

After joining the journalism family last year, I entered *The Review* room sophomore year as “visuals editor,” a shiny new title created just for me. But with no precursor to guide me, I had to define the role myself.

As a member of the editorial board, I brainstormed interesting and creative visual elements for the paper. I helped redesign the *The Review Online*, a process that satisfied my perfectionist soul as the website transformed before my eyes. Beyond the work I did with my own hands, I delegated illustrations to other artists whose process I facilitated and whom I ensured communication with.

I dived into graphic and page design, learning how to use InDesign and Photoshop to help get the print issues ready for distribution day. In our February issue, I was in charge of illustrating and designing a full page (the fourth piece in my portfolio) myself, which was a first for me. While working on it, I consulted many in the team including the author of the article, the chief designer, copy editors, and other designers to get feedback on what was good and what needed to change. Through that process, the illustrated headline changed about five times due to it not fitting the tone or message of the article well, alterations that I quickly adapted to. Beyond that page, I helped out wherever I could, reading articles, drawing graphics, and editing spacing. The night we were going to print, a page had too much white space due to the article being edited and I immediately whipped up a graphic to fill the space. Similarly, all our members switched seats and looked at each page with our individual jobs and perspectives, adding a little here, deleting a little there. Because of this mindset of helping wherever necessary, we were able to come out with a great edition. This experience has taught me that openmindedness, mutual respect for each others’ skills and opinions, and willingness to fill in whether it is your job or not are the keys to synergy in the work process.

Continuing my work from last year, I illustrated many editorial cartoons, which served as visual hooks and summaries for their articles. Having developed my skills over the past year, I was able to quickly come up with and create illustrations for even the most last minute of requests. I also posted for my online comic series *Uncloistered*, which highlighted different stories throughout the year through visual journalism and humor. Furthermore, I designed and illustrated the cover for our final issue of the year (the fifth piece in my portfolio), which acknowledged the happenings of the last few months that have changed our community, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the move to online school, the quarantine lifestyle, the passing of a beloved teacher, and the Black Lives Matter movement, while maintaining an optimistic, sensitive atmosphere.

Art is an universal language that can convey a message at a single glance.

Especially during these trying times, I believe that it is the duty of the artist to tell stories, to capture moments in our living history. As a journalistic artist, I aim to contribute the best I can by documenting the thoughts and opinions of my peers in the context of our constantly changing world. I am extremely grateful that I have had the opportunity to participate in this publication and to share my voice through this platform; I look forward to two more crazy, but meaningful years with *The Review*.



1) "How vaping trends threaten teen health" Illustration January 2020

- a) This editorial cartoon accompanied an article on how vaping negatively impacted teen health, causing lung damage in particular. I personified vaping as a sinister being with a Juul pod as their head whose fluid generates toxic fumes that blackens the lungs. The Juul pod head also represents how nicotine addiction can take over a person's mind as well as their body.



2) “COVID state of mind: mental health in quarantine” Illustration June 2020

- a) This editorial cartoon depicts how quarantine measures and limited social interaction has left people around the world struggling with mental health. In the image, a girl floats in space alone with typical “quarantine” home items around her, her lack of stability indicating the feeling of helplessness, isolation, and loss that many are feeling during the COVID-19 crisis.



- 3) “Inflammatory pandemic rhetoric provokes xenophobia” Illustration June 2020
- a) This editorial cartoon accompanies an article that I wrote about how the COVID-19 pandemic and many influential figures’ rhetoric regarding it has stirred violence and xenophobia against Asians. In addition to the girl holding the sign written in English, I wrote the sentence “I am not a virus” in various Asian languages, directly addressing and supporting my fellow Asians who may have been affected by anti-Asian sentiment during the pandemic.

DIET CULTURE



When the weight-loss mindset takes over, food becomes the enemy

Too often we assume that people who are overweight are lazy, lack work ethic or do not take proper care of themselves, yet it is nearly impossible to determine someone's health from their appearance, weight or clothing size. Both size-zero and plus-sized people have their own medical issues. Having more fat cells does not make you a bad person — and it cannot dictate self-worth.

Beauty is Not Pain

Weight loss is a tool used to increase self-esteem and make people feel better. It's February, and by now most New Year's resolutions have crumbled and feelings of guilt are setting in.

While losing weight is not an inherently terrible goal, the extreme focus on weight loss is problematic. Diet culture promotes the idea that conforming to a specific body standard is more important than your health, both physical and mental.

In middle school, one of my teachers took great pride in constantly complaining to the class about her juice cleanse, which made her cranky and tired. All those complaints seemed like an excuse for her to show how she was sticking to her resolution to become a new and improved version of herself.

