THE DIGITAL SIDE OF DEPORTATION

How Silicon Valley technology impacts undocumented immigrants

pg. 24
Creating Opportunities and Finding Solutions

The Bay Area real estate market is fast paced and high pressure, but the resolve Group knows how to separate the signal from the noise. By focusing on their clients’ needs and relying on their experience, their clients proact more than react in order to succeed. Working with the resolve Group goes well beyond a transaction: they strive to build lifelong partnerships with clients as their trusted real estate advisors.

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THE RESOLVE GROUP
Adam Touni
Cell: 650.336.8530
adam@theresolvegroup.co
Wendy Kandasamy
Cell: 650.380.0220
wendy@theresolvegroup.co
Katharine Carroll
Cell: 415.300.7182
katharine@theresolvegroup.co

ON THE COVER
P.24

The monarch butterfly was first introduced as a major symbol of the recent United States immigration crisis in the documentary series “Migration is Beautiful,” aimed at re-forming immigration policy. Technology has been the heart of Silicon Valley’s growth, but some companies blur the line between technological advancements and abuse of power. Photo and Design Editor Zost Wong-Van-Haren disturbs the monachs as they fly away, representing the disruption that these digital developments have had on immigrants’ dreams for a better future.

Publication Policy
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Letters to the Editors
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Editors-in-Chief
Emma Dorothy-Higgins
Alex Feng
Rachel Lit

Managing Editors
Kate Mikle
Abe Tow
Jasmine Venet (Digital)

Features Editor
Sasha Poor

Profiles Editor
Prahald Mitra

Culture Editor
Kobi Johnson

Perspectives Editor
Ben Cohen

Editorials Editor
Robin Ghosh

News Editor
Myra Xu

Launch Editor
Katherine Cheng

Photo and Design Editor
Zost Wong-Van-Haren

Business Managers
Michelle Kim
Ryan Seto

STEM Columnist and Statistician
Kayla Brand

Social Media Manager
Antonia Mau

Art Director
Samantha Ho

Graphic Designer
Zachary Donaker

Staff Writers
Mia Baldwin
Naomi Boneh
Miles Breen
Allison Chang
Avery Hanna
Timothy Hung
Audrey Kernick
Tara Kohari
Grace Lindstrom
Owen Longstreth
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FROM THE EDITORS
An ode to a hundred

This printing marks a hundred issues of Verde Magazine by 21 different staffs of dedicated student journalists.

While the number “100” is a proud ribbon on a substantial body of work, this milestone is also a reminder of the commitment to finding and reporting the truth — and making it look good — that generations of Palo Alto High School journalists have reaffirmed during their years on staff.

“Verde’s 100th issue,” by Prahalad Mitra, Myra Xu and Naomi Boneh, reflects on Verde’s impact over the years through a set of whimsical statistics and brief vignettes on stories that have created substantial change in the community and beyond.

In addition to producing hard-hitting content, Verde continuously strives to produce stories that give a voice to the marginalized and broaden the perspectives of our readers. Our cover story, “The digital side of deportation,” by Avery Hanna and Ryan Seto, brings the journalistic spotlight to a global discussion through a local lens. Their reporting on the role of rising Silicon Valley companies like Palantir in the exploitation of vulnerable communities challenges us to consider the collateral effects of innovation alongside its benefits.

Reaching and covering members of our community, both in the greater Bay Area and on the Paly campus, is essential to upholding Verde’s mission of inspiring and educating our readers. Through the profiles “Zareen,” by Ben Cohen and Mia Baldonado, and “Phela the phenom,” by Jasmine Venet and Kylie Mies, adults and students alike have been able to share their passions, hopes and dreams in print.

Verde has long been a platform to elevate student voices, and “Acme scans: Skin deep” by Allison Chang exemplifies this ideal with a powerful personal story that reminds us to look beyond the superficial. Perspectives like this serve a greater purpose in fostering a collective of empathetic and accepting students, which opens up the stage for valuable opinions that allow us to learn from one another.

As students who have been a part of the exceptional media arts program here at Paly, we have had the opportunity to experience journalism beyond school sports scores; we have seen, and explored its tremendous ability to effect change. As succinctly put by humorist and writer Finley Peter Drummie, “Stories are meant to comfort the afflicted and affect the comfortable.” We hope we live up to this sentiment.

For the next hundred issues to come, we believe Verde will stay true to its journalistic integrity by continuing to produce articles that are reported with diligence, written with devotion and edited with care. We aim to remain a publication that, at heart, serves as a platform for student journalists to advocate for themselves and their community.

-Alex, Ramona, Emma
Provide safe-sex products to students

Later CA school times are a positive change

The verdicts

The Verdict editorial section expresses the collective opinion of the Verde Magazine staff. This issue’s editorials were drafted by Emma Donnelly-Higgins and Rohin Ghosh.

THE RECENTLY PASSED California state legislation requiring secondary schools to commence classes later each day is a positive step towards student health and wellness.

Senate Bill No. 328, which was approved by Gov. Gavin Newsom on Oct. 15, mandates that California high schools to start no earlier than 8:30 a.m. The changes must be made by July 1, 2022, with some exceptions.

Currently, Palo Alto Unified School District’s high schools commence at 7:20 a.m. and 7:25 a.m. each day. PAUSD Supt. Don Austin says he does not anticipate revised high school start times to be later than 8:30 a.m. Although this will mean only five- and 10-minute changes at Henry M. Gunn and Palo Alto High Schools, the legislation will greatly benefit other students across the state.

Keeping the focus on student health and wellness, SB 328 will benefit both the students and the staff of California high schools because it will allow students to sleep more in the mornings and wake up ready for school. In turn, teachers will be met with happier, more alert students with better attendance rates.

In an email to Verde, Paulson agreed — as did a police officer — that school’s potentially strongest argument — student safety — was refuted by the principal’s announcement and the establishment of a barricade PRIOR to your staff showing up to do their jobs,” said State Press Law Consulting Mike Hiestand stated in an email regarding the incident.

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A 2014 study by the University of Minnesota found that a later start time resulted in higher attendance, improved academic outcomes and improved health among students. Verde conducted a survey in September 2019 of 187 Palo Alto students in randomly selected English classrooms across all four grades. According to the survey, 78.8% of Palo students claim that they do not get enough sleep on an average school night.

This is due to a multitude of factors but an early school start time plays a large role in this startling statistic.

A 2004 report by the American Academy of Pediatrics concluded that “getting enough sleep each night can be hard for teens whose natural sleep cycles make it difficult for them to fall asleep before 11 p.m.”

A later start time can help students get the necessary sleep they need to be healthy and successful at school.

The $135 billion beauty industry is fuelled by negative stereotypes and comparison among students. In keeping with the objective of promoting sexual health among students, the Palo Alto High School Wellness Center should provide condoms and other safe sex products free of charge to students.

According to Paly-specific data from the California Healthy Kids Survey, 18% of juniors have had sex. Alarmingly, over 61% of Paly students who engaged in sexual activity did not use any form of barrier protection such as a condom or dental dam. Many forms of sexual activity can carry inherent risks of unplanned pregnancies or sexually transmitted infection but proper use of protection methods can significantly mitigate these risks.

A 2017 report in the Journal of Adolescent Health found that students at schools where condoms are readily available experience lower rates of unplanned pregnancies and STIs with no significant increase in sexual activity. Students provided condoms at their school were able to access them without the awkwardness or cost of buying them at a store or the inconvenience of having to obtain them from a medical professional.

Several school districts in the region, including San Francisco and Oakland Unified School Districts, already provide condoms to students and have seen positive results. Many districts are going even further in the promotion of students’ health, both sexual and otherwise. Berkeley High School has an on-campus health center which, in addition to providing contraceptives, also offers students basic primary care and referrals for health needs including for sexual health.

Safeguarding the health of students is a paramount responsibility of any school. This responsibility applies to students’ sexual health as well. Both PAUSD high schools should take the basic but impactful step of providing safe-sex products to students.

The verdict

THE REVIEWED student rights and free speech are on the rise this school year. After the November Senate Bill No. 328, which was approved by Gov. Gavin Newsom on Oct. 15, mandates that California high schools to start no earlier than 8:30 a.m. The changes must be made by July 1, 2022, with some exceptions.

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Keep news scenes open to reporters

When our rights were put to the test in a stressful situation, the school attempted to deny them.

Keep news scenes open to reporters

When our rights were put to the test in a stressful situation, the school attempted to deny them.
VERBATIM: WHAT ARE YOUR BEST FINALS STUDY TIPS?

"Start early...and be calm once you’re taking the final regardless of what [grade] you might need to get."  
— Trisha Razdan, junior

"Sleep is important. I always try to feel rested and sleep helps me be more prepared."  
— Thomas McGall, junior

Reporting by KATHERINE CHENG  
Art by SAMANTHA HO

ASB ANSWERS

WITH ASB SECRETARY  
KIMI LILIOS

What is ASB currently working on?

(We are) focused on debriefing the exciting, yet hectic, Spirit Week and reviewing what went well and what could be improved on. We are also working on amending the ASB Constitution after encountering some areas in need of clarification.

As the semester comes to a close, what has been your favorite ASB event so far?

One of my favorite events this year has been the surprise Cookies on the Quad. I love seeing hundreds of students come to enjoy something so simple and yet so exciting.

What challenges have you had to overcome this year?

This year, ASB had an issue with scoring one of the Spirit Week games, Wrap Your VP. We received letters from various classes with questions and concerns about the results and had in-class discussions on how to proceed. In the end, we came to a consensus and proceeded with a successful Spirit Week.

Reporting and photo by KATHERINE CHENG

With Town and Country Village, downtown Palo Alto and California Avenue within walking distance of Palo Alto High School, there are a wide array of shops where students can grab a drink. Here are some of Paly students’ favorites.

Source: The data presented here comes from a Verde Magazine survey of 157 Palo Alto High School students in nine randomly selected English classes (English A, English 16A, English Literature, and Advanced Placement English Language). Verde conducted the survey late October to early November through a digital form. Responses were anonymous and Verde provided students with the option to opt out for any reason.

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PEPPERMINT HOLIDAY MENU

EGGNOG LATTÉ

The egg nog latte had an unpleasant smell. However, the taste of the drink was a perfect balance between the sweetness of the egg nog and the bitterness of the espresso.

TOASTED WHITE CHOCOLATE MOCCHA FRAPPEUCINO

Although topped with red sprinkles for a festive look, the name is misleading. There was not much flavor to the drink besides milk and sugar; while we expected a crisp white chocolate taste, the drink was disappointing.

CARAMEL BRULÉE LATTE

Unlike the frappucino, the Caramel Brûlée Latte was true to its name, bursting with caramel flavor. The whipped cream topped with toffee bits brought the drink home.

Text by KATHERINE CHENG and KYLIE MIES  
Art by KATHERINE CHENG and SAMANTHA HO

LAUNCH

WINTER CONCERT CALENDAR

With concerts on a Monday night, on a Wednesday night, and on a Saturday night, there is something to fit everyone’s needs.

DECEMBER 2019

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Compiled by KYLIE MIES and KATHERINE CHENG  
Art by SAMANTHA HO

With ASB Secretary KIMI LILIOS

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**news**

Churchill Avenue changes loom

**COUNCIL EVALUATES APPROACHES TO TRAFFIC CONGESTION**

The Palo Alto City Council is expected to decide on impending rail grade separations in May 2020, but many of the plans are receiving backlash from the community.

As more diesel locomotives are being replaced by electric ones, concerns have been raised over the resulting congestion on Churchill Avenue. According to the Expanded Community Advisory Panel, the intersection of Churchill and Alma Street is crossed by 9,000 commuters every day.

*One option to relieve Churchill traffic is a viaduct: a bridge made up of arches that would simultaneously allow trains to cross and cars to pass underneath it.*

“I feel it is going to be invasive,” Mari-anella Núñez, a resident living next to the proposed viaduct, said. “I’m sure there are other options to solve the issue that don’t compromise the privacy and home value of the trail’s neighbors.”

Junior Heidi McIntosh drives to Paly everyday, sometimes taking Churchill. She is aware of the traffic resulting from the train and said that it will only get worse with these changes.

“Rerouting traffic or adding a bridge would make traffic even worse,” McIntosh said. “Especially with the long construction times.”

Councilmember Greg Tanaka explained how electric trains cause less traffic.

“We are replacing diesel locomotives with electric ones,” Tanaka said. “Diesel takes a long time for the train to get started and stop. But in electric cars, all the wheels are turning at the same time. They can start to accelerate faster. So they are going to increase the frequency of the trains.”

