Local restaurant owners expressed hope and happiness when outdoor dining reopened on Friday, Jan. 29 after a two-month hiatus. The spike in coronavirus cases over the holiday season resulted in more restrictive stay-at-home orders, including the shutdown of outdoor dining. However, cases in L.A. County have fallen significantly in the past month, allowing for the reopening of outdoor dining, albeit with restrictions. Parties must be six people or fewer, tables need to be set at least eight feet apart, and servers are required to wear face coverings.

Aro Latin, a restaurant with a focus on traditional Mexican cuisine located at the corner of Mission Street and Diamond Avenue, took a hit when L.A. County shut down outdoor dining. Takeout orders only brought in 10 to 15 percent of usual profits, and it could not staff the typical amount of employees at one time. However, with the addition of outdoor dining, Aro Latin’s profits have risen back up to 60 to 70 percent of pre-pandemic levels.

“[Outdoor dining] has impacted us in a really positive fashion. The most important thing is that I’m able to staff five to six people in a day as opposed to one or two,” Aro Latin owner Kiran Raina said. “Everyone understands [that they need] to do their part and [that] the only way we get to stay open is to take hygiene and health very seriously.”

Hi-Life Burgers, a burger shack and source of old-fashioned Mexican dishes, has also experienced a growth in business since the reopening of outdoor dining. The restaurant initially started construction of an outdoor patio in January 2020, and after some delay due to the coronavirus, the new patio opened for the first time to customers when outdoor dining returned.

“Especially when the weather is nice, people are loving to sit outside and enjoy the outdoor patio. We are happy with the turnout,” Hi-Life Burgers owner Nick Tsianos said. “We’ve been really humbled with our customers and the tremendous support that we’ve had. That has meant everything to us. It has carried us through, and things have been getting better and better.”

Community members who have dined outdoors at local eateries have expressed positive reviews, especially about the health precautions taken by servers and other staff members.

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The reopening of indoor dining will not be an option until L.A. falls into a less restrictive tier. When that happens, restaurants will only be able to operate with 25 percent capacity or fewer than 100 occupants.
Pet adoptions lift spirits during quarantine

The demand for pets increased during the pandemic, leading to more adoptions than usual. The Masjedi family decided to add a dog to their family in late January, adopting Babka. Talesnick, who welcomed her third dog, said it was the best time to get a puppy. "We have more time at home to care for a pet," she said. "Because more people are home, they have a lot more time on their hands, so there is a lot of interest in pet adoption." SPHS junior Lulu Talesnick and her family decided to adopt their third puppy, driving to Arizona to meet with a breeder for Akita dogs that originated from Japan and were prized for their loyalty.

"I wish to honor student's humanity, and that means honoring Black history," fifth-grade teacher Kristy King said. "Because Black history is a part of American history, it is important to highlight not only Martin Luther King Jr., Harriet Tubman, and Frederick Douglass, but also discuss Black scientists, mathematicians, and writers, such as Langston Hughes and Toni Morrison. Also, I feel it is important to teach lessons about the impact of racism and the painful truth behind it. My goal is to provide an anti-racist education to help build an anti-racist generation." During the second assembly, students learned about African culture and geography, while the third assembly focused on allyship, specifically for young people. The four-part assembly series is the continuation of an entire year of multicultural and inclusive assemblies that MHS has held during distance learning. The assembly topics correlate with specific months, like Hispanic heritage from September to October and Indigenous experiences in November, in order to promote diversity and anti-racism — what is not currently represented in the school curriculum.

"Teachers have a set curriculum for Social Studies that is multiple decades old," MHS Principal Dr. Laurie Narro said. "Our English Language Arts program is more current, however the inclusion of diverse voices is limited. I think between the assemblies and our teachers wanting to seek out resources beyond our district adopted curriculum, we are doing our best to ensure visibility and inclusivity." Narro consulted with members of MHS’s Black community to ensure that the school sends out an inclusive and accurate message through February's assemblies. The final Black History Month assembly will premiere Friday, Feb. 25, focusing on how skin color and hair type affect one's identity. The assemblies will continue in March, themed around Women’s History Month.

Weekly assemblies recognize Black History Month at MHS

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Drives for homeless inspire compassion

STORY EDDIE ZHOU
PHOTOS OSCAR WALSH

Local activist group Black Lives Matter (BLM) South Pasadena emphasizes humanity and respect for unhoused community members in its lunch and donation drives at Garfield Park every Monday at 12 p.m. Volunteers distribute homemade and purchased meals, drinks, masks, hand sanitizer, snacks, and other everyday items to those in need.

The coronavirus pandemic has had a particularly harmful impact on the unhoused population, prompting drive organizer and community member Anne Bagasao to take action. Places such as homeless shelters and churches that normally offer food, shelter, and other important services to people experiencing homelessness have either closed or reduced capacity, making an already difficult period even harder for unhoused residents.

“The loneliest feeling one can experience is that of being made invisible,” Bagasao said. “Myself, along with our many volunteers, are committed to letting our unhoused neighbors know that they are not invisible, they matter, [and] there are humans out here who care about them.”

The weekly drives began on Monday, Jan. 4, and follow the structure of past events organized by BLM South Pasadena. The group formed in August 2019 as part of a national project, and started to gain traction in South Pasadena on Thanksgiving and during the holiday season.

Although the weekly meal distributions only represent a portion of the group’s efforts, the members hope that such efforts can spur increased action among residents and encourage them to reflect on biases they might have against those facing homelessness.

“The goal is to show South Pasadena that our unhoused neighbors are individuals worthy of the same respect and compassion that we afford to any other member of our community,” Bagasao said. “We don’t only host meals and distribute sack lunches and gear, we coordinate with advocacy groups like SELAH (Neighborhood Homeless Coalition) and Street Watch L.A. We advocate for the unhoused community at City Hall.”

Participants socialize and discuss ongoing needs with volunteers, who distribute extra meals to neighboring encampments such as those in Eagle Rock and El Sereno.

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“I simply encourage folks to act on their own humanity,” Bagasao said. “They are our neighbors. They are our brothers and sisters. We have the means. We just need to get past the prejudices and misconceptions. The best way to do that is to get involved.”

Those who wish to contribute can fill out a volunteer form that can be found on the group’s Instagram @blacklivesmattersouthpasadena, and any questions can be directed to Anne Bagasao (@shejustanne).

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UNPACKING SPUSD MEALS

National financial struggles amidst an almost year-long quarantine have pushed the U.S. Department of Agriculture to implement a universal free lunch waiver. SPUSD is offering meals to all students at no cost, without any need of application. Tiger highlights the intricacies of how meals are selected, prepared, and delivered during the pandemic.

**Nutrition Guidelines**

The district’s lunch meal program follows state nutritional guidelines enforced by the Food and Nutrition Service, an extension of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). According to the USDA, a well-rounded and nutritious high school-level meal must include one cup of fruit, one cup of vegetables, two cups of grains, two cups of protein, and one cup of fluid milk. A sample meal, served on Tuesday, Feb. 2, included teriyaki chicken, white and brown rice, edamame and cauliflower florets, an orange, and the option of a percent or nonfat chocolate milk.

Although the district is mandated to follow these guidelines, SPUSD Director of Food Services Michelle Curry has some freedom to improvise meals within the program. Meals typically consist of a dish made in the school kitchens, such as chicken chow mein or macaroni and cheese, along with a fruit, a vegetable, and milk to meet the USDA requirements. One of Curry’s priorities is to maintain consistency for students by providing specific meals on certain days, however, she occasionally introduces new foods onto the menu, like shepherd’s pie this month.

As for the purchasing of food, the USDA’s Buy American program requires as many ingredients as possible to be grown in the U.S., in order to promote American agriculture. To buy ingredients, the SPUSD meal program is given 40 cents of commodity dollars per meal from the USDA, which equates to around 100,000 commodity dollars per year for the district. SPUSD joins with 30 neighboring school districts, to form a Commodity Co-Opt program that allows schools to pool their commodity dollars together to purchase ingredients from major food distributors like Gold Star Foods and Sysco.

