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We Need To Talk

A global, student-run newspaper



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Current Events

edited by Barsha Parajuli

Asian American Hate Crimes

by Yedilsaac Degu

Racism in the US isn't a new phenomenon, however recently there has been a rise in anti-Asian hate and discrimination.

According to the Stop AAPI Hate National Report, in the past year alone, there were nearly 3,800 anti-Asian racist incidents ranging from verbal harassment to physical assault and murder. There are many different factors contributing to this rise in anti-Asian sentiment, with the COVID pandemic being at the forefront.

Since the beginning of this pandemic, there have been 31,924,090 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the US alone, accounting for the world's highest number of cases and deaths to date. While the Trump administration was still in power, they refused to take any accountability for the way they handled the pandemic. Instead, they found a scapegoat to blame for all their shortcomings: China. With former President Donald Trump using rhetoric like "Chinese Virus," he attempted to shift the blame from the irresponsibility of the US federal government to the virus'

country of origin. People have since started echoing that rhetoric and continue to harass Asian Americans .

With the majority of incidents targeting Asian American women, the current rise in hate has come with an intersection of both systemic and internalized racism and misogyny. Due to the fact that Asian women are stereotyped as delicate and weak, those who carry out these subconscious prejudices often target them for this reason precisely. Even with this increase in anti-Asian violence, most recently seen in the Atlanta Shootings, the police have been reluctant to label the blatant racial targeting of Asian women as a hate crime.

The tendency of anti-Asian hate crimes to go unprosecuted as hate crimes has caused outrage in these communities; however, authorities have said that labelling these attacks as "racially charged" is quite challenging. Unlike anti-Black or anti-LGBTQ+ hate crimes, there are less

indicators of targeted violence towards Asian Americans and in addition to the model minority complex, they find it even more uncomfortable to label these attacks as hate crimes. Due to this, conversations about racism towards Asian Americans and their manifestations in daily life have been diminished and not taken as seriously.

We need to start having conversations about anti-Asian hate and how to combat it. We need to start uplifting and listening to Asian voices. We need to Stop Asian Hate.

Opinion

edited by Vishakha Singh

Queer and Self Identities During Lockdown

by Deetya Adhikari

Insecurity plagues many of us, taunting our very being. It comes in several forms, whether it be through our physical appearance, gender, sexual orientation, or even personality. Sometimes, the anxiety takes over, the unreasonable thoughts storming your mind like a sudden tidal wave. Sometimes, we feel stuck, drowning, the hurricane closing around us; we're right at the eye, helplessly thrashing about in an endless pool of doubt. Sometimes, we feel like all that's left of us are the ruins. Left unchecked, these feelings can easily overpower us.

Humans are naturally observant, but there are innumerable people who take these observations to make jarring derogatory judgements and comments. Before, going through our daily routines in the public, surrounded by a number of homophobes and transphobes, racists and sexists all picking and prodding at our very existence, it was hard to accept who you are. Those who identify as LGBTQ+ especially understand



this struggle, and this period of quarantine has given many of them a break from the grueling stares which they had to constantly bear with in the past. For those who live in discriminatory environments, however, lockdown may not have quite as positive of an effect. Nevertheless, the point still stands that numerous members of the LGBTQ+ community will come out of lockdown with a new appreciation for themselves.