If there's one thing I've learned, no one wants to hear about your diet. You are not a better person for depriving yourself of nutrients through a detox juice cleanse or a water fast. Contrary to the popular expression, beauty is not pain.

When we push ourselves to lose weight, we often berate ourselves for skipping a workout or grabbing a chocolate croissant from the cafe. These

rigid ideas about how we eat and how our bodies should look can cause our mental health to suffer as we constantly push ourselves towards some unattainable goal and deprive ourselves of that which makes us happy.

The Danger of Diets

The body standard that pushes us to lose weight also influences our attitudes towards food. All calories, fat and carbohydrates are, to put it simply, just energy. They fuel our bodies, allowing us to study hard and play hard, but the term "calorie" is now equated with fat.

Calorie-counting has become

an obsession. Apple Watches and apps like MyFitnessPal enable this fixation. Americans spend upwards of \$60 billion on diet and weight loss products every year.

We shouldn't feel guilty or ashamed for eating a cookie because a cookie is just a form of energy — and a delicious one at that.

Crash and fat diets are dangerous. Studies show that limiting one's food intake is often a precursor to eating disorders, yet it has become so pervasive in our society that even young children are worried about their weight. In 2015, a study by Common Sense Media revealed that around 80% of ten-year-old girls have been on a diet, and a 1991 study reported that 42% of first through third grade girls want to be thinner.

We have created a society in which children are engaged in risky dieting behaviors that often lead to full-blown eating disorders. Something has to change.

So we must challenge the norm. Do not call yourself fat, shame yourself for eating a slice of pepperoni pizza, or talk about your diet to a classroom full of impressionable students.

Diet culture thrives on our insecurities and the belief that we somehow need to improve. Weight does not determine character, and we are not good or bad because of what we eat.

By Julia Smith

Last year, I was sitting with friends in front of the cafeteria fireplace on one of the few cold days before winter break. One of my friends was sipping on her daily can of La Croix when she jokingly remarked that she might be addicted.

The theory caught the attention of another friend, who warned that carbonation could cause weight gain, or so he had read.

A long discussion ensued. If La Croix had zero calories, then she shouldn't gain weight, but the bloating effects of the bubbles could not be ignored.

As it turns out, La Croix does not in fact lead to extra pounds; its lack of calories ensures that the contents of the beverage will not be converted into fat.

Still, the seed of fear had been planted. Such reactions are fairly common and reflect a culture in which weight gain is feared and calories are the enemy. In such circumstances, even water — that paragon of health — can be viewed with suspicion.

The Moral Value of Food

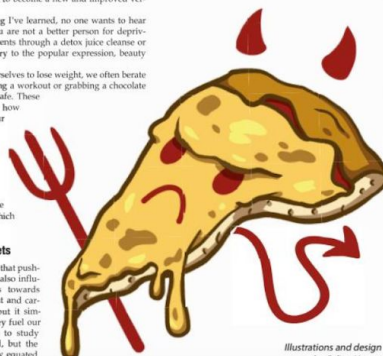
"Diet culture" is a system of beliefs that promotes thinness as the only path to health and desirability, but what makes dieting even more dangerous is when society places a moral value on food.

This unhealthy system pervades our society. Celebrities promote dangerous diets while friends make casual remarks about needing to work off dessert. It seems like everyone believes that eating "clean" and exercising constantly not only makes you thinner, but somehow makes you better.

From a young age, I was taught that there exist two types of food: good and bad. Consuming good foods (salads and fruit) made you pure and healthy, whereas eating bad foods (Breco, Gushers and other sweets seldom found in my house) meant you were greedy, unable to control yourself or simply bad.

While some are not concerned about eternal damnation for eating devil's food cake, many fear weight gain. Dieting is so ingrained in our society that most dread being undesirable more than they worry about their long-term health.

Lizzo recently decided to take a break from Twitter after trolls constantly harassed her and made insensitive jokes about her appearance. This rampant fat-shaming is just one of the ways that overweight body types are portrayed as morally inadequate.



Illustrations and design by Celine Huang

4) "Diet Culture" Illustration February 2020

- These illustrations, title, and page design was done for an opinion about the damaging effects of "diet culture" and how this mindset can create unnecessary bias against foods. For the title, I used color to highlight the word "cult" within "culture" to emphasize the obsessive nature of our society's focus on weight loss. True to many people's perceptions of the foods, I illustrated the salad as an innocent angel and the pizza as a devil.



5) "Life, Interrupted" Cover June 2020

- a) This cover was illustrated for our graduation issue. The illustration shows chalk drawings representative of important events, items, people, or movements that have occurred during these past few months. The style is indicative of the sidewalk chalk that many people have been drawing during quarantine and the dandelions in the grass around the sidewalk implies hope for a better path onwards.