

Empowering students to think critically and creatively since 1913

# Tiger



VOLUME 107 ISSUE 6  
MARCH 15, 2021

SOUTH PASADENA HIGH SCHOOL  
1401 FREMONT AVE, SOUTH PASADENA, CA 91030

## IN THE NEWS

### LGBTQ+ Inclusivity Panel

The Peer Mediators will host a forum about LGBTQ+ student experiences on Tuesday, Mar. 16.

### Freshman Bonding

The ASB Wellness Team's bonding program continues Thursday, Mar. 18 at 2:15 p.m. with a focus on social life.

### Book Drive

Several eighth graders will collect books for Schools on Wheels at SPMS on Mar. 18 from 2 to 5 p.m.

# Teachers, parents, and district clash over school reopening



**STORY** SOFIA ALVA & LILIAN ZHU  
**ILLUSTRATION** ALICIA ZHANG  
**PHOTOS COURTESY OF** PAT BARR & KIM SINCLAIR

Teachers rallied together through countless public comments at multiple School Board meetings to voice concerns about what they believe is the district's decision to reopen SPUSD schools without prioritizing their safety.

The **reopening** of grades TK to 2 in a hybrid model on Thursday, Feb. 18 left almost all elementary school teachers without the first or second dose of the coronavirus vaccine for several weeks while teaching in person. Third and fourth graders returned on Thursday, Mar. 11 and fifth graders came back to campus on Monday, Mar. 15, even though many elementary school teachers had only received one vaccine dose.

"I find it appalling that the district, administration, and board members find it appropriate to reopen our elementary schools while they indicate that their meetings must be held online for their COVID safety," Monterey Hills Elementary School fourth grade teacher Laurie Thackery said in a public comment at the Wednesday, Feb. 17 Board meeting. "If [the School Board] met in the large board room, there would be many windows and three to four times the square footage of a classroom. I have no windows in my classroom and a fraction of the square footage. Walk the talk."

SPHS teachers are scheduled to come **back to campus** on Thursday, Apr. 15, while SPMS teachers return on Thursday, Apr. 8. However, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, a person who receives the vaccine is **not fully immunized** until two weeks after their second dose. Thus, just like most elementary school teachers, SPMS educators will not be fully immunized by their return date if they were one of

the over 200 employees who received their first dose of the Pfizer vaccine at the clinic SPUSD hosted in partnership with the USC Keck School of Medicine on Friday, Mar. 5 and Saturday, Mar. 6. However, SPHS teachers who attended the clinic will be fully vaccinated by the high school return date.

Since L.A. County moved from the purple tier into the red tier on Monday, Mar. 15, SPMS and SPHS are allowed to reopen in accordance with county and state guidelines. Teachers who do not feel safe returning to school must take an unpaid leave of absence. However, per the **Americans with Disabilities Act**, if they have a verified medical restriction that prevents them from teaching in person, they will be allowed to continue virtual instruction. So far in 2021, the School Board has approved eight unpaid leaves of absence for SPUSD employees.

Teachers have felt ignored and disappointed with the district's communication throughout the process of planning the return to in-person school and reviewing hybrid instructional models.

"We felt like the collaboration was just not there because the district disregarded all the input, time, energy, and feedback that teachers had provided. The district was really prioritizing the community and parents over the concerns of teachers," an anonymous SPHS teacher said. "It seemed like the district was only interested in their agenda rather than the input of teachers, [and expects] teachers to be superheroes and make things happen no matter how difficult of a situation it puts us through."

However, the School Board has repeatedly emphasized its commitment to ensuring the health and safety of both teachers and students in talks about reopening.

**CONTINUED, PAGE 2**



### RESPECT RELIGION

No one has the right to qualify a religion's validity, no matter how absurd or illogical it may seem. There needs to be mutual respect between faiths.

Page 7



### LITTLE OBLIVIONS

Julien Baker's latest album since her sophomore release Turn out the Lights is rich with layered instrumentation and raw, honest vocals.

Page 12



### FOOTBALL

The varsity football team returned to the field for the first time during the pandemic in a scrimmage against Polytechnic on Friday, Mar. 12.

Page 16

# NEWS

## Drama students find joy in pandemic-adapted play

*Cast members rehearsed their scenes largely over Zoom, and are just now able to practice in-person. The play, Macbeth, will be filmed.*

**STORY** QUINN MANZO  
**PHOTOS** SARAH LEE

The SPHS drama department anticipates the filming of its play *Macbeth* using a green screen, rehearsing in person for the first time on Friday, Mar. 5.

The current plan is to bring the cast members in one-by-one and film their scenes in front of a green screen at SPHS. Actors playing multiple characters have to come in on different days dressed in the appropriate costume and pretend their scene partner is with them.

"This whole production in general is a challenge. The final outcome of a play produced during COVID-19 is bound to take a lot of extra time and work to perfect. But I know that whatever it ends up as will be entertaining and worth watching," junior Ava Page said.

Rehearsals began completely virtually in late October, and the current schedule is two to three Zooms and two in-person sessions each week. The cast must stand six feet apart and wear two masks during rehearsals, which are usually in the corridor between the band room and the auditorium. Actors remarked on the strangeness of the first rehearsal on campus.

"[Mr. Hoffa] was very adamant about us following the safety precautions so that made me feel a lot better.... It was also really fun getting to actually run our fighting scenes for the first time with our partners," senior Tonalli Garcia Rodriguez said. "[Junior] Rena Pau, my fighting buddy, and I were laughing at how it felt more awkward

to fight in person than over Zoom. We had expected it to feel more natural in person, but I think the shock of not seeing so many people for awhile and then seeing everyone made the 'fighting' feel a bit odd."

Hoffa included additional activities in the rehearsals to make them more engaging for the cast and foster social connection amidst quarantine. He invited a fight coordinator to teach the actors stage combat, and SPHS Drama alumna Grace Chavez taught the cast how to put on stage makeup.

"I think I have definitely connected with my peers during rehearsal through laughter," junior Lulu Talesnick said. "I can remember a few times when I have been working with someone on fight choreography, and we laugh at our sword wielding skills or a silly mistake. We also had a workshop where we tried to do our own makeup, which was really fun and a great bonding experience."

Hoffa wants his students to view the virtual play as its own unique challenge, instead of a downgrade from a completely in-person play.

"I don't think that expectations have to be lowered everywhere just because we've been in [COVID-19]," Hoffa said. "The students have responded to being pushed artistically, and even though it seems challenging, doesn't mean that just because we're in [COVID-19] they can't grow and learn."

Hoffa stated that the play's release date and format have yet to be determined.



**SWORD FIGHTING SCENES** are prevalent in *Macbeth*, a skill which actors had to practice over Zoom until in-person rehearsals began on Friday, Mar. 5.

## Teachers feel excluded from reopening discussions

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"We've been listening to experts and the science, which I think is very clear," Board member Michele Kipke said at the Tuesday, Feb. 9 meeting. "We've had the Department of Public Health come out and visit and they've agreed that we have a safe plan to ensure the safety of our kids and our teachers."

Some parents have criticized teachers' concerns over the safety of school reopening, and likened it to a lack of responsibility for their jobs.

"Teachers are not catching the virus from students and schools with masks are a safe place to be even without vaccines," an anonymous parent said in a public comment at the Feb. 17 Board meeting. "My optic vision of the teachers union thus far along into the pandemic, despite all the safety evidence we've been presented, is embarrassing. They are simply devaluing their own profession that I have always held in the highest regard. If parents could fill in so easily, why should we pay teachers more? Real valuing of your profession means admitting one, remote learning is a poor substitute for face to face interpersonal contact and two, that parents can't do teacher's jobs and then trying with all your might to get back to doing just that as soon as possible."

Teachers expressed frustration with parents for belittling them and the School Board for failing to consider teachers' perspectives in their decision-making.

"Over the year I questioned if [my] caring is reciprocated. Not by my students but by many others who are supposed to be a part of our community," SPHS science teacher Seema Athalye said in a public comment at the Thursday, Mar. 4 board meeting. "I've heard too many hurtful comments written to break teachers. I've watched



**WHEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS REOPENED** for grades TK to 2, 3 and 4, and 5 on Thursday, Feb. 18, Thursday, Mar. 11, and Monday, Mar. 15, respectively, the vast majority of teachers had not been fully vaccinated against the coronavirus.

decision makers downplay our legitimate concerns. [The school board] refused to even engage in a conversation with us, unable to extend to us the basic humanity we extend to hundreds of young people everyday. When we express what we need we are vilified. We are bullied and told we simply don't matter enough to be heard. It's frustrating and disheartening but everyday we keep going because we care. We won't give up on our students; please don't give up on us."

SPHS teachers are currently meeting with site administrators to select a hybrid instructional model for the Apr. 15 return date. They have reviewed a total of 10 models thus far, though many are similar in consisting of one all-remote day per week. The faculty is expected to make a decision on the hybrid schedule the week of Mar. 15, after which the School Board will need to approve it.



**SPMS TEACHERS VACCINATED** at the SPUSD-sponsored clinic will not be fully immunized by the Apr. 8 reopening date.

### NEWS SNAPSHOT

#### District DEI Committee

SPUSD announced the formation of a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee in February, aiming to address bias and discrimination within the five schools by reviewing district policies and practices. The committee will begin its work this year starting with inclusivity training, and will continue for the entire 2021-2022 school year.

Headed by Assistant Superintendent of Instructional Services Christiane Gervais, the committee is composed of members from each of the five SPUSD

campuses and will meet virtually every third Wednesday of the month to review practices and recommend any policy changes to the School Board.

The committee consists of an administrator, teacher, and parent representative from each school site, as well as a total of three middle or high school students, and two non-teacher staff members. More than 80 individuals applied for the committee, and the selected members were notified of their acceptance on Thursday, Mar. 11. Gervais declined to disclose SPHS' representatives due to alleged privacy concerns.

While the DEI Committee's tasks encompass many different issues, some committee members are already

passionate about specific topics and plan to advocate for them within the group.

"I [hope to] provide good contributions as someone who is a POC and part of the LGBTQ+ community," sophomore and committee member Samantha Lopez said. "I would really like to target gender inclusivity in education, especially starting in elementary schools, like by having more gender-neutral bathrooms throughout. I also want to work on including all ethnicities and races without tokenization."

The DEI Committee meets first on Mar. 17, and Gervais has stated that there will be opportunities for the community to give feedback on the group's work.

# Peer Advocates tackle body image

Planned Parenthood youth team combats fatphobia and other body-related issues in community project.

STORY ZOE SCHLAAK  
PHOTOS SOPHIE YEUNG

The Planned Parenthood Peer Advocates promote positive body image through policy presentations to medical professionals and by facilitating inclusive student discussions, all as part of a community project that spans from February to April 2021.

Juniors Sofia Alva, Amber Chen, and Sadie Metcalfe are SPHS' three peer advocates, who work together with other high schoolers in the San Gabriel Valley to coordinate a project each year to advance reproductive rights. The group selected body image — how a person thinks or feels about their body — as the focus of its yearlong project.

"This year a lot of students are having a really hard time with their body especially on Zoom and with the coronavirus. The overuse of social media has [also] contributed to a lot of body image insecurities," Metcalfe said. "So we wanted to address that this year because having a positive body image directly correlates to a healthy relationship with your body whether that be mentally, physically, [or] sexually."

The advocates are separated into two different groups for the project: policy and peer-to-peer discussion. Chen and Metcalfe work in the policy group to present to various community stakeholders, suggesting ways to foster more body-inclusive environments in their professional settings. Two weeks ago, peer advocates met on Zoom with sex-ed teachers and curriculum developers within the L.A. County Office of Education. By the end of March, they plan to speak to a group of medical personnel and



**MEETING WITH MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS AND STUDENT GROUPS** are two of the ways SPHS' Planned Parenthood Peer Advocates (from left) Sofia Alva, Amber Chen, and Sadie Metcalfe are promoting positive body image in school and work environments.

the PTA to provide more inclusive approaches to body image at schools, medical visits, and home.

"We are trying to address systemic fatphobia where it comes into schools, medical offices, and students' homes, so we are attacking the problem directly at its core," Metcalfe said.

The peer-to-peer connection part of the project, which Alva is involved with, is reaching out to local schools' clubs and classes to spread positive body image education. The lessons include the issue's history, the negative effects of social media, triggers of body-related struggles, and **resources** on how to improve mindsets about body

image. Starting Friday, Mar. 12, they began presenting to various student groups in the greater community such as Pasadena High School's P.E. and dance classes and Temple City High School's body image and eating disorder awareness club.

The peer advocates are a branch of Planned Parenthood, and can be reached on their **website**. Applications for the two-year positions will open soon and anyone interested can fill out this **interest form**.

