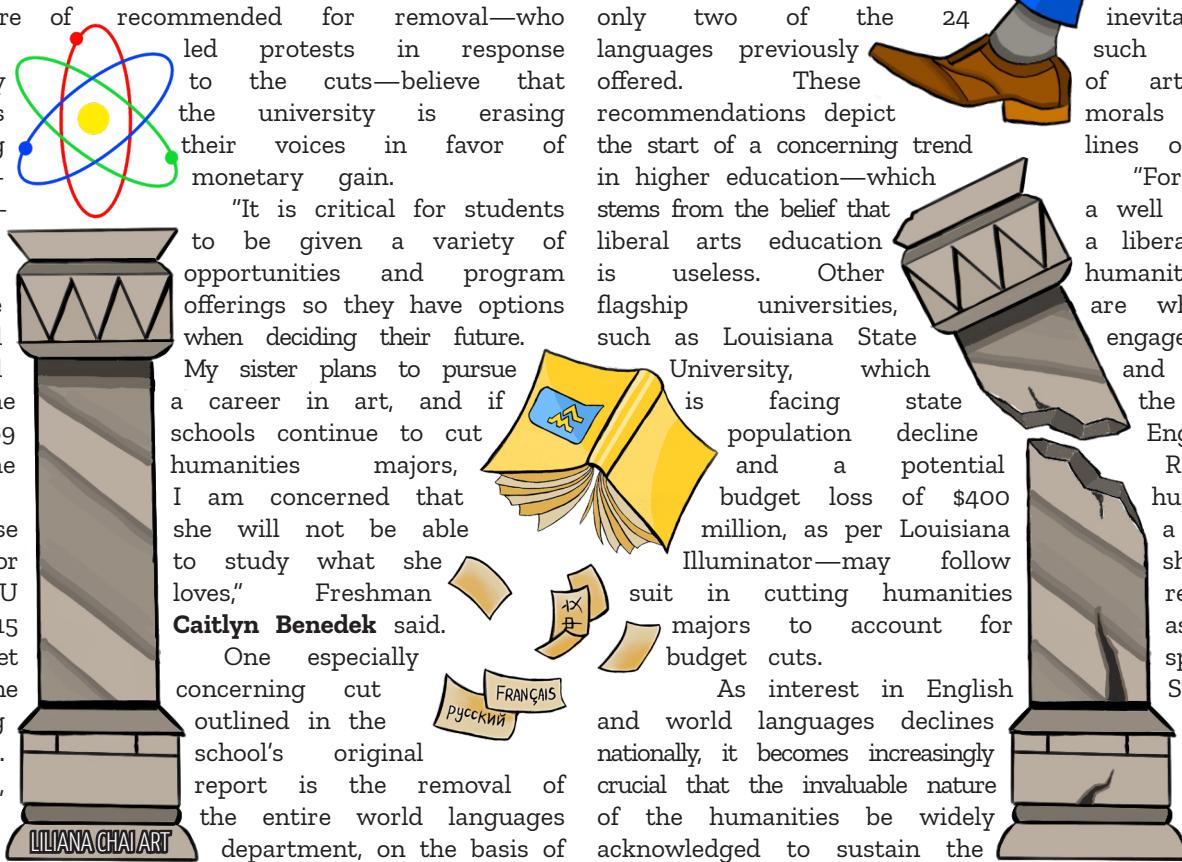
School News & Entertainment Editor and Staff Writer

skills this vast field furnishes society. The skills taught by humanities majors—such as critical thinking, literacy, communication and empathy—are essential; their loss will have detrimental consequences on students entering the workforce. Without foreign language and creative writing majors, society loses the stories of global cultures.

Fewer students studying philosophy and history yields politicians that are less informed about morality and ethics. The loss of humanities majors will inevitably impact STEM fields, such as in the development of artificial intelligence, where morals are needed along with lines of code.

"For many years, the idea of a well rounded education has been a liberal arts education, including humanities classes. These classes are where you learn to think, engage in systems of government and understand your place in the world," Jennifer Touchton, English Department, said.

Rather than eliminating humanities majors in face of a rescinding budget, schools should look elsewhere to recover for lost funds—such as bailouts and holistic spending approaches. In a STEM-dominant era, higher education must remember that humanities majors teach values that define humanity, making it vital to keep them alive.



ENTERTAINMENT

"Meg 2: The Trench"



Jay Li

Opinions Editor

Diving into "Meg 2: The Trench," I expected a megalodon-fueled spectacle of action and gore. Unfortunately, what washed ashore was a dull, tedious chore of a plot prioritizing haphazard environmentalist themes and bland, one-dimensional characters over its giant aquatic creature feature appeal.

The film opens with a team exploring the Mariana Trench, home of many dangerous sea creatures—including the infamous megalodon. There, they discover a secret mining operation that has been damaging the sea floor, and eventually finds the villainous organization behind it. So begins the movie's unsubtle environmentalist preaching, which detracts from the main story and is even ultimately discarded.

"Meg 2" also fails its attempt to prop up the protagonist, Jason Statham's Jonas Taylor, as a father figure to his adopted daughter Meiying—there is not enough time spent on character development for the audience to appreciate the characters or their relationships. In fact, no characters except Taylor add memorable moments, distinctive personalities or contributions to the storyline.

When the cast resurfaces from the Trench, a menagerie of bloodthirsty monsters are hot on their trail—which hinted at the bombastic action sequences I had been anticipating. But to my dismay, what followed was an uninteresting subplot involving the mining organization. For a film advertising itself to be a megalodon creature feature, there is a noticeable lack of megalodon appearances.

However, once the film crosses the one hour mark, intricate graphics and creative action direction take command over the lackluster story: "Meg 2" features brutal carnage on a scale bigger and better than the original. I watched this movie through the end solely for the unapologetically ridiculous action sequences in the final act; I wish it had indulged in more of these exhilarating shark mayhem moments.

If you are searching for an action-packed shark movie, I would suggest disregarding "Meg 2" and instead opting for the unintentionally hilarious cinematic masterpiece that is the "Sharknado" franchise.

"Meg 2: The Trench" (1/5)

a movie of all time?



- + enjoyable action sequences
- lackluster subplots
- one-dimensional characters

Kyan Wang and James Yu

Even as the streets of Los Angeles sizzled in the summer heat, the pavement remained cool, protected by the shadows of protesting crowds. Hollywood production came to a near standstill on May 2, when its writers exited stage right and took to the streets in a unionwide strike with the Writers Guild of America (WGA).

The strikers demanded greater compensation, improved benefits for writers, revised staffing requirements and tightened regulation of artificial intelligence (AI) in screenwriting. Refusing to address these demands, the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers (AMPTP)—representing Hollywood's studios and producers—opened the floodgates for the largest and longest strike Hollywood has seen for nearly 40 years.

The Screen Actors Guild and the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA) union—representing over 160,000 actors, artists and other professionals in Hollywood—answered the WGA's call to action on July 13, announcing that it would also strike against the AMPTP in response to failed negotiations over a new contract. This move began the first double strike in Hollywood in 63 years.

Advancements in generative AIs such as Chat-GPT have increased fear among writers that screenplays

could one day be automatically generated, cutting costs for studios at the expense of writers' livelihoods and human creativity. Similarly, SAG-

and movies. However, with streaming services such as Netflix and Disney+ hiding viewership data of show reruns, it is increasingly difficult for movie crews to receive the residuals that keep their livelihoods afloat. In order to reclaim lost residual income, members of the WGA and SAG-AFTRA are demanding a portion of the profits that streaming services make off of subscriber revenue.

With the WGA and SAG-AFTRA strikes nearly halting Hollywood production, Vox concludes that the strikes have already cost California's economy an estimated \$3 billion.

"The Hollywood strikes have brought together my favorite actors better than 'Avengers: Endgame.' It is interesting to see small-time writers and Hollywood hall-of-famers in the fight together," Sophomore Michael Morgan said.

The WGA, SAG-AFTRA and AMPTP achieved a tentative deal on Sept. 24, halting picketing and signalling that a new contract is underway. But with the winds of change blowing in Hollywood, the streets of Los Angeles will likely remain cool under protestors' shadows until the strikers and AMPTP reach a final agreement.



AFTRA is concerned that AI will soon be able to replicate actors' voices entirely with deepfake technology, removing the human emotions central to most productions.

"With the rise of AI in Hollywood, producers do not need to hire extras, a job once crucial to the industry. The actors are not just striking for better pay—they are striking for their survival," Freshman Ian Gal said.

Strikers are also concerned about the rise of streaming. ABC News explains that traditionally, writers and actors are paid with residuals, or portions of revenue made from reruns of their shows



Barbenheimer: Bombshells at the box office

Lauren Wilson

Cinemas hit their fourth highest-grossing weekend this summer, after raising \$300 million from the same-day release of two polar opposite films: "Barbie" and "Oppenheimer." Despite major differences between the themes and styles of both films, many fans made comparisons between the two because of their coincident release, giving rise to the "Barbenheimer" trend.

Greta Gerwig's "Barbie" follows the experiences of Margot Robbie's titular character as she exits her fantasy doll land and enters the real world, presenting a coming of age story that promotes themes of feminism. In contrast to "Barbie's" bright pink cinematography, Christopher Nolan's "Oppenheimer" stars Cillian Murphy as the eponymous scientist, who struggles with the conflicts of war and internal turmoil while developing a deadly weapon that could lead to mass genocide.

Initially, the marketing for "Barbie" included promotion on TikTok and the release of a Warner Bros. style teaser along with a classic bright

pink "Barbie" doll theme that, as production designer Sarah Greenwood claimed, caused a global shortage of fluorescent fuchsia paint. On the other hand, "Oppenheimer" caught the attention of several viewers through its critically-acclaimed cast and director.

The tremendous popularity of the two movies resulted in substantial internet discourse. On social media, fans debated which movie to watch first, and countless memes and trends related to the movies proliferated. However, according to Vox Media, many are concerned that the comparisons between the two films removed the individual appeal of each and diminished their individual messages. The feminist themes of "Barbie" have also sparked significant controversy, with many individuals claiming that the movie was "man-hating" and inappropriate for younger audiences.

"I prefer 'Oppenheimer' over 'Barbie' because of its darker themes

and slower-paced plot explaining historical events. The controversy that spiked around 'Barbie' is rooted from its biased themes that only represented women. It would have been better if it was not so politically motivated and focused on the doll instead," Freshman Gabriel Pastora said.