With a budget of $300–$400 million, a viaduct would cost less than half as much as the alternative of trenching and is environmentally safer. However, temporary tracks would have to be put in place during construction and would force the city to reduce Alma to two lanes — one lane in each direction — for approximately two years.

Rail noise and vibration would be mitigated with separate-grade crossing. However, some Palo Alto families have expressed concern over the potentially unsightly view — the viaduct would be 20 feet above ground and would tower over the fences of some homes.

Alternatively, a closure for vehicles at the Churchill crossing would cost $50–$65 million and could be implemented in two ways: an underpass for pedestrians and cyclists under the rail corridor, or an underpass under the rail corridor and Alma.

A vehicle closure of Churchill would not require temporary tracks, but would result in the removal of Alma’s center left turn lane.

The closure would reduce danger for bikers and pedestrians who take Churchill, but would force commuters who drive to find an alternative route. To lessen the amount of traffic that would get rerouted to other streets, mainly Embarcadero Road, XCAP has proposed many changes to surrounding streets to mitigate traffic. According to a traffic study by XCAP, this would be enough to mitigate the traffic.

**Churchill Crossing**

To address increased congestion at Churchill, the Palo Alto city council is considering construction plans. “If this process was occurring now it would complicate the way I get to school,” said Palo Alto High School junior Will Thomas. Photo by Myra Xu

**Viaduct View**

A digitally rendered street view of the potential Churchill viaduct shows one of the options under consideration to alleviate congestion. “Living next to the crossing the construction will be a very long process,” Palo Alto High School Junior Will Thomas said. “It might also decrease my neighborhood’s home values.” Image courtesy of AECOM

by RYAN SETO and TIMOTHY HUNG

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Midtown youth mental health clinic to open early 2020

A PILOT YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH clinic will open in midtown Palo Alto in early 2020 with the goal of reimagining mental health, according to the Palo Alto Online.

Alcover, a non-profit organization, will provide accessible integrated health services at the site to youths ages 12–25.

"A mental health center like Alcover could be hugely beneficial to teens in the area, especially with the stressful reputation of our local high schools," Palo Alto High School junior Kimi Lillios said.

Paly senior Elitte Fitton, a member of the Alcover Youth Advisory Group, emphasizes the importance of having such a group.

"The ‘By youth, for youth’ idea has really been essential throughout this entire process," Fitton said.

New Palo social-emotional learning curriculum to debut

ADMINISTRATORS and students at Palo Alto High School will work with educational experts to design a new curriculum that aims to implement new social-emotional learning practices in response to sexual harassment incidents.

The curriculum will better educate students on consent through more personal activities, according to REALyou founder Anna Bogus.

"I think the change defeats the purpose," Nguyen said. Photo by Myra Xu

Blended class student now required to stay on school grounds

STUDENTS ARE FRUSTRATED by the change in Blended classes that requires them to stay within designated supervised areas on campus.

Some do not see this change, announced earlier this semester, as an improvement. Junior Emma Cadahly, who takes Blended classes, said that the amount of freedom gave her incentive to take Blended classes in the first place.

"It’s just frustrating because we all signed up for this with a certain idea of what it was going to be in mind," Cadahly said. "And then we showed up and they were like, ‘No, your mind is completely different.’"

Blended English teacher Kindel Launer attributed the change to an update in Infinite Campus that sparked a larger conversation about Blended periods. The designation was initially “Do Not Meet” and was changed in the update to “E-Learning Period,” which implied that students had some supervised autonomy, Launer said.

“Everyone thought ‘Oh, what's that designation? It’s not actually capturing what students and teachers are doing during that Blended period, so what designation would capture that?’” Launer said.

Emily Garrison, education technology and libraries coordinator at Palo Alto Unified School District, explained that students will be required to fill out a Google form as a means of remote attendance.

"There hasn’t really been that big of a change," Garrison said. "We still have that flexibility. We’re just asking students to remain on campus for now.”

出席映像と写真

ATTENDANCE FROM AFAR Palo Alto High School junior Charizte Nguyen fills out the attendance survey for her Advanced Placement English Language and Composition Blended class. "I think it defeated the purpose," Nguyen said. Photo by Myra Xu

Local responses to college admissions scandal

SOME DEFENDANTS, coaches and university officials involved in the college admissions scandal are facing new charges as of Oct. 22, resurfacing discussion of the event.

According to National Public Radio, 11 defendants now face charges of “conspiring to commit federal program bribery.” Seven university coaches and officials also face new charges of “conspiring to commit mail and wire fraud,” “honest services mail and wire fraud” and “committing federal program bribery.”

Palo Alto High School College and Career Center adviser Emily Razdan’s.

"There are people in position of privilege who have money to hire independent folks … and people think that they can do things that are not ethical to get an advantage," Cernobori said.

"I think that one of the main things we can do is really just encourage having more open dialogue and conversation about why we feel this need to go to a certain school to succeed," Jhaveri said.

"Parents who still have yet to plead guilty will face even more severe charges than before, if convicted," Cernobori views this as a crucial learning experience for the Palo community.

"For 15 years I’ve been [advocating] about finding a fit — that’s the name brand is the one that’s happening. RHS will have to dive deep into your individual research and really evaluate how it [the college] fits."
CAASPP RESULTS SPARK ACTION
DEMAND TO RESTRUCTURE MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Text by AUDREY KERNICK, JAY RENAKER and KOBI JOHNSON

PALO ALTO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT Supt.

Don Austin is calling for a redesign of middle school teaching styles in PAUSD following the 2018-19 California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress results, which further reveals a stark achievement gap.

According to the CAASPP results, 26.67% of Hispanic and Latino middle school students do not meet grade-level standards for English Language Arts, whereas only 5.16% of White students do not. An additional cause for concern is the decrease in academic performance during the transition from elementary school to middle school. Hispanic and Latino students performed above standards in ELA and Mathematics in fifth grade, but when the same students are in eighth grade in 2019, they scored 13 and 20 points below standards, respectively.

These results were presented during the Oct. 15 Board of Education meeting, after which Austin proposed immediate action.

“What I’m going to suggest, pretty publicly, is a complete reboot of our middle schools,” Austin said. By Dec. 10, the middle schools in the PAUSD are expected to present ideas on how to effectively restructure their systems to address the achievement gap.

School Board Member Ken Dauber said he wants to focus on reform of the foundational aspects of PAUSD middle schools.

“You’ll need to go to those hard to go places,” Dauber said during the Oct. 15 school board meeting. “Those are the core of what we’re doing.”

Wendy Stratton
Palo Alto High School Assistant Principal

WENDY STRATTON speaks on the reaction to the CAASPP testing results. Photo by Jay Renaker

“I think the outcry should have been happening — if the gaps have not been addressed in prior years … I’m not saying that people didn’t care about it or didn’t recognize it, I’m just saying that we haven’t had our leadership really call it out. That really puts high beams on these gaps and holds us all accountable for them and that is exactly what should be happening.”

Judy Argumedo
Director of Academic Supports in PAUSD

JUDY ARGUmedo discusses equity in the district. Photo by Kobi Johnson

“When I first came to the district with my own two daughters, I think the climate was really different … There weren’t programs for students who were first generation. There weren’t a lot of supports. But now we have the Rise Up program that’s been around for five years. We’ve expanded our definition of equity to include LGBTQ. We’re looking at inclusion all around.”

Letitia Burton
Palo Alto High School teacher

LETITIA BURTON discusses the minority achievement gap at Palo Alto High School. Photo by Jay Renaker

“I think that in a district like this there shouldn’t be as much disparity as there is. This district has all the resources, all the capabilities for all students to achieve at the same level. I think it would be great if every student had one AP [Advanced Placement] class. … Students seeing themselves as AP students is beneficial to achievement.”

Paly sophomore
This student preferred to remain anonymous

A Paly Sophomore reflects on experiences with racial stereotyping and achievement. Art by Samantha Ho

“The school district is not that diverse, so when you’re in a classroom, you don’t see much of yourself, and that transmits anxiety. You have to show others that you’re worthy of being in that class. … And not have them look at you just based off your ethnicity. I feel like that’s a factor too with the test scores. Aside from also having to do good in school, we also have to worry about what others think about us. … It’s not like the SAT where you actually have to try. No one’s going to see it besides the State people but they don’t care, like not necessarily. … So you’re like ‘I don’t care, I’m not trying.’”

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100 ISSUES OF VERDE

REFLECTING ON OUR LEGACY

7,463 PAGES, 2,583 STORIES, 100 ISSUES. Myriad stories crafted and compiled by dedicated student journalists year after year. Verde Magazine was founded by Palo Alto High School journalism adviser Esther Wojcicki in 1999 and taken over by adviser Paul Kandell after the first volume. Ever since, the magazine has made substantial impacts on our local community in addition to being recognized nationwide with cover packages discussing topics ranging from rape culture to the internment of Japanese-Americans. Rachel Kellerman, former librarian and founder of the Paly Journalism Archives, has seen Verde's impact over the years.

“What binds these stories together is the cultural relevance, but also the heartbeat of the stories is here at Paly,” she says. “It resonates out to the world and that’s why they have staying power. I’ve always respected, and will continue to respect, the work it [Verde] does.”

On its 100th issue, Verde reflects on three of its most well-known cover packages and displays over 20 years of accomplishments and milestones with a series of infographics.

Infographics and design by ZACH DONAKER

Percentage of stories per section in Verde's history:
- Features: 15.60%
- News: 19.86%
- Culture: 17.89%
- Perspectives: 12.56%
- Profiles: 4.57%
- Cover: 11.55%
- Shorts: 4.29%
- Launch: 3.57%
- Editorial: 1.93%
- Other: 6.18%

Infographics and design by ZACH DONAKER

TOTAL STAFF MEMBERS

= 20 PEOPLE

TOTAL NUMBER OF Vs PRINTED

= 1,000 LETTER Vs

POUNDS OF PAPER PRINTED

= 12,000 POUNDS

Infographics and design by ZACH DONAKER
Gun violence (V19.4)

Many current readers will recall Verde's famous "Enough is enough" issue published in 2018, marked by a "bullet hole" punched through the magazine. All stories and many advertisements throughout the 92nd issue were impacted by the hole punch, accentuating their message about the widespread effects of mass shootings.

After production had already ended, Paly received a hoax gun threat through the phone, leading to a school-wide lockdown during Verde's class period. The staff captured the tension in the classroom at the time. The staff had already planned and designed the cover story, but decided last minute to largely reassemble the pages and add a new story to the magazine because of the breaking news event.

The lockdown occurred late in the production cycle, which left the staff scrambling to assemble a cohesive cover package, according to Asia Gardias (Class of 2019), the digital media editor at the time.

"In doing so, however, we solidified how we would present the message of the story and realized we wanted to keep the bullet hole cover symbol throughout the pages for consistency," Gardias says.

The issue was the first to be recognized nationally by CNN, and writers of the cover story were interviewed by local newspapers and media stations.

Japanese-American internment (V17.3)

In the 86th issue cover story "Interned," staff writers Anna Nakai and Gabriela Rossner traced the internment of Japanese-Americans, incorporating a number of Japanese-American former Paly students who were forced out of the school in the 1940s. After the Pearl Harbor bombing, Japanese-American families in the community were relocated to internment camps all over California — an event that is often overlooked, according to Rossner.

"My teacher barely mentioned it [the internment]," Rossner says of the inspiration for the 2016 issue. "The loudest voices in the class tried to claim that the internment of the Japanese-American citizens was a valid action. This story was a response to the ignorance at Paly, especially since Paly was directly affected by the internment."

Rachel Kellerman, the founder of Paly's Journalism Archives, provided sources for the story with her archive collection in hopes of keeping the diverse perspectives alive.

"I was able to connect them [the journalists and the sources]," Kellerman says. "They [the journalists] did a powerful job of getting primary source information."

The article drew attention from the Paly community, and it was even cited by an anthropology research book.

"Just everything about it [the story] is a lot of work, but you get something entirely unique," Kellerman says. "No one else is writing about this in the whole world."

Rape culture (V14.5)

In the 67th issue cover package “Rape culture” published in 2012, staff writers Lisie Sabbag, Will Queen and Savannah Cordova compose three stories that examine the flawed Paly perception of sexual assault.

One cover story, “You can’t tell me I wasn’t raped,” unfolds the experiences of two rape victims ostracized by their community and also incorporates jarring statistics related to sexual assault.

“Breaking the silence,” another part of the rape culture cover package, discusses how the mentality that “rape is inevitable” prevents society from ending the epidemic.