**Preparation**

SPUSD’s 40 meal program employees work in shifts from three to eight hours. At 6 a.m. on Monday mornings, seven people initiate the preparation, with others scheduled for later hours in the day. Before handling the fresh ingredients, each person follows strict safety protocols, filling out the COVID-19 Screening Verification Form, checking their temperature, and donning protective wear, including plastic aprons that are changed throughout the day. The staff is then socially distanced at stations located in the cafeteria and kitchen.

Curry hands out fresh meals to families soon after produce deliveries on Mondays and Wednesdays. During the days in between, the staff spend six to seven hours slicing and packaging whole vegetables, such as broccoli, cucumber, and celery, in individual plastic bags — a technique that preserves freshness and quality for days before consumption. After the packaging, the staff organizes the meals in 30 to 40 crates for distribution.

**Meal Selection**

Curry noted that while many neighboring school districts have chosen to move to strictly pre-packaged food such as Lunchables or corn dogs during the pandemic, her department has continued to prepare fresh meals in the high school kitchen.

“I remember thinking that there is no way our program would [move to only pre-packaged foods] because that is not who we are and that’s not what we want to show to our families,” Curry said. “[We] are fully invested in doing the best for South Pasadena, and having good food is very important to me.”

To select individual meals, Curry and her team observe which foods the students like and dislike by examining which foods are purchased versus thrown away. Students tend to gravitate towards meals like ribs or pizza, but shy away from hotdogs or salads. While the pandemic has made it difficult to gauge students’ meal preferences, Curry’s team has found that a predictable schedule is beneficial.

“I try and keep variety, but I also learned a long time ago that kids will know that Tuesday is rib day, for example. They get used to knowing what foods are being served on which days.”

To improve meals within the program, Curry’s team also serves breakfast meals, which typically include cereal, bagels, or yogurt in addition to fruit and an extra item such as crackers or string cheese.

One of the most significant impacts of the pandemic on the meal program is the lowered availability of certain products like potstickers due to factory layoffs and decreased agricultural production, eliminating some of the freedoms Curry once had in selecting meals. Now, Curry’s team needs to either purchase specialty items several weeks in advance, or change the meal plans to exclude foods that could not be ordered.

**Delivery**

Three days worth of meals are offered on Tuesdays and two days worth of meals are offered on Fridays, from 7:15 a.m. to 8:45 a.m. and 10:15 a.m. to 1:45 p.m. — the only time when lunch is served hot. Since grades TK to 2 returned back to school on Thursday, Feb. 18, all curbside meals are now distributed at the high school only, no longer at Arroyo Vista Elementary School.

As cars line up on Diamond Avenue near the basketball gym to pick up meals, employee Courtney Strain records the oldest child’s ID number, the amount of children in the family, and any dietary restrictions, relaying them to the five-person team behind her. Each family receives one bag filled with all the meal items in their vehicle’s trunk, completing a process the community has praised for its efficiency.

“When we showed up the first day, I just told them who I was and that we were vegetarians,” parent Katherine Bongfeldt said. “From that point on, [Courtney] recognized us and our car, and had our meals ready for us. That surprised me because they are dealing with more than 1,000 meals a week, yet Courtney remembered us and our situation quickly. I am so happy with the staff and the services they provide.”

An average of 375 families pick up meals per distribution day. In an effort to decrease wait times, the team will be welcoming additional staff on Tuesday, Feb. 23.
THE TIGER
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CSPA GOLD MEDALIST 2020
CSPA CROWN AWARD 2020
CSPA GOLD MEDALIST 2021
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FEBRUARY 22, 2021

Opinion

Mental health isn’t for profit
Address mental health with tangible solutions, not commercialization.

The coronavirus pandemic continues to harm teenage mental health, shown not only in student complaints of increased stress, but in such a serious way that it has produced statistical results. Adults who control the structure of student life acknowledge the existence of this issue, however, acknowledgement is rarely tantamount to effective action. In their attempts, these adults have mostly contributed to the commercialization of mental health, rather than the issue’s much-needed destigmatization.

Mental health stigma stems from the belief that struggling with mental illness is shameful, and it is at the root of the poor treatment of mental illness in society and institutions. On the other hand, commercialization is the process of turning something into a commodity for financial gain. The movement for destigmatization has devolved to commercialization, which only worsens the state of mental health treatment.

There are two main aspects of commercialized mental health — portrayals of mental illness for the enjoyment of others and services marketed to better mental health.

In the media, the commercialization of mental health is shown by the contrast between how schizophrenia and bipolar disorder are treated in comparison to anxiety and depression. Anxiety and depression are most commonly depicted. This is because unlike those with schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, anxiety and depression do not affect a larger portion of the population, but their symptoms are more digestible and profitable to a neurotypical audience.

TV shows like BoJack Horseman, where the main character suffers from depression, do indeed result in an increased awareness of mental illness. But BoJack is also idolized for his depression, for being a “troubled artist.” In this intersection of destigmatization and commercialization, much of the apparent destigmatization is actually romanticized. On the other end of the spectrum, because schizophrenia and bipolar disorder were never “digestible” to begin with, they aren’t even able to receive quasi-destigmatization by way of romanticization. Romanticization, what comes by way of commercialization, is just not an effective way to destigmatize mental health.

Furthermore, the romanticization of mental illnesses that are profitable enough to cover exacerbate issues in our medical infrastructure. Not only is treatment financially inaccessible for so many, but those who need help are discouraged from seeking it because of excessive romanticization. In the media, suffering from mental illness has become a personality trait associated with artistic capabilities.

There is undoubtedly confusion between where the lines of commercialization (romanticism) and destigmatization are. But even then, it is no justification for the pervasive lack of proactive mental health action on our school campus.

The parallels to society are jarring, in that it seems like the administration only cares about the mental health of students when it’s something they can gain from, something they can commercialize, while exerting as little effort as possible.

Recently, the administration has promoted artistic endeavors made by the student body in an attempt to address the current mental health crisis. Considering the fact that there has not been much else done despite persistent cries for curriculum accommodations, it seems that by simply promoting the attempts of others, the administration feels relieved from their responsibilities in regards to addressing mental health.

Nothing productive is done to mitigate the issue of mental health when the efforts of students are commercialized — marketed — as action by administration. In a recent forum, students presented solutions to the mental stress the pandemic has caused them: having test corrections, assignments due at 11:59 p.m. rather than 3 p.m., a few late passes a semester to fall back on, etc. These are reasonable, tangible, and timely requests that should have been implemented much sooner.

Boos & Bravos

Tiger’s cheers and jeers for the month of FEBRUARY

BOO to Justin Timberlake. “What Goes Around Comes Around” right?

BOO to Kim Kardashian for divorcing Kanye West. #Heartless. “Cause when she leave yo’ a**, she gon’ leave with half.”

BOO to the wind. 2011 windstorm part two?

BOO to American Apparel ads for making me uncomfortable in the car with my parents.

BOO to cat-ear headband stigma. I look mad sexy in them, don’t make it weird.

BRAVO to seeing people who are listening to on Spotify. Phoebe Bridgers at 3 a.m. is a cry for help.

BRAVO to CollegeBoard for getting rid of their camera rule for the online AP tests! Or... are they?? We don’t know what’s going on!

BRAVO to queen Britney Spears. #FreeBritney

BRAVO to CollegeBoard for giving rid of their camera rule for the online AP tests! Or... are they?? We don’t know what’s going on!

BRAVO to queen Britney Spears. #FreeBritney

BRAVO to Ted Cruz for proving that it is okay to cross the border for better living conditions. Nice.

BRAVO to the third To All the Boys I’ve Loved Before. You managed to make me cry even more.

 Downloads by the numbers

1114 Boos
1113 Bravos

TIGER 5

FEBRUARY 22, 2021
Don’t justify misogyny as racial progress
A trend has emerged where criticism towards women based solely on gender is excused as accountability.

STORY GEORGIA PARSONS
ILLUSTRATION NICHOLAS FORMAN

Throughout history, white women have helped to maintain the system of white supremacy ingrained in this country.

Although often painted as passive characters, white women have also held large and overt roles. For example, white women developed their own branch of a white supremacist organization, the Women of the Ku Klux Klan (WKKK), in the mid-20th century.