Although "Barbie" earned higher revenue than "Oppenheimer," both movies were well received by critics, acquiring positive reviews. To showcase their enthusiasm for the films, many viewers wore pink clothes to the theaters for "Barbie," while some wore blazers to "Oppenheimer."

"I preferred 'Barbie' over 'Oppenheimer' because the message was more meaningful to my own experiences. I enjoyed wearing pink to the theater in honor of the iconic color scheme in 'Barbie,'" Senior Yannah Moon said.

Fueled by creative internet trends and "Barbenheimer" fervor, both "Barbie" and "Oppenheimer" captivated viewers and created an enduring impact on the film industry with their unique stories.



Ozempic's weighty impact on Denmark

Eleanor Gil

Picture a pill that can drastically alter health, promising a direct shortcut not only to blood sugar control and no diabetes but dramatic weight loss as well. The Ozempic pill is a drug gone viral for weight loss despite its intended purpose as a treatment for type 2 diabetes, with 42% of medical practitioners having received requests for Ozempic from patients without diabetes, as reported by The Intake, a healthcare news site. Developed by Danish company Novo Nordisk, Ozempic has engendered an immense economic boom for Denmark but has also generated severe issues such as medication shortage and drug misuse.

Novo Nordisk has not only surpassed other major Danish companies such as LEGO and Carlsberg in terms of economic impact on its Nordic homeland, but also surpassed Denmark itself. According to NPR, Novo Nordisk's current valuation is \$419 billion, greater than the Danish GDP of \$406 billion, which has heavily impacted multiple aspects of Denmark's economy. For one, the Danish currency, krone, is increasing rapidly in valuation because of Ozempic's massive conversion of export revenue in U.S. dollars to krone—according to the Wall Street Journal, the U.S. contributed to 65% of global Ozempic sales in 2022, causing a substantial influx of foreign currency.

As a consequence of the boosted economy, interest and mortgage rates have eased in Denmark, and there have been more lucrative domestic investments which expanded employment opportunities, according to the Wall Street Journal. However, Ozempic's massive impact also raises concerns. If the company fails, Denmark is likely to experience

rapid devaluation of its currency, which would pose a huge risk to the Danish economy—much like Nokia, a Finnish telecom company. Nokia had completely dominated the country's economy in the early 2000s but eventually declined, resulting in a decade of economic stagnation.

Not only does Ozempic's popularity put the economy at risk, but people with legitimate need for the drug also struggle to access the medication. In fact, according to The Intake, 52% of Americans with diabetes say it has been much harder to find medication to treat their condition due to recent interest in drugs like Ozempic for weight loss especially; 15% of Americans have used Ozempic for weight loss, while 47% know someone who has.

"Ozempic should be reserved for people who truly need it. The United States needs to follow the European Union's policies and restrict Ozempic's use only for people with diabetes," Senior **Justin Lai** said.

Ozempic is taken through injections to synthetically produce insulin in the body and lower blood sugar, slowing digestion and producing the side effect of rapid weight loss. An alternative to Ozempic is Wegovy by Novo Nordisk, which, similar to Ozempic, mimics the action of the gut hormone GLP-1 that is released after eating to slow digestion. While these alternatives exist, people with diabetes often spend hours trying to find nearby pharmacies

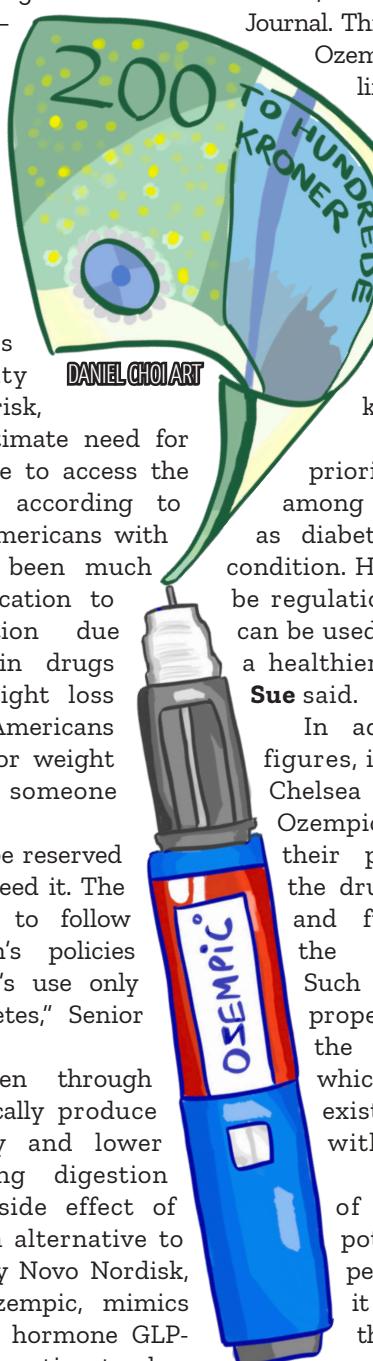
with their Ozempic prescriptions in stock, as stated by the Wall Street Journal. This shortage is significant—

Ozempic is meant for people in life-threatening situations, but progress reverts immediately if the drug is dropped. In other words, it has been difficult for these people to keep their blood sugar levels low and limit their risk of complications like kidney damage.

"Doctors should give priority to Ozempic use among people with diabetes as diabetes is a serious health condition. However, there should not be regulation on the pill's use as it can be used to help people maintain a healthier weight," Senior **Kristie Sue** said.

In addition, many celebrity figures, including Elon Musk and Chelsea Handler, have endorsed Ozempic for weight loss on their personal posts, helping the drug explode in the media and further contributing to the aforementioned issues. Such notice in the media has propelled consumers to try the drug for themselves, which can in turn perpetuate existing cultural obsessions with diet and physique.

Although the side effects of Ozempic have the potential to help many people with weight loss, it was created to help those with type 2 diabetes, a life-threatening health condition. Moving forward, the possibility remains of spearheading regulations for Ozempic.



The carnivore diet: deception in bulk

Vira Patil

Imagine eating raw meat every day with no cheat days, cutting out fruit, vegetables and grains completely. This is reality for some, including social media star Brian "Liver King" Johnson, who maintains that carnivorousness helps bring "strength and happiness back in society."

The carnivore diet consists of strictly animal products, including beef, chicken and cheese. Through his videos on TikTok and Instagram, Liver King claims that the diet hypermasculinizes men and promotes it as an ancestral, traditional lifestyle. He also credits this idiosyncratic diet for his robust build and preaches that eating entirely meat can result in ripped muscles and higher testosterone levels. By advertising his body as the product of the carnivore diet, Liver King has accumulated over five million followers on TikTok and a \$12 million yearly salary, as stated by the U.S. Sun. However, unbeknownst to many followers, he spends \$11,000 per month on performance-enhancing drugs in order to build the body he attributes

to the carnivore diet, as reported by ABC News.

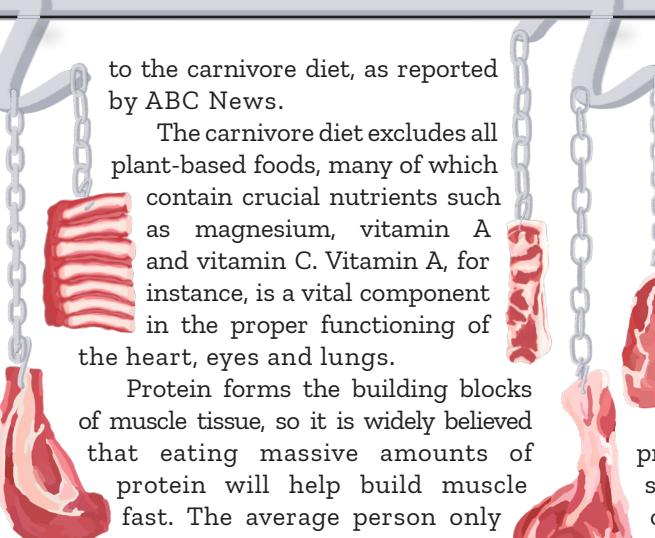
The carnivore diet excludes all plant-based foods, many of which contain crucial nutrients such as magnesium, vitamin A and vitamin C. Vitamin A, for instance, is a vital component in the proper functioning of the heart, eyes and lungs.

Protein forms the building blocks of muscle tissue, so it is widely believed that eating massive amounts of protein will help build muscle fast. The average person only needs 0.75 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight per day, as stated by the British Heart Foundation, but the carnivore diet promotes the consumption of two to three times that amount.

"The underlying assumption that meat is the only way to get protein might contribute to the carnivore diet's popularity in mainstream media."

Healthier foods like vegetables also provide important nutrients and proteins that the human body needs," Senior **Avi Bansal** said.

Furthermore, societal pressure to achieve the "perfect body" is prevalent in today's culture, leading young men to follow those who have obtained these outcomes regardless of



the method and its risks. According to the magazine Rolling Stone, influencers such as Joe Rogan and Tucker Carlson promote eating as much protein and cholesterol as possible, stating that this diet is not only about health, but also returning to the traditional definition of a "man."

While these influencers promote the diet, there is no scientific evidence to prove any of its supposed benefits. The diet's supposed benefits may instead be a manifestation of the placebo effect, where a treatment appears beneficial due to one's belief in it, per the BBC.

"The carnivore diet is influential because it appears to hypermasculinize its participants—when people see others following a trend, they view it as trustworthy and do the same. However, eating raw meat can lead to illnesses such as salmonella and clostridium perfringens," Junior **Ryan Mousavi** said.

Promoted by influencers Liver King and Joe Rogan, evidence that supports the benefits of the carnivore diet remain inadequate. Controversy about the diet continues to persist in media, with its health effects still in debate.



Nature and gratitude



Anna Yue

Staff Writer

Nature has been proven to reduce stress and anxiety, and as the world moves increasingly quick, such ability to rebound becomes more valuable.

Like many others, **Kevin Tibbs**, Science Department, finds peace and enjoyment in spending time with nature, but the amount of time he allocates towards this pastime significantly has decreased as Tibbs transitioned to married life and placed more emphasis on deepening relationships.

Tibbs now dedicates much of his time to his family and friends. Through experiencing love and loss over time, Tibbs developed the mantra "live with an attitude of gratitude" and not hold back any words of love and appreciation. Although his priorities shifted to his family, Tibbs still managed to find ways to connect his passion for nature and his commitment to loved ones.