“Taking it seriously” holds internalized misogyny responsible for perpetuating rape culture. Along with the two other stories incorporated into the package, the story stunned the broader Palo Alto community with its compelling message.

The issue was acknowledged by local media and created dialogue among the Palo Alto community on this sensitive topic. Ultimately, it helped propel Paly into a multi-year Office of Civil Rights investigation, resulting in the court-ordered lessons on sexual assault and harassment that students and staff receive today.
PALY AFTER DARK
WHAT HAPPENS ON CAMPUS ONCE THE SUN SETS?

Text by GRACE LINDSTROM, JAY RENAKER and LAURA MALAGRINO

BY 4 P.M., the Palo Alto High School campus seems largely deserted. It is mid-November, meaning that the temperature has dropped below 60 degrees — scarf weather in Palo Alto. Most students are leaving the school, or have already left. But for some, the day is just beginning.

9 A.M.

Paly custodians begin their first shift after school ends. Albert Hidalgo has been on the team for three years and has been instrumental to the campus’s behind-the-scenes work.

“On a typical evening, we do anything from setting up functions, or meetings … or helping the staff where we can because we’re that extra hand,” Hidalgo says.

6 P.M.

The second round of DreamCatchers, a middle school tutoring program, begins at 6 p.m. The program works to help close the achievement gap. During each session, a middle school student is paired with a high school or Stanford University student. Together, the pair work on developing good study habits for high school and eventually college.

“[Night Security] does his checks and every now and then he will see a student,” Hidalgo says. “He’s there are spots where the team can go and see if they need help.”

The effects of DreamCatchers are also felt by the tutors, who often form close bonds with their students. Paly Senior Ramon Buecheler says, “I think it’s more than just tutoring someone.” Buecheler says, “You’ve kind of like a mentor to them.”

8 P.M.

English Through Movies, a Palo Alto Adult School class, ends at 8 p.m. Other offerings include: Computer Skills, Home & Environment and Upholstery.

During the class, the students watch films designed to introduce them to American culture, such as “Seabiscuit” and “Mr. Holland’s Opus.”

“It doesn’t feel like a classroom,” ETM teacher Mitra Bahrami says. “It’s more like a kind of a discussion.”

Her students compare what they’ve seen in the films to their own lives outside the U.S., creating a melting pot for cultural exploration.

The Palo Alto Adult School, established in 1921 has an annual population of approximately 8,000 and has over 50 instructors, some of whom double as Paly teachers during the day.

According to Bahrami, different classes attract different individuals. From foreign students looking to get another degree, to adults looking to expand their skills and knowledge, the school offers a community for anyone.

9 P.M.

Along with regularly planned activities, unscheduled visitors can also be seen on campus once the sun has set.

With nearby stores closing around nine, locals will cut through campus to pick up last-minute snacks and needs from Town and Country Village.

“We get everyone from transients to locals just walking past getting to Trader Joe’s picking up their ice cream or eggs and then heading back down through Paly to their house,” Hidalgo says.

10 P.M.

The latest Night School class, Taiko, ends at 10 p.m. Taiko is the art of Japanese drumming where students develop musical creativity, self-expression and the stamina to hit drums for two hours.

While some night classes come to an end at 9 p.m., other classes and groups continue on until 10 p.m. In Paly’s own band room, the Master Sinfonia Chamber Orchestra rehearses classics from composers such as Mozart and Beethoven.

12 A.M.

Though people experiencing homelessness may not have an impact on the average Paly student, night security will sometimes find them in unexpected locations.

“We found transients on top of the roof,” Hidalgo says. “He [Night Security] does his checks and every now and then he will find a transient just huddled up in the corner, making hotel right there.”

7:15 A.M.

Travis Fenech opens the Student Center at 7:15 a.m. for students who arrive early.

“People trickle in,” Fenech says. “It will continue getting packed right up until 8:15 [a.m.]”

The center provides students with pastries from Mayfield Bakery and a warm place to wait out the rest of the morning.
O
N NOV. 7, 2018, the National Rifle Association official Twitter account posted a statement that the ‘‘moments when self-important anti-gun doctors stay in their lane.’’

That one line sparked a firestorm of argument on Twitter between doctors explaining their connection to the epidemic that gun violence has become and those insisting it was not their place.

‘‘Tell one mother her child is dead with me, then we can talk,’’ Doctor Marianne Haughey replied on Twitter.

It was this experience that inspired Dean Winslow, a member of the SAFE advisory board, to write an article about the need for political action in order to truly confront the issue.

‘‘I think we have to find that common ground that hopefully isn’t too controversial,’’ Spain said. ‘‘Somebody’s gun advocates and gun control people can agree on.’’

Spain pointed to universal background checks and red flag laws as examples of measures that are widely seen as a positive light.

On Oct. 14, MacLean and SAFE hosted a town hall event at the Center for Disease Control and Prevention to help understand this issue.

‘‘This idea of talking about it as a public health issue has changed things,’’ he said. ‘‘If there’s a measles outbreak, people stop and see what caused it. We are basically having an epidemic of gun violence and you need to understand how this happened, and if you understand, maybe you can control it.’’

Deniz Catalpaa, a medical student at the University of Massachusetts, works as the SAFE Director of National Medical School Chapters.

‘‘[The curriculum] is going to give healthcare providers some basic tools that will help them screen their patients to understand who is at high risk for firearm violence and who might not be,’’ Catalpaa said. ‘‘And you know what steps should be taken once you’ve determined their level of risk.’’

Currently, medical school courses across the country addressing this topic are offered as electives outside of regular classes, if they are offered at all.

‘‘To have this built into the basic doctoring and clinical skills course that’s offered at every medical school in the country would be huge,’’ Catalpaa said.

This is just one of the many goals SAFE hopes to achieve in the coming years. While they have accomplished many milestones, their fight is far from over.

‘‘I don’t think that SAFE is going to become obsolete, although I wish it would,’’ Winslow said. ‘‘I think this is going to be a long process in the United States.’’

Dean Winslow, a Stanford University professor of medicine, and then-Stanford medical student Sarabeth Spitzer co-founded SAFE in 2018. The organization has now grown to 49 medical schools across the country as gun violence remains a major issue and more people are looking for solutions.

SAFE is primarily focused on two goals: education and research. David Spain, the founder of SAFE and a member of the SAFE advisory board, and Stanford chief of acute care surgery, explained how further research about gun violence would better inform a course of action.

‘‘Unfortunately, research by itself helps you down the road, but it only informs you in terms of what interventions really need to take place,’’ Winslow said.

A major obstacle in the way of further reform is political division over the topic, something Winslow has personal experience with.

‘‘We are basically having an epidemic of gun violence and you need to understand how this happened and if you understand, maybe you can control it.’’

— DAVID SPAIN, SAFE advisory board member and chief of acute care surgery at Stanford University professor of medicine.
Text by AVERY HANNA and RYAN SETO

THE DIGITAL SIDE OF DEPORTATION

MARIA WALKS through the door, ushering in her two youngest children, ages 7 and 2, who cling to her
hands. She is followed by her niece and eldest son, who diligently carry a stroller.

Maria, her husband Eric and her oldest son are three of over 2 million undocumented immigrants living in California, according to the Pew Research Center.

In April of 2018, President Donald Trump implemented the zero tolerance policy, resulting in an increase in child separations and criminal prosecutions against undocumented immigrants.

Whether or not Maria and Eric, whose names have been changed to protect their identities, were aware, technology companies were using Department of Motor Vehicles information and online searches and purchases to create a mold that would fit many undocumented immigrants. This mold could then be used to identify and deport them, a fear that was a constant presence in Maria and her family’s lives from the moment they crossed the border.

Since they first moved to America, they were cautious about the jobs they took and their daily decisions because there was always the hidden threat of technology that could make this fear a reality.

California is tied to the immigration debate not only because of its large population of undocumented immigrants, but also through Silicon Valley tech companies. By using data mining — a tool that enables companies or government agencies to examine large sets of data and create new information — these companies assist Immigration and Customs Enforcement in finding and deporting undocumented immigrants.

For undocumented immigrants in California and even here in Palo Alto, this new role of technology as an agent of immigration enforcement makes the fear of deportation even more real.

The role of tech

To the rest of the country, Silicon Valley is often perceived as the birthplace of successful technology corporations and a pillar of academic success.

Yet, as these tech companies grow in power, some question their interest in and whether their influence is being wielded appropriately.

Hana Moritii, a 2018 Palo Alto High School alumna, is one such critic. She is a member of a student-led group at the University of Puget Sound called Advocates for Detained Voices, who work to protect the rights of immigrants. She said that the image Palo Alto projects does not exactly align with the reality of the community.

“We portray ourselves as this sort of utopia with liberal values,” Moritii said. “We want to protect our immigrants and stand with people of color and people of different genders. But I think it is important to actually ask what our cities are doing and what the companies in our cities are doing, because underneath, that is not so good-looking, and it kind of goes against those values.”

Maria points to the Palo Alto based data-mining company Palantir as one of the corporations that has contributed to the detainment of undocumented immigrants. The tech company has faced opposition from the public and even from its employees over the renewal of a $49 million contract with ICE in 2019.

ICE and Palantir have been linked to a data-mining company Palantir as one of the companies that have contributed to the detainment of undocumented immigrants. The tech company has faced opposition from the public and even from its employees over the renewal of a $49 million contract with ICE.

In addition to economic challenges, they lived with the constant fear that they could be caught — a fear that, with the work of companies like Palantir, becomes more and more possible every day.

Even though some of Maria and Eric’s younger children are American-born, there is the constant fear in the back of her mind that they will be caught and her family will be split apart.

“It does scare me in that when you leave the house, you go to work and when the kids are in school sometimes — I have seen it happen to three families — that they go to work and unfortunately they are found by immigration and are arrested,” Maria said. “And sometimes they put your kids in the care of another person.”

They said that they never completely felt comfortable living in the United States, not only because of the economic struggles they first had to deal with, but also the constant fear of getting caught.

“Here, one is not legal,” Eric said in Spanish. “One is not 100 percent safe in this country.”

— ERIC, undocumented immigrant

Durosinmi so exceptional.

“Technology is all ways evolving and providing some tools for, let’s call it scary government agencies,” Arthur said. “And then sometimes taking things away too.”

Arthur says that the role of tech companies is simply to push the boundaries of technology, even if the technology is more harmful than beneficial is up for interpretation.

“It [technology] can also help immigration,” Arthur said. “I’d love a system where we use tech to actually identify people who want to come here that are likely to be good citizens. That would be a great use of it — evaluating potential people that apply.”

Technology is constantly evolving and, in turn, changing the world around it. Data that was once unfathomably large can now be processed in a matter of minutes. Arthur points out that this new ability allows for the exploration of scientific frontiers while also allowing advertisers to target individuals and their preferences on social media.

“[Technology] also allows scary surveillance stuff, which seems less exciting,” Arthur said. “I wish the federal government was a little more proactive about addressing that. It’s always going to be after the fact.”

However, with no such laws preventing Palantir from carrying on with data mining, they continue to help ICE bring to life the fears many undocumented immigrants hold.

Immigrants in Silicon Valley

As undocumented immigrants living in Silicon Valley, Maria, Eric and their oldest son are three of over 2 million undocumented immigrants who have faced many challenges in the U.S.

Leaving behind their lives and their families was not an easy decision, but Maria and Eric hoped to find better opportunities for their son, who they had suffered from hearing issues. They walked for two days to cross the border and worked day and night to support their family.

With her husband working at stores, car washes and construction companies where he could get by without documentation, Maria spent her days cleaning houses. From early in the morning, they tried to work and then again from 6 p.m. to 1 a.m. she worked. When pregnant, she took day off.

“I spent the nine months working,” Maria said in Spanish. “I started to work in order to earn a little more money. He [Eric] alone could have worked, but it was not enough for a baby. So I said, ‘I have to work’ and I kept working. And like I told you, on Wednesday I cleaned two houses and that night he [my son] was born.”

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They said that they never completely felt comfortable living in the United States, not only because of the economic struggles they first had to deal with, but also the constant fear of getting caught.

“Here, one is not legal,” Eric said in Spanish. “One is not 100 percent safe in this country.”

Headed home

For Maria and Eric, this sense of insecurity is part of the reason that they have decided to return to Mexico. Life for them in the U.S. was never easy; they had to deal with the stress of being away from their family, were constantly working and always afraid.

“If someone doesn’t have papers, from the moment they enter this country they come with fear that the police will find them or there will be a raid,” Eric said. “One always has fear.”

Here, one is not legal. One is not 100 percent safe in this country.