Presentations to students, medical professionals, educators, and parents about body image will continue into April.

## Junior Ava Dunville educates elementary schoolers about local government and activism in Gold Award project

STORY KAHLEN MIAO  
PHOTO KATELYN HERNANDEZ

Junior Ava Dunville encourages civic engagement among third through fifth graders in weekly 30-minute Zoom workshops for her Girl Scouts Gold Award project that began on Monday, Mar. 1.

Dunville begins each of her presentations with an icebreaker before going into a deeper dive on the day's topic. Her **first lesson** defined and showed examples of civic engagement, like protesting, volunteering, and writing to local elected officials. At the end, she facilitated a discussion where the kids brainstormed changes in South Pasadena they think need to be made.

In her **second class**, Dunville spoke on the function of the City Council and public comments, explaining who the five elected officials are and giving a rundown of a meeting agenda. Dunville chooses lesson topics as she goes, but currently plans to cover the coronavirus' impact on South Pasadena, the importance of using green energy, and local homelessness in the future.

Her project mentor, Bill Kelly, is part of **Care First South Pasadena**, a local activist group whose help she is leveraging to get kids involved with local environmental movements within their schools.

"I'm really excited to be working with Care First South Pasadena. I feel like their mission really aligns with what we should all be working towards: a better community for all in terms of health, safety, and welfare," Dunville

said. "They're a very organized and knowledgeable group and it's been great working with them."

Dunville's experience with local politics and activism in the YMCA's Youth and Government Program inspired her to teach younger kids about civic engagement.

"I don't think it's ever too early to start learning about [civic engagement]," Dunville said. "I think if you open the door to these discussions, kids will want to learn more."

The Gold Award project is the Girl Scouts' highest achievement and must consist of at least 80 hours of work and generate a lasting community impact. These difficult requirements compelled Dunville to thoroughly consider her options, before she settled on her current idea.

"While I did struggle coming up with a project, I realized that I should do something I'm passionate about if I'm going to spend so many hours doing it, and what better than civic engagement?" Dunville said, "I consider myself to be pretty active in our own local government and I've always voiced my opinion even if it's just on Facebook. I think [my] accumulative acts of activism prompted me to learn more about why it's important to speak up."

Dunville hopes that the kids involved will use their voices to better the community. To ensure the project's sustainability, she will be passing on her curriculum to a Marengo fifth grader teacher to lead lessons in future years. While the civic engagement classes are already underway, those interested **can still enroll** and contact [avadunville@gmail.com](mailto:avadunville@gmail.com) for further information.



**TO COMPLETE HER 12-YEAR GIRL SCOUTS JOURNEY** in troop 16221 and earn her Gold Award, junior Ava Dunville is hosting civic engagement classes for youth.

## LISTEN WITH US

Check out  
our weekly  
playlist!

Spotify playlists curated by a  
new staff member each week!

Listen to *Tiger's* podcast

Hosted by Cloe Maurer and Amber Chen  
New episodes every Tuesday

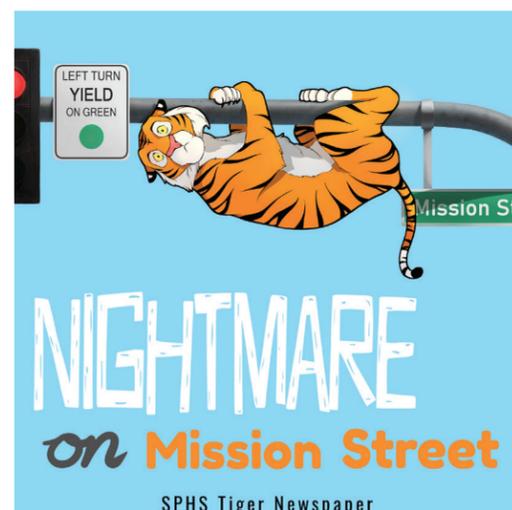


@nightmareonmission



Available on Spotify and Apple  
Podcasts

This podcast only represents the views of the hosts and any guests. It does not necessarily represent the views of the SPHS staff, student body, faculty, administration, or *Tiger Newspaper*.



SPHS Tiger Newspaper

# Student Quarantine Travels

Although the pandemic has held millions of people hostage in their homes, many students have discovered safe and fun ways to travel in the time of the coronavirus. This issue, Tiger highlights three unique quarantine vacations.

STORY SOFIA ALVA,  
KIMBERLY HSUEH, & ZOE SCHLAACK

PAGE DESIGN CHARLOTTE COHEN  
& TERRY SONG

PHOTOS COURTESY OF LONDEN ELY,  
MEGAN SUNG, & SHANE YU

GRAPHICS TERRY SONG

## Flight camp lifts spirits during pandemic

To satisfy her love for aviation, freshman Megan Sung and her family escaped from the monotony of quarantine with a summer road trip up the coast to Santa Barbara to attend her annual flight camp, albeit with coronavirus safety restrictions.

Sung has always been passionate about planes, mainly due to her mother's job as a flight attendant. Every summer since sixth grade, she has attended the Above All Aviation flight camp. She was thrilled to learn she would still be able to fly this summer, and her family drove two hours to the Santa Barbara airport and rented an Airbnb for five days.

Due to the coronavirus, the camp enforced many restrictions. Instead of conducting flight lessons inside the local airport, the personal instructors taught outdoors in reduced class sizes to allow for proper distance and to reduce the risk of virus transmission. In the past, participants had partnered up within the planes to experience and learn from each others' flights, but this year, all students flew just with their teacher.

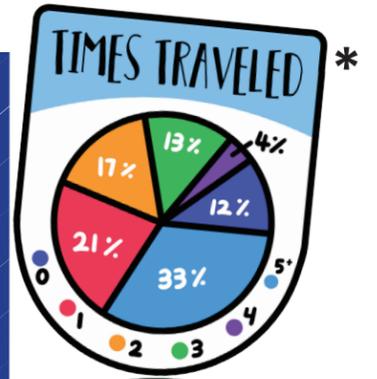
Even though the pandemic changed the look of the camp, Sung still found refuge being up in the air.

"It was so nice to be outside and go flying because it's almost like it was a normal day. The airports were definitely less crowded which meant we were able to get more flight time which I'm super grateful for because [now] I am way closer to my end goal [of earning a flight license]," Sung said.

Like other families in quarantine, the Sung family soon grew stir-crazy being stuck at home together, so their road trip provided some peace and solitude.

"The more time we spent together in really close quarters, [the more] we got on each others' nerves a little bit," Sung said. "When I went out to go fly, it was just me and the instructor and I had time away from my family, [so] we all got our personal time."

Sung's flight camp proved to be a much-needed break during quarantine and marked progress on her goal of becoming a commercial pilot.



## Spontaneous road trip aids family bonds

As L.A. began to normalize the daily doldrums of the coronavirus pandemic last summer, junior Londen Ely and his family eagerly embarked on a spontaneous cross-country road trip.

Without an itinerary, the Ely family set out from their home in South Pasadena in the general direction of Texas, where they would visit relatives.

"A lot of our trip was unplanned and I think, ironically speaking, that was the plan," Ely said. "If we, say, saw something cool, [we would] stop there. That's how a majority of the trip went."

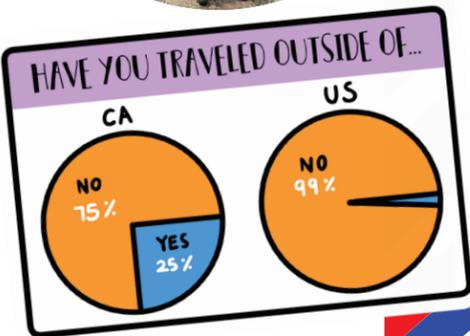
Ely and his family continued their trip to the Midwest, averaging about eight hours of driving each day. When they were not staying with family or friends, the Ely family spent the night in open campsites en route. Throughout their journey, they camped in the white rock Ozark mountains of Arkansas, visited Mount Rushmore, and pitched a tent in the home of 100-year-old untouched Apache artifacts in Lyman Lake State Park in Arizona.

While most of the attractions the Elys visited were open despite the pandemic, they did run into one hiccup during their trip.

"We were driving through scenic route 73 in South Dakota [where] there is nothing but farmland as far as the eye can see," Ely said. "About two hours down this path, we came across a secluded Native American reservation [but] because we weren't residents of the town we had to turn around due to coronavirus safety precautions."

Besides this incident, the family's two month-long trip went relatively smoothly. Their final stop was in Minnesota, at the 1,000-person town where Ely's mother grew up. Exploring his mother's roots strengthened Ely's family connection.

"This road trip allowed me and my family to actually enjoy each other under different circumstances than just watching movies and staying inside," Ely said. "We were able to explore new places and experience new things [which] helped cut loose a lot of anxiety that the pandemic has brought to my family specifically."



## South Korea exemplifies proper safety

Bustling crowds on streets, open restaurants, and people wearing masks are now a common sight in South Korea, as coronavirus cases continue to decline. Eager to experience that novelty and visit family, freshman Hanniel Park and his family spent their winter break in Korea.

Arriving at Incheon International Airport, Park experienced first-hand South Korea's meticulous quarantining and coronavirus testing process. After filling out forms and getting their temperatures checked, the Parks waited for their luggage to be disinfected. Following this process, travelers had the choice to quarantine for two weeks in a family home or a government-provided facility.

To prevent coronavirus exposure to Park's grandparents, the family decided to pay to live in an apartment for their quarantine period. The Parks had to download an app that kept track of their temperature and record it twice a day.

During quarantining, deliverers in hazmat suits provided three meals of food and water, daily. Meals of traditional Korean cuisine were packaged in a bento-style box.

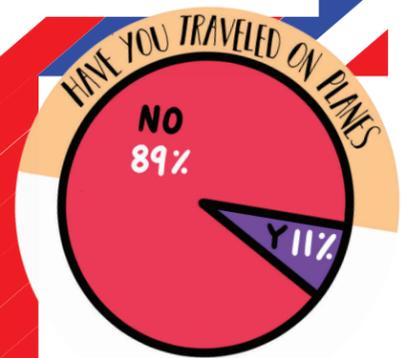
Necessities, such as toilet paper rolls, were adequately supplied to the apartment prior to their arrival.

After a week of normal temperature records, Park and his family were approved for an early release, and they spent the rest of their winter break touring the port city of Incheon and the skyscraper-lined capital of Seoul.

"This trip was a nice breather after almost eight months of quarantining. Korea has been able to maintain control of cases, as people listen well to the rules of making Korea clean and healthy. Even with Korea's careful process of quarantining and testing, people were understanding and almost never took off their masks, except when eating," Park said.

Heading back to America, Park noticed stark differences in the public's adherence to safety guidelines.

"There were a few thousand people at LAX and although there were signs to stand six feet apart, no one was following them. There was only one temperature check, too. This really showed how lacking America is [in handling the pandemic]."



\* The results shown in the pie charts are from a survey Tiger conducted of 231 SPHS students.

# THE TIGER

ESTABLISHED 1913

CSPA GOLD MEDALIST 2019  
CSPA CROWN AWARD 2018  
CSPA GOLD MEDALIST 2017  
CSPA CROWN AWARD 2016  
CSPA GOLD MEDALIST 2015  
CSPA GOLD MEDALIST 2014  
CSPA GOLD MEDALIST 2013  
CSPA GOLD MEDALIST 2011

**EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**  
CAT FLORES

**MANAGING EDITORS**  
MATTHEW TSAI, *Print*  
CHRISTINE MAO, *Online*

**NEWS**  
NOAH KUHN, *Editor*  
SOFIA ALVA, *Associate*

**OPINION**  
AMBER CHEN, *Editor*  
SAM GROTENSTEIN, *Associate*

**FEATURE**  
CLOE MAURER, *Editor*  
GEORGIA PARSONS, *Associate*

**SPORTS**  
ELLIE CAMPBELL, *Editor*  
ZOE SCHLAAK, *Associate*

**DESIGN**  
TALULLA CHOW, *Editor*  
MADDIE YOO, *Editor*  
CHARLOTTE COHEN, *Associate*  
TERRY SONG, *Associate*

**PHOTOGRAPHY**  
ELLA JAYASEKERA, *Editor*  
SARAH LEE, *Associate*

**COPY**  
ADAM KWOH, *Editor*  
LUYANG ZHANG, *Editor*

**SENIOR STAFF WRITER**  
KIMBERLY HSUEH

**STAFF WRITERS**  
KATHARINE FLORENCE,  
KATIE HOHMAN, HAELEE KIM,  
QUINN MANZO,  
KAHLEN MIAO, EDDIE ZHOU

**SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER**  
OSCAR WALSH

**PHOTOGRAPHERS**  
KATELYN HERNANDEZ, SEAN JIN,  
SOPHIE YEUNG

**SENIOR STAFF ILLUSTRATORS**  
NICHOLAS FORMAN, DAVID SOHN

**ILLUSTRATOR**  
ALICIA ZHANG

**VIDEOGRAPHER**  
ALVARO RODRIGUEZ-CHAVEZ

**WEBMASTER**  
JACKSON McLANE  
LILIAN ZHU, *Associate*

**FACULTY ADVISOR**  
KAREN HAMES

VOL. 107 NO. 6 DISTRIBUTED ON  
MARCH 15, 2021.