For many years, Tibbs has enjoyed venturing outdoors and rock climbing, as well as the friendly communities these hobbies provided. Recently, Tibbs merged his love for nature with his family's interest by selecting outdoor activities that appealed to both him and his wife, such as pickleball and camping. They organized camping excursions and transformed their SUV into a portable resting haven, which was frequently camped out of. The back of the car was modified into a cozy sleeping accommodation by tearing down the seats and attaching extension platforms. Now, they can sleep and cook in the convenience of their car.

"I want to encourage all students to express their love and appreciation to those around them."

The modification had another unexpected use—a comfortable resting place for after a long day. As a physician, Tibbs' wife often worked night shifts, and Tibbs would occasionally camp out in the parking lot of her hospital, waiting for his wife to join him when her shift was over.

"We often do not appreciate enough what our friends and family do for us, so I want to encourage all students to express their love and appreciation to those around them, and not be afraid to tell people you love them. It makes them happy, and makes your love understood," Tibbs said.

Therefore, Tibbs advises all students to openly and freely express their appreciation, because gratitude and affection can sometimes be difficult to recognize without clear expression. Invariably, gratitude leads to greater happiness and positive emotions for the people on both ends, and it really is meaningful to express whenever genuine.

Retro style: Back from the dead

Joshua Yan

Staff Writer

Sidelined in favor of more contemporary and progressive styles such as modernism, minimalism and futurism, the retro style has descended into obscurity since the 1970s. After more than 40 years of cultural neglect, the bold motifs and pop culture imagery of the retro era are now back in style.

An abbreviation of the word retrospective, retro refers to the embrace of art and fashion trends from the past in order to live in nostalgia. Specifically, it refers to the style of fashion and art introduced in the 1970s, which referenced elements from the 1940s, such as faded hues of vibrant colors, simple shapes and flowery patterns.

The idea of revisiting past trends has existed for hundreds of years, appearing as early as the late 18th century. Neoclassical architecture embodied the styles of ancient Greece, Rome and Egypt. In 1910, the fashion designs of Paul Poiret were inspired by motifs from France in the 1790s known as the Directoire. Elements from the second empire of Louis Napoleon could be found in the works of French fashion surrealists in the 1930s, more than 60 years after its fall.

Though it fell out of style in the 1980s, retro has become popular again in recent years. For one, its appeal can be seen in the work of musical artists. Synth pop from the 1980s has a major influence on music by Harry Styles. Many popular video games also use retro elements; games like Undertale, Celeste and Stardew Valley use the 64-bit styles of those from decades past.

"There are many television shows that incorporate retro, which I am a big fan of. For example, I watched 'That 70's Show' and thought that the outfits in that were really cute. Look at Jackie Burkhart, her fashion sense is so good!" Senior **Jeaninne Yu** said.

The revival of retro style can be attributed in large part to nostalgia and a desire to relive "the good old days" because of the fond memories and emotions that they elicit. This phenomenon is referred to as "rosy retrospection." According to The Decision Lab, a research hub on behavioral science, a person's most vivid long-term memories are from when they were between the ages of 10 and 30. During this time, humans typically have higher levels of hormones like dopamine. This means that in general, people tend to believe that the world was better when they were younger because they felt happier during that time of their lives.

"When people see styles and aesthetics from when they were younger, they feel a connection to that time period. The modern style can feel too boring at times, and revisiting old ideas is a way for people to have something different," Junior **William Chan** said.

Advertisements and media have had a key role in retro's recent comeback as well. Many film companies use retro aesthetics in order to take advantage of the fondness that their existing fanbases hold for their childhoods. Disney's numerous live action remakes are specifically targeted at older audiences and their families who wish to relive the classics. Though almost all of these remakes are widely considered mediocre or underwhelming by critics, they have proven to be financially successful, with "The Lion King" and "Beauty and the Beast" each generating over \$1 billion.

As the world becomes increasingly more progressive and fast-paced, reminders of the past, like the style of retro, are a way for people to escape reality and appreciate the environment and circumstances that shaped them. Slowing down to remember simpler times can help people make sense of the plethora of complications that fill their lives.

RETRO

Poll: Which retro era has the best music?

Compiled by Winston Chu
Staff Writer

100 students polled

80s:
48%

70s:
32%

60s:
20%

Retro-futurism: Merging the past and the future

Ella Polak

Lifestyle and Feature World Editor

The bright neon lights of flashing billboards and floating holograms reflect off the grimy streets of Night City, the setting of the dystopian game Cyberpunk 2077. Featuring towering skyscrapers, sleek cars and a wealth of cybernetic implants, the game offers its vision of a future where advanced hardware has fundamentally altered every aspect of life. Ironically, the forward-looking nature of Cyberpunk 2077 does not stem from contemporary aesthetics—instead, it merges modern technology with a vintage '80s vibe to enter the stylistic halls of "retro-futurism."

The term "retro" refers to any concept, theme or idea taken from the past and repurposed for modern culture. The genre can be seen everywhere, from the synth beats in Harry Styles' and Dua Lipa's songs to pixel art and flared pants. Retro often draws on influences from trends of the 1970s and 1980s, including funk and disco music, bright colors and geometric patterns. According to LUXLife Magazine, a lifestyle publication, retro's appeal lies in the nostalgia it evokes, which is evident in the recent resurgence of old vinyl records and video gaming consoles.

However, some types of media, like Cyberpunk 2077, surpass the traditional confines of retro style by using old-fashioned ideas about the future to reimagine science fiction. Depicting the future through a historical lens allows the pioneering genre of retro-futurism to portray new technologies with a nostalgic aesthetic. The familiarity of those potential alternate realities can facilitate a more personal connection between the viewer and the content, per the news website ZME Science.

"A lot of people try to learn from the faults of the past and take inspiration from past advances, which is why retro-futurism's historical focus has such a broad appeal," Junior **Titus Hsu** said.

Retro-futurism contains many subgenres, including steampunk, which recalls the 1950s Cold War era; dieselpunk, where diesel vehicles have futuristic modifications; biopunk, a pessimistic conceptualization of biotechnology and Raygun Gothic, a visual style inspired by Art Deco and the Space Age. Likewise, the subgenres of steampunk and cyberspace have gained notable prominence within mainstream popular culture.

Steampunk takes inspiration from the aesthetics of the Victorian era and romanticizes industrial machines driven by steam power. The novels "Journey to the Centre of the Earth" by Jules Verne and "The War of the Worlds" by H.G. Wells introduced the steampunk genre to most audiences. Early literature solidified steampunk's aesthetic of metal gears, bizarre inventions and the endless pursuit of scientific discovery, BBC Radio reports. In the 20th and 21st centuries, steampunk has inspired the movies "Mortal Engines" and "Howl's Moving Castle," along with the game "Final Fantasy 6."

One of the other most widespread subgenres of retro-futurism is cyberspace, which first emerged in the 1980s with Ridley Scott's movie "Blade Runner" and William Gibson's novel "Neuromancer." According to Polygon, an entertainment website, cyberspace typically depicts advanced and hyper-urbanized societies in which technology has monumentally impacted human lives. Polygon states that cyberspace media often emphasizes the "underworld" of sprawling cities, where people suffer at the hands of massive corporations, indiscriminate violence and general lawlessness. The broad appeal of the cyberspace genre stems from its criticism of modern societal problems through dramatized settings and storylines, as seen in Cyberpunk 2077.

"The world now, as compared to 100 years ago, is moving exponentially quicker in terms of communication, research and trade, so the fear of what might lie ahead always sits in our minds. We translate our sentiments, hopes, predictions and warnings about the future through the creation and absorption of science fiction," Senior **Declan MacNeal** said.

While retro-futurism is still generally restricted to media and entertainment, its influences have begun to pour over into the physical world. Tesla's Cybertruck, made of stainless steel and featuring flat surfaces and jutting edges, has been described by many commentators as retro-futuristic, per the design magazine Dezeen. Retro-futurism's nostalgic vision of the future holds powerful possibilities for advancing human technology. As society continues to develop, the genre will naturally move toward a point where the creations of the 2020s evolve into the "retro" of "retro-futurism."

SCIENCE & TECH

The Internet's midlife crisis



Kyan Wang

Science & Tech & Feature US Editor

"Don't be evil" seems like a rule that should apply to everyone. Google built an entire brand around this core tenet, promising that its intentions were pure and humanitarian, and outlining its goal as to make information "universally accessible and useful" in their mission statement. "Don't be evil" was discarded as Google's official motto in 2018, having outlived its purpose in masking the morally questionable decisions regarding privacy, manipulation of search results and more that led to Wikipedia's 10,000 plus word article on criticism of Google.

Tech platforms typically begin their life cycle by offering a useful and oftentimes free or low cost service. But as companies expand, so does their drive to chase profits. As a result, tech companies almost inevitably turn to unscrupulous exploitation of its users, diminishing the quality of their product (think of pop-up ads), to squeeze their diehard fans of all the money they are worth. This phenomenon was termed in 2022 by tech blogger Cory Doctorow as something I will euphemistically refer to as "endungification" as in the actual term "dung" is replaced with an explicit term that is not fit for publication in this paper.

Users of major platforms often cannot find suitable alternatives and are thus subjected to the whims of greedy companies. Such is the case with Amazon, which holds a near monopoly on online shopping. Fast shipping and low prices have lulled users into the arms of the e-commerce site, which now allows sponsors to jam their low quality products at the top of the search results, raking in cash at the expense of its loyal customer.

X, formerly known as Twitter has come to exemplify endungification, as Elon Musk has attempted to recoup losses on his \$44 billion acquisition of the platform. From burying the comments of anyone who is not willing to pay \$114.99 a year for "X Premium" to limiting all users from viewing Tweets to decrease server costs, Musk has not been afraid to destroy the core values of the former Twitter—a platform that valued the free discussion of topics. Perhaps most comical is the fact that paying for "X Premium" merely halves the amount of ads the user sees. Musk has even suggested making Twitter completely subscription based.