— ERIC, undocumented immigrant

Profiles

DECEMBER 2019
“COME ON ERIK, load it up!” “Let’s get it, Jared!” Other gymnasts at the gym cheer on teammates Erik and Jared Noyman, brothers practicing their high bar routines. The gym is alive with boys of all ages perfecting their own routines and exercises in groups. Upbeat pop music plays in the background, and the sound of chatter and encouraging words fill the space with a fun and collaborative atmosphere. After applying chalk to their hands, the brothers take turns swinging and flipping on the high bar, receiving feedback from their coach and then repeating the process.

“The reason that I like it [the high bar event] is it’s really challenging and there’s always an adrenaline rush when you do it,” Erik said.

Erik Noyman, a Palo Alto High School junior, and Jared Noyman, a Paly freshman, are brothers and competitive gymnasts at the Stanford Boys Gymnastics club. The brothers take part in men’s artistic gymnastics, a type of gymnastics in which athletes perform short routines including vault, floor exercise, pommel horse, still rings, parallel bars and high bar. Similar to other club sports leagues, gymnasts participate in tournaments and compete in state, regional and then national championships.

Both Erik and Jared started gymnastics at a young age. Jared started at around five or six years old, encouraging Erik to start about a month later. The two of them took up the sport when their mom noticed that they both had a lot of energy.

“I was always climbing up the door frames in my house and my mom was like ‘That’s it, you’re going to gymnastics,’” Erik said.

Despite the sport’s individual focus, the team’s positive and collaborative atmosphere contributes to their success.
text by Allison Chang and Owen Longstreth

Dancing to Bollywood Tracks

Akhil Joondeph’s Time as a Company Dancer

“People often associate Bollywood dancing as people shaking their hips and doing moves like screwing in light bulbs or picking cherries from trees,” Palo Alto High School sophomore Akhil Joondeph says. “But it is definitely more than that.”

For the last 12 years, Joondeph, a company dancer, has performed in numerous Bollywood productions with Mona Khan Co., a dance school located in Milpitas responsible for producing the Bay Area’s largest Bollywood resident shows. These resident shows feature classic Bollywood dance: acts with high energy steps, over-the-top expressions and modernized versions of traditional Indian attire.

“I would just say that many people outside the Indian community don’t actually know what true Bollywood dancing is,” Joondeph says. “Because if [Bollywood] is not something that exists in Western dance, people either don’t open their minds to it or naturally assume it is inferior because they don’t know any better.”

Joondeph says that people are too eager to categorize dance into distinct styles, and they fail to capture the essence of Bollywood dancing. As a collection of styles, each Bollywood piece is created with purpose. It is an art form that communicates important figures or providing commentary on social issues.

“What Bollywood dancing was 10 years ago is nothing like what it is now, and it’s probably nothing like what it’s going to be like in 10 years,” Joondeph says.

Unlike how many dancers specialize in certain techniques, Joondeph does not concentrate on a dance style. Instead, he strives for versatility when learning, performing or choreographing.

“My goal is to be competent in all different styles and to be able to do everything,” Joondeph says. “Bollywood dancing is not just one style of dance. It is a blend of Western and Eastern culture. We [Mona Khan Co.] train and perform in all styles, whether it be contemporary, hip hop, jazz, Latin or different Indian styles.”

Joondeph’s journey as a Bollywood dancer began with a flyer from an Indian community center in Milpitas. After noticing their three-year-old son’s love of dancing around the house, Joondeph’s parents spontaneously signed him up.

“His dad and him showed up on the first day of class and said, ‘Hey, we know he is not five yet, but we are really interested in trying Bollywood,’” Joondeph’s first instructor Shobana Shankar recalls. “I looked at him [Joondeph] and I saw this huge smile and enthusiasm in his face — his smile just lit up the whole room. I said, ‘Well, you know what, why don’t we give it a shot? If everything goes well, we can make an exception.’”

Shankar’s exception for Joondeph sparked a 12-year journey. Despite being younger than the rest of the class, Joondeph exhibited a level of control and coordination unusual in children that old. His sense of rhythm, his attention to detail and his ability to learn and execute quickly paved his foundation as a dancer.

“I think that [dancing from a young age] is what solidified my training, because we trained so hard,” Joondeph says. “We did so many shows and so many styles. From such a young age, I think a lot of things just kind of came into my body as a dancer.”

His talent as a dancer and performer did not go unnoticed. Even though he was five or six, we put him on stage to be the emcee for the show,” Shankar says. “He did fantastic. It became the highlight of the show. There was this little kid walking in, just talking about Bollywood.

No matter what the piece is or when we’re learning it, I will do whatever it takes to get to that [my goal],” Joondeph says. “No matter what the piece is or when we’re learning it, I will do whatever it takes to get to that [my goal], whether it be like listening to the tracks while I’m biking or re-hearing it in my mind before I go to bed.”

Joondeph’s preparedness, attention to detail and work ethic have prepared him for success both in dancing and in his life outside of it. To accommodate the 20-plus hours a week of dancing work, Joondeph works hard to do his work ahead of time to prevent late nights.

“I can’t really wait till the last minute,” Joondeph says. “I have to plan better and know which days of the week have less stuff and try to focus on my work at that time.”

Despite his positive takeaways from dance, Joondeph said that dance is not necessarily important for his future professional success. He is, however, sure that he will continue his passion for Bollywood dancing regardless of whether he can make it a career.

“I don’t think I want to stop,” Joondeph says. “I don’t see myself ever stopping.”

MOVEMENT ON STAGE (left) The details for each dance can be very minute, with dancers often working on correcting very specific things like the direction of their head.

ATTENTION IN THE STUDIO (right) The details for each dance can be very minute, with dancers often working on correcting very specific things like the direction of their head.

The details for each dance can be very minute, with dancers often working on correcting very specific things like the direction of their head.

The details for each dance can be very minute, with dancers often working on correcting very specific things like the direction of their head.
YES SQUINTING ABOVE SMILING CHEEKS, Lama Rimawi's laugh fills Cuppa Cafe as she listens to her sister Ellen Stromberg crack a joke. The two women are not sisters in a biological sense — Rimawi is Palestinian and Muslim while Stromberg is American and Jewish. But, in spite of these differences, they have formed a close bond through a common community. Both are leaders of the Palo Alto chapter of Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom, an organization that strives to build trust and positive relationships between Jewish and Muslim women.

In a country that has become increasingly divided and polarized, members of the Sisterhood, who call themselves “sisters,” recognize the importance of listening to each other. Their main goal is to create a broader understanding of each other’s culture and religion and work toward eliminating Islamophobia and anti-Semitism.

Embracing sisterhood

In 2010, Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom was founded in New Jersey with the goal of Jewish and Muslim women connecting through open dialogue. Now, with chapters throughout the United States and Canada, the Sisterhood’s mission remains unchanged.

In the nine years since the sisters’ first meeting, over 2,500 Jewish and Muslim women have participated in chapters of the program, meeting in each other’s homes. Stromberg has always been an advocate for creating and maintaining peace across cultures regardless of religious differences, and in 2017 she decided to start the first Northern California chapter of the Sisterhood in Palo Alto.

“I’d lived in a Palo Alto bubble, a Jewish bubble, and I knew I needed to get out of that,” Stromberg said. “I didn’t realize how positive and how expansive it was going to be for me.”

The Palo Alto Sisterhood chapter has been a powerful force in Stromberg’s, and other members’ lives since its inception.

“Creating peace, putting people together, being part of listening to people’s stories,” Stromberg said. “Sometimes it’s the only thing that keeps me going.”

New perspectives

During their monthly meetings, sisters discuss topics such as religious holidays and their interpretations of holy texts.

“The Muslim sisters will talk about Eid [and] the background behind it,” Rimawi said.

Not only do the women learn about cultural aspects of another religion, but they also form tight bonds with each other, which Stromberg says has strengthened the group dynamic over time.

“A Jewish sister was in the hospital, and we got a picture of a Muslim sister who went and found her to visit... we just take care of each other,” Stromberg said.

Teen chapters

Recently, chapters designed for teenagers have emerged across the country. Stromberg and Rimawi agree that this is important: they believe that learning how to be empathetic is key to forming friendships in high school that will positively impact teens throughout their lives.

“The way it’s impacted our lives and helped us see each other’s perspectives on things is something [that] would be really valuable for a teenager,” Rimawi said. “When you become a teenager you want to look at what other possibilities are out there. Being able to get that information directly would be really exciting and interesting.”

Rimawi also finds that learning about someone else’s truth can create new understanding in a person and help to forge new friendships.

“We try to understand each other’s perspectives and that’s very valuable because understanding each other’s perspectives helps you understand the world,” she said.

Recently, the impact of the Sisterhood has been recognized by the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and BMW Group. It was named one of ten international finalists for the 2019 Intercultural Innovation Award. The award had over 1,200 applicants from more than 120 countries and looks to highlight groups with a commitment to promoting intercultural diversity, peace and understanding.

But the greatest recognition of the organization’s impact can be seen in the testimonies from members themselves. Being in the group has had immense, positive impacts on Rimawi, who has both learned about the Jewish faith and taught others about Islam during meetings.

“Having my sisters understand where I’m coming from and how I perceive things has been really powerful,” Rimawi said.

Rimawi understands the significant impact the group has had on herself, and deeply values the act of understanding others.

“The most important part is you create relationships with people you otherwise wouldn't necessarily have the opportunity to, and they're very deep relationships,” Rimawi said. “I find that, within those deep relationships, sometimes the religion comes out but friendship allows you to deal with it in a different way, and I think that's really valuable.”
ZAREEN.

CUISINE FOR COMMUNITY

Text by MIA BALDONADO and BEN COHEN

"I was sitting here working, and I saw an older Indian-Pakistani lady with no English and her daughter-in-law, they were eating some really authentic gola kabab and sheermal," Zareen Khan, owner of Zareen’s, fondly recalls. "And I saw this Caucasian Stanford [University] professor sitting eating tikka masala. Then I saw that they started sharing food across the table and they were talking, even though they didn’t understand each other’s language. It was so cool, right? Like this 75-year-old grandma trying to explain to her how she could try the gola kabab and the sheermal. And then she’s trying it, and enjoying it, and they’re like talking in sign language or a little bit of broken English.”

Khan owns the Pakistani-Indian restaurant Zareen’s, located in Mountain View and Palo Alto. Zareen’s is one of Palo Alto’s hottest eateries, with its line permanently extended past the outdoor seating. Zareen’s has been recognized as a Michelin Guide Restaurant in 2017, 2018 and 2019 for its “well-spiced” samosas and “juicy and caramelized” chicken shami kababs.

Behind the awards Zareen’s has accumulated is Khan: a genuine restaurant owner who, through her food and passion, has convincingly broken into the business career path and found no satisfaction from it, so she decided to start from scratch.

Khan began by picking up odd jobs that interested her, such as teaching cooking classes and catering for restaurants. “There have been times when I felt like, ‘What the hell am I doing making $5 an hour from cooking classes?’” Khan said. “But then I figured that this is what I want to do and I’ll continue to do it.” In 2014, Khan was able to open her own restaurant. At Zareen’s, Khan shares the same joy of authentic Pakistani-Indian cuisine that she cooked in those past classes, only now to a larger audience.

“I think what makes this place unique is that you won’t see just one kind of people here,” Khan said. “That kind of gives it that melting pot feel.”

This welcoming attitude percolates beyond the restaurant’s atmosphere. To Khan, not only is the well-being of her employees a priority, but their happiness and satisfaction as well. "Happy workers make good, happy food" is a mantra she often tells her staff. In 2017, Khan purchased a Menlo Park house which she uses to provide discounted housing for many members of her staff—an arrangement that shows her commitment to her staff and the food that leaves her kitchen.

“I figured that I can help them by giving subsidized rent, and they can help me by being consistent and showing up to work and not being late,” Khan said. “It’s a nice place they share together so they become like family.”

With her unique management style and wide range of strong beliefs and experiences, Khan has certainly left a lasting impression upon her staff.

“Happy workers make good, happy food.”

— ZAREEN KHAN, owner of Zareen’s

“I personally make some small dessert to give to all the women who come here,” Khan said. “They like it, you know, they appreciate being appreciated.”

Along the walls of the Palo Alto restaurant’s are messages of female empowerment expressed through art such as poetry, comics, quotes and, on one wall, a vibrant mural. The mural depicts a woman, Qandeel Baloch, who was a victim of honor killing—a murder that occurs when a male family member kills a female family member who they believe has tarnished their family’s reputation. “It really affected me because on her death anniversary they made this mural in Karachi, Pakistan and the next day the religious police came and whitewashed it,” Khan said. “So when I found out about it, I go, ‘Ok, she’s gonna live on my wall.’”