TIGER IS PRODUCED BY THE ADVANCED  
JOURNALISM NEWSPAPER CLASS AT SOUTH  
PASADENA HIGH SCHOOL, 1401 FREMONT AVE,  
SOUTH PASADENA, CA 91030. LAYOUT AND  
PHOTO IMAGING ARE COMPLETED ON-SITE.

SIGNED ARTICLES APPEARING IN TIGER  
REPRESENT THE WRITER'S OPINIONS AND  
DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THE VIEWS  
OF THE STAFF, STUDENT BODY, FACULTY OR  
ADMINISTRATION OF SPHS. ORIGINAL STORIES  
WILL CARRY BYLINES, ALTHOUGH STORIES  
REWRITTEN BY ANYONE OTHER THAN THE  
ORIGINAL WRITER WILL NOT RECEIVE ONE.  
CONTRIBUTING WRITERS WILL ALSO RECEIVE  
ONE.

CONTACT THE PUBLICATIONS OFFICE AT (626) 441-  
5820 EXT. 2615 BETWEEN 8:00 A.M. AND 4:00 P.M.  
FOR ADVERTISING RATES AND SUBSCRIPTIONS.  
TIGER WELCOMES ARTICLES, LETTERS OR  
REBUTTALS FOR PUBLICATION IN THE PRINT AND  
ONLINE EDITIONS. ALL LETTERS MUST BE SIGNED  
AND VERIFIABLE, BUT NAMES WILL BE WITHHELD  
UPON REQUEST.

TIGER'S MISSION IS TO PROVIDE A RELIABLE NEWS  
OUTLET FOR SPHS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY.  
THROUGH A VARIETY OF COVERAGE, TIGER  
EMPOWERS/ENABLES STUDENTS TO THINK  
CRITICALLY AND CREATIVELY, COMMUNICATE  
EFFECTIVELY, SOLVE PROBLEMS, SET AND  
REACH GOALS, AND WORK COOPERATIVELY AND  
INDEPENDENTLY AS RESPONSIBLE CITIZENS.  
TIGER IS A FORUM FOR STUDENT FREE SPEECH, IN  
ACCORDANCE WITH CALIFORNIA ED CODE 48907.

## STAFF EDITORIAL

# OPINION



## An invasive media is inhumane

*The public must counter the media's horrific treatment of women.*

At just 10 years old, pop star Britney Spears was asked by a TV host about whether or not she had a boyfriend. Reporters would continue to ask her questions like these throughout her career — questions that are not only invasive, but have nothing to do with her talents.

Spears' experience is among the countless examples of the media's inhumane treatment of women. Singer-songwriter Amy Winehouse was another talented artist who fell victim to cruel media exploitation. Towards the end of her life, Winehouse struggled with drug addiction, and the paparazzi and tabloids heavily documented her personal problems, reducing her complexities and talents to a shallow portrayal as nothing more than a drug addict.

More recently, Duchess of Sussex Meghan Markle's interview with Oprah Winfrey has not only exposed racism within the royal family, but also the abusive treatment of the British media that eventually contributed to her stepping back from her royal duties. Throughout her relationship with Prince Harry, Markle has been attacked by tabloids that portrayed her as a bully, fabricated stories about past relationships, and even made racist remarks about her son upon his birth. When comparing Markle's treatment in the media as a Black woman to the treatment of her sister-in-law Kate Middleton, who is white, Markle's portrayals have been significantly worse.

The media especially targets women's faults, and women of color, in particular, because of the extreme expectations they are put under. Celebrities in general are expected to behave in certain ways that protect their public image, which greatly depends on their race and gender, especially when they publicly act out.

For example, when Spears and Justin Timberlake went through a very public breakup, Spears ended up taking most of the blame for their falling out. For months after, Spears was bombarded with cheating accusations. Timberlake received

virtually no questioning pertaining to his role in the breakup; the media had just assumed it was Spears' fault.

Although the media is largely to blame for the exploitation of celebrities' personal lives, especially those of female stars, this content would not exist if there wasn't such a large demand for it. This cruel obsession with seeing people fail actually has a name: *schadenfreude*. This complex emotion is typically associated with envy and self-esteem issues, which makes complete sense why seeing others fail, especially celebrities that are placed on a pedestal, makes a person feel better about their own flaws. This phenomenon, combined with sexism that is present in the media, breeds a heightened obsession with the downfall of female celebrities.

However, the blame should not be placed solely on the consumer, but rather celebrity culture itself. Celebrity culture is one that functions on the basis of envy. The lives of celebrities are manufactured to seem effortlessly perfect, despite the presence of managers, PR teams, makeup artists, and personal trainers lurking in the background.

This "perfect" image inevitably makes the consumers of celebrity culture feel inferior and persuades them to search for solutions in celebrity-endorsed makeup products or diet programs. This ultimately creates self-esteem issues, so instead of the consumer making peace with their own life, they search for flaws in the lives of celebrities.

*Schadenfreude* will persist as long the celebrity exists, and the media is an entity that will always cater to the consumer. These downsides of celebrity are almost like a written contract that comes with the job. Despite the fixed presence of the media, in terms of objective morality, there are some lines of privacy and personal harm that should not be crossed. The media caters to the consumer, and by the same coin the consumer controls the media, and it is therefore their duty to point out when the media takes things too far.

## Boos & Bravos

*Tiger's cheers and jeers for the month of MARCH*

### BOOS

**BOO** to the Tiger Takeaways. I just got an automated call from Commanderson Janderson about being tardy because of you. That's one too many.

**BOO** to guys who work out. Firstly, no one cares and secondly, all that butt and chest area looks like it's going to pop and spin around like a balloon.

**BOO** to the three-week-old pile of dirty laundry on the floor of my room. Unfortunately, it really speaks to my mental state and just keeps getting bigger, stinkier, and harder to clean up.

**BOO** to Netflix Originals. We do NOT act like that.

### BRAVOS

**BRAVO** to the district for having us go back to school right before the AP tests and less than two months before school ends! Gosh, what a wonderful decision!

**BRAVO** to all the recent lightning and thunder. Telling my teachers that "my wifi is down" has never been more believable.

**BRAVO** to the royal family for caring about baby Archie's appearance. Really? Prince Phillip looks like death itself and the rest of y'all's eyes are so close together it's giving off mad pelican energy.

**BRAVO** to the drone strikes. We're proud, Joe.

# BuzzFeed's ironic misandry hurts feminism

*The hypocrisy rampant in BuzzFeed's content has no place in promoting the feminist movement.*

STORY QUINN MANZO

ILLUSTRATION

NICHOLAS FORMAN

**B**uzzFeed, a news and entertainment company, gained a large following in the 2010s for its articles about relatable moments, YouTube videos where some guy tries fruits and vegetables for the first time, and videos and articles of #girlboss women that insult men on the basis of their sex.

The company's humor is played off as ironic misandry, or humor involving ironic hatred of men, to make them seem like a noble retaliation against sex discrimination. But in reality, BuzzFeed's ironic misandry only teaches its audience of young girls that feminism is about hating men, and that feminism is a movement of vengeance, not gender equality.

A recurring theme in BuzzFeed's ironic misandry is its "men are trash" and "kill all men" jokes. To be clear, these jokes aren't malicious in their intent. Women don't genuinely believe all men are trash and that they should die. These jokes are a way for women to commiserate and make a hyperbolic joke of a scary and dangerous reality.

It can be assumed that most adults are able to figure out that a thread of tweets with garbage cans labeled "men" is not the pinnacle of the women's rights movement. Yet, BuzzFeed underestimates how much its content can

affect a more impressionable demographic. Children are frequently using the internet today and they will be exposed to BuzzFeed's popular content, which racked up 92 million users in the U.S. alone in 2019.

Perhaps BuzzFeed believes that its ironic misandry can make people aware of behaviors that disproportionately impact women by aiming that behavior at men. For example, the patriarchy oversexualizes women, and BuzzFeed — in apparent good intention — has chosen to combat this by sexualizing men.

These articles objectify men from an aggressively heterosexual female perspective: "18 Celebrity Men Who Are Actually Really Pleased to See You," "The 16 Most Important Celebrity Bulges of All Time," and "So, BuzzFeed Has a Newsletter About Hot Guys Now." The first two consisted of celebrity bulges rated on a scale of one to five, captioned with sexual innuendos, and the third advertised a newsletter BuzzFeed created that sends daily photos of chiseled men.

But, if BuzzFeed's goal is to highlight how certain behaviors of the patriarchy are wrong, why are they taking it so far? BuzzFeed takes its ironic misandry jokes to an unnecessary extreme.

In fact, the vulgarity of these articles make them no longer excusable as ironic misandry. It's just blatant hypocrisy. BuzzFeed needs self-reflection in order to become



aware of the significant influence they have on others, especially 11 to 13-year-olds. Its articles objectifying men are unacceptable regardless of context, and the fact that women are disproportionately discriminated against on the basis of sex is not a "get out of jail free" card to discriminate against men. BuzzFeed's failed attempt at ironic misandry discredits feminism and its followers, and they have become part of the problem in an attempt to bring awareness to it.

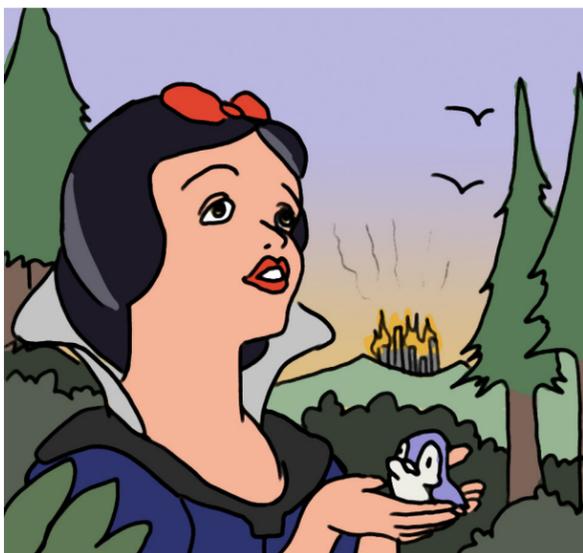
# The romanticization of the cottagecore aesthetic on social media is harmful to a society that requires progress

STORY CAT FLORES

ILLUSTRATION

NICHOLAS FORMAN

President Abraham Lincoln passed the Homestead Act on May 20, 1862. The act gave American citizens the opportunity to own up to 160 acres of public land provided that they live on it, take care of it, and pay a minor fee. In order to make way for the homesteaders, Native Americans were forced from their lands and onto reservations.



These homesteaders' lifestyles became the foundation for the popularized cottagecore aesthetic. The aesthetic has gained immense popularity from TikTok, but it existed long before on sites like Tumblr and Instagram.

Cottagecore is characterized by living a Laura Ingalls Wilder-esque life in the woods or the countryside, baking, farming, gardening, farm animals, and picnics — away from society and its ills.

In addition to its roots in 19th century Manifest Destiny, cottagecore mainly stems from racism and nativism. When urbanization heightened in the late 19th and early 20th century, non-white people and immigrants moved into the city.

Consequently, white people started to develop an illogical fear of "white race deterioration" and turned to rural living as a more clean, safe, and wholesome way of living compared to the "corruption" of the city. The demographics of people who obsess over the cottagecore aesthetic now eerily mirror those who moved out of the "corrupt city" for a Manifest-Destiny-driven rural life — they are all white.

Nearly all cottagecore TikToks are of queer white women saying that they want to leave the city behind along with men, technology, and basically any and all problems of the modern world. Cottagecore as an aesthetic is paralleling its history in modern times as an excuse for people to escape the pressing issues of society.

Queer people are undeniably in a position of oppression, as society is heteronormative. But, being gay does not magically negate white privilege.

The conclusion that it is a logical impulse for oppressed groups to idealize a life away from society, underestimates the gravity of white privilege. White privilege infiltrates every aspect of a person's identity, arguably more than any other identifier.

The queer white people that make up the majority of cottagecore don't want to address the problems that they're eager to escape from, because they are not as severely affected by them as queer BIPOC are.

These problems are not a threat to their existence. And this escapist attitude is incredibly dangerous, because societal problems are actively worsened when people of privilege ignore them.