In the recent months, there has been an increasing amount of discourse examining white women’s roles in white supremacy, which is imperative to dismantling the system that upholds racism. However, a problem arises when white men use this discourse as an excuse to be misogynistic towards white women, and by extension, all women.

The focus shifts from recognizing white women’s roles in white supremacy to perpetuating misogyny. For example, white men often take a situation in which a white woman is being called out for racist behavior as an excuse to use their power structures to attack her, touting their supposed “white pride.”

It is important to note the difference between when people of color criticize white women, it’s a critique of their whiteness but when white men criticize white women it’s usually a critique about their gender which is, by definition, misogyny.

Many white men on the internet have used these conversations about white women as a way to prop up their own “wokeness,” by making misogynistic statements under the guise of activism. Although the word “white” is tacked onto these statements after the word “women,” many point out broad things that all women do. Adding the word “white” in front of a sexist statement has wrongly exempted white men from criticisms of misogyny.

An example of this is the “ACAB Emily” trope, popularized on social media to call out the performative activism of white women. The trope has now morphed into general misogyny that is widely used to make fun of any young female activist, not matter how genuine their activism.

Moreover, the “ACAB Emily” trope is an example of the fact that women so often take the blame for actions that both men and women do.

This is how the patriarchy functions. It is relentless in its aim to put women down, a testament to how pervasive misogyny still is. White supremacy cannot be treated as something mutually exclusive to the patriarchy. There needs to be a broad lens taken to societal issues in order for there to be just accountability and genuine progress.

Parental censorship from social media hinders a child’s potential for confidence and self-discovery

STORY KALEHN MIAO
ILLUSTRATION NICHOLAS FORMAN

When I received my first phone at the beginning of middle school, I was beyond excited. I was enamored by the modern communication: social media.

I was beyond excited. I was enamored by the modern communication: social media.

Parental censorship is when parents actively hide information from their children because they believe it is too uncomfortable or dangerous for their children to know. In my case, my parents didn’t allow me to use Instagram or Facebook, and my YouTube screen time was heavily restricted.

This underexposure to popular culture made it difficult to connect with my friends. When I hung out with them I felt like a third wheel. I didn’t understand the Vine references they made or the topics they would discuss. Instead, I became heavily dependent on my parents for information and would believe almost anything they said.

The dependency on one’s parents that censorship results in is toxic. It discourages kids from self-advocating and pursuing personal interests. So much of an individual’s likes and dislikes are self-discovered, and censorship prevents this discovery. This keeps children in a box of tainting windows, as they are aware that there are doors but are unable to realize what those things are. This limited understanding of the world around them leads to a loss of self-confidence.

My restricted understanding of the world around me made me feel dumb. I couldn’t contribute to conversation with my peers who always talked about current trends or complicated world issues, because my parents had never exposed me to these things before. It became difficult to ask my friends about subjects that were considered common knowledge and increasingly harder to not see myself as a burden to them when the only things I could really ask them for help on was homework.

On the other end of the spectrum, unrestrained internet access can enable many children to encounter dangerous situations. There should be a balance between enough and too much internet access and it is imperative for parents to allow their children to constantly communicate their feelings in regards to how much access they should be rightfully given.

In an era of increased online media usage, connecting to content on social media has become an essential aspect of building one’s identity. The fast-paced nature of the internet dictates how people discover different interests quickly and allows them to explore each independently.

When parents censor, they often fail to recognize that alongside potentially graphic content, they are also doing away with safe spaces and support systems — places on the internet that validate identity. Furthermore, knowing you have access to resources on taboo topics such as mental health and sex education is a vital part of encouraging unjudged communication. Ignoring the issues such as these doesn’t eliminate them, but rather postpones education until it is unavoidable.

I know I’d be a different person today if I had social media when I was younger. And while I can’t fully know if I would prefer that version of me over who I am now, I do know that the past me would have appreciated it.

Now is the time to finally reclaim my identity

The intersectionality of my identities is something that I’ve always struggled with, especially my racial identity as a Black and Mexican person growing up in South Pasadena’s mostly Asian and white environment. My environment has shaped who I am and the way that I view myself.

And while it is not my fault that I have not been raised around people who look like me, lately I’ve been beating myself up over my lack of knowledge about my own cultures.

I find it ironic that I wrote so many articles about feeling alienated from the South Pasadena environment, when I feel in so many ways even more alienated from my true racial identities.

I spent a lot of my life walking the line between being ashamed and embarrassed of my culture and being resentful towards white people. Honestly, I feel like a fraud. I feel like I don’t fit in anywhere.

But I’m not writing about this simply to complain about current situations. There should be a balance between enough and too much internet access and it is imperative for parents to allow their children to constantly communicate their feelings in regards to how much access they should be rightfully given.

I know I’d be a different person today if I had social media when I was younger. And while I can’t fully know if I would prefer that version of me over who I am now, I do know that the past me would have appreciated it.

And so I’m also encouraging all of my fellow whitewashed brown people who have grown up in the sheltered bubble of South Pasadena to explore their identity as a person of color. You are not alone in your feeling of alienation, whether it be from South Pasadena or from your own culture.

Now is the time to take back your identity.

As a child, I wanted to know how my parents came to this country. I wanted to know their life story. I didn’t know why they were in this country.

Now is the time to make your voice heard.

Start by asking your parents about your familial history. Ask them about cultural practices in your family. Ask them to show you old family pictures. Ask them about their own childhoods.

Read books about your culture and from your culture. Learn the history of your culture. Read articles about your culture. Learn about famous people from your culture. Watch films from your culture.

I haven’t completed my self-discovery journey yet, and I don’t think that I’ll ever stop exploring my cultures and figuring out who I am and how I fit into my cultures. But what I do know is that learning more about my own people has already helped me take pride in who I am and will continue to do so.
“Peaceful protest” is far from pacifism

A demand for “peaceful protest” is a demand for protestors to subject themselves to state violence.

STORY SAM GROTENSTEIN
ILLUSTRATION ALICIA ZHANG

Between the rough transition of presidential power, coronavirus relief efforts, and attempted coups, 2020’s Black Lives Matter protests almost seem like a distant memory. As the protests themselves become cemented in history books, so too will the context surrounding them fall into obscurité detail. Those not involved with protest movements see news footage of burning buildings and street brawls with cops, and are left wondering, “Why can’t these protestors just be peaceful?”

This same critique has been applied to a number of historic protest movements, ranging from the Civil Rights Movement to the Stonewall riots, but there is undeniably a common trend. Despite (in some cases) history’s absorption of these movements, almost every protest movement in America has been met with a public demand for peace. Even leaders that are now used as the model of peaceful protest were lambasted in their day for even the slightest inclination of violence caused by or otherwise related to their existence (think MLK). If all protest movements are to be met with a demand for pacifism, what does pacifism in protest really mean?

The term “protest” is an umbrella term that refers to any kind of organization against an equal or higher power. For the sake of simplicity, the idea of protest can be broken down into two main categories: protest of the state and protest of industry. There is also the counter-protest, but this is much harder to speak about generally as all counter-protest movements must be viewed relative to the original issue being protested.

The key and most obvious difference between these two forms of protest comes down to who is being protested, and by extension how protests are going to be responded to. In essence, a protest against Walmart is fundamentally different from a protest against the police, as Walmart has no financial interest to “fight back,” as they do to ignore the protest entirely. Understanding this distinction is vital if one wishes to proceed as an advocate for pacifism.

First, let’s dissect the peaceful protest of industry. It is important to note that the protest of industry can only occur in a capitalist society. With this, it is not surprising that the “goal” of those protesting industry is to disrupt their target’s production of capital to a point where the demands of protestors are heard. It is far more reasonable to demand a peaceful response from industrial protest, as despite the overwhelming presence of monopoly, most American businesses still operate with the public as their primary consumers. As such, tactics such as boycotts, unionization, and a demand for state intervention are all methods that have in the past proven effective.

Notably, it’s not nearly that simple in America. Not only does the state work in large part to protect corporate interest, but corporations are often just as capable of inflicting violence as the state. Though Amazon probably isn’t going to directly attack, the ability to survive in America rests entirely on the private sector. Food, water, healthcare, etc. are all basic human necessities that can be deprived on a whim, so it follows that these corporations are entirely capable of state-endorse violence.

