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We Need To Talk

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Current Events

Edited by Barsha Parajuli

As Schools Are Reopening

by Deetya Adhikari

After almost two years in virtual learning, many schools in the United States have at last reopened their doors for a full-time in-person education. People have said that this is the next step into recovering from COVID-19, and returning to “normality;” however this may be a step backwards. Cases were at a record low in June of this year, only for them to rise as the first schools began to reopen in July and as more people became content with not wearing masks.

In 2020, Kansas teacher Alisha Morris had created a database, tracking any cases of the virus in public schools, spanning from July 1st onwards to January of 2021—a retrospective look at cases of the virus in schools in 2020. From the start of July to August 23rd, 2020, the database logged approximately 4,300 cases across schools in the United States. Her project has grown since then, with volunteers helping catalog cases from news reports and personal anecdotes, at the behest of many school districts, which have tried to deflect attention from the growing number of cases. This also means that schools were perhaps not being completely



forthright and transparent about how smoothly the school year had been running; this leads to parents misjudging how safe an in-person school environment is and does not bode well for how honest school systems will be for this new year.

Currently, Atlanta's school district has reported 24,270 cases since schools reopened this fall, which does not include data from Clayton County, one of the largest districts in Atlanta. Thankfully, no other district surpasses Atlanta in COVID numbers, but many are following close behind, such as Los Angeles, with a hardy 5,307 cases as of September 1st. In Houston, there have been over 11,500 cases throughout staff and students; after the first week of school, Tampa had put nearly 9,000 students into

quarantine. School had only been open for a few weeks in these cities. The biggest surprise about this exponential rise is purely the sheer number of cases, but also how quickly the number of cases rose.

With that being said, the excitement for being back in school is unparalleled, especially with many students not having been in the classroom for nearly two years. For a good majority of students, distance learning was not fulfilling and was detrimental to their well-being – plummeting mental health and motivation to an all-time low as well as not allowing students to properly learn and grasp material. Under all the emotional and mental stress, resuming in-person classes feels like a breath of fresh air. At least, that's how it may seem at first glance. In reality, the pressures of school only increased, with teachers piling on copious amounts of homework and quizzes within the first week. The sudden contrast between taking class in bed and getting up early for lectures is enough to put students off their guard, but for teachers to assign work as if nothing was different the previous year is draining and anxiety-inducing. The exacting demands that teachers make on their students are surprising, especially considering that they know how difficult the previous year was and have a vague understanding, at the least, that students did not learn very much that year.



History

Edited by Bruktawit Fisseha

Remembrance of September 11, 2001.

by Tara Vidyababu

Terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers in New York City are still remembered 20 years later.

On Sept. 11, 2001, four airplanes were hijacked and crashed into the North and South Towers, more commonly known as the Twin Towers, and the Pentagon.

A flight attendant on board one of the four planes hijacked said in a phone call to American's office in Boston, "Something is wrong. We are in a rapid descent. We are flying way too low. Oh my God, we are way too low."

Soon after that call was made, that airplane collided with the World Trade Center's North Tower causing it to collapse. Shortly after the same happened to the South Tower.

That day left 2,977 people killed as a cause of the terrorist attacks. Even 20 years later, of Sept. 11, 2001 causes people to feel overwhelmed with sadness and fear from the attacks and the loved ones lost in the midst of it all.

According to the Pew Research Center, 92% of Americans felt sad watching news coverage of the 9/11 attacks and another 77% of Americans reported feeling frightened watching the media of the attacks. Additionally, three weeks after the attacks, 87% said they felt angry about the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

Politically, 9/11 left Americans with a new set of priorities. Two months after the attacks, 83% of Americans said "defending the country from future terrorist attacks" was a top priority for the United States, and was the number one priority over all.

Today, a 9/11 museum and memorial is put in place where the Twin Towers once sat.

For example, inside the museum can be found a smoldered fire truck with its hood almost completely blown off from the conditions caused by the airplanes crashing into the towers. Additionally, an original steel beam, adorned with memoranda of lost ones and missing posters of those following the attacks from the World Trade Center is displayed..

The 9/11 museum also holds an exhibit telling the story of how the hijackers of the planes that crashed into the Twin Towers and the Pentagon were found and how Americans reacted to the news of the lead hijacker being killed almost ten years later.