Instead of romanticizing cottagecore, there needs to be an acknowledgement of the fact that America occupies Indigenous land. Furthermore, Native American communities must be actively supported: amplify Indigenous artists, work to understand their history, and donate to Native American justice organizations.

Above all, people shouldn't use cottagecore as a way to avoid confronting societal issues. Social media platforms like TikTok should be used to raise awareness for issues, not to promote escaping from them.



## CAT'S PLANET

CAT FLORES

### Redefining my friendships during quarantine

At the beginning of quarantine, I spent a lot of time with my best friend. I thought that she would be the person that I spent all of my time with during the pandemic. We did everything together before; we were inseparable. But slowly, we started to hang out less, talk less, and eventually we grew apart.

I was really sad about this. I knew that we weren't as close as before, but it really started to bother me. Then we got in a big fight. It was over something so stupid and trivial, but then it turned into something bigger: a fight about our friendship and the fact that we had

grown apart. We no longer talked everyday or hung out every week. I felt like I was losing her. Little did I know she didn't exactly feel the same way.

We talked on the phone that night for over an hour. She told me how she didn't realize how us growing apart had hurt me so much. That made me feel even worse because she obviously wasn't as sad as I was about our dwindling friendship. I honestly felt really stupid that I cared about this person so much, who I figured didn't care about me nearly as much.

But that wasn't necessarily the case. As I sobbed to her, she reassured me that she cared about me and loved me a lot. But she told me that for her, she didn't mind growing apart. To her, it was natural and expected. That's kind of the way quarantine is.

It didn't feel natural to me. It was hard for me to get used to the fact that we wouldn't do everything together anymore, that we wouldn't see each other everyday or talk everyday. I realized that I became dependent on her for happiness and support. She told me this too, how she felt used — not in the way where I was actively trying to use her to achieve something. She felt like I had subconsciously been relying on her for my primary source of happiness. And I think she was right.

I personally rely on human connections and the relationships I have to keep me stable. To a certain extent everyone is like that, but I have trouble being happy on my own.

This is a skill that I've had to learn to develop over quarantine, even though I have grown closer to a lot of people in ways that I'd never imagined. I've grown apart from more than just this friendship. It still feels weird to say that now I hardly have any friends. I was such a social butterfly before quarantine.

After our argument we didn't hang out or really talk for a few months. At first it felt weird but then I got used to it. We hung out for her birthday in December and then didn't hang out again until Valentine's Day, which was really fun. After that, we started to text more and talk more. It felt natural, not forced like when we were growing apart.

I don't know if she would say the same about me, but she's still one of my best friends. I realized that you don't need to spend every day with someone to call them your close friend. Being a friend to someone is more than spending every minute with them. A lot of friendship is knowing that they will always be there for you no matter what.

# Eastern religions need to be respected

*The legitimacy of religions should not be questioned, especially when doubt stems from difference.*

STORY QUINN MANZO

ILLUSTRATION DAVID SOHN

I remember being so excited in seventh grade when I heard that my history teacher was going to teach us about the Eastern religions. For the Buddhism lesson, she laid out stations around the classroom that my classmates and I were to explore. In the right corner was a meditation station, with Chromebooks that had YouTube videos of calming music and guided meditation.

As I sat down, closed my eyes, and began to steady my breath, I was startled by a sudden uproar of laughter. I wondered what was funny to my classmates. I assumed the only issue was them disrespecting the lesson. That was until I exited the classroom to the final station.

On a table placed just outside the door of the classroom, in a blue-gray plastic bin, was the saddest excuse for a Zen garden I have ever seen. It was complete with cheap sand, pathetic rocks, plastic plants, and from what I remember, forks in place of rakes.

At the time, I didn't know why I found these displays so offensive. All I knew was that they made my blood boil. Today, I have a complete understanding what it was that ticked me off.

Americans pride themselves on the rules and rights that they have and always emphasize the importance of honoring those principles — in this case, the separation of church and state. What kind of backlash would the school have received from parents if they had treated

other faiths the way they did mine that day? If they had taken a cheap version of Christian religious activities and invited the class to participate in them, the reaction would most certainly be fiercely negative. My peers had mocked meditation that day, but I'm sure they would've kept decorum if asked to pray.

So why was my faith treated this way? I hold no grudge against my seventh grade history teacher, because I genuinely believe she felt it was okay to create that lesson. She didn't view Buddhism as a legitimate faith with a modern following. Americans view Buddhism as only a lifestyle. If one identifies as a Buddhist and define it as a lifestyle, that's fine with me. Call it whatever you want. However, the fact that outsiders feel entitled enough to sum up Buddhism — and by extension all non-Western religions — as only a lifestyle, like veganism, is beyond me.

The Eastern religions are quite different in comparison to the common Western faiths and Americans have a long history of disrespecting things that are different. But it's unwise to try and argue religion using logic. As a Buddhist, I believe in reincarnation, and I think there is an undeniable beauty in the belief that you can try over and over to be the best version of yourself until you get it right. The idea of reincarnation is not scientifically realistic, but neither is the idea that there is a giant bearded man in the sky that can hear your thoughts. Don't get me wrong though; I have no issues with either idea. I can assert that all religions have a component that no one can ever prove or disprove. After all, that's what faith is, right? Faith is not the absence of doubt, but the triumph over it.

No one has the authority to decide which religions are most logical, valid, or virtuous. Eastern religions must be explored through a more realistic lens. In history lessons, a unit on the Eastern religions should include the practices of that religion in modern times, as well as its upbringing. Just portray the faith realistically: Not every Christian is a priest and not every Buddhist is a monk. It all comes down to mutual respect.



## The overly positive perception of Biden is evidence of a society that values aesthetics over concrete policy

STORY SAM GROTENSTEIN

ILLUSTRATION DAVID SOHN

On Feb. 25, President Joe Biden ordered a drone strike on Iranian-backed militias in Syria. To some, this was a surprise, but to most, the Biden regime only reminded the American people what the government stands for: appeasing corporate interest. It's been almost two months into Biden's presidency and nothing has been said of his promised healthcare reforms, police brutality and misconduct continue to run rampant, and America is still engaged in illegal military action across international borders without any repercussions. The majority of people posting about how "we can disagree on ice cream flavors but not on children in cages" have been slowly favored out for tweets about how happy they are that Biden is "handling drone strikes maturely."

Although lifting the military ban on transgender people has shown that Biden is at least not overtly bigoted and reentering into the Paris Climate Accords is a big step in the right direction, these policies are relatively superficial and insignificant compared to Biden's campaign promises. Despite this, the transfer of power from Trump to Biden ushered the sensation that an immense social weight had been lifted. America under Biden really does feel different than America under Trump.

In describing Hitler's rise to power, Walter Benjamin and a number of other self-described postmodern philosophers took to focusing on the close relationship between the politics and aesthetics of a society. To briefly summarize, politics is the material structure from which a society operates. For example, America's judicial system and tax brackets exist as governing principles that materially shape society. In contrast stands the aesthetic, how those both inside and outside of a society perceive it. Think of the stereotype that Texas is a "free state full of rednecks." Whether or not this idea is supported by policies within Texas state law, it is arguably more important to the country's social understanding of Texas than the laws that govern it.

This same phenomena is responsible for the almost paradoxical interpretation of Joe Biden described earlier. Because Trump existed primarily in the world of the aesthetic, to see someone come in and restore the "American aesthetic" of a mostly well put-together white man in a suit and tie telling people what to do on a stage



rather than on Twitter genuinely feels like a wholly new thing. By this same token, the fact that Biden's policy isn't radically different from Trump's doesn't really matter as long as Biden presents his policy in a sensible and straightforward manner.

In no way is this to say that the rights of transgender people are in any way superfluous, but rather that when the question is "should transgender people be allowed to fight and die in forever wars," the goalposts have been moved so far back that "are you a bigot or not" has become a hot-button issue. It is truly a testament to how far this country has come that Biden can be touted as the most progressive candidate for taking a bold stance on the question of who gets to be included in the suffering.

This same understanding of aesthetics can also be applied to the boogeyman of American politics that is the MAGA movement. Trump was the perfect embodiment of this "style over substance" philosophy, and it shows: MAGA crowds' borderline cultish and outright conspiratorial worship of Trump as not just a presidential candidate, but a messiah figure has very little to do with policy. Cries for Trump to "uproot the deep state" are, politically speaking, cries for martial law similar to what was

presented in the Nazi propaganda book *The Turner Diaries*. To say that MAGA is the prerequisite to an actual fascist movement is not to pass judgement on any individual Trump supporter, but rather that by focusing entirely on aesthetics, policies that lead to a fascist state are almost irrelevant to the movement as a whole.

This is the natural extension of a society that values aesthetic over politics. When the way a candidate presents their platform becomes more important than the platform itself, America is left with a bizarre political wasteland in which the candidate literally deploying the army on peaceful protestors can be seen as a populist hero. It is a testament to this fact that even after Trump has left the presidency, he is still the figurehead for the Republican Party.

This is not to condemn aesthetics in politics entirely, but rather to remind society that aesthetics are a very powerful tool. The issue America has today is not that aesthetics are being deployed incorrectly, but rather that aesthetics have become the platform itself. There is a wide margin between using aesthetics to promote policy and having aesthetics replace policy, and it's vitally important to recognize this distinction before it's too late.

# Quarantine Reflections

PAGE TALULLA CHOW &amp; MADDIE YOO

ILLUSTRATION ALICIA ZHANG

The pandemic in the U.S. has just passed its first (and hopefully only) birthday. Four Tiger staff members contemplate how the past year has personally pushed each of them into new territory.



## Someone to thank

Matthew Tsai

“Wow. This is kinda crazy. I’d like to thank my family and friends for supporting me. Thanks to the producers for believing in me. And most of all, I’d like to thank my hands for always staying by my side. Thank you!” Okay, I’m not married to that joke, but that’s probably what I’ll say when I win an Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay.

My journey as a screenwriter began just as COVID-19 did; I’d always entertained the thought of storytelling, but now I finally had the time to do so, and I decided to take a crack at this lifelong dream.

In the past year, I wrote a sitcom pilot, two features, and I’m currently fleshing out a third. I’ve learned so much about my life, my characters, and myself; I can’t wait to keep writing. This was my go-to answer whenever I caught up with an old friend, and every time, I recited it with pride. Well, until that one time I went to Garfield Park.

It was the first time seeing my friends in almost five months. During an extremely competitive Spikeball game, someone cracked a lame one-liner about “penguin ice cream.” I was about to roast him for that terribly-delivered remark when everyone broke out in laughter. It was an inside joke that I wasn’t a part of. And I’ve realized this is not an isolated incident. My family reminisces about stupid conversations over homemade carbonara. My friends remember epic park-wide games of hide and seek. And throughout COVID, I was always locked away in my room, mesmerized by the worlds I created — alone.

In quarantine, because of my incessant writing, I’ve lost many relationships, and I’ve been okay with that tradeoff. But as I think about my eventual Oscar win, I wonder, what will my achievements be if I have no one to celebrate them with? Will that alone satisfy me?

I don’t know. But I refuse to believe that achievements and personal satisfaction are mutually exclusive. I think I can have both. Perhaps there’s a balance I haven’t figured out yet, but I’ll be searching for it everyday. Because it’s not just about the journey or the destination. Maybe it’s about the company as well.

Maybe I’m wrong. Maybe I can’t have it all. Maybe I’ll need to choose one or the other. But I don’t want to take that chance. Because when I win an Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay, I want to have people in my life I can thank.

## Bonding with mom

Katie Hohman

In the last year — as I have begun to reflect more and more on my time in high school — I have become increasingly nostalgic. I thought about all of the late nights with my friends, early mornings for school activities, and ice cream trips with my brother. When I looked back on all of the times my mom and I were together, I came to a rather painful realization: I didn’t actually spend that much time with her despite her being my only parent and seeing her every day.

I immediately felt guilty about this. How could I not have dedicated more time throughout middle and high school to the one person who had always been there for me? Did that make me a bad daughter? I knew that I would be leaving for college soon and began to fear that we would drift apart, like two boats drifting further and further away from each other into the night. There were still so many things I wanted to ask her and lessons I needed her to teach me. Could I accomplish all of that with so little time?

My answer came in the form of a mandated quarantine. Throughout the past year, my mom and I have spent more time together than I ever thought possible, and I have quarantine to thank for that.

One day, we’d spent two hours debating which David Fincher film is the best (it’s *The Social Network* by the way) only to find ourselves laughing over my brother’s terrible Christopher Walken impression, with tears in our eyes. Now, I eagerly listen as she tells me wild stories about her youth, each one more unbelievable than the next, or some odd piece of advice she’s picked up along the way, like always remember to fill the back of the shovel.