Demanding peaceful protest of the state is significantly more complicated. Political philosopher Max Weber defines the state as a group that has the monopoly on violence in a given area. In essence, Weber’s definition argues that by supporting any political system, one is also supporting the violence necessary to enforce said system. Unless one believes in the abolition of borders, then one must believe in the violence necessary to maintain those borders, and this same logic can be applied to just about any facet of government.

This means that if one is to understand the state as necessarily having to assert its authority through violence, then one must also recognize that protestors of the state will be subject to such violence. People, as a society, know that protesting the police will lead to a violent response from police, and thus this same lens must be applied when demanding peaceful protest. When one demands that protestors abstain from violence, they are essentially asking the protestors to subject themselves to state violence and not fight back.

This is a country where police have what resembles complete freedom in who they choose to execute, a country where immigrants are separated from their families and placed into detention centers on arrival. There needs to be an understanding that protest against these systems does not come from a background of peace. Furthermore, cries for peace directed at the BLM movement speaks not to any violence within the movement itself, but rather to the fact that state-sponsored violence has become such an accepted part of everyday life that it can be misconstrued as peace.

Students should not continue to tolerate the current system of education — it needs to be changed

STORY ZOE SCHLAAK
ILLUSTRATION ALICIA ZHANG

At the start of my junior year, I finally told my friends that their obsession with academic comparison was wrecking my mental health. I suggested that we avoid talking about grades altogether. Oftentimes after a test, I would hear this seemingly innocent inquiry: “Oh my God, what did you get?”

Yet, this question is frequently loaded with the intention of outperforming others. The one who asks usually already knows that they have received the higher grade than the person they are asking. So what is the point of asking other than to feel superior to one’s peers? It just fuels the subconscious and almost primal competitiveness that defines SPHS’ social climate.

To me, school has become a crazy race. Everyone wants to be “better,” not for themselves, but in comparison to those around them. And this race is dangerous, in that it destroys its participants’ self-worth. The intersection between online learning, the pandemic, and my junior year — arguably the hardest and most crucial for colleges — has heightened this race now that the pressures of school are expected to be maintained throughout this entire new environment.

The shutdown of almost all extracurricular activities, where most students were able to pursue their personal interests, has isolated academic competition into an uncomfortable spotlight. In this spotlight, academic competition has been able to dominate and suffocate the livelihoods of students with a power unmatched than ever before.

There is now pressure in an aspect of my life that I never expected: my peers. A majority of students at SPHS are so hyper focused on anything that enhances their college applications. It seems like a lot of the voluntary decisions they make and things they do are done so only because it attracts prestigious colleges, the ones draped in ivy and adorned with impressively old brick.

I’ve had conversations with people where I compliment a new activity they’ve taken up, and they’ll admit to only doing it for the sole purpose of “looking good” college applications.” Being constantly surrounded by this college-centric mindset makes me feel like I’m really not doing enough. I should be playing an instrument, forming a club, or spending my free time studying for upcoming exams — even if I don’t love it.

I have been making an effort to do things that I like, and this effort has become more taxing due to the weight of academic pressure. Even when I spend time doing those activities, I think that I could be spending my time doing something that would actually benefit my future or college applications. Every aspect of my life is affected by this hypercompetitive college process and it’s a constant battle to justify to myself that I can do things that I like even if other, more “beneficial” things, could be done.

I’m coming to recognize that I don’t thrive in school environments. High school sparked this immense anxiety flareup in me and any mildly provocative event garners a disproportionate emotional response. I feel sick, I can’t eat.

It’s really admirable that some are able to do what they love in high school when it contradicts the norms of resume padding, but the culture as a whole has to change. Students need to be less compliant towards the current educational system. Rather than superficial complaining students do on a regular basis, there needs to be serious criticism of how the education system, because right now it is antithetical to happiness.
Debunking today’s “learning styles”

Misunderstanding metacognition

Learning styles began as a much smaller idea. In the 1970s, psychologist David Kolb introduced the concept of learning styles to help educators understand how students learn best. However, over time, the idea of learning styles has evolved into a much larger concept, with many people believing that there are three distinct learning styles: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. Today, we are all familiar with the idea that people have different learning styles, and that these styles can be used to improve teaching and learning outcomes.

Dangers of the learning styles

Learning styles serve as pseudo-personality tests with only three options. This rigid categorization can impose the idea of a “fixed mindset” into students’ minds. The idea that a particular learning style is the best way to learn can limit a student to a predetermined “easiest path” can lead to a static, and cannot change in any meaningful way. This can stifle academic and personal growth during a time period when children and teenagers are meant to explore themselves.

Furthermore, learning styles can often stereotype students (for example, athletes with spatial learning styles, and musicians with auditory learners), while also discouraging the importance of small oversimplifications that add up over time — a large source of misinformation. On top of that, the learning styles longevity can be attributed to its attractive nature.

Human nature like to form groups to create order in social environments. Finding ways to understand others, we want to develop a greater sense of self and what type one is. Learning styles are often applied to literally every group, from Buzzfeed quizzes to quizzes. A recent study by psychologists found that 90% of people prefer to learn in one of three ways: visual, auditory, or kinesthetic. While learning styles can streamline the learning process, it sets a possibly dangerous mindset of “easiest path is the best.”

Learning styles also have some utility, but not just in the conventional sense. For example, when teachers are aware of different learning styles, they can employ various methods to allow the student to receive a well-rounded learning experience — and many do.

Why is it still here?

Learning styles do have some utility, but just not in the conventional sense. For example, when teachers are aware of different learning styles, they can employ various methods to allow the student to receive a well-rounded learning experience — and many do.

"To try to create a learning environment in which students can experience the content in different ways. Instead of trying to appeal to a particular way of learning, I am thinking about how to make connections among students' prior knowledge and experiences, real-life phenomena, and abstract ideas and concepts," AP and honors chemistry teacher Ben Ku said.

Rather than forcing students to learn the material in a certain way, he provides his students with various ways to understand the material, whether it be in class, notes, or class discussions. Ku emphasizes the importance of learning with intention and experiencing the content of his lessons in different ways so that students can fully understand the material and its importance rather than just learn by rote.

The merging of different aspects of the learning styles seems to be a common theme on campus. AP U.S. History teacher Gilber Voltaire employs several different teaching methodologies to help his students better understand the material. History classes generally tend to be extremely dense in content and context, so to space out the time between lectures, he allows students the time to ‘pair-share’ or discuss amongst each other. Students write cautious statements as they can better understand and make connections to the historical events.

Meanwhile, Math III+ teacher Jared Gauze does not believe each student fits into one of the learning categories, but he expressed that some subjects require a focus on one of the three methods in the curriculum can be best absorbed. For him, visual teaching strategies are particularly effective when teaching math.

"Each student is a new world, a great example. I could explain how alternate interior angles are proved and understand the concepts out loud, but it would just sound like nothing meaningful was defined without a diagram," Gauze said. "Diagrams help to aid the students to see the situation we are describing and ensures we are all visualizing it in the same way."

Special Education teacher David Baughman, on the other hand, stated confidently that he uses visual teaching methods to help others. He reflects his own learning and teaching style, and in his experience, his students required the best when a visual quality is present during lessons.

Both Gauze and Baughman shared the idea that learning styles should accommodate the subject matter of each lesson, not just the students’ learning preferences, because different lessons call for different learning mediums.

The Learning Style Conundrum

STORY: DUNN MANZO, GEORGIA PARSONS, & MATTHEW TSAI

GRAPHICS: CHARLOTTE COHEN

ILLUSTRATIONS: TERRY SOKE

The popular learning styles theory states that people prefer to learn in one of three ways: visually, auditorily, and kinesthetically. Today, most SPUSD employees are trained to consider that theory and there is a general sentiment that students most SPUSD employees are trained to consider this visually, auditorily, and kinesthetically. Today, it is accepted that people prefer to learn in one of three ways:

- Visual learners (like those who enjoy reading and looking at graphs and illustrations)
- Auditory learners (like those who enjoy listening and hearing information)
- Kinesthetic learners (like those who enjoy doing hands-on activities)

Learning preferences for Students

- Visual: 52.9%
- Auditory: 40.9%
- Kinesthetic: 18.2%

Learning styles teachers employ

- Visual: 22.7%
- Auditory: 18.2%
- Combo of all three: 31.9%

72.7% of teachers believe learning styles are important to consider in education

70% of students believe learning styles are important to consider in education

Data was collected from a random SPHS survey of 170 students and 22 teachers.
Star Wars diversifies for profit, not principle

The franchise's devotion to corporate interest tosses politics to the wayside.