From her genuine relationships with her employees to her activism regarding women’s rights, Khan brings together several communities through an influential Pakistani-Indian restaurant: Zareen’s.

“Her’s a person with a lot of vision, a vision different than anybody else’s,” Zareen’s employee Maria Mendez said. “I notice that the way she gets involved in her business is totally different to any other business person I’ve dealt with before.”

Perhaps one of Khan’s most defining characteristics is her drive to give back to the community and to support what she believes to be right. For example, each year on Mother’s Day, Khan works hard to recognize every woman in the community.

“Perhaps one of Khan’s most defining characteristics is her drive to give back to the community and to support what she believes to be right.”

— ZAREEN KHAN

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From her genuine relationships with her employees to her activism regarding women’s rights, Khan brings together several communities through an influential Pakistani-Indian restaurant: Zareen’s.
You have to invest a lot into glass pieces, both physically and emotionally."

— STEVE FERRERA, ceramics teacher

“It’s very relaxing while you’re heating something up,” Ferrera says. “It’s also really cool to see the students work and torching — emerges from a burning furnace.

Behind it all is Martin Ehrensvard, Paly’s resident glass master, who runs the glass studio. Ehrensvard acts as a mentor to students like Guillet, and is a constant presence in the studio. From guiding beginner to more advanced students, Ehrensvard dedicates his hours to mentoring and assisting them. His mentorship instills inspiration in his most passionate glassblowers, who may go on to pursue the craft later in life.

Guillet is one of a handful of students who was inspired by Ehrensvard and jumped at the chance to work with the newly covered glassblowing program. Paly is one of only five high schools in the United States to have glassblowing equipment and a developed program. Steve Ferrera, the current ceramics and sculpture teacher, credits former art teacher David Camner for introducing glassblowing to Paly twenty years ago, which also was made possible by support from the community. The department has since grown into a community of over 100 students per year.

Camner’s influence has not left Paly completely. His passion has been carried through the years by Ferrera and Ehrensvard. 

“A big part of it was because David Camner was super passionate about it [glassblowing],” Ferrera says. “So he made it happen through just hard work and sheer will and perseverance.

Class-room teachers

Ferrera currently teaches Ceramics and Sculpture and Advanced Sculpture at Paly, and his influence extends much farther than the classroom. In his own time, Ferrera enjoys working on his own personal pieces, which he displays to his 40,000 followers on Instagram and sells on his eponymous online store.

Though he currently focuses on silicone and resin art pieces, Ferrera shares a love for glassblowing as he works alongside many of his students.

“Glassblowing student smooth out the rough edges of his piece. “You have to trust your team to get a good end result,” junior and Advanced Ceramics student Andrew Guillet says.

From teacher to student

Glassblowing techniques don’t just require time and energy to perfect. They also need a guiding hand from someone who is able to pass down knowledge and technical skills. As Ehrensvard helps students with their glass pieces, he introduces them to the techniques and skills that he has learned through his experiences.

“He’s a great influence because he’s a great glassblower, but he’s also encouraging and tries to help everyone to get as good as they can at glass,” junior Eli Crystal says.

“Teens like me, we learn best through hands-on things,” junior Jack Compton says.

“Art makes people smile, and we fulfill an important role in society because we make people’s everyday lives more colorful,” Ehrensvard says. “I tell my students to figure out what matters to them and how to communicate it, and find people who can teach them to do that.”

Laura Ferrera, Ferrera’s mother, encourages her son’s passion. "I love what he does in such a unique way. It’s a fun thing when you’re talking about something passionately with someone else, and you’re smiling and they’re smiling!" — MARTIN EHRENSVARD, glass instructor

FORGED IN FIRE (ABOVE) Martin Ehrensvard heats a glassblowing student smooth out the rough edges of his piece. "You have to trust your team to get a good end result," junior and Advanced Ceramics student Andrew Guillet says.

CREATIVE COLORS (RIGHT) Students use a variety of colored glass pieces to create their own sculptures, from glass pumpkins to goblin shaped cups. "The creative aspect allows me to be myself and control what I make," junior Jack Compton says.

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CHARLOTTE VERSAVEL recalls her first time trying to sail; struggling under the weight of a sailboat with bigger sails, that's when it really hit me like, "Oh my god, I can go as fast ... it's so technical and it's fun," and that's when I really started to enjoy it.

Versavel competes with her sailing partner, Jack Sutter, a junior who attends a high school in Vallejo, in co-ed competitions around the world. Sutter steers the boat as the skipper, and Versavel's job is to trim the sails and make sure the boat moves as fast as possible. Over time, Versavel and Sutter have learned how to work together under pressure.

“My favorite part of sailing with Charlotte is how funny she is and just being around her; she’s really a caring person,” Sutter says. “They call us the married couple, because I’m like the other half of her. Everything that’s bad, I’m at good and everything I’m bad at, she’s good at.”

Almost every weekend, Versavel drives to either of her home yacht clubs — Richmond Yacht Club in the East Bay or St. Francis Yacht Club, north of San Francisco — to sail with Sutter. The pair generally meet at 10:30 a.m. to rig their boat, then put on their wetsuits and start sailing, occasionally accompanied by a coach or training partners.

"Every time I'm in the [San Francisco] Bay, I just feel so lucky," Versavel says. "I've also been able to travel to many places all over the country like North Carolina, Florida and L.A. [Los Angeles]. But honestly, no view beats the Golden Gate Bridge. I think it’s absolutely beautiful!"

At practice, Versavel says they always try to do at least 10 maneuvers a day, including tacking and jibing, which allows them to keep moving in the correct direction depending on the wind. When she is away from her boat, Versavel works out at least three to four days a week to stay fit.

Not only has sailing helped Versavel become physically stronger, but it has also helped her build character.

"Sailing has taught me a lot of grit and determination, that you need to persist even when things are hard," Versavel says.

For Versavel, her greatest accomplishment was during a particularly cold and wet competition, the first qualifier for Youth Worlds, where her boat had flipped because of a careless mistake. Although they were behind, the pair got the boat back up, put their heads down, and ended up passing several boats that had not flipped.

"Staying positive and staying calm, even level-headed, during that experience has shown me what an incredible person I could be when I'm competing," Versavel says.

After high school, Sutter and Versavel plan to continue sailing during college and beyond. One of their main goals is to make it to the Nacra 17, the fully foiling, out-of-the-water Olympic sailboat, to compete in the Olympics in the near future.

"I'm really a much stronger, healthier, smarter and better person because I sail," Versavel says. "Being on a team in such a competitive environment in sailing, it really tests you. It has given me a lot of confidence. If I didn't sail, I think I would be completely different."
THE NOYMAN BROTHERS

SETTING A HIGH BAR FOR INTENSE ATHLETES

Text by MIA BALDONADO and GRACE LINDSTROM
Photos by ZOE WONG-VANHAREN

COME ON ERIK, load it up! “Let’s get it, Jared!” Other gymnasts at the gym cheer on teammates Erik and Jared Noyman, brothers practicing their high bar routines. The gym is alive with boys of all ages perfecting their own routines and exercises in groups. Upbeat pop music plays in the background, and the sound of chatter and encouraging words fill the space with a fun and collaborative atmosphere. After applying chalk to their hands, the brothers take turns swinging and flipping on the high bar, receiving feedback from their coach and then repeating the process.

“The reason that I like it [the high bar event] is it’s really challenging and there’s always an adrenaline rush when you do it,” Erik said.

Erik Noyman, a Palo Alto High School junior, and Jared Noyman, a Palo Alto High School freshman, are brothers and competitive gymnasts at the Stanford Boys Gymnastics Club. The brothers take part in men’s artistic gymnastics, a type of gymnastics in which athletes perform short routines including vault, floor exercise, pommel horse, still rings, parallel bars and high bar. Similar to other club sports leagues, gymnasts participate in tournaments and compete in state, regional and then national championships.

Both Erik and Jared started gymnastics at a young age. Jared started at around five or six years old, encouraging Erik to start about a month later. The two of them took up the sport when their mom noticed that they both had a lot of energy.

“I was always climbing up the door frames in my house and my mom was like ‘That’s it, you’re going to gymnastics’,” Erik said.

Despite the sport’s individual focus, the team’s positive and collaborative atmosphere has kept the pair hooked since they started.

“Everyone respects the work that you put in, and everyone’s really supportive of each other,” Erik said. “It’s not really like people booing against you — you want everyone to do as well as they can.”

This spirit is emblematic of the gymnastics culture as a whole. According to Jared, most athletes cheer each other on at tournaments, despite the fact that they are all technically competing against one another.

“Even people on other teams cheer each other on,” Jared said. “Maybe we’ll cheer if someone has a good routine.”

Erik and Jared began training at the Stanford collegiate gym because of its close distance to their home. From there, the brothers have worked hard to perform well each season, and both of them have made it onto an All-Star team — a group composed of the top five gymnasts at regional championships who represent the region at state championships.

“I was able to represent Northern California at regionals and I got second in the state,” Jared said. “I was pretty excited about that and it was a really good experience.”

Not all of their accomplishments, however, have necessarily been awards or medals. Like many other sports, gymnastics can help encourage a strong work ethic.

“I feel like I’ve improved myself as a person — I’ve become a hard worker and that has helped me with my other commitments,” Erik said.

Despite the positive experiences that Erik and Jared have had, a rewarding sport is not without its challenges. Gymnastics is not an easy activity to just pick up or participate in as an extracurricular. It demands extensive time commitments, and the Noyman brothers typically practice for three to four hours a day, six days a week.

“You go home, have a 10 minute break, and then just go straight to work,” Erik said. “You can’t slack off at all. And then oftentimes you have to stay up late at night because of gym, doing the work that you didn’t finish before, so it’s definitely a commitment.”

Another challenge the brothers face is the stigma that comes with being a male gymnast. According to Erik, many people who show interest in his gymnastics career tend to visualize the sport as nothing more than leotards and flips. While both Erik and Jared do wear leotards during competition and can do flips, they also want people to understand the commitment and hard work that go into the sport.

Injuries, although common among gymnasts, usually prove to be setbacks as well. Erik has learned to deal with them though, as he has had to handle injuries for the past couple of years. Often, these injuries have left him unable to practice certain skills or compete in tournaments.

“Everyone at one time or another is going to get injured, but I guess it’s something you have to deal with and just push forward,” Erik said. “I feel like I’ve improved a lot even though it’s been on-and-off in that I’ve learned how to rebound from major injuries.”

In the future, the Noymans both hope to continue their gymnastics careers in college and beyond. The idea of competing in college pushes them to continue working hard, keeping in mind that one day they could represent not only a team, but also a school.

“Compete gymnastics — that’s the goal for me,” Erik said. “I feel like I’ve improved a lot even though it’s been on-and-off in that I’ve learned how to rebound from major injuries.”

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“Collegiate gymnastics — that’s the goal for me,” Erik said. v
Standing at the top of a flight of stairs, Palo Alto High School freshman Phela Durosimi looks down and considers his next trick. He takes a deep breath, his grip tightening on the handlebars of his scooter, and takes off, his sneakers pushing off the ground. Then he is in the air flying over the stairs while twisting his scooter beneath him in one swift motion before landing, wheels down on the hard cement once more.

At only 14, Durosimi demonstrates the same kind of skill and energy as many pro scooter riders. This raw talent is what has allowed him to make a name for himself in the world of scootering, catching the eye of a company called Aztek Scooters, which decided to sponsor him.

To Durosimi, however, scootering means more than sponsorships and recognition. Through the sport, he was able to find a group of scooter riders that he connected with, creating friendships that surpassed a shared passion for scootering.

**His start to scootering:**

When Durosimi was eight years old, Durosimi was gifted his first scooter for Christmas. Since then, he has immersed himself in scootering, constantly trying out new tricks and expanding on his skill set.

"A lot of times I’ll be messing around doing old tricks, or I’ll see a certain obstacle and think of something I want to do on it, thinking I can do this and change that," Durosimi says.

At the time, he had no idea that the sport would be the spark for his future friendships and successes over the course of the next six years.

Durosimi is seen by many as an exceptional and hard-working scooter rider. Reed Schulman, a Paly freshman and fellow scooter rider, thinks Durosimi’s skills are a product of both raw talent and hard work.

Durosimi is one of the best riders of his age — he is riding at the same level of some of the guys on our team who are 24 years old," Marconi says. "This is what really was amazing about him. We saw a lot of potential in him, and he’s only getting better."

Besides being sponsored, Durosimi is also part of a scooter-riding crew called the Bling Boys, the members of which he met in Menlo Park. He created it with Alex Washburn, a Paly junior, and his brother Lucas Washburn, a Brown University student and Paly alumnus.