We also have had more time to talk about the topics that take more time to get through: love and loss and grief and failure. I have learned more about my dad and shed tears over all she and I have been through. Because of our time together, our relationship has become something more sturdy, more mature.

Even when quarantine ends or I move away to some far-off town, I will never forget the time spent with my mom. I will never lose sight of that mischievous twinkle in her eyes as she tells me about some daring adventure or whirlwind romance. While I can wallow over lost time, I know that it’s not worth it. Instead I choose to focus on all of the things she has taught me and continues to teach me.

## Fun in spontaneity

Amber Chen

I went into quarantine with a very specific idea of what I wanted to accomplish, how I was going to accomplish it, and the person I’d be afterwards. I envisioned a 6:45 a.m. wake up. Then a cappuccino with a small spoonful of sugar. Straight to the piano by 7:45 a.m. Theory and warm-up until 9 a.m. Then, classical repertoire until 12 p.m. Then jazz studies until 4 p.m. Then the mad *Tiger* grind!

I was incredibly drawn to this routine and obsessed with the outcome it was sure to create. At that time, I had no solid group of friends that could distract me from my goals. But to my surprise, this routine did not happen at all. Instead, what happened was this condensed, cliché, teen-movie coming-of-age ordeal.

Less than a month into quarantine, I found myself deepening my relationships with some really nice people, people I had looked up to for such a long time. I found myself veering away from the highly-structured routine I had initially set myself up to do.

Admittedly, it wasn’t easy to lean into improvisation, especially with the mindset that I had to be highly productive that dominated early quarantine. When my routine began to unravel at first, I found myself in a state of deep personal dissatisfaction. I’d go through phases of ignoring people for long stretches of time and trying to force myself back into the regimen, before resigning and impulsively lunging headfirst into the speed of the changes.

But as time went on, I discovered that I valued the novelty of new experiences more than the attainment of high achievements, and my initial personal dissatisfaction began to dissolve. A lot of it came down to putting my life into perspective as well; I fully embraced the “you only live once” mentality.

It was going along with the spontaneity of my new friends that gave me this coming-of-age experience. I got comfortable in my body, learned how to do a mad winged liner, snuck out of the house, and indulged in other unmentionables.

I can sense that others would find this era of teenage adventures nothing out of the ordinary. But for me — as someone who, previous to quarantine, struggled to form basic friendships — it was totally unforeseen. It was liberating. It was so fun.

## Love letter to L.A.

Cloe Maurer

Last March, I was terrified of being alone. I didn’t know what to do without a steady stream of stressors and distressors to point to the reason why I felt bad. I started going on long walks, acutely aware of the way my body moved down the sidewalk and waited patiently at crosswalks. I was uncomfortable walking, half lost, through a neighborhood I was unfamiliar with, despite having lived there for the past four years. It took a little practice, but I slid pretty easily into solitude and barely talked to anyone for two months.

I kept walking and started biking everyday. It began as an attempt for routine and a new distraction. I didn’t realize it then, but I was existing in a disoriented middle ground, simultaneously scared to be alone with my own thoughts and too disengaged to feel comfortable with anyone else. I saw friends for birthdays. We stayed out late in parks and for a few hours, I just felt fine. The next morning, I would wake up feeling so isolated I couldn’t breathe. The highs and lows got more extreme and worked their way into my life more randomly and with more frequency.

So I biked to new parks and found new places to be alone. I found places that grounded me and filed them away, subconsciously associating L.A. with being able to breathe, even if only momentarily. Now, I’m armed with some kind of emotional toolbelt fitted with hidden trails and hillsides, remembering where the sunsets are the best, and where I can stare into the wide, sun-bleached expanse of the San Fernando Valley.

The strange intimacy of learning my physical space while simultaneously confronting my mental state has been freeing. There is very little longing, baggage, or judgment attached to the Los Angeles I’ve grown close to in the past year because I only really know it as who I am now. Learning and loving this city has given me new spaces to inhabit all by myself, without wishing for who I was or how I felt before I was forced to really confront my mental health.

There’s something about L.A. that’s unnamable. Maybe it’s the stardom, the love, or the sneaking suspicion that there is always something bigger, something cosmic, behind the smog, lamentably designed grid, and screaming freeways: I’ve found a lot of comfort in knowing that L.A. is too alive to ever be truly alone in. Looking out onto a city I love, I can’t help but feel hopeful.

# FEATURE



## Generation is unexpected

The new HBO show exploring Gen Z teenagehood uses SPHS as a set.

STORY ZOE SCHLAAK  
ILLUSTRATION ALICIA ZHANG

HBO debuted the first three episodes of its newest series *Generation* last Thursday. The TV show, written by 19-year-old Zelda Barnz and her father, aims to capture the complexities of Gen Z teenagehood through the lens of a cast of Southern Californian teens in an Orange County suburb. The show used the SPHS campus as its high school, which made for an equal parts surreal and confusing viewing experience. As an SPHS student, it was difficult to mentally disassociate how the characters experienced the SPHS locations *Generation* used, like the picnic tables outside of the bathrooms or Ms Athalye's classroom from my high school experience. If it were some random, undistinguishable set, it would have been easier to follow the story and relieve some of the pressure realism puts on an audience trying to get lost in a story.

However, the show is centralized around the idea of realism and proving that high school stories can be told in a way that allows for nuance and perspective. While the commercial safety of an "every-teen" tale is appealing, at least from a financial standpoint, there is value in specificity. *Generation* is committed to telling a high school story that is raw and almost confrontationally vulnerable. Instead of picking one issue or instance of inner turmoil to zero in on, the writers combined a set of very real struggles Gen Z teens face en masse: battling with self-identity and sexuality, body image, and depression because realistically, teenagers can at once be queer, depressed, and dealing with an eating disorder.

The pilot episode opens to a high shock value mall bathroom birth scene, then rewinds three months earlier to the Orange County high school. The viewer is taken on one day of school through the eyes of each individual character and is familiarized with the gist of the characters' personalities and struggles. The show focuses on the main character Chester (Justice Smith) who rules the school as a queer, rule-breaking teen

proudly flaunting his crop top and sunnies while listening to "Lucky" by Britney Spears. At his side are the sexually-confused Nathan (Uly Schlesinger) and his naive sister Naomi (Chloe East), the rebellious feminist Riley (Chase Sui Wnders), and the introverted Greta (Haley Sanchez).

Barnz truly tried to accurately represent Generation Z and what it's like to be a teenager right now, by embracing its faults and struggles. She acknowledges teenagers' dependence on social media and phones by using texting and Snapchatting as storytelling devices. Triggers and struggles like depression, coming to terms with sexuality, and anxiety are addressed without being immediately followed by a definitive solution. There is a certain power in embracing the truth in all of its vastness and uncertainty rather than offering an ultimately empty solution for the sake of didacticism. Grappling with a search for closure and problems that often feel like anything but solvable are common teenage experiences and *Generation* realizes that not everything needs an instant solution.

Teens better relate to a show that conveys their day to day lives and the struggles they deal with in an accepting and realistic way, like *Generation* does. Today, teenagers are more openly sexually diverse and Barnz chose to represent that by spotlighting a diverse group of queer characters, rather than falling back on tired stereotypes. This representation is especially important to young, queer viewers because it projects that being a part of the LGBTQ+ community doesn't mean being the tokenized gay best friend or a supporting character. These queer characters roles showed power and strength, which is not what the entertainment industry has traditionally projected the LGBTQ+ community to be.

*Generation* addresses age old teenage turmoil in the context of how Gen Z interacts with trends, their mental health and their sexuality. The show is dedicated to exploring the ups and downs of being a teenager now. The show's allowance of high schoolers to lead complicated, multifaceted lives is what ultimately sets it apart.

## Kim's Convenience

KIMBERLY  
HSUEH



## Anime carries surprising weight

The setter smoothly and effortlessly switches from a spiking to setting position, passing the ball to one of the wing spikers, who smashes the ball over the net. Karasuno High's middle blocker Hinata Shoyo, a master of spikes, retaliates. With intense concentration fixated on the ball, he blocks the ball's path, shooting it high into the air. Hinata, the one who neither the team nor I ever expected to perform a perfect receive, broke the close, intensely fast-paced game. That moment made me realize how one slight change in momentum could dramatically result in a victory.

This was a scene in *Haikyu!!*, one of the first animes I binged during the pandemic. As a racket player and a writer who has covered countless sport beats, I was able to restore a sense of normalcy in my life through anime. Familiar feelings of excitement and nervousness were portrayed through the teams playing on my screen.

Seeing their teamwork, game play, and perseverance invigorated me and I felt a pressing urge to put my best foot forward in tennis and meet with my own real-life teammates. During the pandemic, anime has consistently resuscitated my waning enthusiasm for sports, school, and life. Where was it when I needed motivation as an underclassmen?

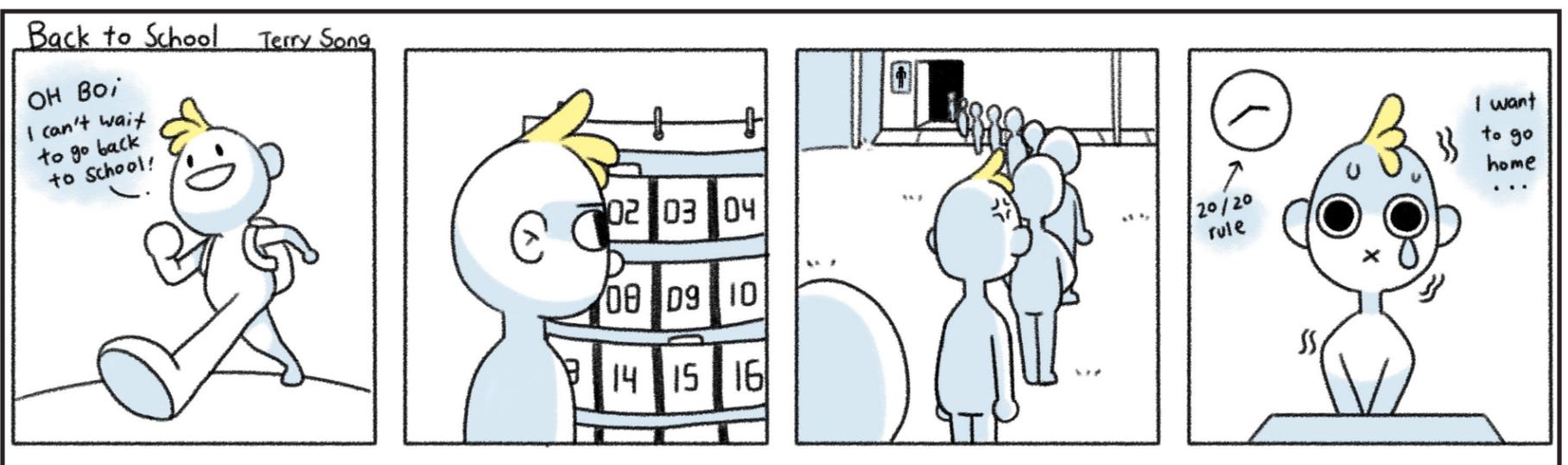
I spent the majority of my middle school reading manga, such as *Ouran High School Host Club*, and watching *Shugo Chara!*, an anime about elementary school students who fight villains, so I always saw anime as childish cartoons. My friends, who had a similar mindset, laughed at anime lovers and called them "weebs." I never wanted to associate myself with that label and said goodbye to anime forever, or so I thought.

During COVID-19, *Haikyu!!* was trending on Tik Tok. Seeing Hinata jump and become a Little Giant that ruled the volleyball courts was oddly touching and sent me down a sports anime rabbit hole. I started watching animes, such as *Stars Align* which also emphasized that appearances don't always match what's on the inside.

Behind the students' masks of perfection or happiness were issues that plagued them for years. Some players faced physical and mental abuse from their parents. Others, such as Yu Asuka, faced the struggles of gender and sexual orientation.

The questions of existence, what roles to play in life, deeply resonated with me, and while I don't have the answers, I understood what *Stars Align* was attempting to relay: There are forces in life that can belittle, question, and oppress one into a specific role. But, by consistently engaging in open conversations with the willingness to listen, differences can be overcome, open mindedness can be established, and one can be the most authentic version of themselves.

Anime weaves intricate stories that are equal parts educational and emotional. It's been an informative and strangely normalizing force in my life.



# Indie bands share how they are making music

STORY SAM GROTENSTEIN  
PHOTOS COURTESY OF JACOB  
JEFFRIES & THE HELLP

The coronavirus pandemic hit the L.A. independent music scene hard. With clubs shutting down, a community that is largely based around small, in-person shows is being driven almost entirely to the wild frontier of streaming services. Despite this, L.A. bands have found the will to persist, branching out into a wide variety of approaches towards making music during a pandemic. From independent music veterans to first-time artists, *Tiger* examines what the past year has meant for L.A.'s indie music scene.