**FEATURE**

**Kim's Convenience**

KIMBERLY HSUEH

**Competition is fracturing**

I can't remember the carefree feelings that surged through me in elementary and middle school. But I can recall that I was braver, happier, and more ambitious than I am now.

My adventure started with fearlessly climbing the netted structure at Monterey Hills with my friends and boldly declaring my future careers with them in front of Mr. Hilger's room. We dreamed of high school as a campus of freedom, the beginning of a bright future, and a tightly knit community like in *High School Musical*. It was a short-lived dream.

Together, my fellow peers and I swarmed through the gates of South Pasadena High School as freshmen with our faces bright and ambitions high. Most of us had the same classes, so we discussed freely and animatedly about the classes we wanted to take the following year and the years after that.

In the second semester, we confidently lined outside of our counselor's office, hoping to take five APs as sophomores, and came out disappointed with a list of the necessary requirements and a grade-limited number of classes and teachers. To take the AP sciences, I needed to take Honors Chemistry. Would I take that during the summer, so I could complete three sciences out of the four by senior year? Would I take the math placement test to finish all the math courses and be done with AP Statistics as a senior?

Without one singular path that everyone walked in middle school and still limited with options in high school, I schemed to widen my options by fulfilling the courses' necessary requirements, but by doing so, the connection between me and my friends weakened. Maybe it's what they mean when they say, "We were still a group, but our vivacity was gone; we no longer daredly spoke about our ambitions and became wary of each other's actions."

By junior year, we had secretly and strategically found ways to implement four or five APs into our schedule and often sneakily asked others about their classes. We kept them in mind, compared stats, and had one goal in mind: to one-up our classmates, to one-up our friends, and to one-up ourselves.

Our expectations for ourselves became more than what could be handled. I lost myself in this toxic environment and lost sight of my motivation, goals, and future.

Now, in this pandemic, that competitiveness has faded and, maybe, because of the loss of interactions. Maybe it's because of the sheer amount of time we had to reflect and ask ourselves what we truly desired. But, the one thing that is for sure is the concrete loss of community. Our competitiveness indirectly broke our community and now having experienced that shatter, what are we going to do about it when we go back to school?

Don't let competition break your friendships. Cherish genuine human connections, share your dreams, and don't let your community slip from your fingers. Stay ambitious, but don't lose yourself along the way.

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**Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker** was released in 2019 to immense controversy. Audiences and critics alike felt that this film, the conclusion to the newest Star Wars trilogy, had completely and utterly failed to capture the magic of the originals. In fact, this same critique was aimed at *The Last Jedi*, *The Force Awakens*, and just about every other Star Wars film that has come out past the year 1980. Despite this, *Star Wars* lives on.

Unfortunately, this isn't the only critique that has been laid at the feet of the most recent Star Wars trilogy. Criticism has been directed in large part at the characters Finn (John Boyega) and Rose Tico (Kelly Marie Tran), both of whom were perceived by the audience to be token minorities whose existences were just vague gestures made by Star Wars. To be clear, this criticism holds some weight — Rose was barely a character and Finn, despite being the focus of much of the film's marketing, moved further and further to the sidelines as the films continued. This begs an important question: What responsibility does Star Wars have to reflect its audience?

Well, the easy answer to this question is "none." The only real responsibility Star Wars has is for Disney shareholders, and by this token it is exclusively responsible for turning a profit. Despite this, in the case of Star Wars, things become a little bit more complicated.

This is because Star Wars is not just a series of films. While it is true that George Lucas's trilogy lies at the core of the Star Wars universe, in the year of 2021 the franchise has taken on a life far outside of anything George Lucas could have imagined. Of Disney theme parks, T-shirts, backpacks, books, TV shows, and large portions of consumer power, watching the Star Wars universe slowly lose its magic takes a toll.

The company dagers taking a consistent stance, and devoted fans are the ones who face the consequences. Characters get neglected, plotlines get diluted, and the Star Wars universe slowly loses its magic takes a toll.

The Star Wars franchise is just one of the many branches under Disney, a multi-billion dollar corporation, and the base of the consumer is the illusion that they have any control over the products a corporation dishes out. There is no such thing as bad publicity, and the only real responsibility that Star Wars benefits them, even if it is in a critical article in a school newspaper. Regardless of consumer power, watching the Star Wars universe slowly lose its magic takes a toll.

The fact is that the Star Wars franchise is just one of the many under Disney, a multi-billion dollar corporation, and the base of the consumer is the illusion that they have any control over the products a corporation dishes out. There is no such thing as bad publicity, and the only real responsibility that Star Wars benefits them, even if it is in a critical article in a school newspaper. Regardless of consumer power, watching the Star Wars universe slowly lose its magic takes a toll.

The mainline films have begun to drop any vantage of being actual artistic efforts, instead serving as sightseeing tours for the already established Star Wars universe. Any themes or messages in Lucas’s original trilogy have been commodified, and thus the entire franchise sits on the back of regurgitating the aesthetics of the originals without actually adding much substance. Moreover, more recent efforts like *The Mandalorian* show just how amorphous the Star Wars brand is, acting (at least in the first season) as a mostly self-contained series that earns the Star Wars name entirely on a few sparse references and visual callbacks.

Considering that the mainline films act as the primary advertising push for the Star Wars brand, it comes as no surprise that they would best represent the utter inconsistency that now defines it. More than anything, the plots and themes of these movies can be seen as a reflection of the broader cinematic trends of the time, and this understanding can also apply to the most recent trilogy. If the films are to be understood as both advertisements and self-contained reflections of modern cinematic trends, then the empty push for diversity and eventual concessions to racist backlash is closer to a failed marketing campaign than a misguided artistic effort. As such, it follows that the discussion of any thematic or political significance in the more recent films is not contained to the Star Wars trilogy, but instead acts as a broader reflection of Disney's perceived audience.

Don't let competition break your friendships. Cherish genuine human connections, share your dreams, and don't let your community slip from your fingers. Stay ambitious, but don't lose yourself along the way.
Frenemies is a reminder of internet detachment

STORY GEORGIA PARSONS
ILLUSTRATION NICHOLAS FORMAN

Frenemies, a podcast hosted by popular YouTubers Ethan Klein and Trisha Paytas, captures a surprising combination of hilarity and emotional vulnerability. The podcast, which began as a segment on Ethan's H3 Podcast channel, uploaded its first episode in September 2020 and immediately took off, reaching upwards of one million streams per episode. An unlikely duo, Trisha and Ethan have an almost uncanny understanding of each other that creates for the perfect comedic chemistry with those poignant, emotional moments in between.

Although the podcast follows the lives of both Paytas and Klein, along with celebrity guest appearances and games, the podcast acts mainly as a platform for Paytas to recount her various scandals and troubled past.

When discussing modern day internet culture, Trisha Paytas is a name that cannot be ignored. Her infamous YouTube channel "blondsundoll4mj" has grown with the platform itself. Paytas posted her first YouTube video on Jan. 3, 2007, offering fashion, beauty, and relationship advice to her modest following that would eventually grow into her now 4.5 million fans.

Paytas is a well-known figure to younger generations practically raised on the internet, but often unfamiliar to adults despite being deeply involved in Hollywood scenes and the film industry since the early 2000s. She appeared on numerous TV shows in the early 2000s including The Ellen DeGeneres Show and Modern Family and even, according to Paytas, frequented the Playboy Mansion.

Despite mingling with the likes of Hugh Hefner and Ellen Degeneres, Paytas is best known for her "tralling" videos, which often consisted of rants, verging on incoherent, delivered while sitting on her kitchen floor. One video of this nature titled "im a chicken nugget" one of her most popular videos, reaching over one billion streams and morphing into internet memes and video compilations. Paytas became the laughingstock of the internet in the weeks after it was posted, however, behind the bizarrely amusing facade was somebody who was really hurting. Paytas later revealed during an episode of the Frenemies podcast that she had been high on meth in the video and was later taken to a rehab facility.