In modern day, most Americans under the age of 25 do not remember where they were or the day of 9/11 to its full extent. However, the mass amount of people affected by acts of terrorism on that day is a feeling that can not be forgotten. As per Pew Research, “In many ways, 9/11 reshaped how Americans think of war and peace, their own personal safety and their fellow citizens.”



Spotlight

Edited by Paleesa Kapoor

The Shooting of Guila Dale by Elbethel Gebeyehu Moges

For most Americans, the fireworks on the Fourth of July weekend symbolize national prosperity and patriotism. They represent the long and colorful history of sacrifices made for the independence of their country. They trigger a sense of pride. But for one fellow American, Gulia Dale, a black man and a retired army major, that wasn't the case.

On July 4th 2021, the sounds of fireworks in his town of Sussex, New Jersey revived Gulia dale stressful memories of his time in combat and aggravated the post-traumatic stress he fought after 42 years in the Army.

Four minutes later at about 9:30 pm, Dale was backing his car out his driveway when one of the officers responding to the 911 call arrived and blocked him from the front. A second police car pulled from behind pinning him in. "Get out of the truck. Get on the ground," an officer can be heard yelling in the video footage of the encounter released by New Jersey's attorney general. The footage shows Major Dale leaving the vehicle, opening a rear door and reaching inside. He then returns to the driver's seat before quickly exiting and facing at least one of the officers. He was shot as he left the truck "with an object in his hand," the attorney general's office said. He was declared dead right at the spot.

Civil rights leaders believe race played a role in how officers engaged with the retired major, especially when compared to how they handled an 80 year old white man on a January episode.

The man was accused of firing twice at the officers after he called to report that he had a gun and planned to kill himself. The officers did not fire at the man. The situation ended with him being safely apprehended and arrested at a hospital.

The contrast in the police response to these situations highlights the inequalities in how police treat white people and people of color even when responding to a mental health crisis. Gulia Dale was not a criminal. That night, he was a man that was suffering from mental imbalance and PTSD. He did not deserve to be approached with guns a blazing while he was having a panic attack. There was no effort from the police to deescalate the situation. Instead, the police approached him with violence.

"It was 12 seconds — if that," his sister, Valerie Cobbertt, said in an interview. "It was just so fast. You didn't give him a chance."

"I don't want to say that race played a part in it," she added. "But it did."

The two officers identified as having fired at Major Dale, Garrett Armstrong and Steven Kneidl, are back to work after taking some time off to have their mental health evaluated. The lawyers said shooting was warranted .

"His death is tragic," Charles J. Sciarra, Officer Armstrong's lawyer, said of Major Dale. "But we're certain that all protocols and procedures were followed."

"He reached into his car and came out with a gun," Mr. Sciarra continued, calling the episode a "no-win situation."

"If they hide behind the cars and the guy drives off and then kills himself or winds up on a shooting spree," he added, "then everyone is screaming: 'Why did they let him get away?'

However the excuses given don't explain why the white man was given the benefit of the doubt and not Gulia Dale? Because of the color of his skin, the police saw a black man in a car more threatening than a white one shooting at them. It's a sad reality but this is the society we live in. A society that perceives black people as a threat merely because they're black.

Gulia Dale is not just another statistic. He was a man who had spent 30 years as an army veteran. A man who made sure none of his troops were ever left behind. A man who had worked at the pentagon. Gulia Dale was a husband. He was also a father. He was killed in a town where he had lived for nearly three decades on the very holiday that honored his greatest quality: Patriotism.

Opinion

Edited by Sanjana Mittal

Climate Change Leading to a Possible Extinction of Cocoa and Coffee

by Kavya Malla

Chocolate and coffee, it is hard imagining life without them isn't it? Well, if governments don't do something to combat climate change quickly, it might just come to that.

Climate change is the world's biggest environmental issue today, and its effects are already starting to show in the forms of floods, wildfires, and melting icebergs.

Climate change is known to affect hundreds of animals and plants, putting them at the risk of extinction. So far in the last 50 years, around 2,000 species of plants and animals have perished due to climate change, which, while being a natural process, is being affected by the carbon emissions of human beings raising the temperatures of the Earth.