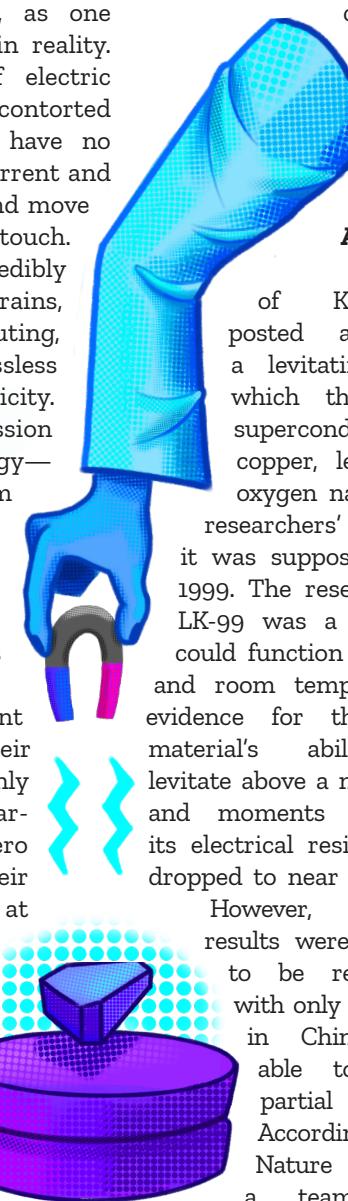
Unfortunately, endungification has become nearly ubiquitous as it greatly increases profit for online platforms. The web being dominated by a few megacorps practically guarantees that it is in a company's best interest to nickel-and-dime its users. As people have come to accept the continual degradation of online platforms, the user-driven days of the World Wide Web may truly be over.

Adrian Tomaszewski

The Meissner effect is, as one physicist puts it, a "glitch" in reality. It describes the ability of electric fields to be repelled and contorted by superconductors, which have no resistance to the electrical current and can thus levitate in the air and move indefinitely with a single touch. Superconductors are incredibly useful in magnetic levitation trains, MRI machines, rapid computing, nuclear fusion and the lossless transmission of electricity. Currently, all power transmission results in some loss of energy—on average 2%—in the form of heat. However, according to Science Magazine, a superconductor can transmit electricity over any distance with no energy loss due to its zero resistance property.

Nonetheless, all present superconductors have their faults. Some must be highly depressurized or cooled to near-absolute-zero or far below zero temperatures to reach their critical points—the point at which material becomes superconductive. Since both extreme cooling and depressurization are expensive, modern uses of superconductors are relatively limited.

"The creation of an ambient superconductor would greatly change the electronics industry by revolutionizing quantum computing and the creation of phone



chips. Additionally, it would boost business for companies that are able to get ahold of this material," Junior Alon Vals said.

On July 25, a team of Korean researchers posted a video displaying a levitating piece of metal, which they claimed was a superconductor made of copper, lead, phosphorus and oxygen named LK-99 after the researchers' names and the year it was supposedly first discovered, 1999. The researchers claimed that LK-99 was a superconductor that could function at standard pressure and room temperature. Their main evidence for this claim was the material's ability to levitate above a magnet and moments where its electrical resistance dropped to near zero.

However, these results were unable to be replicated, with only one team in China being able to achieve partial levitation. According to Nature Magazine, a team of U.S. researchers also questioned the video's validity, explaining that the material's structure made superconductivity



JANE HONGART

impossible. Also, the drops in resistance could also be explained by the copper sulfide in the material which, when tested, had similarly timed drops to those in the LK-99 findings.

"Scientists should verify the reproducibility of their results and conduct thorough peer review before releasing their discoveries to the public to prevent the spread of misinformation," Sophomore Aishwarya Vinodh said.

While LK-99 is likely not a true ambient superconductor, other materials have shown promise. In March, University of Rochester researchers claimed to have created a superconductor from lutetium—another rare earth metal—and hydrogen that functioned at near room temperature. However, other teams presented doubt over the practicality of the material because it had to be pressurized to ten times the pressure at the bottom of the ocean to reach its point of criticality. Nevertheless, the Rochester laboratory hopes their lutetium-hydrogen superconductor will be a major step forward for the field and inspire further research. Should scientists succeed in finding a marketable ambient superconductor, the world would likely experience a major generational leap in technological innovation and ability.

Microchips by Big Parma

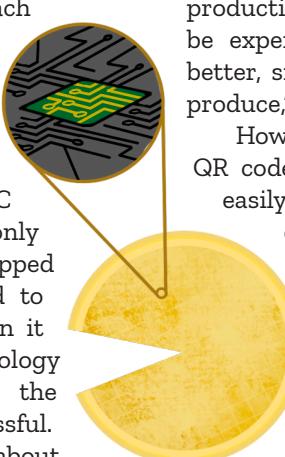
Genevieve Carroll and Winston Chu

Feature School & Community News Editor and Staff Writer

One does not normally eat the rind of their authentic parmesan cheese—but if they did, they could come across a tiny silicone surprise. The surprise in question would be a microchip the size of a grain of salt integrated into authentic parmesan, or Parmigiano Reggiano, cheese by the Parmigiano Reggiano Consortium (PRC).

Half a square millimeter in size, the microchips are embedded in the outer layer of the parmesan's rind, which is called the casein. Manufactured by p-Chip, the chips help customers identify legitimate parmesan cheese, as they can be scanned to access information such as each cheese's quality, origin and date of production, as stated by La Voce di New York. Although they are not yet widespread—the PRC reports that in 2022, only 100,000 wheels were chipped for a test run compared to the annual several million it produces—the new technology may become par for the course if it proves successful.

The information about the cheese gained upon scanning the chip is stored on the blockchain, a digital library of information strung together in a way that prevents the data from being edited. Blockchains encrypt stored data, meaning the only possible point of data corruption is at the source itself. As blockchains allow the data about each cheese's origins to remain the same from production to sales, they are a useful method to verify product authenticity.



The microchip is far from easy to come across—not just because of its minuscule size, but because it is only present in authentic parmesan. In Europe, any cheese labeled as Parmigiano Reggiano is guaranteed to be fully authentic, but outside, according to the PRC, Parmigiano Reggiano makes up just over 6% of parmesan cheese on the market. Around the globe, counterfeit cheesemakers borrow parmesan's fame as the "king of cheese" in search of profit.

"Microchips are very efficient for countering counterfeit goods, but production on such a large scale would be expensive. QR codes would work better, since they are cheaper to mass produce," Junior Nadia Karpenko said.

However, no method is perfect: QR codes and other visual labels are easily duplicated and degrade as the cheese ages. Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) chips are too bulky and Near Field Communication (NFC) tags must be scanned up close. Microchips, however, come with the ease of size and convenience

of integration: embedded in the casein, they are easily accessible by inexpensive equipment and can withstand the aging process, making them ideal for verifying the authenticity of the cheese.

"I care a lot about whether my food is labeled correctly. When I eat something, I want to know exactly what it is I

am consuming. People deserve to know what they are putting in themselves and counterfeit goods are a threat to that—people with dietary restrictions should have their needs respected. I am vegetarian, so food branded as such should not be contaminated with meat," Sophomore Suraga Nallan said.

The need for authentic parmesan verification arose in the early 1900s, when Italian immigrants in Argentina made counterfeit Parmigiano Reggiano called "reggianito", according to The Guardian. Since then, fake parmesan has dominated the global market, making Europe the PRC's only safe haven. This may soon change, as the PRC reports that it was recently able to prevent "KRAFT PARMESAN CHEESE" from being trademarked in Ecuador, a significant win for the Consortium considering the PRC is rarely acknowledged outside of Europe. This PRC victory also details that although the microchips' efficacy is still being tested, they may soon become the standard mark of an authentic cheese if such a verification method continues to grow in success.



PETER YOUNGART

Welcoming New Staff



Ahn-Kiet Tran
AP of Student Services

Tran spent his first 19 years in education teaching elementary school. Now, he hopes to build strong relationships with everyone involved in the school community, including students, teachers and parents. He looks forward to watching Charger athletes compete in sports this year.



Evan Brown
AP of Curriculum & Instruction

Brown grew up in the Bay Area and went to Archbishop Mitty High School. He worked in tech before marrying a teacher, which sparked his interest in teaching. After starting this new career as an English teacher, Brown became an administrator at the school.



Madison Gill
Department of Special Education

Gill graduated from USC before coming to the school. She had previously worked as a U.S. History teacher and tutor. So far, she has been enjoying her time at the school and appreciates all the support she has received from her coworkers.



Nathan Lee
Social Science Department

Lee worked in politics before becoming a substitute teacher after COVID, looking for a job with more human interaction. From there, he fell in love with teaching and became a History teacher at the school. He looks forward to improving his teaching craft this year.



Alexander Tsou
9th Grade Counselor

Before coming to the school, Tsou was a para-educator and mental health therapist. Now, he works on developing effective strategies to support students and is pleased to see how dedicated students and staff are to the community. Tsou enjoys eating spicy foods and listening to K-pop.



Nick Day
Speech Therapist

A graduate of Louisiana State University, Day is excited to be part of the Charger community for his first job at the school. He looks forward to meeting new students and helping them build their confidence and communication skills. Day likes to read and was voted "Most Likely to be Famous" in high school.



Regina Martinez Campusano
Instructional Aide

Martinez-Campusano has been working at SJUSD as a substitute for more than 20 years. She is looking forward to learning more about the students at the school. She enjoys watching movies and playing all types of sports, especially bowling, baseball and softball.

JUDE TANTAWY ART
CELINA LIU AND SHIRIN MOALEDJ PHOTO



Stephanie Porcadas
Licensed Health Tech

Before coming to the school, Porcadas worked at a care facility and a vaccination clinic. She is currently pursuing a bachelor's degree in registered nursing. In her free time, Porcadas enjoys designing digital planners and loves matcha.



Sibel Ilsever
AP of Student Services

Ilsever worked for San Jose Unified for 21 years as a teacher and intervention specialist before becoming an administrator. Building classroom community was her favorite part about being a teacher and she is working to foster a similar sense of community and belonging at this school as an admin. Ilsever is originally from Canada and has three children.



Alexander Ahn
Media Center Technician

Ahn began his career in education as an elementary school teacher, but quickly discovered that the job clashed with his introverted personality. However, after helping out at a book fair and seeing how much the students enjoyed reading, he discovered his passion for working as a librarian. Ahn's job is teaching him important life skills like organization and communication, and he hopes to build a library that is a safe space for students to study and rest. Although he enjoyed teaching, Ahn finds the peace of the library more suitable.

By Amie Ahn,
Ariel Lee and
Anna Yue
Staff Writers

FEATURE: US

Andrew Duval and Adrian Tomaszewski

Former President Donald Trump stands before a podium, declaring to the judge: "If you count the legal votes, I easily win. If you count the illegal votes, they can try to steal the election from us." This claim, made the day after the 2020 United States presidential election, would spiral into a series of legal events that culminated on Aug. 14, when Trump and 18 allies were charged with several crimes related to their attempts to overturn the election results.