Paytas' entire channel and its success is a glaring example of the often indifferent attitude shown towards those going through a crisis on the internet. If anything, viewers find it specifically entertaining to watch the deterioration of an individual's mental health. Part of the reason people can be easily entertained rather than concerned is the detachment between viewer and poster. Especially on YouTube where scenarios are often fabricated for views, it can be difficult to discern between fiction and reality, even when the subject of the video is obviously going through some sort of breakdown; it is difficult to humanize them. Her experiences on YouTube also speak to the exploitation many people with mental health issues face in Hollywood. Those with unpredictable behavior are often viewed as the most entertaining by those seeking to exploit. Whether deliberately or inadvertently, the Frenemies podcast does an outstanding job of bringing to light this detachment by highlighting the various issues that Paytas had gone through while posting on YouTube. In an especially poignant episode of the podcast, Klein and Paytas recount their relationship and past with celebrity psychologist Dr. Drew Pinsky.

In the episode, Paytas speaks vulnerably about her struggles with drug addiction, living with traits of borderline personality disorder, and coping with severe childhood trauma. The podcast is a platform for Paytas to share her narrative, independent of her own YouTube persona and the one others have created for her, an empowering move to take control of the content put out about her on a platform that makes it so difficult to do so.

Vaccinated at 18: The relative morality of vaccine hunting in L.A.

STORY KATHARINE FLORENCE
ILLUSTRATION NICHOLAS FORMAN

A seemingly stagnant vaccine rollout in L.A. County, murmurs of extra doses being dumped, and anxiety to get vaccinated have spurred ‘vaccine hunters,’ or someone who stakes out vaccination centers in hopes of receiving a coveted leftover dose. With almost half a million people in the U.S. dead from the virus, it may feel unjust to see members of the public take advantage of our country’s inefficiency. However, this is evidence of a structural issue with the vaccine rollout on a federal level rather than an issue of individual fault.

In my five days of searching, I acquired information that helped me successfully narrow down my search. Firstly, visit the L.A. County website for vaccine appoints. Find clinics labeled Pfizer as those doses expire five days after thawing whereas the Moderna vaccine can last for up to 30 in cold conditions.

Consider smaller locations such as the St. John’s Health Centers throughout L.A. Not only are you more likely to get the vaccine, but they tend to be friendly out-of-towners who are willing to give out insider information. Consider smaller locations such as the St. John’s Health Centers throughout L.A. Not only are you more likely to get the vaccine, but they tend to be friendly out-of-towners who are willing to give out insider information.

Third, consistency is important. I tested my luck everyday, knowing it could take several weeks. Look outside of L.A. County. It's no surprise that vaccines may be at a premium in an epicenter.

Some sites simply turned me away, whereas others offered me valuable information that I took with me, leading to the clinic where I ultimately ended my search. The experience itself is rather anticlimactic: filling out forms and sitting in the waiting room for 30 minutes hovering over me, turning around to an angry man yelling at me and others to give up our vaccines for an older couple who had just arrived.

Vaccine hunting is a response to a lack of preservation tactics. Both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines have a shelf life of around six months held in their relative freezing temperatures. Once they are removed and thawed, they must be used quickly as neither vaccine can be refrozen. If people don’t show up for their scheduled appointments or something else prevents the vaccine from being administered, the leftovers will simply be discarded. Vaccine hunters aren’t “jumping line” or “stealing” because that vaccine would have been tossed anyway.

While I was waiting in line, I befriended a couple in front of me, one of which wanted to get the shot before getting pregnant, and the other who was a cancer survivor. It is important to recognize that a lot of these people hunting for vaccines who appear young and vital, may be immunocompromised and desperate for protection. Admittedly, something about the whole experience still felt off, probably because there is something deeply wrong with the way vaccine administration has been handled. With almost half a million people in the U.S.

Centers throughout L.A. Not only are you more likely to get the vaccine, but they tend to be friendly.
Almost a year into quarantine, I have become intimately familiar with almost every detail of my room. Every nook, cranny, crack, and crevice has been explored by my wandering eyes as I try desperately to overcome the monotony of quarantine. As the way people use the spaces around them has transformed from a comforting safe space to what now feels like a prison. The bedroom has become a place to mourn the destruction of innocence. Instead, when Laura allows the viewer to focus on the idea of the surreal, and often ignores the mundane aspects of life.

As such, the bulk of the writing on Twin Peaks has focused on the idea of the surreal, and often ignores the mundane aspects of life. Just as iconic as any character is the location where Laura is born; it's her home. By this same token, the audience begins to see them as characters in and of themselves. The Great Northern Hotel, the Palmer House, and so on and so forth. The effect of this, however, is far stronger than simple association. As Laura Palmer. More importantly, the town of Twin Peaks choose to focus on the idea of the surreal, and often ignores the mundane aspects of life.

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Within the first five minutes I found myself frantically time, toppling over almost everything in its path. sand, the wind was more intense than I'd seen in a long brightly, reflecting across the smooth water and soft was how windy it was. While the sun was shining When we arrived at the beach, the first thing I noticed Bridgers song I put on. in silence, contemplating the lyrics of whatever Phoebe we were laughing over the absurd fact that Oscar had so our conversation easily drifting in and out like the clear The journey began with a smooth drive to Venice Beach, before I undoubtedly had to leave for college in some pushed myself to actually try to have fun at the beach. I idea that didn't involve sandy dunes and salty water, I Despite my knee-jerk reaction to suggest an alternate way that didn’t involve sandy dunes and salty water, I pushed myself to actually try to have fun at the beach. I told myself to make the most of the good company and enjoy the precious few moments I had left in sunny SoCal before I undoubtedly had to leave for college in some freezing East Coast town. Despite my knee-jerk reaction to suggest an alternate idea that didn’t involve sandy dunes and salty water, I pushed myself to actually try to have fun at the beach. I told myself to make the most of the good company and enjoy the precious few moments I had left in sunny SoCal before I undoubtedly had to leave for college in some freezing East Coast town.

The journey began with a smooth drive to Venice Beach, our conversation easily drifting in and out like the clear blue waves of the ocean we were nearing. One minute we were laughing over the absurd fact that Oscar had so much Doja Cat on his playlist and the next we were sitting in silence, contemplating the lyrics of whatever Phoebe Bridgers song I put on.

When we arrived at the beach, the first thing I noticed was how windy it was. While the sun was shining brightly, reflecting across the smooth water and soft sand, the wind was more intense than I’d seen in a long time, toppling over almost everything in its path.

Within the first five minutes I found myself frantically searching for my glasses after the wind had knocked them right off my face. A sense of dread settled in the pit of my stomach. I began to worry that we wouldn’t be able to have the nice picnic we had been so looking forward to and we had come all the way to Venice for nothing.

In order to combat the cold, we picked a sunny spot near the pier for our picnic and (after a few hilarious tries) managed to get all of the food laid out in front of us. We began to munch Quinn's precut vegetables and resumed our conversation from the car ride. Although the spot we picked did end up being home to a large flock of seagulls (which were seriously terrifying by the way), I found myself forgetting about the biting wind as laughs seamlessly slipped out and my cheeks warmed with contentment.

After the picnic, Quinn and I raced to the shore and stood staring out at the glittering waves, our legs tiring and cheeks tight. It was at this point that everything seemed to click into place. Sure, the weather was horrendous and my hands had turned purple about five minutes into the picnic, but with the golden sun pouring onto my face and the sound of Oscar and Quinn laughing behind me, I felt totally at peace.

Quinn: The three of us stuck out like sore thumbs in Venice. Adorned with overalls and canvas bags, it became clear to me that I would have no luck convincing the residents that I was one of them. As Venetians nommed past me on roller skates and blades, I thought about moments face-planting into the Moonlight roller rink floor, I stared at people passing by because they weren’t wearing masks, and they stared back because I was wearing one.