Although the majority of the Bling Boys do not scooter together anymore, scootering has helped form Durosimi’s current friendships in high school.

"I still remember absolutely losing my mind watching Phela do some of the tricks he did — he was definitely at some point better than a great portion of professional scooter riders," Alex Washburn says.

Durosimi has had a raw talent for scootering since he started, but with the extra stresses of high school, it has become hard for him to find time to do it. Yet, his undying creativity, fearlessness and hard work is what has gotten him so far in the world of scootering.

"He has really become more of an inspiration to the younger generation in the sport," Schulman says.

To Durosimi, however, scootering has been, and always will be, a way for him to simply let go, relax and just have fun.

"Scootering is just fun, it is a way for me to gather all my energy and do something I like," Durosimi says. "It is really relaxing."

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**Phela is the future**

"A-1 trick selection." "Great style." "Take your notes kids." "Real scootering."

"Phela is the future." These are some of the many comments on a video Aztek Scooters posted in December 2018. The video features Durosimi doing daring tricks off of obstacles like stairs and railings, his scooter consisting of Aztek Scooters parts.

Dom Marconi, the owner of Aztek Scooters, explains what he believes makes Durosimi so exceptional.

"Phela is one of the best riders of his age — he is riding at the same level of some of the guys on our team who are 24 years old," Marconi says. "This is what really was amazing about him. We saw a lot of potential in him, and he’s only getting better."

"Phela is the future of scootering," junior Alex Washburn says. 

"I think that what makes him so good is his creativity in addition to the many hours that he has spent on his scooter," Schulman says.

Durosimi is a master at thinking creatively — new tricks come naturally to him.

"It’s like improvising," Durosimi says. "It’s not like you have to do something [specific], you can just do whatever you want."

"Phela is the future of scootering," junior Alex Washburn says.

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THE FUTURE OF SCOOTERING

On his scooter," freshman Reed Schulman says.
A REFLECTION ON THE TRENDS OF THE 2010s

For the past 10 years, the students of Palo Alto High School have experienced trends that came with the decade that defined their childhood. From elementary school wrists stacked with Silly Bandz to Hydroflasks adorned with friendship bracelets, a lot has changed throughout the 2010s. On the eve of a new decade, Verde decided to take a trip down memory lane and revisit some of the biggest trends in television, music and fashion that emerged between 2010 and today.

Show-stoppers

Almost every child growing up in the 2010s remembers waking up early on a Saturday morning to watch the most popular TV shows. Nickelodeon’s “Spongebob Squarepants” captivated us with the adventures of a sponge and his starfish best friend. “Phineas and Ferb,” the Disney Channel favorite, made their fans want a platypus as a pet and, more importantly, 104 days of summer vacation.

Other Nickelodeon series “iCarly,” “Victorious” and “Big Time Rush,” as well as the Disney Channel classic “Hannah Montana,” “Wizards of Waverly Place” and “The Suite Life on Deck” provided us with high expectations for love, friendship and fun in our teenage years. These children’s TV shows have also helped break boundaries for equal representation in media. For example, “Steven Universe” on Cartoon Network is about a young boy who lives with strong female superheroes. The program shows queer- ness, female empowerment and journeys of self-love. It is encouraging that more television programs and producers are using their influence on children in a positive way by educating them on topics that were not addressed progressively in earlier popular television shows for kids.

Although television was a huge part of many Paly students’ childhoods, younger generations are not as invested in children’s show networks like Disney Channel and Nickelodeon. Social media apps, such as YouTube and Instagram, provide today’s youth with a plethora of entertainment for free, while online streaming video services like Netflix and Hulu have dominated the Saturday movie nights for American families, decreasing cable ownership.

According to Business Insider, a spike in cable ownership was seen in 2012 but has been declining since. Recently, Disney has launched their own streaming video service called Disney+, further hinting at the movement away from cable TV.

It’s no question that 2010s TV has a special place in Generation Z’s heart, but the recent decline of cable membership has reduced the role of television in younger generations’ lives.

Memory lane music

From DJ Snake and Lil Jon’s chaotic “Turn Down for What” to Adele’s melodicrapattolling of the Deep,” the music videos of the 2010s reflect the decade’s emphasis on visuals associated with music.

Some of the most iconic songs of the 2010s, such as “Stereo Hearts” by Gym Class Heroes and “Teenage Dream” by Katy Perry, have been the soundtrack of our childhood. We have seen a drastic change in the range of music this decade, from Bruno Mars’s heart-felt “Just The Way You Are” to Robin Thicke and T.I.’s raunchy “Blurred Lines,” which both hit number one on the Billboard Hot 100 about three years apart.

Although 2010s also saw a rise in digital streaming services — most notably, Spotify, Apple Music and Soundcloud. Music, which used to be purchased in stores, is now paid for as a whole through the streaming service the consumer has selected.

These services have introduced the ability for individuals to venture into unfamiliar genres of music without having to pay for each song. Spotify even suggests specific playlists that correspond to a genre or mood, eliminating much of the time and effort it took to create playlists before. For example, the “At & Be” playlist consists of the most popular rhythm and blues songs today, whereas the “Down in the Dumps” playlist contains strictly sad songs.

The streaming services’ ability to offer new music to consumers at the click of a button has decreased the demand for the radio DJ, who did the job for years before.

With unlimited song selection, users no longer have to put up with the regularity of Top 40 radio music stations: many former radio listeners are tired of the same songs.

“I don’t listen to the radio because I got a Spotify [Premium] membership,” Palo Alto High School junior Jace Purcell said. “I think radio music quality has declined over the years.”

The music industry has evolved with technology’s integration into our lives. Car rides with the radio blaring are fading to fond memories while our consumption of music through streaming services creates new ones.

Trend throwbacks

The early 2010s had the mall as the centerpiece of teen clothing trends, usually including Abercrombie & Fitch, Hollister, Forever 21 and H&M as the most popular brands. Now, teen trends have shifted to thrift stores where affordable, vintage-looking items that differ from mainstream corporate designs can be found.

The change in clothing trends seen in the 2010s has been drastic: teens went from feathers in their hair, patterned leggings and intentionally-ripped skinny jeans to scrunchies, Lululemon leggings and thrifted mom jeans.

The rise of the social media app TikTok has popularized many fashion trends such as e-boys, e-girls and VSCO girls, named after the photo editing app, VSCO. Although over-exaggerated, the fashion trends seen on TikTok have prompted schools to create their own Spirit Days associated with these trends. From Silly Bandz to Hydroflasks, the fashion trends of the 2010s have turned many household items into a point of cultural conversation.

Recently, we have seen teens boycotting fast fashion brands like Forever 21 for the unsustainability of their clothing. Sustainable fashion and “resurgence outfits” are in the spotlight now, but we have no idea what the next decade will bring in fashion.

High schools will never forget the hundreds of TV shows, music videos and clothes that made the 2010s such a memorable time to grow up in. As we head into the next decade, all we can say is “Good luck, Charlie.”

Text by KYLIE MIES and MILES BREEN
Art by MEYA GAO

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104 DAYS OF SUMMER VACATION Patricia (bottom right) and Ferb (top left) star in the show “Phineas and Ferb,” which aired on Disney Channel from 2007-2015.

PHOTOSTORE / GETTY IMAGES

FIDGET SPINNER
The fidget spinner was a toy that gained popularity from the satisfying way it spins.
OUR “CHEAP QUEEN” IS FINALLY CENTER STAGE

Ever since the release of her debut single “1950” in 2018, pop artist Mikaela Mullaney Straus, popularly known as King Princess, has continued to make a name for herself as a queer voice in the music industry leading up to the release of her debut album “Cheap Queen.”

Straus, a 20-year-old Brooklyn native who identifies as genderqueer and gay, grew up playing various instruments in a musically-engaged family. Beginning her career making music in her dad’s studio, Mission Sound, Straus was offered her first record deal at the age of 11.

While her relationship with music has been lifelong, Straus has only been pursuing music professionally since 2015. She launched her career on SoundCloud, a music platform where anyone can post their music publicly, and was able to build a following with the release of songs “Send Pix” and “Sunburn” in 2017. Soon after, Straus became the first artist to sign to established musician Mark Ronson’s label, Zelig records.

Straus found critical acclaims following the release of her debut single “1950,” a tender and beautiful song about rejected love in the eyes of a gay woman, in February of 2018. She wrote the song single “1950,” a tender and beautiful song about rejected love in the eyes of a gay woman, in February of 2018. She wrote the song “Prophet,” a fervorous and alluring song with a tantalizingly slow beat married to craving lyrics, altogether creating a potently seductive soundtrack.

The first track, “Tough On Myself,” is chokingly sorrowful. The tale of a failed relationship ripe with self-deprecation over a slow and vicious beat is perfect to sway to by oneself. Following “Useless Phrases,” a short and sweet taste of a song at a run time of 1:16, is the title track “Cheap Queen.”

“Cheap Queen,” which was released as a single in May of 2019, is subtle pop at its best. With slinky, tired-smile cheesiness, “Cheap Queen” feels like the end of a good night out. Straus covers strengths, shortcomings, good friends and the reality of her experience as a young queer person.

On “Ain’t Together,” Straus croons about the difficulty of a causal relationship, and the song as a whole feels like one big sad smile. “Prophet” is a fervorous and alluring song with a tantalizingly slow beat married to craving lyrics, altogether creating a potently seductive soundtrack.

The most popular track on the album, “Hit the Back,” is, as Straus states in a tweet, “the anthem for bottoms everywhere.” “Hit the Back” stands out as one of the higher energy tracks on the album. It is a bumping, playful song about submission and control with a sprinkle of Straus’s signature self-doubt.

Capping off the album is “If You Think It’s Love,” a raw reflection on relationships, power dynamics and change. It is stripped of frills and presents a simple melancholy end.

While broadly homogenous as an album, each song is still distinctly its own. “Cheap Queen” is versatile and has songs for breakups, makeups, hookups, sad days, great days and all the days in between: it is an account of life as a young queer person, with Straus’s experience acting as validation for so many others.
**ESCAPE ROOMS: A TEST OF TEAMWORK**

The Steady rhythm of the clock breaks the silence of the room, as people scramble around, turning over every piece of furniture in an effort to find clues. They have just one hour to solve all the puzzles laid out before them in order to escape the Mad Hatter’s tea party. Succeed, and they will be allowed to leave. Fail, and they will be stuck at his party forever.

“Escape the Mad Hatter” is created by Ryptic Room Escape, a company which creates games and team-building exercises. This experience is Ryptic’s innovative take on the newest type of puzzle game: the escape room. Locked in a room with various clues on how to open the door, participants are faced with real-life physical and mental challenges. They then have to decipher the clues and solve puzzles to find their way out of the room before their time limit expires. Escape rooms being a unique adventure to eager audiences.

A legacy of unlocking

Escape rooms are inspired by adventure video games in which players maneuver a space by interacting with objects and solving puzzles. According to the Digital Game Museum, the original games were entirely text based, and they used basic commands in order to solve complex adventures and puzzles. With the advent of computer graphics, studios like Lucasarts and Sierra popularized the adventure game genre, transforming it from typing to pointing and clicking.

As the genre grew in popularity, so did the push to have a real-life version of these adventure games. According to Lock Academy, in 2007, the Japanese company SCRAP introduced a live escape room, finally bringing the genre beyond the screen. These puzzle games exploded in popularity when the first escape room chain, Hint Hunt, opened in Hungary. Their popularity continued to rise to escape when rooms established themselves across Europe, Canada and the United States by 2013.

With escape rooms popping up locally, many students at Palo Alto High School have tried to channel their inner Houdini and break out of various different labs, cells, and cages. Junior Kimi Lillios went on a team bonding trip with her volleyball team to an Egyptian-themed room during a tournament in 2018.

“I loved the escape room,” Lillios said in a text. “I’ve grown up loving various puzzles and problems that incite critical thinking so the escape room was the perfect manifestation of these games on a larger scale.”

In addition to creating a bond between teammates, the heat-of-the-moment adrenaline combined with spontaneous cooperation builds team-work skills. An experience like this is able to connect people who may not have been initially familiar with each other in a fun and low-stakes setting.

Escape rooms require people to cooperate with other participants by being on the same page and sharing clues. This can lead to conflicts, as people jockey to solve the puzzles first and be the “leader” of the escaping group. Arguments between participants make both the escape itself and future collaboration more difficult.