Trump has been battered by four indictments since his departure from the presidency. The election interference case is his most recent, taking place in Georgia—where Trump focused most of his efforts to change the official election results, alleging hundreds of cases of voter fraud. For Trump's call to Georgia's Secretary of State demanding he "find 11,780 votes" and other attempts to interfere with the 2020 federal election, Trump and his allies have been charged with 41 felony counts under Georgia's Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act—an act broader than its federal counterpart with past uses including lawsuits against mafia members and Ponzi schemes. The act's use in the case has been controversial, as it contains vague wording and its maximum sentence is 20 years in prison.

"A conviction against Trump would improve the U.S.'s reputation because it would show the world that the government



is willing to prosecute someone as powerful as a former president. It will demonstrate that justice is valued above political power in America," Senior Matthew Penner said.

Trump had previously been indicted three other times. His first and second indictments were related to his hush-money payments to an adult film star and his retention of classified documents after his presidential term ended, respectively. Trump's third indictment

concerns his interference in the 2020 election and his effort to block the peaceful transfer of power. Much of the third indictment centers around the Jan. 6, 2021 Capitol riot and the inflammatory statements made by Trump that seemed to have incited the attack.

Classified Documents
Location: Florida
Charges: 31 counts of retention of classified documents and 9 others
Indictment Date: June 8, 2023
Trial Date: May 20, 2024

Election Obstruction
Location: Washington, D.C.
Charges: 4 various felony counts
Indictment Date: August 1, 2023
Trial Date: March 4, 2024

Many of Trump's supporters see the indictments as politically-motivated and an attack on democracy, and they have only become more active in their backing of Trump. For instance, CNN

reports that the day after his surrender in Georgia, Trump raised \$4.18 million, the most he raised in a single day throughout his entire campaign.



Sports & Fun Page Editor and Staff Writer

battling a corrupt "deep state" on Capitol Hill.

While some believe that the Trump indictments are a crucial turning point in accountability for politicians—which has historically been lacking—others claim the cases set a framework for abusing the legal system to undemocratically prevent candidates from running for office. As the four proceedings unfurl, they bear the weighty responsibility of establishing an enduring precedent for dispensing justice to those in positions of power.

Hush Money
Location: New York
Charges: 34 counts of falsifying business records
Indictment Date: March 30, 2023
Trial Date: March 25, 2024

HARRY KANG ART

Voting Interference
Location: Georgia
Charges: 13 various felony counts
Indictment Date: March 30, 2023
Trial Date: To be determined

"Some of these indictments are necessary to preserve democracy in this country because they show that there are consequences to the attacks on our democratic institutions such as the Jan. 6th insurrection. However, the New York and Florida indictments especially seem to be political attacks on the Trump campaign," Sophomore Kabir Gupta said.

Despite the indictments, the Trump 2024 train is not slowing down—his campaign has already earned \$6.4 million from selling photos of his mugshot on merchandise including mugs and shot glasses. On top of that, many of Trump's supporters view the indictments as a confirmation of him

An island ablaze: Wildfires tear through town of Lahaina

Mahika Khosla and Jaein Park

Houses, stores and historic landmarks burned to the ground, turning one of the most peaceful destinations in America into an apocalyptic scene in the blink of an eye. The wildfires on the island of Maui, which mainly occurred in the historic city of Lahaina, have destroyed more than 2,000 structures, caused up to \$6 billion in property damage and displaced 4500 people. Additionally, the fires have led to the disappearance of 31 people and the death of 97.

Public outrage against Hawaii Electric, the electric company that serves Lahaina, is stoking in response to mounting evidence that their failure to shut off the power even as wind gusts from Hurricane Dora became more and more dangerous caused the fires. The wind is believed to have toppled power lines, sending sparks into the drought-stricken vegetation. Hawaii Electric is currently facing nine lawsuits, including one filed by Maui County.

Many locals have expressed frustration that the government's



response to the fires has been very slow, inadequate and uncoordinated. Compared to how the Californian government responded to the 2021 wildfires in the state, spending millions of dollars to provide food, water and shelter to victims, the support that the Hawaiian government gave during the fires is considered very poor—for example, some report that medical aid has not been readily available.

"I read that the citizens seeking refuge in hotels do not get enough water and electricity. The government should be more active in supplying the people of Lahaina with power, water, shelter, food and money until they can get back on their feet," Freshman Yashika Agarwal said.

Still, countless civilians have taken initiative to provide relief in Maui, alleviating the impacts of the government's delayed response. The American Red Cross and Maui Strong are two humanitarian organizations leading recovery efforts in Maui, and such initiatives have raised more than \$43 million in donations from people in over 44 countries.

Amidst the chaos caused by the wildfires, tourists continued traveling to the island of Maui, which has irritated victims. Maui residents who lost their loved ones, homes and even jobs during the wildfires struggled to get back on their feet, received insufficient aid from the government, while travelers enjoyed their trips in luxury and often received preferential treatment. Because tourism is the center of Maui's economy, the government gives heavy priority to the well-being of tourists, even during difficult times.

As a result of protests and criticism from victims, however, the Hawaiian government eventually asked visitors to leave Maui as soon as possible.

"Tourism in Maui should not be outright restricted, but it should be limited to the areas where the fire had the least impact. This way, Maui can continue to earn income from tourism while still allowing victims of the fires to peacefully recover at this time," Junior Olivia Liu said.



Global warming is driving Maui's growing vulnerability to wildfires, creating the perfect climate and dry conditions for an inferno to ignite.

Thus, the recent events in Lahaina, similar to many other recent natural disasters, have drawn increased attention to climate change.

In Montana earlier this year, three youth plaintiffs led a lawsuit arguing that the state was violating its citizens' right to a "clean and healthful environment" that is guaranteed by the state constitution by aggressively developing fossil fuels. The result of the lawsuit was a 103-page court order affirming the plaintiffs' claim. The success of the Montana climate lawsuit can serve as an example for other individuals working to get fossil fuels deemed unconstitutional as a step forward in the fight to combat climate change and prevent future disasters like the Lahaina fires.

Paris' olympic battle over bookstalls

Claire Chang and Winston Chu

Nestled along the iconic River Seine in Paris, France, hundreds of

were prohibited because they threatened the business of official bookstores in the area. The bouquinistes made a comeback during the French Revolution, and their presence has persisted ever since.

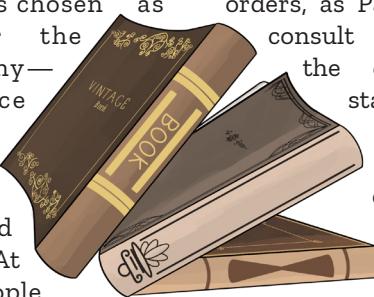
Because of the scenic beauty of the Seine, it was chosen as the venue for the opening ceremony—the first instance in the history of the Summer Olympics where it was not held inside a stadium. At least 10 million people are expected to watch both athletes and representatives sail down the river, which increases the need for stricter security measures. Consequently, the bookstalls found themselves within the security perimeter of the ceremony, and nearly 570 out of 950 stalls were required to be dismantled and relocated to the Bastille square for several months, according to The Guardian. Due to the terrorist attack on the 1972 Olympics in Munich in which 11 athletes were killed, the International Olympic Committee and Parisian government are wary of potential threats; officials want to remove bookstalls to minimize areas in which bombs can be hidden.

"Bomb threats cannot be taken lightly; they have been followed through many times. Even if the police were to search every single

bookstalls sell historic treasures, rare literary pieces, vintage posters and intricate maps. These stalls form the largest outdoor book market in Europe, where both citizens and visitors can check out unique literary works. However, in preparation for the 2024 Summer Olympics, these beloved bookstalls have been ordered to close due to security reasons, prompting backlash from booksellers and local residents.

These bookstalls, also known as bouquinistes, have thrived for nearly 450 years and are a vital part of Parisian culture. Similar to the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre and the Arc de Triomphe, the bouquinistes symbolize Paris. Bouquinistes first came about in the 16th century when small-scale merchants hoped to promote their books along the river, which drew high amounts of foot traffic. However, in 1649, these bookstalls

bookstall, there would still not be enough security around where the Olympics are held simply due to the number of individuals present," Senior **Norbert Magyari-Kope** said.



Booksellers have not hesitated to express their frustration over the orders, as Paris City Hall failed to consult them before making the decision to relocate stalls. Since book stalls are fragile and quite old, relocation risks damaging them. The book stalls were not designed to be relocated and moved easily and due to each stall's uniqueness, it takes ample time to study how they are built so that they may be taken down properly.

Additionally, some stalls contain literary treasures and fragile works which booksellers do not want to risk losing during the moving process.

In response to such worries, city officials have offered to pay for the costs of relocation and for any damage done to the stalls. However, the city offered no compensation in response to potential injuries booksellers may sustain while handling the heavy stalls.

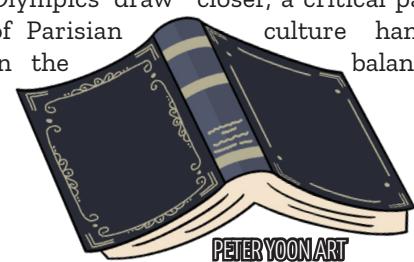
What worries booksellers most is the loss of income during this

period—sales have already been on the decline because of the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing protests in France over economic justice and political reform. Now they risk losing substantial amounts of revenue during the peak summer tourist season. Booksellers also claim that no one visits Bastille square, which only exacerbates the income issues; in their current location, the stalls are perfectly positioned alongside foot traffic from the nearby bridge which connects popular tourist sites.

"The removal of the bookstalls could cause social injustice problems by proving to citizens that the government is not protecting their cultural and historical artifacts. The fact that they did not consult the owners reveals red flags for citizens: it shows that the government does not care if their revenue is jeopardized," Junior **Aidan Tran-Longtin** said.

Normal citizens also do not want the stalls to be moved since they are an integral part of Parisian culture.

The history of Parisian book stalls goes back centuries, and tourists often stop by the bouquinistes during their time in Paris. As the Olympics draw closer, a critical part of Parisian culture hangs in the balance.



PETER YOUNGART

Japan's nuclear decision ripples through the Pacific

Jay Li

Opinions Editor

Over a decade after the 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster—the worst nuclear accident since Chernobyl—radioactive challenges continue to leak out of the long-decommissioned power plant. On Aug. 24, the Japanese government began dispensing thousands of tons of radioactive wastewater from the plant into the Pacific Ocean, drawing fierce criticism from the public, the fishing industry and neighboring countries.