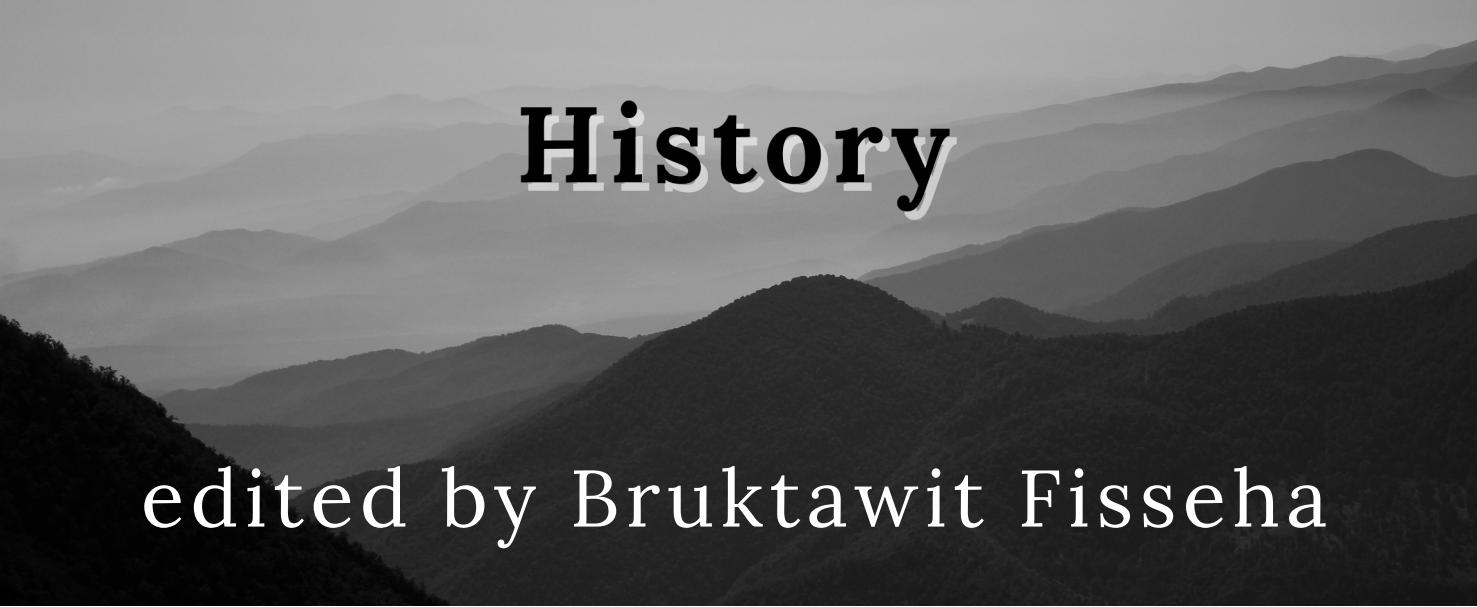
People have lost their jobs, family, and friends, but through all this, many have gained a sense of self-worth and

contentment. Though this does not negate the aforementioned tragedies of the pandemic, this new-found self-acceptance will carry on into post-pandemic life. In the hiatus from everyday life, due to the novel coronavirus, many have taken a step back to reflect upon their lives, changing how they view themselves for the better. For example, gyms have closed, so people have resorted to working out at home. Through doing this, I, among others, realized how much better I felt about myself without fit men and women surrounding me, almost taunting me with how easily they work out, promoting ideals devastatingly out of my reach. Before when I took a look into a mirror, I saw myself as an amalgamation of my flaws. Now that I have had time to myself, I see that I am much more than a number on a scale, much more than my supposedly flawed reflection in the mirror. Another example is for those who struggle with gender dysphoria - a feeling of discomfort or distress for those whose gender identity differs from their sex assigned at birth. This sense of dissatisfaction can be so intense to deal with, so much so that it can lead to anxiety and depression. Having to keep distance from others has given individuals the opportunity to deal with their dysphoria without feeling the judgement and eyes of others on them.



Through new-found self-discovery, people have come to peace with their gender/sexual identities and labels. Accepting and becoming honest with yourself has a profound effect on your psyche: you become more comfortable in your own skin, alleviate any stress that hiding from yourself and others caused, among other benefits. The introspective nature of quarantine has helped to realize what identity you truly feel comfortable in, as you are comparatively farther from the judgement and clamor of society. Those who are lucky enough to be living in loving, accepting environments are given the space and freedom to experiment with their identities, as they figure out what feels right to them.

My message to people reading this: take advantage of this time you are given to contemplate and accept your emotions. This prolonged period of self-isolation has given people the sorely-needed opportunity to take a step back and reflect upon themselves, with a focus on self care. Coming out of quarantine, many will see themselves, and hopefully others, in a new, more positive light.



History

edited by Bruktawit Fisseha

The Peculiar Standards of Masculinity in Clothing Across History

by Abey Bekalu

Pink was originally a masculine color.

That's right. Pink was actually thought to be a color for boys. In 1912, an article from a trade publication called Earnshaw's Infants' Department, declared that, since it was derived from red, "Pink is for the boys, and blue for the girls. The reason is that pink, being a more decided and stronger color, is more suitable for the boy, while blue, which is more delicate and dainty, is prettier for the girl."