Walking down the sidewalk boarding the beach was a trip. We were bombarded by people trying to give us their mixtapes, and eventually got overwhelmed enough to retreat to the car. I suggested we listen to one of the mixtapes. It couldn’t be that bad, right? Wrong. So very wrong. The guy had spirit, I'll give him that. I ended up keeping the CD, not because I wanted to listen to it but because I needed hard evidence that I didn’t hallucinate the experience of hearing it.

Once we were back in the car and Katie had turned on the good music again; I mentioned that I was craving some fast food, so we headed to McDonald’s. It was when we pulled out of the McDonald's driveway that I realized I had had a wonderfully childish day. Before the beach, I packed snacks into tupperware and plastic baggies, slicing apples and cucumbers and packing them with hummus and peanut butter dip.

While I was there, I ran through the sand barefooted and chased seagulls across the shore. After leaving the beach, we ate chicken nuggets and french frites in the backseat of the car as we inched across the freeways, starting at the other cars and watching the sun fall below the concrete walls. I felt absolutely free, and my day was entirely composed of naivety save the Phoebe Bridgers and Arctic Monkeys blaring through the car speakers.

You know those moments when you find yourself romanticizing your life to the point where you’re nearly convinced that you’re starring in a indie coming-of-age movie? The car trip home felt like that, and I had the perfect fellow cast members. I told Oscar and Katie that I missed the smell of the city in the nighttime, and they understood what I meant. I got a warm feeling in my chest, realizing how lucky I was to become close to these incredible people in such a short amount of time.

The realization that they would be leaving me soon came immediately after, but instead of spiraling, wishing I had had more time, and wondering why I hadn’t befriended them earlier, I turned to the window and watched the glowing city turn into streaks of light behind us.
Junior Sophia Davison endured a taxing injury that has taken away her ability to play water polo for the rest of her high school career. Being unable to practice due to her injury has caused several social and mental detriments. Davison took her injury as an opportunity for introspection and described it as a learning experience.

Davison tore her labrum and rotator cuff in her shoulder. This injury was a smooth criminal; her shoulder was tearing gradually over time from the strain during swimming and water polo practices. She was initially unphased, but her second MRI scan revealed that she would have to have surgery and go through months of physical therapy. Her shoulder and arm interfered with every moment of her daily routine.

"After surgery I was in a sling for six weeks with a big block holding my arm out," Davison said. "During that time I couldn't write, I couldn't use my arm at all, barely dressed myself, brushed my teeth—it was just a hassle because it was my dominant hand."

Davison had her surgery in January 2020, but she swam for the first time since then just two weeks ago. The healing process following the surgery was an emotional rollercoaster, filled with anger, frustration, loneliness, and longing. Davison became the manager of the water polo team, and had to watch her teammates practice and have fun together, while she sat on the sidelines. When she wasn't watching practices, she was spending hours in tedious physical therapy sessions.

"(Physical therapy) irritated me because it took a lot of my time..." Davison said. "There's also other clients there so it's kinda frustrating for me personally to see other clients and people get better faster and heal their injuries quicker and get through their exercises while I was still new to things."

Despite regaining mobility in her shoulder and regaining the ability to swim, Davison is no longer able to participate in water polo because she is still rebuilding muscle, and water polo is especially vigorous in comparison to swimming. Like many other athletes who have lost the ability to play a sport they greatly enjoy, Davison aimed negative feelings at herself because her injury was holding her back.

"When I was injured...I was really mad at myself for a long time that I couldn't be where I wanted to be and I couldn't do what I wanted to do because my mind was telling me: 'Get back into this and do what you have to do to look good for colleges, for your friends, so you can be this person...' I was in a really poor mindset for a really long time and it took me a while to find what I'm doing now and find other passions that I like... There's so many other things I can focus on."

Healing from a serious injury calls for someone to be patient with themselves, and some athletes come out of the process with a healthier and more positive outlook.

"Before, I've always been very overly competitive with myself, with my friends and trying to be the best and not disappoint anyone...I think just being able to recognize that there's other ways to be happy and you don't have to necessarily be the best in everything you do. Competing with others and competing with yourself only makes a more stressful and anxious life for you."

Sophia has embraced a more forgiving attitude for herself, pivoting her focus to spending time with her loved ones, reading, and enjoying the abstract moments in life. She is confident that this experience has changed her for the better, and she encourages other athletes to be less critical of themselves.

"In my mind I think: 'If I practice harder, if I eat less, if I study more, I would succeed more in life.' It's not healthy for me to hyperfixate on swimming and school and [the] 80 other clubs and activities that I have going on. You can't devote all your time and all your passion to every single one."
Senior basketball transfers weigh in on lost season

Ocean therapy: students unwind through surfing

BEACHES IN THE LOS ANGELES AREA are where Junior Will Michels spends most of his time in surfing. Surfing seems like an uncommon pastime within the landlocked boundaries of South Pasadena. However, Isaac and Sawyer Sharp, senior and sophomore respectively, and junior Will Michels venture out to the beach nearly every week, away from the structure of normal sports to the dynamic energy of the ocean where little moments stick with them. These student athletes often find the ocean therapeutic with a rush.

“It’s a very therapeutic sport, [but] at the same time it’s physically demanding,” Isaac said. “There’s this whole culture of what surfers do to be very self-oriented, because you’re trying to get better for yourself.”

The Sharp brothers learned and casually surfed through camps and family trips when they were younger, but it was quarantine that ended up contributing to their earliest enjoyment of the sport. After being stuck at home for weeks on end, they jumped at the first opportunity to head for the ocean when the beaches reopened.

With so much time on their hands, Isaac and Sawyer doubled down to intimately familiarizing themselves with their element.

“We’ve been learning about the nature of the ocean, how weather patterns affect the waves and its shapes, what is okay to catch versus waves you get on and hope for the best, or even the kind of waves you caution against because they slam you,” Sawyer said. “Surfing is one of those things where there’s only so much that you can learn without actually going out there and doing it.”

By winter, they improved enough to upgrade their foam boards to fiberglass shortboards, requiring much more precision but resulting in a more rewarding experience when catching waves.

“On one of the first times that we had our new boards, there was a big wave around five to six feet, which is bigger for Los Angeles standards. I was like, ‘I need to get on up on that,’” Isaac said. “It was faster than I’ve ever gone down on a wave before and I was screaming as I did because I was telling Sawyer I finally did it.”

Michels, who has been more of a regular surfer since middle school, also attests to the welcome reprieve surfing brings.

“It’s just a good way to make me forget about everything that’s going on. When you’re out in the water, all you think about are the waves,” he said.

Michels learned how to surf with his dad, and the two of them made frequent trips to many different beaches along the coast, experiencing firsthand just how powerful the ocean is.

“One second you can be seeing a really big wave in the distance, but your heart will start beating super fast because you know what’s coming and there’s no way to avoid it,” Michels said. “The only thing you can really do is try to relax yourself and swim under the waves, letting your body go numb and get pulled around until you feel like you can swim back up again.”

Being submerged in the water for long periods of time has other perks too, particularly the chance to view rare aquatic wildlife up close.

“If I’ve seen seals and a shark super far away, which was really cool,” Michels said. “I saw an otter one time too, and it reminded me of a water dog.”

Opportunities to surf are limited but all three surfers make sure to carve out time to go. Despite these lean windows and long drives nothing can dull their enthusiasm once they are on the sand.

“Even if we get there and it’s not a great wave day, it’s still nice to just be out there at the beach,” Sawyer said. “It really only takes one good wave, while I’m there to make the whole experience worth it.”

SPHS senior Tyler Johnson has long found comfort in playing basketball. When he and his twin brother Chase moved to South Pasadena amidst the pandemic, in order to support their grandmother, he hoped to find solace in his final year of high school off the court.

After his grandfather passed away in 2020, Johnson and his family didn’t want his grandmother to live alone. Thus, when the pandemic hit early last year, they decided to move in with her, with Johnson and his brother consequently transferring to SPHS. Luckily however, he didn’t have much trouble getting used to his new surroundings, as he had been familiar with the area since a very young age.

“My grandma has lived in South Pasadena since the 70s, so when I was growing up I would always go to South Pasadena to visit [my grandma],” Johnson said. “With the pandemic, we didn’t want my grandma going out to do the things she normally does, such as buying groceries, and possibly get exposed.”