**Tylwyth Teg:** Oftentimes, society values music, and art in general, based on what the piece has to say. When analyzing music, one tends to focus on the themes that song aims to convey: American Idiot is about disillusionment with the American dream, OK Computer is about the mundanity of modern life, and so on and so forth. Audrey Reynolds, a local artist and former SPHS student going by the stage name of Tylwyth Teg, rejects this notion entirely. Reynolds prioritizes the raw emotional response of the listener over a defined narrative or message.

"I think it allows for more individuality in the listener if there isn't one 'correct' meaning in a song," she said. "The song means whatever you think it means."

However, Reynolds makes clear that the lack of a direct social message by no means diminishes the social power of the art in question. She offers up the idea that the merit of art as emotion is its ability to remind the audience of the authentic.

"If music is made to be authentic, it can influence the world in the same way. There is so much passivity and inauthenticity threaded through day to day life right now, and music can be a big healer to that."

Reynolds reasons that authenticity is vital in forming a community. This has been the biggest hurdle for her over the last year. nterfacing with an actual audience to be the biggest hurdle thrown her way by COVID-19.

"It's a lot harder for scenes to start since you can't play typical shows. Not being able to play live also stifles the overall promotion process."



**The Hellp (Chandler):** Over the last year, the Hellp has cared about one thing and one thing only: keeping it Rasta. This L.A. based electronica band has been in the scene for almost five years, and in that time they have made a name for themselves as one of the greatest independent bands to emerge from the L.A. scene. Combining heavy electronica and synths with acoustic melodies and echoing vocals, the work of the Hellp is immediately recognizable. Made up of Chandler Ransom Lucy and Noah Dillon, the Hellp is an example of the purity of vision granted to independent artists.

Above all else, the Hellp hopes that their music can "bring back expression in a world of content." Given that the Hellp already had a firm, pre-established following before the pandemic, they have spent the last year refining the craft of their music.

"[During 2020], we transformed everything," Ransom Lucy said. "[We were] pushed into a corner of necessity. Needed to be better. Needed to learn how to do everything on our own. We came out stronger than all of our peers and this will be proven in the coming months."

The Hellp has rejected any kind of virtual replacement for live music, instead opting to put all of their effort into future releases and live shows. Moreover, Ransom Lucy specifically has taken the last year to reflect on the importance of, as he puts it, keeping it Rasta.

"To keep it Rasta is to keep it gangster, to keep it simple," he said. "Remain calm when the world wants you to lead with emotion. Lead with compassion and understanding. Just keeping it G."

**Jacob Jeffries:** In contrast to artists like Tylwyth Teg and 2Hollis, Jacob Jeffries sees music almost entirely as a storytelling medium. Taking inspiration from the likes of Neil Young and Pete Seeger, Jeffries puts his tracks' messaging at the forefront. This style of narrative-driven music is a more old-school approach to independent music, which shows his veteran status; Jeffries released his first single almost 12 years ago.

"We're in the age of vibe right now," Jeffries said. "Lyrics don't matter as much to people, but to me, it is important that any story I'm telling comes full circle, or maybe it just leaves you hanging. Either way, it's not a droning vibe."

A well-established artist, Jeffries has had little trouble maintaining a community. Instead, he has faced the issue of having to approach storytelling from a new direction. He reasons that in such a negative time, it's important to keep his work positive to avoid basking in the misery surrounding him.

"I've been feeling like making my songwriting almost more fun throughout [2020] to counterbalance the mundanity. Maybe it's just my subconscious telling me that I have to have more fun with it."

This attitude has been carried on across a number of singles that he has released in the last year, which tend to focus on highlighting the positive aspects of the mundanities of day-to-day life.



**L.A.'S ECLECTIC INDIE MUSIC SCENE** has responded to challenges the pandemic has posed in a number of ways.

## The evolution of indie film doesn't mean the genre is dead

STORY GEORGIA PARSONS  
ILLUSTRATION DAVID SOHN

By definition, the word indie refers to a pop group, record label, or film company not belonging to or affiliated with a major record or production company. However, this definition has changed over time to include large-budget films distributed by major companies.

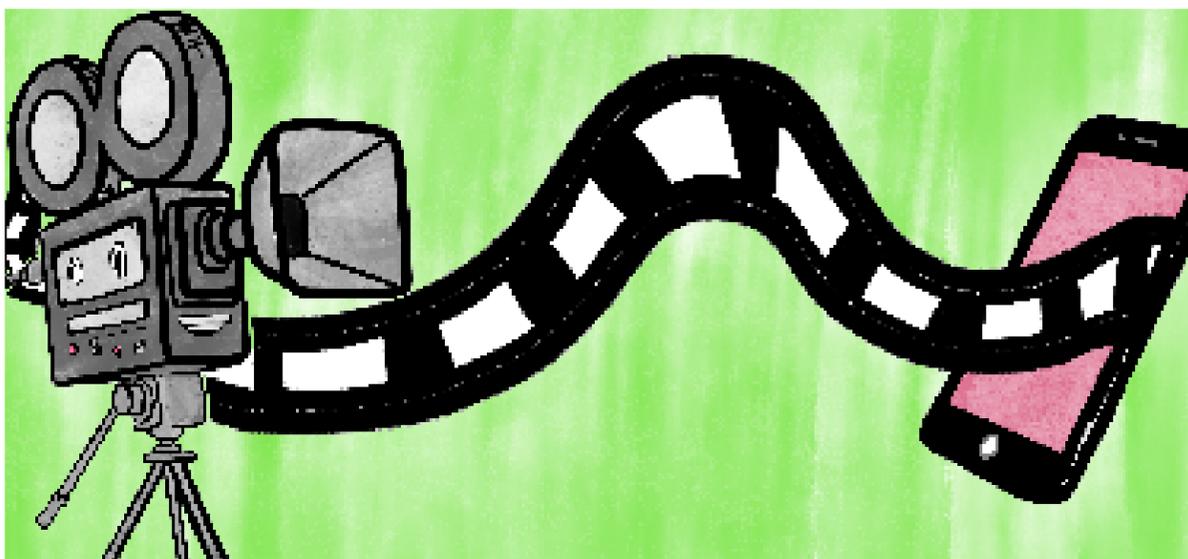
The very first indie movies appeared in the early 1970s as a diversion from major film companies. The studio system at the time made it very difficult to produce movies outside of studio lots, and these limitations helped shape the style of early indie movies. The budget was often very low, camera quality was poor, and directors had to adopt guerilla filming tactics. However all this chaos made the movie seem ultra-authentic and allowed directors to adapt their own unique style.

These movies also represented a diversion from the influence of mainstream media. At a time where television shows and movies produced in Hollywood shied away from portraying societal issues due to fear of being controversial, these independent filmmakers had the freedom to call attention to and dissect taboo topics without having to water anything down.

Now that the indie movement has been fused into the popular bloodstream, the nature of these movies have changed. Films that once had virtually no budgets now have budgets in the millions. Independent films that were once shown almost exclusively to college film classes and local movie houses are now being picked up by major distributors and viewing platforms like A24 or Netflix.

This change in the structure of indie movies has inevitably upset some diehard indie movie fans reminiscent of a time when these films lived, for the most part, in obscurity. However, it can also be argued that this change is fundamentally for the better because it makes indie movies accessible to a wider range of people.

Despite these changes, most independent films at their core remain the same. The indie movies of the 70s and



80s were deeply personal projects; the filmmaker would be involved in every step of the process as writer, director, editor, and sometimes even actor, which allowed them to tell their stories more authentically than Hollywood had ever allowed.

Independent movies tell the stories of people who are often ignored by mainstream media and are guided by artistic vision and personal experience rather than profit, ensuring that these stories are as authentic as possible.

Few, if any, mainstream movies are telling the stories of transgender sex workers like Sean Baker did in *Tangerine* or a Korean immigrant family in Lee Isaac Chung's *Minari*. Although these stories may not be relatable to every viewer, they touch on many universal human emotions that mainstream movies are only able to scratch the surface of.

Movies like Barry Jenkins' *Moonlight* are proof that the biggest distinction between mainstream and independent films is not budget or the way a film is made, but rather motive. Mainstream movies created

in the Hollywood machine are designed for profit and mass appeal, whereas independent films are designed to showcase artistic style and personal values. This distinction is glaringly obvious when comparing Netflix's coming of age dramas *The Kissing Booth* or *To All the Boys I've Loved Before* to the independent coming of age movies *Ladybird* or *Mustang*.

Netflix's financial motivation doesn't necessarily automatically discredit the quality of their movies, but rather lacking the personal elements that independent movies showcase so well.

Ultimately, no matter how much money is handed to indie filmmakers, true, spiritually indie movies will retain their integrity. These movies are not about the method by which they are made — it's about why they are being made, which is to tell stories differently than the mainstream has historically allowed.

However, even with the rise of massive production companies, as long as there are filmmakers that care about creating authentic work, indie movies will survive.

# Little Oblivions is nuanced and powerful

STORY KATIE HOHMAN  
ILLUSTRATION DAVID SOHN

Julien Baker's new album *Little Oblivions*, which is filled with prominent instrumentals and rich vocals, opens up about the struggles of substance abuse and losing conviction.

After struggling with alcoholism and experiencing a relapse in 2019, Baker uses the album to open up about her journey with substance abuse and how those in her life (family, friends, God) have pushed her towards recovery. Baker explained in an KEXP interview that the title of the album comes from "the substances we use, the escapist mentalities we have, the negative coping mechanisms — these are all ways we create little, tiny oblivions in our head because reality is difficult and painful."

The 12-track album opens with the instrument-heavy "Hardline," which marks Baker's departure from the more-stripped down sound she is known for. In this song, the 25-year-old reflects on her experience with alcoholism and relapse. "I'm telling my own future/ Something I cannot escape/I can see where this is going/ But I can't find the break." The lyrics focus on relapsing and loss of control, setting the tone for the rest of the album and creating a somber mood of personal reflection.

That theme of relapsing and vice is expanded upon in "Faith Healer," which relates faith healers and snake oil dealers (figures who boast their ability to ease people's pain) to drug dealers. Baker shows off her expert lyricism and vocal abilities through this extended metaphor, giving the listener room to think about what exactly it means to believe someone is helping them: "Faith healer, come put your hands on me/A snake oil dealer/I'll believe you if you make me feel something."

In a *Pitchfork* interview, Baker explained how "I, and so many other people, are willing to believe whomever



(a political pundit, a preacher, a drug dealer, an energy healer) when they promise healing, and how that... however genuine, [may] actually impede healing."

*Little Oblivions* becomes increasingly melancholic with "Relative Fiction." The song, which focuses on the feeling of accidentally causing loved ones pain through unintentional callousness, represents a common experience among those struggling with mental health issues (like Baker herself). The singer understands that the identity she has built for herself, that of a good person, might just be a work of fiction and her actions will continue to hurt those around her, writing, "Cause if I didn't have a mean bone in my body/I'd find another way to cause you pain/I won't bother telling you I am sorry/ For something that I'm gonna do again."

In "Favor," Baker expresses the guilt and fear of opening up that accompanied her 2019 relapse into alcoholism. She vocalizes her fear of wearing her family and friends out with her problems. She worries that one day, her support system might get sick of her and leave, making

"Favor" incredibly personal: "How long do I have until/ I've spent up everyone's goodwill?"

Throughout *Little Oblivions*, Baker opens up about the struggles in her life and the overload of emotions that she was forced to face. By deviating from her expected sound, Baker created an album that serves as an outlet for those who might be experiencing the same struggles as her. The album gives listeners the ability to finally hear someone express the complicated emotions they feel that can often be difficult to put into words.

<b>Little Oblivions</b>	
★★★★★	
Artist	Julien Baker
Genre	Alternative/Indie
Category	Album

## The ethics of *Judas and the Black Messiah* are complicated



STORY SAM GROTENSTEIN  
ILLUSTRATION TERRY SONG

*Judas and the Black Messiah* released on Feb. 12 to a positive critical reception and box office success. Directed by Shaka King and starring Lakeith Stanfield and Daniel Kaluuya, this biopic focuses on the relationship between Stanfield's Bill O'Neil, an FBI informant, and the Chicago Black Panther Party leader, Kaluuya's Fred Hampton Jr.

Outside of the mainstream critical success, the film has been steeped in mild controversy regarding the depiction of Fred Hampton Jr. This controversy reached its peak when artist Noname refused to appear on the film's soundtrack, arguing that the film largely neutered Hampton's political views. More specifically, critics have argued that, by profiting off of the legacy of a revolutionary who worked to fight against American capitalism, it is inherently unethical.