Jo B. Paoletti, historian and author of *Pink and Blue: Telling the Girls From the Boys in America*, believes the line was firmly drawn in the 1980s, when two things happened. First, it became more and more common for parents to find out the gender of their children while they were still in the womb. Excited moms and dads wanted to buy gender-specific items for their new little bundles of joy, and of course, retailers obliged. The other main reason, Paoletti theorizes, is because mothers who grew up wearing gender-neutral clothes and playing with toys that appealed to both boys and

girls wanted their daughters to be able to revel in pink, lace, long hair, and Barbies. Marketers and advertisers made this choice seem natural.

This phenomena makes you think what exactly masculinity or femininity is, especially when it comes to appearances. Specifically, clothing.

A man that is interested in his appearance and spends his time grooming himself is usually considered a 21st century development. But actually, through the 19th century, there was certainly a trend for men to be well groomed and fashionable. Some men actually wore corsets during the 18th and 19th centuries. At the time this wasn't necessarily common practice, and so men tried to be discreet about wearing corsets. Towards the mid 1800s, it was considered taboo, and the few men that did wear corsets started to become the subjects of ridicule.

Towards the late 19th century, while corsets were still worn discreetly by men, they were

no longer quite so taboo. Companies began to offer corsets specifically designed for men and for everyday wear. While corsets were mostly worn for fashion purposes by both men and women, similar designs have also been worn by men for hundreds of years for medical purposes. Andy Warhol is said to have worn a corset to support his weakened back after being shot in 1968 until the time of his death.



a 19th century corset for men

By today's standards, an upper-class man in 17th or 18th century Western Europe cannot be considered anything remotely close to "masculine". Long, flowing wigs, bright colored fabrics, wide brimmed hats, stockings, heels...they were too flamboyant to even be considered feminine.

Again, this really breaks down the shallowness of "masculine clothing".

Here's another one for you. Ancient Greeks and Romans never wore pants, and equated the wearing of pants with savagery. Pants were originally associated with the Persians, Scythians, Sarmatians, Eastern and Central Asian peoples. The Greeks used the term anaxyrides for pants and thought that wearing pants was a sign of barbarism. They wore very simple clothes draped around the body or fastened with clasps and brooches. Usually made of wool, the tunic, was the most basic item of clothing. The Romans only began wearing pants when the Empire

started extending beyond the Mediterranean. They began gaining popularity among Roman soldiers and would continue to remain popular throughout the Byzantine period and beyond.

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A fashionable man in the reign of Louis XIV

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Now, one can see the things that have been said so far and interpret it in whatever way they want. But here's what I think should be the takeaway. The concept of masculinity and femininity, especially in appearances, are simply a social construct. There's no further meaning to it. We can simply see how vastly it differs from culture to culture and time to time. Criticizing someone for dressing differently is simply denying the usual changing process of fashion as time goes by. It's hard to take in, but it is what it is. It's best if we just accept it and put our attention to more important topics.

Spotlight

edited by Rachel Lewis

Studying abroad is now possible for every teen with a WiFi connection

by Rachel Lewis



Project Exchange is a global organization that hosts multiple programs that aim to increase cultural understanding and promote youth-led work to solve the world's biggest issues, starting in their own communities. Image courtesy of Project Exchange.

Studying abroad is a distant dream for many high school students, even if they are eager to participate in a cross-cultural learning experience. For Ashley Lin, though, three weeks in Uruguay as a U.S. Department of State Youth Ambassador was a wake-up call to the necessity of cross-cultural exchange in the modern world.

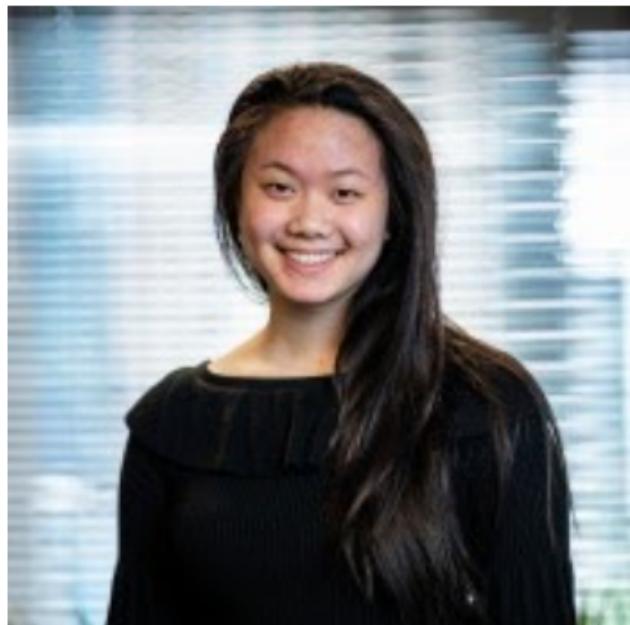
Lin learned and lived the culture of Uruguay during her three weeks there, which opened her eyes to the benefits of cross-cultural understanding. However, she recognized that the number of high school students who