Ever since an earthquake and tsunami heavily damaged the plant during the nuclear disaster, the reactor cores have required constant water flow to prevent a meltdown. The cooling process produces incredible amounts of wastewater which, despite being treated, still contains dangerous levels of tritium, a radioactive isotope that is impossible to remove. According to Reuters, over 1,000 tanks containing 350 million gallons of wastewater have accumulated, which the current administration believes is unsustainable. Consequently, they have planned to release the wastewater into the Pacific over the course of several decades.

Prior to discharge, the wastewater will undergo its usual treatment process and be mixed with saltwater, diluting the tritium. The resulting mixture will then be channeled to the bottom of the Pacific, where it will be further diluted.

"The potential habitat loss, ecosystem disruptions and pollution that would result from this irreversible decision makes it far too unpredictable to be taken. The sheer amount of wastewater could permanently damage not only the Pacific Ocean, but also the future generations of all nations beyond Japan," Junior **Ethan Nguyen** said.

While the U.N. International Atomic Energy and Nuclear Regulation Authority has signed off on Japan's plan after citing a negligible impact on the environment and population, the Japanese fishing industry, South Korea and China have voiced skepticism. China was previously Japan's largest importer of seafood but has since restricted all Japanese aquatic products from entering the country, unconvinced that the discharge process is safe. Tokyo responded by emphasizing that China's own nuclear power plants release wastewater with even higher levels of tritium, per Time Magazine.

"While Japan's decision to dump wastewater into the Pacific is dangerous, China's blanket ban on Japanese products goes too far, as it will cause seafood prices to spike and remove Chinese citizens' option of buying Japanese seafood; instead, China could require radioactivity testing," Freshman **Andrew Sohn** said.



The concern is not limited to China; over 50,000 South Korean citizens assembled around the capitol building and the Japanese embassy in protest of a lackluster response from the South Korean government, which is still allowing imports. They have accused President Yoon Suk Yeol of seeking closer ties to Japan in exchange for public health.

On the domestic front, Japanese fishing groups are worried about their sales given the already plummeting prices of local seafood, similar to how the initial disaster in 2011 dealt a heavy blow to the industry. In an effort to mitigate backlash, Japanese officials have promised the fishing industry compensatory funds, launched public education campaigns and bolstered diplomatic talks with foreign delegates.

As controversy surrounding the wastewater release persists, a delicate balance between environmental concerns and international relations underscores the complex challenges Japan faces in addressing the legacy of the Fukushima disaster.

Poll: Should the Japanese government release nuclear wastewater into the ocean?

Compiled by Claire Chang and Eleanor Gil
Staff Writers and Photo-Media Team
101 students polled

Yes
58%

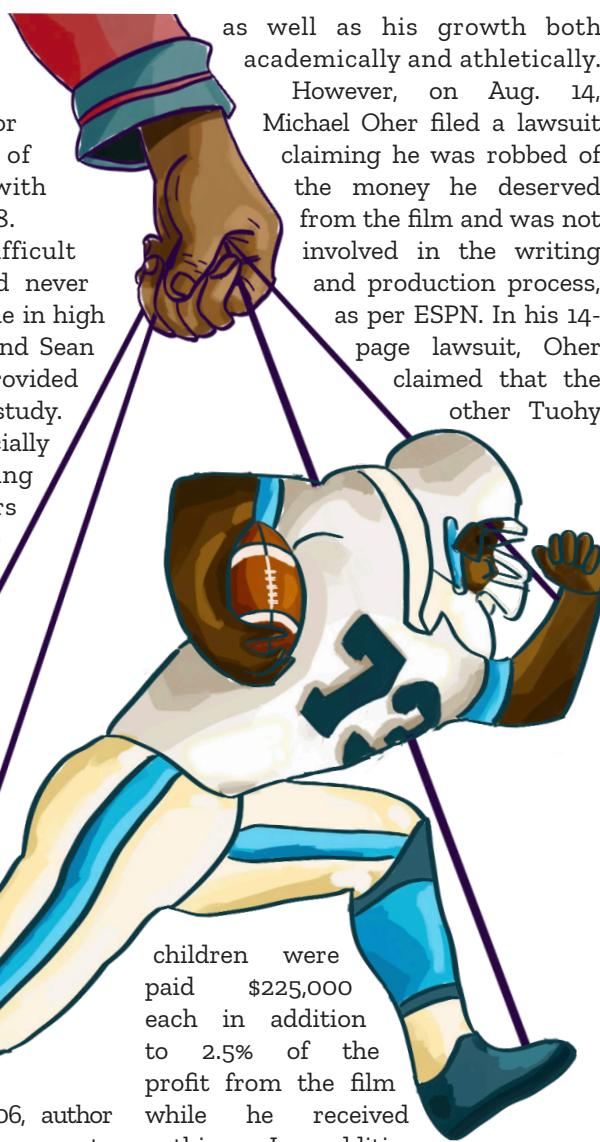
No
42%

Tackling the truth over Michael Oher's lawsuit

Mahika Khosla

Michael Oher, a former African-American NFL football tackle, is suing the Tuohy family for supposedly not telling him of the conservatorship he had with the family since the age of 18.

Oher suffered from a difficult early life in foster care and never had a stable place to live. While in high school, he met Leigh Anne and Sean Tuohy, two adults who provided him with food and a place to study. When Oher was 18, he officially entered into the family. During his 11th and 12th grade years he received multiple college scholarships for basketball, track and football and went on to play in the NFL. Oher announced his retirement from the NFL in 2017, with his last team being the Carolina Panthers in 2016.



In 2006, author

Michael Lewis wrote a book, "The Blind Side: Evolution of a Game" on Oher's life story. The biography was a large success, leading to a movie adaptation in 2009 titled "The Blind Side," which detailed the life of Michael Oher, depicting Oher's relationship with the Tuohys

as well as his growth both academically and athletically.

However, on Aug. 14, Michael Oher filed a lawsuit claiming he was robbed of the money he deserved from the film and was not involved in the writing and production process, as per ESPN. In his 14-page lawsuit, Oher claimed that the other Tuohy

children were paid \$225,000 each in addition to 2.5% of the profit from the film while he received nothing. In addition,

Oher wrote that the film inaccurately portrayed his experience as a Black teenager experiencing homelessness and instability, and asserted that he was never adopted by the Tuohys as the movie hinted.

Oher states that when he was 18 years old, the Tuohys convinced him to

enter a conservatorship which allowed them to control Oher's finances, health insurance and admission to college among other important affairs, lying to him that it was essentially the same as adoption. Oher argues that he was unaware of the arrangement until February and that the conservatorship has allowed the Tuohy family to take a significant share of his money. Contrarily, the Tuohy family asserts that all household members, including Oher, received about \$100,000 from the film, and that a conservatorship was the only way Oher could become part of their family as an adult. As debates arose over the film's validity and ethicality, those who supported Oher expressed displeasure with the actors of the movie, specifically Sandra Bullock, who portrayed Leigh Anne Tuohy, for participating in the filmmaking process without doing any background research or contacting Oher.

"It is important that Oher speaks up about injustice. His lawsuit sets a precedent for others who are falsely portrayed by the media. If these people do not speak up about the truth, then others may misunderstand them," Sophomore Nainika Srinivasan said.

Nevertheless, some doubt that Oher was uninformed of his conservatorship because he referred to the Tuohys as his "conservators" in his 2011 memoir. Moreover, when in a conservatorship, guardians must sign off the paychecks of those under their care. Thus, many question how Tuohy went through his entire NFL career without noticing

anything unusual. As a result, CBS News Baltimore reports that many speculate that Oher is only suing to publicize his book "When Your Back's Against the Wall," which was written earlier this year and received little attention.

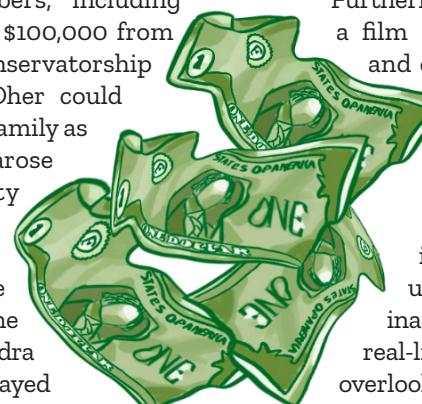
"The lawsuit is a publicity stunt. However, if a person has been falsely portrayed in a movie, the creators should inform the public and remove the film if the individual wishes.

Furthermore, those depicted in a film should be interviewed and consent to the storyline before the movie is produced," Sophomore Emily Marshall said.

"The Blind Side" is not the first movie under investigation for inaccurately portraying real-life stories and overlooking input from the main character. For example,

"Fresh Off the Boat," the first sitcom to feature an Asian American family in two decades, was criticized by the central character Eddie Huang, who accused the creators of misconstruing his memoir by watering down the difficulties he encountered in order to make the show more appealing.

"The Blind Side," along with other possibly erroneous biographical films, emphasizes the importance of thoroughly investigating multiple sides of a story and honoring the truth. Oher's fight for justice will help determine how similar cases are handled in the future. Through his efforts, Oher hopes his adoptive family will compensate him properly and that the public is cognizant of his story.



Passing the torch: Building up from underclassmen

Niru Shrivakumar

Staff Writer

Through their experience and accomplishments, Seniors can lend leadership, direction and a multitude of abilities that contribute to the success of a school sports team. Their impact often goes beyond the playing field, helping to mold the team culture and create an atmosphere that encourages excellence and togetherness. As Seniors develop a strong connection with their sport, it may be difficult for both them and their teammates when they graduate.

For example, in girls' volleyball, losing Seniors has been tough for the athletes; Bella Chobanian '25 stated that the team lost two Seniors last year. She described how the volleyball team is putting in extra work to make up for the loss of their

experienced teammates in hopes of becoming a physically and mentally strong team going into the season. Moreover, Chobanian highlighted their team-building efforts, indicating how the team is excited to grow and become stronger together.

"Our players work hard outside of practice and sometimes after weekend practice we like to enjoy a team breakfast together," Chobanian said.

In cross country, Colin Jubert '25 explained that although past Seniors contributed greatly to the team's success, the rest of the team is also strong and talented. Additionally, Jubert expressed gratitude towards the current Seniors on cross country who are setting a good example for the rest of the team. He described how they have stepped up as leaders by helping out their teammates with workouts and encouraging their peers to stay motivated.

"The loss of Seniors was hard since they were good athletes and great leaders. However, we have rising talent from the underclassmen, as well as upperclassmen who are improving significantly. Going into the season my attitude is to strive for more. I am excited

to work with the rest of my team this season," Jubert said.