While moving to a new place to join his grandmother was a pleasant experience at first, Johnson soon grew irritated with quarantining in his new home. With the pandemic limiting his ability to play as much as he had before, Johnson found it difficult to remain motivated and positive.

“It’s honestly been difficult not being able to play,” Johnson said. “When you’re so used to doing something and then all of a sudden you stop, it’s pretty irritating. It’s made staying at home all day feel even worse because I can’t play the sport I love.”

Although COVID-related restrictions have led to the cancellation of many of his and his brother’s games and the closure of the facilities that he would normally practice in, Johnson has done his best to continue refining his game. Still, he has found it difficult to practice with pre-pandemic.

“Before the pandemic hit, I would be in the gym practicing all the time,” Johnson said. “But because all the gyms had closed during the pandemic, I was only able to practice outside, which is a different [and] much more challenging experience than practicing in a nice gym, for practically the whole summer.”

After a long, frustrating summer of trying to practice and hone his skills without access to his normal facilities and equipment, Johnson looked forward to the prospect of playing with a new set of teammates on the school’s basketball team.

“I was looking forward to just playing in a new environment,” Johnson said. “It’s always fun meeting new friends and playing with new people, mostly because it’s great to see how you match up against other people and ultimately work together to achieve a common goal. The other players here are great people and seem pretty dedicated to the sport, which is a totally different culture compared to my previous school.”

However, the ongoing pandemic has put a dent in his really high hopes, as the possibility that there will be a season continues to slip away. Considering that this season would be his last of high school basketball, he has been forced to face the disheartening reality that his long journey might end with little fanfare.

“There’s no guarantee that I will be able to play in college, so this last season is potentially all I have left to play basketball,” Johnson said. “I have been playing basketball since I was literally 8 months old, and it feels so unreal that this might potentially be my last few times playing. It’s disheartening but you try to be positive because there’s no point in being upset anymore about something I can’t control.”
SPHS hires new girls golf coach Isaac Yamagata

YAMAGATA DABBLED IN PROFESSIONAL GOLF where he met and worked with many people in the industry.

STORY KAHLEN MIAO
PHOTO OSCAR WALSH

Tiger sat down to talk with new girls golf coach Isaac Yamagata about his ambitions and plans for the team in years to come. Yamagata has been in the golf industry almost 30 years now and was hired as the girls golf coach one month ago. Following a baseball injury, Yamagata got back into golfing and landed a job at the Olympic Club in San Francisco, one of the most prestigious golf clubs in the country. It was at this club that Yamagata learned to thrive on a secure team, and threatening that chemistry could possibly prove harmful.

Yamagata: What led you to become the girls golf coach?
Isaac Yamagata: I've always been looking for something that interested me in terms of getting involved with the community. I thought it was an opportunity to become part of a traditionally strong program that may have gone down a bit over the last few years as the school entered the Rio Hondo League. I saw an opportunity to help rebuild the program back to that status that it used to be. I have a daughter who will be coming to the high school soon — she's highly competitive and has ambitions of playing college golf. I wanted to make sure that I was helping to create a team environment where she could have fun playing golf in high school.

Tiger: What do you look forward to in this new job?
Yamagata: I don't really look at it as a job. For me, it's more of something to get involved in. I like the aspect of helping to develop younger players. But obviously since I'm new to this arena, in terms of area, it's an opportunity to see some of these girls go from freshman to seniors or sophomores to seniors. For me, it's kind of a fun thing to watch these kids develop throughout the years and really help them excel at their game through their high school years.

Tiger: How do you plan to move forward in coaching during the pandemic?
Yamagata: Golf is unique because it's not a contact sport. Golf in itself is an individual sport so the idea of a team is unique for golf in general. Golf itself has been sort of one of the few activities that has been thriving during the pandemic because it is one of the few activities where you can get outside and maintain social distancing and have a safe environment. We're following protocol with masks and the COVID-19 check-in policies and trying to keep the kids in smaller groups. It's just an inherent nature to golf that makes it easier to make it competitive during the pandemic.

Tiger: How do you plan on motivating your athletes?
Yamagata: Part of what I've seen within the week or so is that I've been with the girls and the couple of weeks that we've been online with each other, the biggest motivator for the girls is getting out of the house and having something to do. This week, we had our first full practice where almost all the girls have gone through the health and physical requirements, and things like that, so everybody was pretty much able to practice today. I think that from a high school perspective its easier to conduct high school golf because unlike junior golf, highschool kids are more mature and they're more cautious of what their environment is. As I talked with the girls, what was motivating for them was being able to get out of the house, get into the fresh air, play golf, and see their friends. It's sort of motivating in and of itself.

Tiger: What do you consider your coaching style to be?
Yamagata: I'm a big believer that it's a game, and that we should be having fun. But at the same point, I'm a highly competitive person. When I look at competitive sports, I am definitely not a "everybody deserves a trophy" coach and golf itself is an individual and performance-based sport, you have the ability to help players advance earlier than you do in team sports. Because in a team sport, you have to rely on the entire team to win, but an individual in golf can get better on their own. They don't need a team, like baseball, where to get better at hitting, you need someone to throw the ball at you. I like to give kids the skills and lessons to take it upon themselves. It's a very self-motivating sport and at the same time I try to be as supportive as I can in terms of making sure that I help them all understand and give them as much knowledge as I can. I have so much experience and I love sharing my experience and knowledge of golf because I'm a pure golfer.

Tiger: Where are you looking forward to doing with the team?
Yamagata: This year is obviously a challenge and given the situation where we're at, it's not going to be a regular season. One of the things I'm really trying to focus on this year is trying to figure out how to make sure that the upperclassmen enjoy the season, because the seniors have had such a rough year and a half. To me, high school is supposed to be one of the most fun years of your life and I think most seniors can say this is the worst year of their life.

I hope to get the team out to where they can continue to develop their love for the game. Unlike other sports, golf is a sport you can play for the rest of your life. Helping these kids develop a love for this game is really something I look forward to for the years to come. Hopefully throughout the years, I'll have kids who can play at highly competitive levels, and for the kids who don't, maybe I'll get to play golf with them 10 years from now.

Creating healthy relationships on JV and varsity sports

STORY ZOE SCHLAAK
ILLUSTRATION ALICIA ZHANG

In stereotypical high school sports, varsity players tend to avoid the junior varsity teams. But in reality, interactive experiences between the teams can ultimately be beneficial. Involving a varsity player in a JV team can bring new perspectives, mindsets and strength, while also boosting motivation and team effort.

Junior Stephanie Li, a varsity tennis and track and field athlete, explained that her tennis environment allowed her to bring new perspectives, mindsets and strength, while also boosting motivation and team effort.

Junior Stephanie Li, a varsity tennis and track and field athlete, explained that her tennis environment allowed her to bring new perspectives, mindsets and strength, while also boosting motivation and team effort.

“Initially it threw us off a bit, having a new player from another program, but over the long haul, it definitely made us better. We learned a lot of new things, especially respecting our teammates because Alan was someone everyone could look up to.” Tiejun Li said.

Junior Tiejun Li, a varsity tennis player explained that during their sophomore year, Alan Quan, a varsity player at the time, moved down to JV and impacted the team greatly. Current senior Sean Wu, communicated that, at first, his addition shook up the team chemistry, because they were all so accustomed to playing together. But after adapting, Quan helped to instill a motivated mindset in the players.

“The experience was really great. Competing on the varsity level makes you want to compete on [that level all the time] and it makes you want to try harder. When you have varsity competition, it makes you want to do better,” Li explained that in tennis, some varsity athletes who went down, might have taken it as an insult. So, many felt motivated to work harder and solidify their position as a varsity athlete.

Team-dependent sports, like basketball and volleyball, thrive on a secure team, and threatening that chemistry could possibly prove harmful.

Senior Ryan Tse said that Quan became a leader and fostered a strong, learning team environment. Many of the players on the JV team had known Quan through other programs, which made Quan’s transition smoother.

“He ended up pushing us past our limits and made us better basketball players in the end.” Tiejun Li said.

“Things have changed within varsity and JV teams to impact both positively and negatively. Coaches and athletes often recognize that these additions can be beneficial to their team.”