**Ryptic’s fixes**

“Escape the Mad Hatter,” located at 1931 Old Middlefield Way in Mountain View, is not a conventional escape room: instead of grouping all the participants together, four participating groups rotate between four different rooms every five minutes. If a team is able to solve all four rooms, they unlock the final puzzle. If the final puzzle is solved, the group manages to escape the Mad Hatter. While the teams go at it, the game master walks around, providing the occasional hint to those who are struggling. Each room is self-contained, requiring nothing from other rooms to solve each room’s respective puzzle. It is not recommended for beginners, with a completion rate of only 25%, according to Ryptic.

This system was an interesting way to mix up the common escape room experience, and it definitely added a unique twist. The tight time limit in each room meant that there was no time to waste bickering, forcing us to work quickly and leave the extra comments for later. The room switching also meant that we had to be able to quickly switch gears to focus on new settings and different challenges. Any time spent thinking about previous rooms would eat into the five minutes in the next.

Despite this, the room rotation was not without flaws. Switching meant we had to frantically examine each new room to try to make the most out of our time. Because of that, we ended up missing many clues.

This also meant that once we were behind in clue-solving, it was difficult to make up for lost time and solve what we needed to. The most problematic part of the design was the possibility that we couldn’t solve the first room. If a team didn’t solve the first room in their rotation, their last fifteen minutes would be spent rotating through the three final rooms without actually being able to escape. Despite this, we still thoroughly enjoyed ourselves and managed to solve the other three rooms.

“Escape the Mad Hatter” is an ambitious take on a thrilling form of entertainment that is still developing, but it stays true to the principles that make escape rooms so popular. With intricate room designs and plenty of puzzles combined with a fresh take on the method to escape, it makes for an entertaining hour. And although we’re still technically stuck at the Mad Hatter’s tea party, we would definitely recommend it for escape room enthusiasts and newcomers alike.
Though eateries in Palo Alto already represent a rich mix of international cultures, authentic Spanish cuisine has only recently made a breakthrough on the local food scene this October. At Town & Country Village, Telefèric Barcelona is the newest addition to the diverse lineup of available restaurants. Run by siblings Xavi and Maria Padrosa, the business has drawn diners from all over the Bay Area after its launch on Oct. 8 by remaining true to its unique Catalan origins.

The small family business began under a different name 25 years ago in Sant Cugat, Spain. A toy cable car, or telefèric in Catalan, going from one side to the other at this first restaurant led to regular customers calling it the telefèric restaurant. The name has since stuck and all five locations across Spain and the United States are called Telefèric Barcelona. As the winter season comes into full swing in Palo Alto, Spanish music, warm lights and lively diners welcome guests to experience an authentic immersion in Catalan culture. Inside the restaurant are good-natured waiters who approach with an “Hola” to every guest, switching fluidly between English and Spanish. Closely mimicking Spanish nightlife, Telefèric Barcelona remains busy late into the night and takes reservations until 10 p.m. Though crowds peaked at around 7 p.m. on the Friday night of our visit, the restaurant hosts a fair amount of customers throughout its lunch and dinner hours.

After their meal, guests are free to explore the small Spanish market on the side of the restaurant, where they can purchase goods such as Spanish cookbooks, olives and garnaches.

In an extra effort to stay true to authentic Catalan culture, the Palo Alto site also plans to host Flamenco Nights beginning around January with professional dancers from Caminos Flamencos — authentic Spanish performers who have already proved popular at the Walnut Creek location.

“My dream was always to make a chain in the United States of authentic Spanish food,” Padrosa says. To help spread Spanish culture as far as possible, the menu at Telefèric Barcelona is set to change every three to four weeks as part of an effort to keep the restaurant dynamic.

According to Cabezas, the three most important things that characterize Spanish food are local ingredients, taste and flavor, hence, these are the restaurant’s core values in serving its patrons. Telefèric Barcelona has proven its success in serving its patrons.

“Taste and flavor, yet Telefèric Barcelona easily opens a window for its customers into an authentic Catalan lifestyle. I try to share the message of how Spaniards like to eat when [they’re] not at home,” Oscar Cabezas, executive chef of Telefèric Barcelona, says.

Telefèric Barcelona has since stuck and all five locations across Spain and the United States, the Padrosa family has proven its success in serving its patrons. The taste of garlic is not at all overpowering and the combined flavors create a delightful dish which has proved popular among customers.

Churros con Chocolate ($8)

This straightforward dessert is served warm with a small bowl of chocolate sauce and mint leaves. A crispy exterior hides soft dough on the inside and the churros are neither overwhelmingly large nor sweet.

La Burrata ($12)

This salad is made with arugula, oranges, sun-dried tomatoes and fips with a mound of soft burrata cheese. The sweet and savory dish is topped with balsamic vinegar and crushed pistachios for added texture, with fig jam on the bottom layer.

Patatas Bravas ($9)

Crispy potatoes are served in a yellow ceramic bowl and covered in a delicious bis-cayenne sauce with aioli. The taste of garlic is not overpowering and the combined flavors create a delightful dish which has proved popular among customers.

PINTXOS (RIGHT)

PINTXOS (RIGHT) The Padrosa family was among the first to serve these small-bite skewers in Barcelona nearly 25 years ago. Typically made with meat, cheese or vegetables, pintxos are eaten as finger foods at Spanish restaurants. Photo by Zoë Wong-VanHaren

A TASTE OF SPAIN (BOTTOM LEFT) In El Merkat, Telefèric Barcelona invites customers to experience the atmosphere of a Spanish market. The space is complete with authentic recipe books, Catalan pottery and a large selection of wines. Photo by Zoë Wong-VanHaren

PAIN DE VÉRTEBRA (TOP) This well-known Spanish dish is fresh and not too hot with a crispy exterior and a warm with a small bowl of chocolate sauce and mint leaves. A crispy exterior hides soft dough on the inside and the churros are neither overwhelmingly large nor sweet.

CULTURAL CONNOISSEUR Xavi Padro- sa, co-owner of Telefèric Barcelona, is passionate about sharing Barcelona’s culture. “My dream was always to make a chain in the United States of authentic Spanish food,” Padrosa says. Photo by Zoë Wong-VanHaren
HARLEM-BASED artist Jordan Casteel’s first solo show at the Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Center for Visual Arts at Stanford University illustrates her development through four years of her art career, from 2013 to 2017. The exhibit is free to attend and is open until Feb. 2, 2020. The art is arranged in chronological order, showing her evolution from painting important figures in her own life to strangers.

Casteel is an artist and assistant professor at Rutgers University. She paints large-scale, figurative realism portraits of everyday scenes from her community.

Entering the exhibition at the Cantor Arts Center, Casteel’s first portraits greet the viewer. Continuing through her paintings, the subjects’ eyes stare back, calling the viewer toward them.

“I think that the thing that really grabs you in these paintings is the way that these viewers look back at you,” said Akrsa Pitchman-Alexander, Cantor Arts Center assistant curator of American art.

Breaking stereotypes

Even Casteel’s choice of subjects defies stereotypes. Each of her series focuses on people not usually featured in fine art, but become compelling subjects. Her earlier collections, “Visible Man” and “Brothers,” portray black men who Casteel had close relationships with, including family members and friends.

They render these men through Casteel’s eyes, showing a humanity that is often lost to the pervasive racism and toxic masculinity of the outside world.

“The intent of the paintings from my early works is to expose my vision of black men as a sister, daughter, friend and lover,” Casteel said in an interview with the Cantor Arts Center in June.

“That perspective is one full of empathy and love. I see the humanity and, in turn, I want audiences to engage with them as fathers, sons, brothers, cousins — as individuals with their own unique stories to share.”

Casteel focuses on interpreting her own experiences and her own reality, which is appreciated by people attending the show at the Cantor Arts Center.

“I think her work is very powerful,” exhibit attendee Liz Jessee said. “It’s really a reflection of a time and a place.”

Community engagement

Casteel’s more recent paintings depict members of her society that she sees throughout her day, not only those she has a connection to.

“Nights in Harlem,” her 2017 series, details the area at night, while other subjects include women, cityscapes and local business owners.

To paint these portraits, Casteel approaches strangers on the street, asks to take their photo and bases her art on those photos.

“We felt her message about emphasizing stopping and getting to know folks around you,” Alexander said.

“Really paying attention to the importance of everyday life and the people that you will encounter in everyday life, and how we often take those encounters for granted.”

Casteel’s approach to engaging with her neighbors is something that all viewers can take from the exhibition and incorporate into their own lives.

“I could go into a store and say ‘Well, hello, I live here. Do you live here?’” Rocky Blumhagen, a Stanford Fellowship Program student, said. “I think that’s really valuable that anybody can take away. Are you really seeing the people in your community? Do you really see them?”}

Photos by JASMINE VENET

A GAZE RETURNED

Jordan Casteel’s portraits are rough, with each brush stroke prominently featured when viewed up close. The unnatural colors that Casteel sometimes chooses to paint her subjects in add to the striking effect of her paintings. Casteel’s portraits are designed to show her subjects’ humanity, incorporating small elements to accentuate their personalities. “She reflects her time and place; it’s very powerful,” said Liz Jessee, an attendee at the exhibition on Nov. 7. “It shows the good in people, not the stereotype.”

Text by SASHA POOR

ENCOURAGING CONNECTION TO COMMUNITY

RETURNING THE GAZE

I see the humanity and, in turn, I want audiences to engage with them ... as individuals with their own unique stories to share.”

— JORDAN CASTEEL, artist

DECEMBER 2019

A PALY SOPHOMORE reflects on experiences with racial stereotyping and achievement. Art by Amy Zhang. Photo by Jay Renaker
When people drink tea I assume they are more shy.
— Trisha Razdan, Junior

Coffee people are definitely a lot more successful and goal-oriented than tea people.
— Thomas McGall, Junior

Bags or Beans?

Comparing the SF Tea and Coffee Festivals

Text by Audrey Kernick and Tim Hung

One city, two different conventions, two different drinks and two different demographics. The San Francisco International Tea Festival and the San Francisco International Coffee Festival both provided a space for people to come together, sample different products and rejoice in their respective drinks.

When we think about the people who drink tea and the people who drink coffee, usually there is a notion of each. Tea drinkers are stereotyped as meek, introverted individuals who prefer to live tamely, more subtle. On the other hand, coffee drinkers are perceived as loud, opinionated extroverts who are assertive and confident. Palo Alto High School junior Trisha Razdan, an avid coffee drinker, explained that tea drinking carries a connotation.

“My opinion is that tea is a much more timid drink than coffee,” Razdan said. “When people drink tea I assume they’re more shy.”

Thomas McGall, another junior, perceives coffee drinkers as more successful than tea drinkers.

“Coffee people are definitely a lot more successful and goal-oriented than tea people,” McGall said.

Amelia Gibbs, a senior, sees the value in both.

“Tea and coffee serve the same purpose, and the people that consume tea and coffee are both trying to get the same thing,” she said.

Because of these personas, the San Francisco Tea Festival and the San Francisco International Coffee Festival are more than your average vendor market: the events turn stereotypes of beverage drinkers on their heads.

The tea festival, which was held at the Palace of Fine Arts, took place on Oct. 19 and 20 and has been held annually since 2011. The small exposition hall was lined with vendor booths, each offering samples of their own products, both hot and cold.

The chatter reverberating through the space was accompanied by soft, mellow music or, at times, no music at all.

It gave the festival a mild, peaceful feel that contradicted the openness and enthusiastic conversation swirling around every booth.

The crowd was composed of just as many millennials as baby boomers. The tea festival was a riveting congregation of many different people who all enjoy the same beverage.

Noah Bleich, co-creator of the TeaBook, explained that tea is a embodiment of this diversity.

“All tea comes from the same plant: Camellia sinensis,” Bleich said. “So black, green, oolong, you name it — they all come from the same species. The different varieties of tea are the result of the plant being grown in different regions and environments, and processed using different methods. So just as how we are distinguishable or stereotyped by where we’re from and how we are brought up, we have to remember that, despite our differences, we all come from the same species — just like tea.”

When asked about the tea versus coffee debate, Bleich took a stance similar to Razdan’s.

“Look at their marketing, just Google coffee T-shirts, it’s always ‘Don’t talk to me until I’m angry,’ right?” he said. “They’re very aggressive and violent. And tea is like, ‘Life is beautiful, stay calm. It’s all good.’”

The coffee festival, held in the Fort Mason festival pavilion from Nov. 1 through Nov. 2, was close to a sensory overload. Led Zeppelin boomed through speakers and coffee beans roasted their way into nostrils.

The coffee festival, held in a much bigger venue, offered more vendors and attracted a larger crowd. The environment of the festival certainly aligned with our stereotypes of coffee drinkers — boisterous, aggressive and loud.