Climate change affects major food-producing plants like cocoa (*Theobroma cacao*) and over 60% of coffee plant species. Both coffee and cocoa are plants that need weather-specific areas to grow and produce good-quality beans. Due to the rising temperatures near the Equator, the habitable regions for

these plants are reducing. Cocoa plants are said to go extinct and cultivable land for coffee is said to reduce by 50% by 2050.

Along with coffee and cocoa, foods like bananas, strawberries, avocados, seafood , and grapes(especially the kinds used for wine-making) are also at risk of dying in the foreseeable hotter climatic conditions. While the extinction of these foods does not threaten human existence of their well-being, these foods are a significant part of our cultures and everyday lives and their shortages would leave substantial gaps in food culture and would cause considerable shifts in the financial weightage that the exports of these foods bring to countries and are bound to cause some imbalances in the ecological systems of the regions affected by the cultivations of these plants, however, scientists and companies are researching, testing and genetically modifying these plants to try to make them survive the dynamic weather and climate changes predicted, so hopefully, these foods will still be a part of our culture.

The Tragic End to America's Afghan Forever War

by Vijay Fisch

TW: disturbing images, depictions of violence and terrorism

On September 11, 2001, America faced one of its deadliest terrorist attacks ever: the attacks on the Twin Towers, Pentagon, and an attempted attack on Washington DC. In response to the brutal hijackings, President George W. Bush vowed to “win the war against terrorism,” and invaded Afghanistan, in hopes to find Osama Bin Laden, a key planner of the 9-11. In October of 2001, Operation Enduring Freedom began, and US forces initiated airstrikes on al-Qaeda and the Taliban. Quickly, Taliban forces fell and the Taliban regime collapsed.

Many wonder after the chaos that has ensued in recent weeks why we didn’t stop there. How did this revenge mission turn into decades of failed nation building? As John Oliver explained it; we built a bi-partisan “crusade for human rights” with overwhelming political consensus.

The US soon propped up an interim government, and would stay in Afghanistan

for the next 20 years, spending billions on training Afghani soldiers and developing infrastructure for a self-sustaining country.

America’s reconstruction of Afghanistan focused on counter-terrorism to build a lasting peace. Getting Bin Laden was not enough at this point, they wanted to eradicate al-Qaeda. A drastic decrease in troop presence did take place, but we continued to support Afghan soldiers and the Afghan government through air support. We also sent a massive influx of reconstruction money for building bridges, schools, roads, and other key health and infrastructure projects. So how did we get here, where the Taliban has so easily taken back control of the millions of Afghani’s within the war-torn country?

America's massive campaign of bombings caused high civilian death tolls; and outside Kabul in the rural regions, Taliban support grew substantially. While we beat the Taliban, ironically, our presence brought them back. Every year, they took over a little bit more of the country. The fact that the Afghani president failed to include Taliban representatives in most government decisions poured fuel to the fire.

Eventually, the Trump administration decided to pull out of the country. The Biden administration decided to follow through with the plan, and an increase in the Taliban's control was inevitable. The US, which had provided air power, would now stop. Afghan soldiers would be on their own. The issue was the rapid shift of power from the American soldiers to the Afghans. Rural districts were taken swiftly, and the violence escalated in May 2021.

The capital, Kabul, fell quickly, and as we all now know, chaos ensued. We've all seen the devastating photos of Afghans fleeing by holding on the outside of a jet, and falling to their death; photos of the whippings that journalists sustained from Taliban imprisonment; Taliban fighters sitting in abandoned high tech military equipment; and crowds gathering at the Kabul international airport.

All of this raises an important question: after the thousands of lives lost, the hundreds of billions spent, and the decades of conflict, what did we really achieve? Has a strong and free democracy flourished? No. Have we ended the Taliban? Clearly not. Did we achieve the human rights gains we hoped for? Probably not.

As the new Taliban government takes hold with a near zero US military presence, our military leverage has faded. Interaction with this new government is inevitable, and even experts can't predict how this new government will conduct itself. It could decide to avoid the pariah image, and give some leeway on women's rights. It could also go farther right, and stress a stricter interpretation of Sharia Law.

If one thing is clear, the war in Afghanistan failed miserably in most of its tasks. Policy makers must learn from the war and its mistakes to drive future military and international policy to avoid such a costly disaster again.