Jubert is the co-captain of the track team, which puts him in a position where he can

motivate others. He emphasizes developing the connections between team members and the crucial role it plays in maintaining team spirit.

"In the cross country team there is really great morale—everyone is always cheering others on during races. Additionally, athletes enjoy running with each other during practices and if anyone passes you they are likely to cheer you on. There is always someone to root for you at the end of the workout," Jubert said.

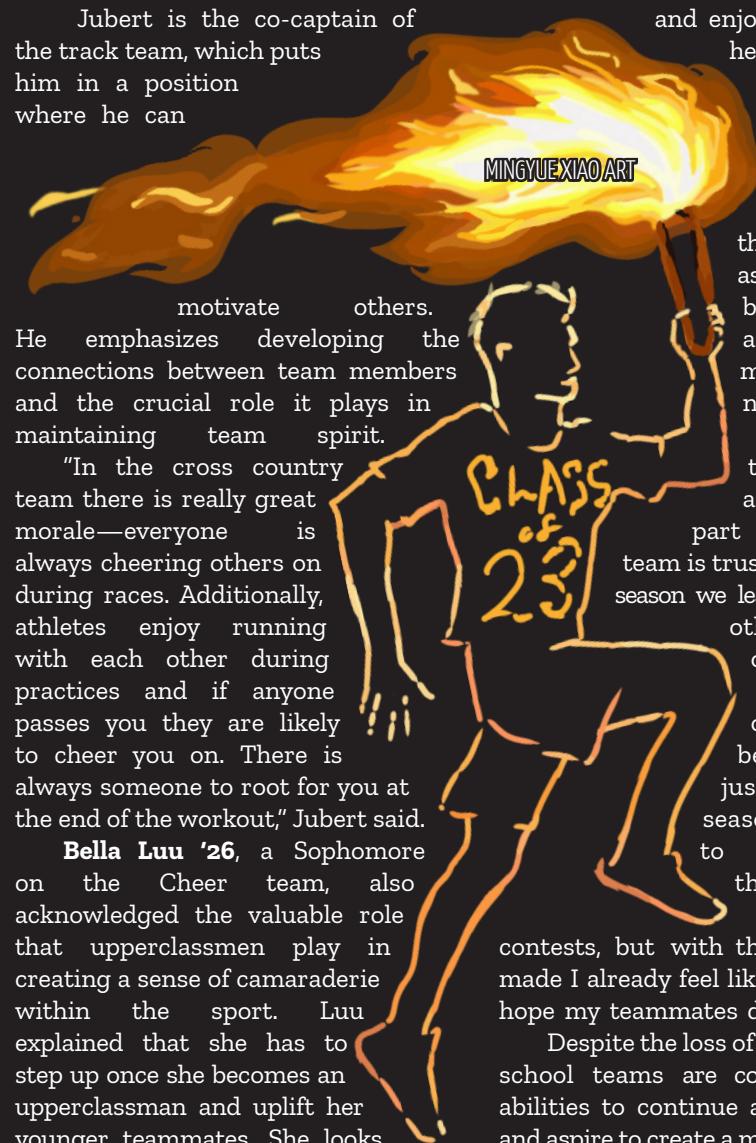
Bella Luu '26, a Sophomore on the Cheer team, also acknowledged the valuable role that upperclassmen play in creating a sense of camaraderie within the sport. Luu explained that she has to step up once she becomes an upperclassman and uplift her younger teammates. She looks

forward to inspiring and mentoring the underclassmen to create a collaborative and enjoyable season for her teammates.

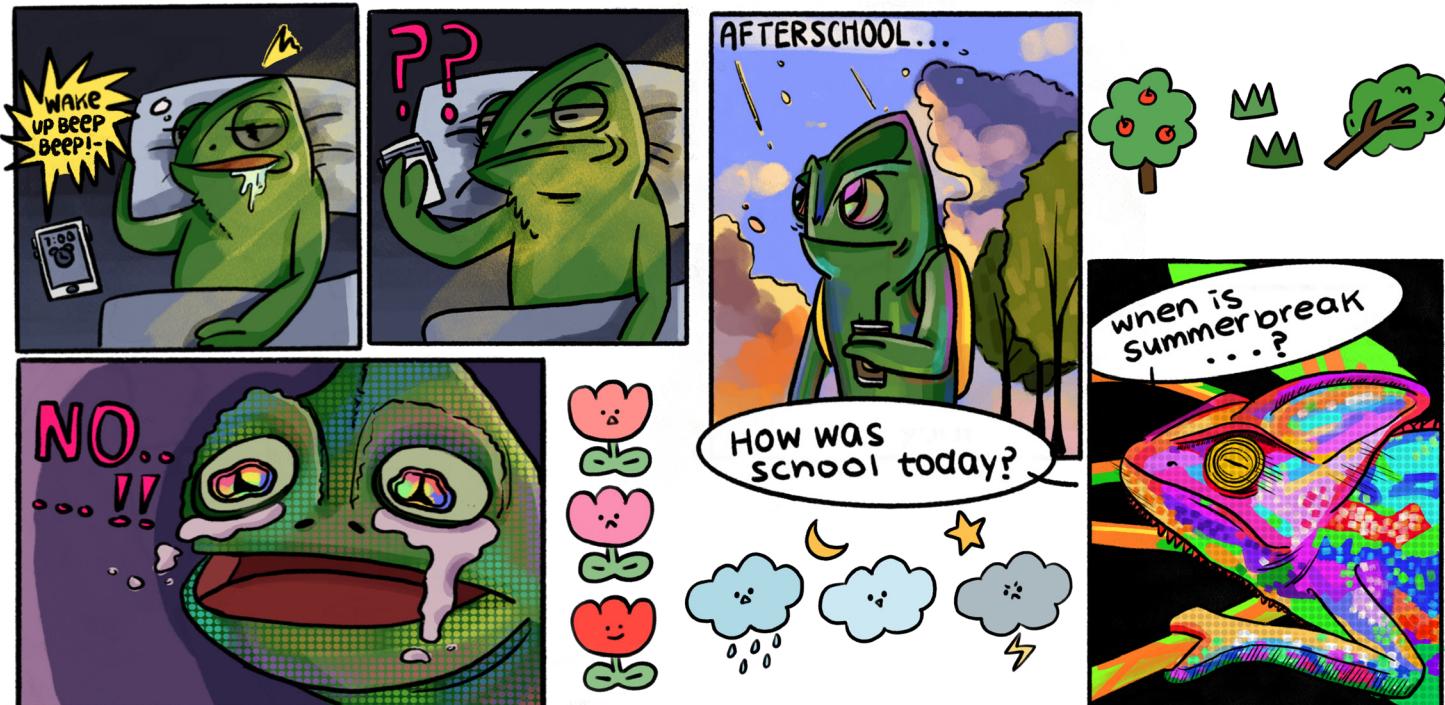
Also, Luu believes that the team experience is more valuable than the success. She asserts that the best part of a sport is the memories made, not the wins.

"I want my team to feel like a family. A big part of a successful team is trust, and I hope this season we learn to trust each other, support our teammates even outside of practice and become sisters, just like last season. We hope to win nationals this year and perform well at contests, but with the friends I have made I already feel like a winner, and I hope my teammates do too," Luu said.

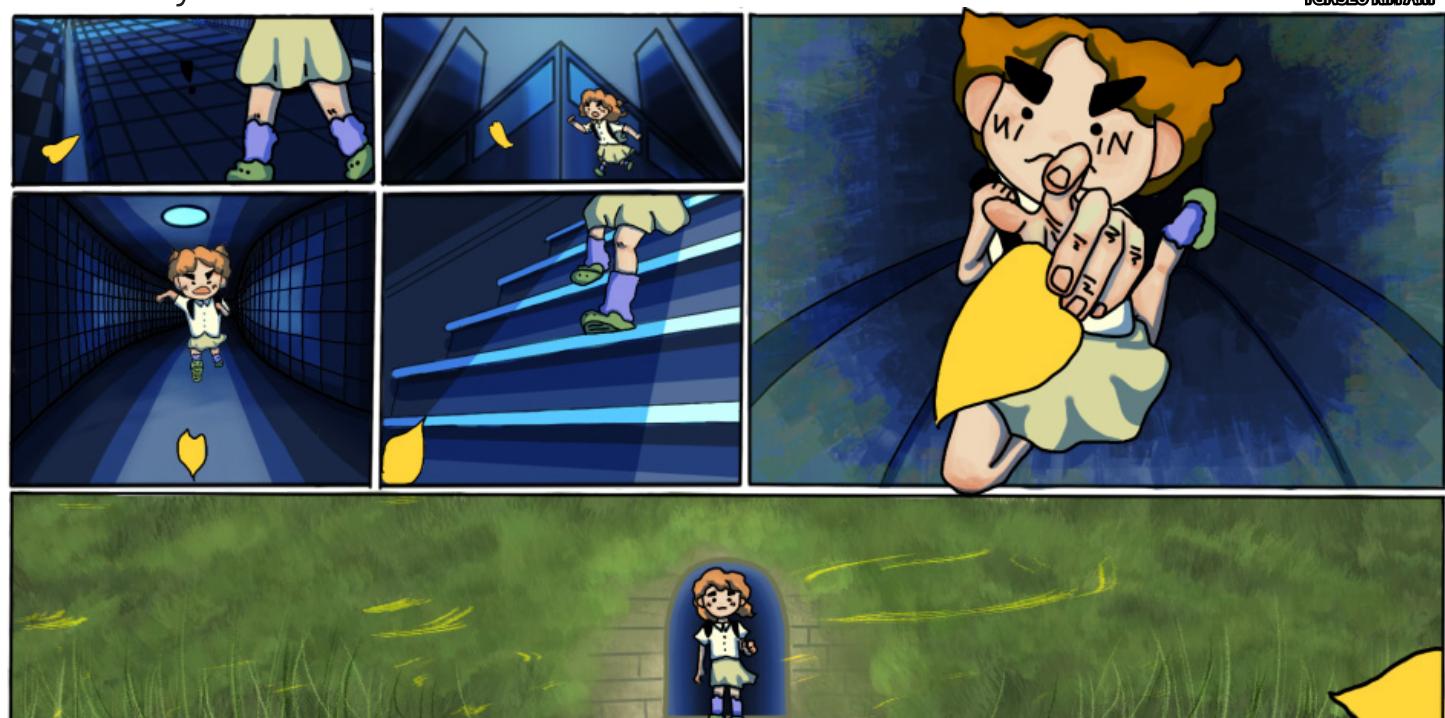
Despite the loss of valuable Seniors, school teams are confident in their abilities to continue achieving success and aspire to create a meaningful season.