A number of pop-activism social media accounts have blasted the film, claiming that Fred Hampton Jr. himself would despise it.

Before defending *Judas and the Black Messiah*, it's important to make one concession. It's true: Fred Hampton Jr. probably would have hated this film. Despite the fact that this backlash feels more something that would make the rounds on Twitter rather than a well thought-out criticism of the film, acknowledging that this film was not made for Fred Hampton Jr. is absolutely vital in understanding the true role of *Judas and the Black Messiah*. It is a truly unique piece of activism through a cinematic lens in the current cultural zeitgeist.

The idea that Fred Hampton's political views have been neutered stems from the fact that Hampton himself is not portrayed as the leading man, instead acting as a

face for the Black Panther Party that O'Neil can play off of. However, it is important to note that this trend of anchoring biopics on an intensely relatable protagonist who serves as an audience vessel is likely a creative choice that the filmmakers had to make to see any sort of mainstream success.

Even so, from his first on-screen appearance, Hampton is portrayed as so overtly socialist that he spends the first scene of the movie criticizing liberal politics and calling for revolution, clarifying that the bourgeois come in all colors, shapes, and sizes. On top of that, the fact that this film was released in a for-profit model was a sacrifice that had to be made to exist in America's capitalist society — even copies of the communist manifesto aren't free.

Since the bulk of this film's criticisms stem from the fact that it had to exist within the current studio-infrastructure, the question becomes not "Is the film's existence ethical?" but rather "Does the importance of this film's narrative make up for the necessary concessions made in the process of creating the film?"

The use of cultural narratives as powerful tools is especially prominent when it comes to the discussion of American history. There has been an increasing trend in Western media to depict history through the lense of short-form personal experience.

There have been an overwhelming amount of recent examples proving this. The Broadway musical *Hamilton*, which over the course of two hours, filters the entirety of the Revolutionary War through the eyes of a charming, wealthy lawmaker; HBO's *Chernobyl* combines dozens of scientists into one character (Legasov); even Spike Lee's 2018 *BlacKkKlansman* focuses almost entirely on John David Washington's character and his relationship with Adam Driver's.

This trend isn't inherently negative, but it can lead to the cultural narratives of the historical events depicted being so altered and condensed that they become complete distortions of the event in question. If one would look at the broad strokes, *BlacKkKlansman* is about how effectively America's police in the 1970's were at fighting racism. Enter *Judas and the Black Messiah*, which, in a stroke of genius, anchors its narrative on the character of Bill O'Neil.

Bill O'Neil plays into the Hollywood biopic trope of an audience-surrogate protagonist to an almost absurd degree, having no clear backstory and serving almost entirely to react to the world around him. This means that O'Neil can act as an almost empty vessel for a modern audience to whom the idea of a truly revolutionary socialist movement in America seems entirely foreign. In other words, the movie outright tells the viewer that there is no neutral.

This is the cultural significance of *Judas and the Black Messiah*. The film tells the audience that they have to imagine a functioning alternative because the alternative is death. More impressively, by using the cinematic language of the modern biopic, the audience is forced to relate to somebody who chose to reject Hampton's revolution, a decision that weighed on him so much that he took his own life some years later.

Finally, here is a mainstream Hollywood movie that is a reminder that victory is not forcing compromise. Rather, it is precisely about changing society entirely. When Hampton tells the crowd at the beginning of the film that "they may let you change the name of your college and throw on a Dashiki, but they'll still ship you off to Vietnam to shoot some poor rice farmer," the audience is forced to question not just the activism of the past, but the activism of the present.

# TAAGLAA: Goodbye L.A.

TIGER'S AWESOME ADVENTURES IN THE GREATER LOS ANGELES AREA

STORY KATIE HOHMAN  
PHOTOS OSCAR WALSH

In preparation for this TAAGLAA, I was hit with an unpleasant realization: I'm going to move soon. This isn't the type of move where I'd find a new house on the other side of town and nothing really changes, but the one where I don't know if I'll ever see my friends again. It's the type of move where I become a Texan. It's where I am two hours ahead of everyone I've ever known, and 1,220 miles from the only city I've called home.

It's a depressing thought, and I have found myself becoming more and more attached to Los Angeles as the days whittle down. It was that newfound attachment that led me to suggest a trip to downtown L.A. for one last outing with Quinn Manzo, Alvaro Rodriguez-Chavez, and Oscar Walsh as my time in California comes to an end.

Our trip downtown started with us freaking out, as any good TAAGLAA should. While Quinn and I were chatting at Jones Coffee, blissfully unaware of how much time had passed, our train arrived. Completely caught off guard, we were forced to do the only thing we could: sprint to catch our train before it left us behind. When we finally made it on board, clutching the stitches in our sides, I glanced over at Quinn, who was similarly out of breath, and knew this was going to be a good day.

The day got even better when we actually made it downtown. After sprinting to catch our nearly missed train, I was properly hungry and ready to get some good food at Grand Central Market. The market is a quintessential part of the downtown experience and I was excited to go to my favorite food spots one more time.

Once we arrived at the market, I made a beeline for Knead, a trendy Italian place that my family and I swear has some of the best pasta in L.A. After ordering my usual, spaghetti and meatballs, I was ready to explore the rest of the market.

We came across a jewelry stand packed amidst the brunch spots and trendy dessert places in Grand Central. Quinn and I decided that we should buy something to remember



**IN THE GRAND CITY THEY CALL HOME,** Tiger staff members roam around downtown Los Angeles in a bittersweet adventure filled with delicious food, interesting conversation, and beautiful sights in their final TAAGLAA together.

our time together. It was a beautiful sentiment and I couldn't help but get excited by having a physical object to represent all of my adventures with Quinn and Oscar. Quinn and I each picked out three rings — which fit me perfectly despite my abnormally small hands — and I couldn't wait to wear them in Texas.

Our next stop was Grand Park, which sits at the edge of City Hall and is the perfect place to watch the sunset reflect off of the glassy sheen of downtown buildings. Once we sat down, it was back to talking about everything and anything, something that has become a staple of my time with Quinn and Oscar. As per usual, Quinn posed a seemingly random, yet extremely thought-provoking question that left me completely stumped. This time around, it was "What's a TV show where your favorite character is the main character?" Somehow, I managed to make the entire conversation about movies — it was truly so fulfilling.

There was a moment, near the beginning of our trip, when I made a promise with myself to remember every single thing I did with Quinn and Oscar that day. We were sitting on the train, going back to South Pasadena to get Quinn's phone, and I had pulled out my copy of *The Secret History* (which I had early admitted to Quinn I keep on me just to seem well-read).

The sun coming in through the train window was honey yellow as it illuminated the page I was reading, Quinn was staring off into the distance (deep in thought no doubt), and the white noise of the train cars moving along the tracks made for the perfect background music.

It was all so very L.A. and I couldn't help but smile about how grateful I was that I was able to grow up in a place like this — a place where the sun always shines brightly and the most interesting people you'll ever meet are just a train ride away.



**FOR MORE COVERAGE...**



**ONLINE**  
tigernewspaper.com



**FACEBOOK**  
tiger.newspaper



# SPORTS

## Junior Aurelia Olguin promotes health and fitness

STORY SOFIA ALVA  
PHOTO SOPHIE YUENG

Eating well and exercising are two very important aspects of junior Aurelia Olguin's life. Having previously played on the SPHS soccer team and currently doing shot put for the track team, health has always been something Olguin prioritized.

However, it was not until the beginning of the pandemic that she consistently began educating herself and working on her personal fitness journey. Olguin's initial reasoning for working out at home was to stay in shape for the return of school athletics, but when it became apparent that school athletics would not be returning for the foreseeable future, she quickly incorporated a regimen into her everyday life.

"Having that outlet to constantly learn new things and push myself harder was definitely one of the best things for my mental health especially during the pandemic," Olguin said. "However, going from having your practices planned for you everyday to having to create your own schedule and routine definitely took some trial and error. But I began to really enjoy the process of planning how I was going to push myself and grow further."

The closure of gyms due to the pandemic also gave Olguin an opportunity to transition her workouts from outdoors to inside, at home. In March, she began creating an at home weight lifting and strength training gym.

"I wanted a way to stay active and strong. And I slowly became obsessed," Olguin said. "I learned a lot and I definitely would say that it was one of the most impactful

things that I did over quarantine because it kept me active. It also was something I could focus on [to] keep my mind off everything else going on."

Throughout the pandemic, Olguin has continued to work out, running four to five times a week and strength training three times a week. Her strength training includes weight lifting, sled pulls, and hill sprints.

This lifestyle has engulfed every aspect of her life, most notably her diet. In December of last year, Olguin created an [Instagram](#) dedicated to the daily meals she prepares.

"The cooking I was posting was really [for] my close friends to see and I was pretty proud of the aesthetics of it," Olguin said. "Some people had told me that maybe I should make an Instagram [account for my food]. So I did, and I just started posting pictures of what I was cooking. And it really motivated me to continue to cook and try new things."

Olguin is always trying new recipes but enjoys sticking to the basics that she knows fuel her body effectively. These include smoothies, yogurt, oatmeal, wraps, and stir fry. She also aims to include plenty of plant-based sources of protein in her cooking alongside meat and dairy. A combination of eating balanced meals and working out daily has provided Olguin with benefits that are not just physical but mental.

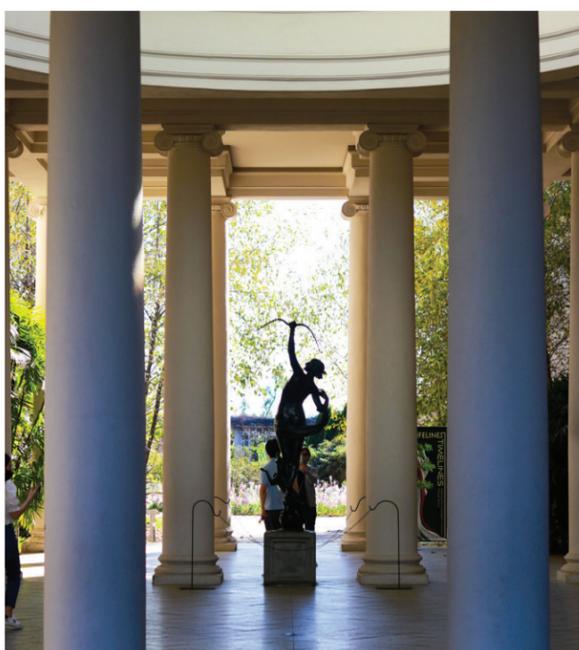
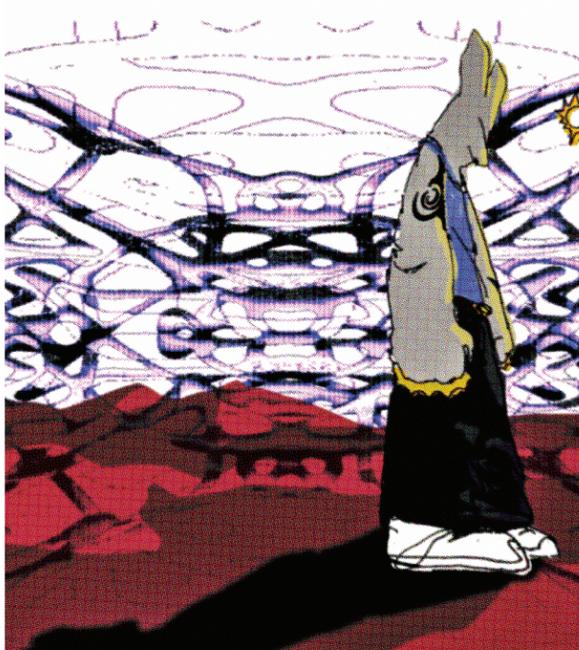
"The difference that I feel physically is crazy," Olguin said. "Making healthy choices has increased my strength and endurance but also mentally, [given] me a sense of clarity. Overall [you] feel better knowing you are making choices that are good for your body."



**OLGUIN STARTED AN [INSTAGRAM](#)** where she shares images and recipes of the daily meals she prepares.

## Tiger's media gallery: The staff's best personal pieces

PHOTOS KATELYN HERNANDEZ, SARAH LEE, & OSCAR WALSH ILLUSTRATIONS NICHOLAS FORMAN & TERRY SONG



# FitSport Kinetics: Where athletes train

STORY EDDIE ZHOU  
PHOTO COURTESY OF  
FITSPTS KINETICS

SPHS athletes and community members have turned to local training facility FitSport Kinetics in order to improve their athletic abilities. Located in Pasadena, FitSport Kinetics aims to raise athletes' physical performance in their respective fields, offering a wide variety of group classes and individualized exercise programs to both adults and young athletes.