Art

Edited by Jyotsna Bisariya

Egyptian Art by Paleesa Kapoor

Art was an important element of Egyptian culture and was present in nearly every Egyptians daily life. Artists were revered and regarded as significant crafters, and many typically lived in luxurious surroundings. In the ancient world, the Egyptians redefined art. They were most likely the most accomplished painters of the period. The Egyptians built huge temples and structures, including large pyramids, the majority of which are still standing today. Egyptian history has a lot of art incorporated and over time it has evolved as it is one of the areas with the earliest signs of art. Egypt was known for its amazing pyramids, temples and sculptures. Massive temples, monuments, and pyramids were created by the Ancient

Egyptians. Some of the Egyptians' architectural strategies are being used today. This demonstrates that they were excellent architects who carefully planned their designs to ensure that the construction would stand the test of time. Many popular architectural approaches are derived from ancient Egyptian techniques. The art was based on fundamental components demonstrating significant advances in civilisation. People are still interested in Ancient Egypt art, which is shown in numerous museums because of its elegance.

Pyramids

The greatest architectural achievements of the Ancient Egyptians were the pyramids. Pyramids were built as tombs for the pharaohs. They contained the items that the Egyptians believed the Pharaoh would need in the afterlife. Much of the art that remains today was preserved in the pyramids. Early Egyptian tombs were mastabas -(ow, flat tombs). Pyramids were solid limestone, with the exception of a few small rooms & passages. Egyptians placed great importance



on the resurrection of the soul. They believed the soul, or ka, remained in the body until death. For the individual to travel to the afterlife, both the ka and the body had to be safe. The pyramids were like fortresses to protect the body and treasures of the pharaoh, who was believed to become a god after death. His body was sealed in a sarcophagus, a stone coffin. It was then hidden somewhere in the pyramid. Lots of false passageways were constructed to protect the body and prevent tomb robbery. The pyramids and tombs contained the mummified remains of the pharaohs.



Mummification protected the body so that the ka could use it. After embalming, mummies were carefully wrapped in yards of linen bandages. The ancient Egyptians even mummified animals. The first pyramid was built for King Zoser in 2600 BC. It was a "step pyramid", meaning it was made by stacking several mastaba tombs. It was designed by the architect Imhotep, the first recorded artist in history. The Great Pyramid of Giza was the oldest of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World and the only one that survives intact. It was built as a tomb for Pharaoh Khufu and constructed over 20 years, finished 2520 BC. The tallest man-made structure for over 3,800 years. Originally was covered by casing stones that formed a smooth outer surface. The Pyramids are guarded by the Great Sphinx. The sphinx is carved from a rocky ledge. Sphinx was built in approximately 2500 BC by the pharaoh Khafra.

Temples

Temples were built along the eastern banks of the Nile near Thebes. Temples became more and more elaborate overtime. They were built under the command of pharaohs and were dedicated to the king's favourite gods. When the king died, temples housed their funeral chapels where people made offerings to his ka. The temple of Amon continuously improved by different pharaohs over history. Some of its features were: surrounded by obelisks, tall, four-sided pointed stone shafts, statues of pharaohs, open courtyard, great hall, massive 70-feet tall columns, small dark sanctuary for only the king and the priests. There was also a famous temple of Re, built for the sun-god, Re.



Sculptures

Grave robbery was very common, even in ancient times. to protect the ka of the pharaohs, statues were created in the king's likeness. These served as a back-up for the ka in case the king's body was ever damaged or lost. The Sphinx is a very large example of Old Kingdom sculpture, resembling King Khafre. Artists used materials found in the Nile river valley. Some materials were gold, turquoise, lapis lazuli and red coral. Painted relief sculptures lined the walls of pyramids. These are called steles. A stele is a carved upright stone slab used as a monument. The sculptures are stiff, formal,

and stylized. Faces face forward, and the left foot is slightly ahead of the right. There are no open spaces in the stone that the figures are carved from.



The Egyptian period was known for its elegance and beauty. It is clear that their artistic abilities were far ahead of time. It is fascinating to see the different art forms including pyramids, temples and sculptures. Nowadays, we view this as art, however these had a greater purpose years ago. So if you see an Egyptian sculpture in a museum, think about its greater purpose.



Call to Action

[**https://www.stopline3.org/#intro**](https://www.stopline3.org/#intro)

Website with information and ways to take action against line 3.

[**https://www.honorearth.org/action**](https://www.honorearth.org/action)

Website of an indigenous lead environmental group with information on how to take action against line 3.



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