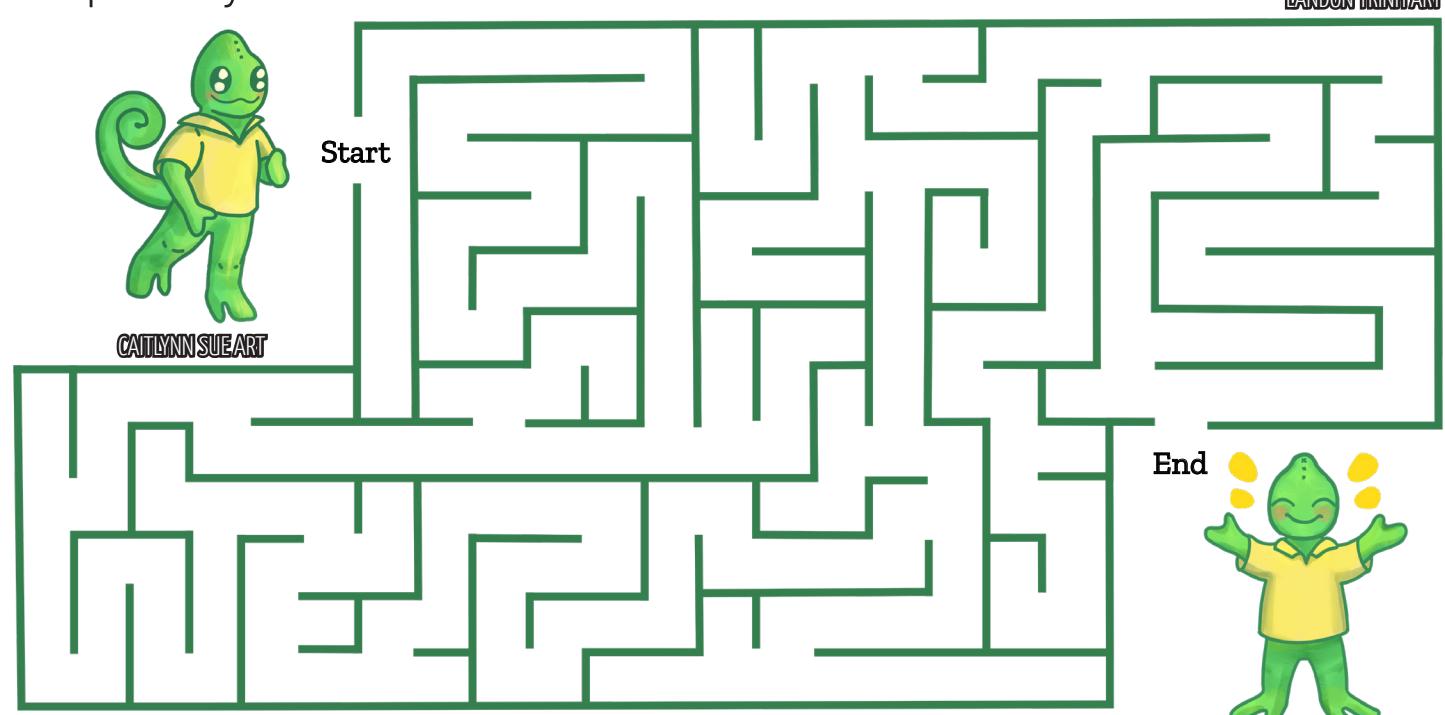
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J H L X N B T S O R C S K A P V A P S L T C E M R I A T B C
K Y L S E N C E N T H I N S R E H L W I A J P J M C C F O B
A R T I C L E C R D U G E F J V R W G S D M N E W S B D T M
V Q E C O F G W R V D N Y V C S O N H M K E I A C X V U B L
X C A M E R A R Y S I D T J A O T A C F B I E N B D Q I F P
O Q J R D F M E K A N E C R V E G A P N L J W R S K E T C H
A S T O R Y V N P M Q P W D G B K Q F U S L O V K S D Y C F
N B G A H Y R Z P H O T O G R A P H Y F D B X P K T I D Y W

ALEXA JOSEPH ART

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Article	Journalism
Camera	News
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Sketch
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Story
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CHARGER FOLLIES

LYNKANGART

"Get Up"



James Yu

Staff Writer

As I wake up to afternoon rays of sunshine slipping through the cracks in my blinds, there is one thing that motivates me to get out of bed on those serene summer days: listening to the new NewJeans extended play (EP)!

Loud and bold, K-pop girl group NewJeans' newest set of six songs, released on July 21, in the EP "Get Up" encapsulates the spirit of summer. The EP opens with "New Jeans" which introduces the listener to a new NewJeans—filled with expressive synths, presto speed beat and reinventive lyrics. The song expresses what NewJeans is going for in their new EP best: "New hair, new tee, NewJeans do you see?"

Following "New Jeans" is the EP's hit lead single "Super Shy." With its fast tempo and avant-garde instrumental, it is not shy in its ability to get people moving. Its energy leaves no question as to why the song's over-the-top dance has exploded across TikTok and Instagram, with netizens putting their own unique twists onto the dance in order to compete with others over who can get the most "Super Shy."

Not to be outdone, the next song after "Super Shy," "ETA," follows in its predecessor's footsteps of musical ingenuity. Incorporating a proud bass accompaniment and a catchy beat, "ETA" gets listeners into the fun and excitement of the summer.

However, "Get Up" has more to offer than just summer hits. Single "Cool with You" offers listeners a calm and refined yet rhythmic and vocally brilliant song for the calm summer nights. Similarly, the single "ASAP" mimics the songs which precede it, combining the calm vocals from "Cool with You" with the crescendoing mood of "ETA." Unfortunately, while the fifth track of the EP, "Get Up," evokes the tranquility of relaxation, it feels more like a sample than an actual song due to its brief 36 second run time, leaving much to be desired.

Although the summer has come and gone as fast as a full listen of the EP takes (12 minutes), I still find myself returning back again and again to "ETA" and "Super Shy" whenever my schoolwork builds up and my motivation reaches record-breaking lows. Whether the sun is shining or snow is falling, whether I have a math test the next day or a Minecraft session with my friends until long after the sun sets, NewJeans' new EP will always have a place in my playlist.

"Get Up" (4/5)

was i vibin?



- + experimental vibes
- + rhythmic music design
- some songs feel unfinished

TRAINS

- Transportation -

A train ride to the future

Niru Shivakumar and Joshua Yan

Staff Writers

Throughout the years, trains have solidified themselves as a key part of human transportation. What started off as a simple concept has been developed and revolutionized, with recent innovations including real-time data transmission systems and advanced sensor technology even allowing for autonomous operation.

Autonomous trains enhance city utilization and reliability and make transportation more convenient and affordable for passengers, reducing traffic congestion and offering an alternative to car use. However, it was a long journey of innovation that has brought the world to the trains of the modern era.

The first railways came up in Germany in 1550. They were paths of wooden rails called "wagon ways" used to reduce friction while moving wheeled vehicles. The 19th century saw the beginning of significant changes in German railways, which was propelled by the tremendous industrialization that was spreading over Europe at the time. The Bayerische Ludwigs-Eisenbahn, the first steam-powered railway in Germany, commenced service in 1835, traveling between the cities of Nuremberg and Furth. This railway signaled the arrival of steam locomotives in Germany.

Passenger railways that cover medium to long distances are known as conventional railways. They generally do not reach speeds above 150 mph. According to the International Energy Agency, 90% of global conventional rails today can be found in North America, Europe, China, India and Japan, and many span between countries.

"Trains are a really important part of transportation since they allow for efficient and speedy transcontinental travel. For a while, my dad and I rode on Amtrak and we really liked how you get to experience the landscape more and how you can get off at stops to check out local areas before leaving, not to mention the much lower price," Freshman **Anderson Lin** said.

Although the U.S. is experiencing rapid economic growth due to train production, according to the International Railroad and Transit Union, many students choose to drive or do not even think about using rapid transit as a more convenient way to travel.

"In the past, trains were very impactful, but are no longer as important since cars are more convenient for short distances and planes are faster for long distances. However, I can see them being used in the future because of innovations like magnetic levitation, which will improve cost and efficiency," Junior **Brian Zhou** said.

The railway industry has made innovations regarding the kinds of trains they produce. Passenger rail and freight rail perform two very different functions, both catering to their own unique set of requirements and industries. Although both rely on rail infrastructure to facilitate movement, there are some significant variations between the two. Passenger trains often use a greater amount of power than freight railroads, as they must ensure the comfort of their passengers by providing facilities such as air conditioning, lighting and entertainment systems. On the other hand, freight rail is focused on the effective transportation of products and may not need as many energy-intensive features. Additionally, the schedules of passenger train services are often more frequent and adhere to predetermined timetables, while freight trains are more adaptable in order to accommodate the needs of the cargo and the requirements of the logistics.

Of the most notable advancements in train technology is the magnetic levitation train, or maglev train. Maglev trains, in contrast to conventional trains, which depend on wheels for traction and movement, float above the rails using magnetic forces. The first of these trains was constructed in the U.K. in 1984, but the technology was first conceptualized back in 1904 by American professor Robert Goddard. In place of an engine, maglev trains move via electromagnetic propulsion, the same concept that causes opposite magnetic charges to repel each other. A magnetic field is generated by electrified coils in the track and its guidance walls, which pushes the train forward. This allows for zero friction between the train and the track, meaning that maglev trains can reach speeds of more than 300 mph. It also means that they make less noise and vibration, which in turn leads to far less delays as a result of mechanical breakdowns.

Unfortunately, due to high costs, it is difficult for nations to implement a widespread use of maglev trains. Each mile of maglev track can cost anywhere between \$50 million and \$200 million. Considering the speeds that these trains can travel, that adds up to roughly \$15.5 billion to \$62 billion for each hour of travel. As a result, only six maglev train networks as of 2023 currently exist in the entire world: one in Japan, two in South Korea and three in China.

Trains are a symbol of the unending drive for technological advancement—the first railway lines were made of wood, and today's marvels of maglev technology are sleek and futuristic—and they play an important role in human creativity. The history of trains is a reflection not just of the progression of technology but also of the unrelenting will of people to connect, explore and overcome limits.

Compiled by Vira Patil,
Niru Shivakumar and
Gilina Voon
Staff Writers

Poll: How often do students ride trains?