The gym provides athletes with the opportunity to work with certified strength and conditioning specialists, physical therapists, athletic trainers, and nutritionists, who formulate workouts and regimens that work on a variety of fitness aspects. These workouts are meant to improve an athlete's speed, agility, conditioning, and strength, with some workouts training all aspects of an athlete's fitness and others tailored specifically toward a certain area of growth.

The athletic facility also offers combat sports and self-defense classes, which cover kickboxing and muay thai. The gym can also be rented out for private parties.

For senior Amar Ebrahim, who will **compete in track and field for Occidental College** in the fall, working with the coaches at FitSport Kinetics has allowed him to improve and understand his athletic abilities as he hopes to translate his success competing with SPHS to his competitions at Occidental College.

"It's been great to continue training for our track season with the help of Coach Alfredo and Coach Drew, who provide detailed and effective training programs for me," Ebrahim said. "I train on the outdoor turf, typically focusing on movements specific to track: single leg romanian deadlift, Bulgarian split squat, deadlift, etc, and I've 100 percent gotten stronger as well as more explosive after going to Fitsport Kinetics. I have also gained a better understanding of strength and conditioning as a whole, which I can take with me to sports at the collegiate level."

Senior Khalil Murdock has also experienced noticeable improvements in his fitness and strength after training at FitSport, citing the expert and individual attention from trainers as particularly effective in allowing him to become a more competitive athlete.

"I would definitely recommend athletes to work out at Fitsport Kinetics," Murdock said. "The trainers there

have allowed me to become a better athlete by helping me become a lot stronger. They curate workouts specifically for me and my fitness goals, and since I began working out with them, I have been able to increase my base strength and my agility and coordination as well. I believe it's a great option if you want to become more fit or excel in your sport."

As of Monday, July 13, 2020, Fitsport Kinetics reopened from lockdown and has since lowered the enrollment capacity for each class and incorporated COVID-19 health guidelines. Athletes have their temperature checked before entering and follow COVID-19 health guidelines during workouts.

Training takes place outdoors while wearing masks at all times as well as maintaining six feet of social distance. Amidst the pandemic, Fitsport Kinetics has continued to provide training sessions and classes, which is particularly important for those hoping to improve their skills during the offseason.

A single session costs \$25 and prices vary depending on the type of class and number of sessions. Those interested can find more information on the FitSport Kinetics' [website](#).



**FITSPTS KINETICS HAS BEEN KEEPING SAN GABRIEL VALLEY COMMUNITY ACTIVE FOR OVER 25 YEARS,** since it's founding in 1995 by David Kerr. Kerr works as a master instructor as well as founding partner to the facility.

## COVID-19 impacts on the college recruitment process

STORY KAHLEN MIAO  
ILLUSTRATION NICHOLAS FORMAN

The college recruitment process can be difficult and stressful during the regular school year. However, when a global pandemic is added to the mix, challenges can arise. Seniors Lindsay Michaels, Reo Snyder, and Maya Villaseñor shared their college recruitment experience during the pandemic with *Tiger*.

Swimmer Villaseñor has been applying to college recruitment websites since her sophomore year, which made the virtual transition a little less out of the ordinary. Instead of in-person meetings Villaseñor met with coaches over video calls where she talked about scholarship offers and took campus tours virtually. While she wasn't able to interact with coaches and show them what she could do her junior year, she received emails about college recruitment opportunities and talked to a

few schools. After considering her options and looking into the specifics of the school's campus and location among many other factors, she ultimately committed to the University of Jamestown.

"When everything started getting locked down [last spring], [I] didn't really get a season to go to CIF and talk to coaches and interact with them and show them what I could do," Villaseñor said. "So [college recruitment] wasn't really something on my mind, but I had been getting emails from different coaches from different schools around the country, talking to them about different opportunities they wanted to give me."

Missing out on touring colleges in person and not getting the full experience with overnight stays made it especially difficult for cross country and track runner Lindsay Michaels to figure out the college that was best fit for her. Instead of staying overnight and bonding with the team

in person, she met with them through video calls and is able to constantly text and communicate with them.

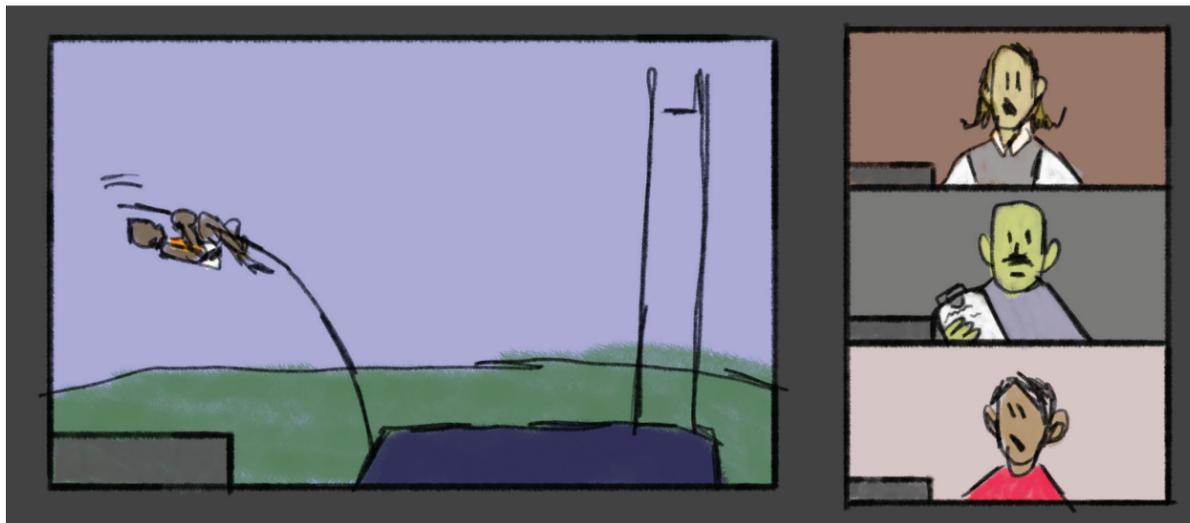
"I got to call a ton of the current team members which really helped because I didn't have a good sense of the team from all the way across the country," Michaels said. "It was such a bummer that no athletes this year had a chance to do an overnight stay, which I guess is universal, so we're hoping that it all works out when we get there."

During a regular year, senior soccer athlete Reo Snyder would have participated in a soccer showcase, tournaments designed for college recruitment that allow students time to connect with coaches. In lieu of the showcases, Snyder prepared a highlight reel — a short video clip that relays his best moments in action. The next step for Snyder was to reach out to coaches with his highlight reel via email. After receiving personal responses about half the time from coaches, many of them wanted to see him play in-person.

"I didn't want to take the time to wait until I could play in order to sign with someone," Snyder said. "We're barely starting back up to play so [in-person meetings] would have been delayed until now (when athletics started again), which would have been really stressful because right now is the time regular colleges you applied to get back to you, so you would have to make a decision."

Despite missing out on many opportunities and the guidance of others to help navigate the process, they are all excited to have made it through the process with good outcomes. Villaseñor, a graduating athlete, leaves helpful insight for future recruitment seasons.

"Don't hesitate to reach out to a school. If there's a school you're really looking at that you really like don't be afraid to reach out to the coaches and tell them that you're interested in being a part of their team."



# Football loses to Polytechnic in friendly scrimmage

STORY SAM GROTENSTEIN  
PHOTO OSCAR WALSH

SPHS football competed against Polytechnic in an unofficial exhibition game on Friday, Mar. 12. Returning to action after a 16-month hiatus, the Tigers were unable to shake off the rust in the two-hour friendly game.

Unlike normal football games, each team alternated possession every 10 plays. The Tigers struggled to find their footing on defense, as Polytechnic picked apart the South Pas secondary. Still, the outcome had no implications on the team's season rankings, and players remained upbeat.

"[Being able to compete] feels great," junior cornerback Jack Riffle said. "I've been waiting for this day for a whole year and I didn't think that I would be able to play a high school sport until senior year at least. So I am very grateful that I am able to play at all, even if it is going to be a short season."

After losing 12 seniors that scored 37 of 42 touchdowns last year — the Tigers head into a transition year, including two notable transfers. Senior middle linebacker Cole Stirling joins the South Pas defense after a season at Maranatha and junior quarterback Noah Aragon, a Cathedral transfer, will start under center.

Aragon will look to develop chemistry with junior wideout Grant Huntley (19 yards per catch) and senior wide receiver Terrence Sweetman (seven receiving touchdowns). On the other side of the ball, Sweetman looks to build upon his 11-interception season, which ranked sixth in the state.



**STAR SENIOR ATHLETE TERENCE SWEETMAN (88) CONTINUED HIS DOMINATING PLAY** in the friendly scrimmage match against Pasadena Polytechnic School as a free safety defensive player and wide receiver.

While the scrimmage left much to be desired, coach Jeff Chi understands the privilege of returning and keeps his eyes on the start of the new season.

said. "Performance-wise, we could have done better, but we'll try and straighten that out by next week's game with La Cañada."

"I was just happy to see the kids out there today. Six months ago, they told us we wouldn't be playing," Chi

The football team will visit La Cañada to play its first league match against the Spartans on Friday, Mar. 19.

## Volleyball reviews the possibility of outdoor competition



**SEASON ONE SPORTS CONCLUDE ON SATURDAY, MAR. 20**, leaving girls volleyball with a limited window for friendly competition matches. Whereas boys volleyball, being a season two sport, currently has no set date for the end of the season.

STORY EDDIE ZHOU  
PHOTO SARAH LEE

COVID-19 health restrictions have jeopardized the SPHS volleyball team's season, as it has become unlikely that the teams will be able to compete before the end of the season. Hoping to salvage a season, SPHS athletic director Anthony Chan and athletic directors from neighboring schools have raised the possibility of playing volleyball outdoors.

The outdoor volleyball games would likely have to be played on grass, as most schools do not have a suitable blacktop surface or nets that can be weighed down on cement. Additionally, outdoor volleyball is not a California Interscholastic Federation sanctioned sport, and the games would likely be played without referees. The teams hope to schedule a few friendly matches against neighboring opposition, although La Cañada and Temple City, among other schools, have expressed hesitancy to play on grass.

Playing outdoors presents its own set of challenges. Factors such as the sun and wind, which can normally be controlled indoors, could alter the flow of games. Similarly, grass is radically different from the hardwood floors of an indoor gym surface that players are used to competing on. These differences could result in limited mobility, a slower playing pace, and injury risks that would not normally be present in an indoor setting. Such concerns have players remaining cautiously optimistic about the potential return to competition.

"Playing outdoor volleyball would be a very interesting alternative," senior libero Lindsey Hirano said. "I think there are some concerns with playing outdoors. For example, some positions such as libero and DS [defense specialist] have to dive on the ground to get to the ball, and that could be very dangerous if we are playing on grass. I think that is something that players have to be mindful of if we hold games outdoors."

However, such worries have not gone unnoticed. coupled with neighboring schools' unwillingness to play on grass, Chan maintains that there is much left to assess before anything can be finalized.

"We are reviewing whether we want to play on grass for one or two games, as many of us are concerned about the safety of full speed volleyball on grass," Chan said. "Most sports that play on grass normally have cleats for that reason. With many of our girls playing club volleyball and are looking to play (or are) at the next level, we are reevaluating the situation."

Despite these potential obstacles, many players understand that playing outdoors might represent their only opportunity to play this season; The girl's volleyball season officially ends on Saturday, Mar. 20 and neither the boys or girls team has yet to step foot in the gym this year.

"It isn't what we want, but it is better than not playing at all," senior volleyball player

Colin Sheng said. "This season will be my last of high school volleyball, and although playing outdoors will be a different, more challenging experience than what we're used to, it could be my last chance to play alongside my teammates."

Chan shared similar feelings, as he hopes to find a way to provide seniors with one final chance. While COVID-19 regulations have made playing outside the only feasible option as of now, Chan relays that getting student-athletes back into the gym before the end of season two remains a priority to the SPHS athletic department.

"I think we are looking at finding ways to honor our seniors," Chan said. "Should we be able to have something inside the gym, we could look at ways of scheduling an exhibition match of just seniors between some league schools. However, everything is very fluid. One thing is certain, and that is we have been thinking about how we can give these ladies a chance to compete on the gym floor."

**BUT WAIT!**  
There's more...

CHECK OUT MORE  
COVERAGE ON



ONLINE  
tigernewspaper.com



TWITTER  
@SPHTiger



FACEBOOK  
tiger.newspaper



YOUTUBE  
@SPHTigerNewspaper



INSTAGRAM  
@tigernewspaper