travel and stay in another country is a very small fraction of the teens who are interested in cultural exchange, not to mention the total population of high schoolers on Earth. There are multiple obstacles to participating in a study abroad program, even if you're interested: knowing they exist, researching them, applying for them, and paying thousands of dollars in fees if accepted.

Only about 20% of all U.S. students were taking a foreign language course in 2017, according to the American Councils for International Education. The median percentage of students learning a foreign language in European countries in 2016 was 92% and 100% in France, Norway, Romania, and some other small European nations, according to Eurostat. Part of the reason for this difference is that most European countries have national requirements for elementary, middle, and high school students, but individual school districts set

those graduation rules in the U.S. Study abroad programs in American colleges do not come anywhere close to balancing this international education disparity. While 347,099 American college students studied abroad in the 2018–19 school year, 872,214 international students – over 2½ times as many – were enrolled in U.S. colleges in the same year, according to the Institute of International Education's Open Doors report.

Many high school students lack the financial means to register for a costly international trip that includes airfare, hotel costs (unless staying with a host family), food expenses, travel insurance, transportation within the foreign country, and spending on souvenirs, among other fees. Some students simply do not want to stay in a country where most citizens may speak a different language, eat different breakfast foods, and celebrate different holidays, or feel that it would be too difficult to live there.



Current college student Ashley Lin founded Project Exchange in the summer of 2018 after studying abroad in Uruguay. Her goal was to make cross-cultural discussion and collaboration more accessible to high school students. Image courtesy of Ashley Lin.

Lin wanted to change this by making cultural exchange and discourse a possibility for all teens (with a working device and reliable WiFi), both in the U.S. and around the world. In July 2018, Lin founded Project Exchange to provide an accessible, digital way to “study abroad” during the summer. Project Exchange is now an international nonprofit that has helped over 300 students from more than 30 countries connect, discuss cultural similarities and differences, and work on global issues together.

The Digital Exchange Program (DEP) is Project Exchange’s primary method of achieving its mission “to bring together high school and college students from around the globe to talk about culture, promote mutual understanding, and prepare young individuals to tackle critical global issues through cross-cultural communication”. Each week for three months, students participate in video calls with their DEP partner, a student from a different country, as well as lessons and activities on the United Nations’s Sustainable Development Goals and how to create community initiatives that promote cultural understanding. For those who prefer messaging or can’t do international calls, Project Exchange recently created DEP Text, where partners communicate solely through text messages over a four week period. Alumni of the DEP or any other study abroad program can also apply to the Impact Incubator, which focuses on teaching middle and high schoolers the skills they need to implement a local cultural exchange initiative over eight weeks, from fundraising to social media strategies. Project Exchange created this opportunity in response to DEP alumni with novel ideas for community-based cultural exchange programs who lacked some of the skills and financial resources they needed to put their

plans into action.

Participants from multiple rounds, or cohorts, of the DEP, DEP Text, and the Impact Incubator have said that they learned a lot about other cultures and how to lead improvements in multicultural awareness and acceptance through Project Exchange's programs, in addition to improving their leadership and communication skills and making a friend thousands of miles away. As physical travel becomes more difficult due to rising diplomatic tensions and a global pandemic, Project Exchange's vision of a digitally interconnected and understanding world is more relevant and impactful than ever.



Call to Action

<https://sahanjournal.com/helping-out/how-to-help-brooklyn-center-daunte-wright/>

How you can help people in the Brooklyn centre after Daunte Wright's killing

<https://www.advancingjustice-atlanta.org/>

Asian Americans Advancing Justice website

<https://chipublib.bibliocommons.com/list/share/709652867/1066283627>

Black Lives Matter reading list



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