Our preconceptions about coffee drinkers had led us to expect a noticeably younger and more male demographic at the coffee festival than at the tea festival. Instead, the crowd was made up of people of all ages and genders, and of all descents, too. This raised the question: had the hosts of both festivals forced the same stereotypes that we did?

Buuff Magazine, owner of Lady Falcon Coffee Club, seemed to fuel the suspicion. When asked about her opinion on those caffeinated drinks is better, the owner defied our expectations of the headstrong and opinionated coffee drinker by taking an understanding stance.

“I don’t compare the two,” she said. “Each has their reasons for being so popular.”

Our assumptions of what behaviors and personalities correlate to tea and coffee are based off of a mixture of stereotypes and truth, and navigating that can be tricky. The festivals served as a seating — and delicious — reality check for us, and a welcome reminder that not everything is what it seems.

“I think there’s a place for both tea and coffee in everyone’s lives,” said Gibbs.

Tea Cups

The San Francisco International Tea Festival provides porcelain tasting cups branded with their logo. Photo by Audrey Kernick

Jing Si Tea Vendors of the family-owned shop showcase their newest flavor, Jasmine Rose Tea. Photo by Timothy Hung

Coffee Canvas

An artist paints portraits with crushed coffee beans. Photo by Timothy Hung

Reveille Coffee San Francisco International Coffee Festival-goers wait in line to sample the California-based company’s latest products. Photo by Audrey Kernick

Maitake Mushroom San Francisco International Tea Festival attendees watch vendors make tea infused with the medicinal mushroom. Photo by Audrey Kernick

Kenyan Purple Tea A vendor brews an exotic tea in front of an audience. Photo by Timothy Hung

Caffeine Calls A line forms in front of a booth as they finish the next batch. Photo by Audrey Kernick
DC's newest comic book movie is dead serious—and about a clown. The release of director Todd Phillips' "Joker" has thrust one of the most iconic villains of all time into a world of cutthroat controversy and polarizing critical reception almost as manic as the Joker's own mind.

Set in a pre-Batman Gotham City choked by crime and corruption, "Joker" tells the story of Arthur Fleck—played by Joaquin Phoenix—as a professional clown and aspiring comedian who suffers from psychological and hallucinations: Fleck longs for attention and acceptance, but is continually shunned and abused by those around him.

As vicious muggings, budget cuts to mental health services and public humiliations cause Fleck to feel more and more victimized by society, he begins to lose faith in humanity—fatefully giving rise to Arthur's new identity as the Joker. Nihilistic, murderous and feral, this version of the Clown Prince of Crime is the grinder and mad, broken one yet to play on the big screen.

On Oct. 25, 2019, "Joker" became the highest-grossing R-rated film of all time, thanks to the intriguing reversal of critical reception and fireworks of media outrage that erupted not long after its release.

The film debuted at the Venice Film Festival on Aug. 28 where it took home the prestigious Golden Lion Award for Best Film, generating a great deal of buzz around the movie. Combined with brilliant advertising campaigns and a wave of highly positive reception from the public (some critics who saw a pre-release exclusive showing even called it a "perfect" movie), "Joker" seemed too good to be true.

And, as it turns out, this infant phase of "Joker" was simply the calm before the storm.

As captivated Joker fans and critics swarmed to theaters on Oct. 4 for the movie's general audience debut, excitement turned into appallment, and a rush of negative reviews polymersed its reception almost as manic as the Joker's own mind.

Throughout its box office performance, "Joker" stood above the majority of the cinematic. The movie repeatedly uses low-angle closeups and manipula- tions of color temperature, which foreground Fleck's vulnerability in an attempt to evoke sympathy for the serial killer clown.

This intention to draw audiences into rooting for Fleck has led to contro- versy from individuals claiming the film glorifies extremism groups and encour- ages violence as a way to relieve negative emotions. Many also condemn "Joker" for stigmatizing mental illness and per- petuating the stereotype that those who suffer from such conditions are deranged and dangerous. The United States Army has even issued warnings to be on the lookout for "vicid violence" at screenings.

While "Joker" may not have been the "perfect" film some made it out to be, it does solidify one thing: the Joker's role as a reliable mirror to society.

Every new generation has brought about a new actor who redefine the iconic DC villain: Cesar Romero in the 60s, Jack Nicholson in the 80s, Heath Ledger in 2008 and now Phoenix in 2019. While the amount of social commentary in each film varies—with none more packed than 2019's "Joker"—each performance reflects the social and political settings of their respective eras.

Cesar Romero's performance in the classic television show "Batman," which ran from 1966-1968, emphasized camp buffoonery and pop-art. The show produced our merriest Joker to date—a product of a mainstream entertainment industry reluctant to face the harsh realities of the Vietnam War and a television industry dominated with a drug fueled, hippie counter-culture for the American youth.

Jack Nicholson's Joker in the 1989 film "Batman" emerged from the acid vat of Reagan-era materialism. Unlike the subsequent nihilistic, money-burn- ing iterations of the character, Nicholson's Joker is a highly polished and scathing look at its audience. His version was more refined and refined, but just as artful is Phillips' control of the cinematics.

The similarities don't end there. Beyond political issues, the similarities don't end there. Beyond political issues, the similarities don't end there. Phillips' character is on the rise. The film is a reflection of Bush-era attempts to grapple with terrorism.

While "The Dark Knight" is about a city being torn apart, "Joker" is about a man being torn apart. Interestingly, this narrowing of scope is accompanied by a broadening of societal commentary.

Many of the Jokers who came before Fleck snapped into madness after just "one bad day," exemplified in a brilliant moment written by Alan Moore in the 1988 comic book "Batman: The Killing Joke."

However, Phillips' reimagining of the character's origin story depicts Fleck's transformation as a culmination of the gradual degenerative effects of living in a toxic society.

Alluding to Hillary Clinton's 2016 presidential campaign, which she la- beled "grubby," "Joker" contains a scene in which Trump's supporters who donned "deplorables"—T-shirts celebrating the mori- lor, the Gothamites put on clown masks. The similarities don't end there. Phillips' character is on the rise. The film is a reflection of Bush-era attempts to grapple with terrorism.

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The Black Savior of Fashion

Pyer Moss is Rocking the Fashion World and Beyond

These are 13 unarmed black men killed by police brutality, each of their names listed on the "They Have Names" piece by Brooklyn-based clothing label Pyer Moss. According to an article published by Complex, Kerby Jean-Raymond, founder and creative director of Pyer Moss, created the shirts with the intention of conveying his opinion on the matter.

Pyer Moss has made its mark in the fashion community as the brand that is reclaiming black history and its impact on American culture.

In a community of activism and expression, Pyer Moss offers itself as an example for young artists. Palo Alto High School junior Amanda McVey is an example of their impact, having found Pyer Moss through online subscriptions and social media. McVey soon became intrigued and started researching Jean-Raymond’s work with Pyer Moss.

Under the layers

In this past New York Fashion Week, Pyer Moss revealed its final collection, "Sister." The show told the story of Sister Rosetta Tharpe, a queer black woman who invented the legendary music genre of rock and roll. Through Tharpe, Jean-Raymond strove to portray the importance of black women to American culture.

"What I aim to do is to make disenfranchised people, black people, and minorities and women, know and understand how important they are to this thing called America right now," Jean-Raymond said in an interview with the Associated Press.

Jean-Raymond worked with artist Richard Phillips, an exonerated black man who spent 45 years in prison due to a wrongful conviction. In the prison cell, Phillips made photorealistic landscapes and portraits that are now featured in the "Sister" collection.

Outlines bearing the semblance of a guitar, black and white tabs depicting piano keys and allusions to Phillips’ artwork were only a few of the motifs seen throughout the show.

Pyer Moss uses the runway as a performance that draws the viewer past just simple fabrics and brings them into the story. The "Sister" collection began with an ensemble of band members accompanied by singer and record producer Brent Faiyaz. The musical number was followed by author and speaker Casey Gerald, who spoke about the 400th anniversary of the first slaves arriving in North America. The runway concluded with a tribute to both Tharpe and guitar legend Jimi Hendrix.

According to Jean-Raymond, this form of multi-dimensional show is rare within the fashion community.

"I look at this as an art project, and I think the success of it is bringing people closer to me rather than trying to assimilate into whatever else people are doing," Jean-Raymond told AFP.

Pyer Moss has not only made a statement among popular fashion brands, but it has also given a new inspiration to anyone piecing together an outfit.

"It’s the creative process of any level of fashion that makes it art," McVey says.

Fashion for Paly students

For many Paly students, fashion can offer an alternative form of self-expression. As high school coincides with the formative years of adolescence, teens yearn for a way to stand out and express themselves. For junior Marina Buendia, clothing serves as a connection to her inner self.

"I’ve gone through many stages of fashion, and throughout all those stages clothing has been a very personal thing for me," Buendia says.

Though many consider the runways filled with haute-couture and frivolous, indecipherable clothes to be the only example of fashion as an art, others would disagree. McVey has designed clothes ranging from runway pieces to simple school outfits. For her, fashion is an art no matter how and when one wears it.

"It’s the creative process of any level of fashion that makes it art," McVey says.

Michaela Seach, Paly junior and editor of Anthro, the school’s social activism magazine, finds that clothing has long been used as form of activism, whether purposeful or not.

"All art, including fashion, can help spread awareness," Seach says. "I also think that fashion can be used to break certain gender roles and stereotypes, especially for the LGBT community." Jean-Raymond has also worked with the LGBT community. In the 2019 Met Gala, Jean-Raymond took on the runway alongside queer actress and producer Lena Waithe, wearing matching Pyer Moss tuxedos with the writing "Black Drag Queens Invented Camp."

Using his own clothing as a form of activism on one of the most widely-watched fashion events of the year, Pyer Moss communicates to the LGBT community the importance of activism on the red carpet.

According to Seach, this unapologetic outward expression of both activism and identity can inspire curious teens.

"It [fashion] can allow you to experiment with what you're comfortable with the public seeing," Seach says. "You can try out these new identities, try out these different types of aesthetics and see if they really fit you as a person and if you're okay with people seeing that.

Stanford University Professor of Art Nancy Troy, says that clothing has been the patchwork of identity throughout history. Even prior to the creation of the fashion industry, clothing was a symbol of status. Who wore what clothes and the way they wore them was a signifier of class.

According to Troy, this concept of clothes as a form of representation is both modern and universal among all cultures and dimensions of identity.

"I think that clothes have a lot to do with the creation of gendered identities and ethnic identities, but many other kinds as well," Troy says. "We think about fashion there and I think clothes maybe are used to accentuate those aspects and the performance of identity."
ACNE SCARS: “CORRECTING” THE THE

Text by ALLISON CHANG

Acne was due to poor hygiene, and 80% believed that acne was due to poor diet. The negative stigma that has risen from these misconceptions has created a society where 67.9% of participants said they would be ashamed if they had acne and would similarly find someone with acne unattractive.

The lack of empathy from misinformed people has a damaging effect on the self-worth of those affected by acne. Whether we admit it or not, our self-confidence is greatly influenced by our complexion. I really struggled with acne last year and it really contributed to the increasing list of insecurities,” Palo Alto High School junior Mia Rotblatt says. “Even if my breakouts are not perceivable by others, I can’t help but to feel that others are staring at me.”

On days when my cystic acne was really noticeable, I would stand in front of the bathroom mirror for hours painfully popping every one of my pimples. I remember thinking I would rather it bleed and run the risk of scarring than have people stare at the mountain of breakouts on my forehead. The predisposed notion equating acne with dirt is not only scarring to my skin but also my confidence.

Acne is a skin condition that affects 50 million Americans every year. It is caused by blocked pores from the oils produced by the sebaceous glands from an imbalance of hormones. Cystic acne, on the other hand, is a more severe form of acne, one that I have grappled with for the last six years. Although acne is the most common skin condition in the United States, people continue to harbor misconceptions surrounding it. According to a 2016 study by the American Academy of Dermatology, 55.4% of participants believe that acne is due to poor hygiene, and 80% believed that acne was due to poor diet. The negative stigma that has arisen from these misconceptions has created a society where 67.9% of participants said they would be ashamed if they had acne and would similarly find someone with acne unattractive.

The fear of acne and the societal pressure to look flawless has translated into an enormous beauty industry. The $135 billion beauty industry is fueled by negative stigma against acne. Salespeople relentlessly pitch their products at me, knowing I am equally as desperate to try them.

When natural products did not work, I opted for stronger ones with harmful chemicals such as benzoyl peroxide, salicylic acid and sulfur. While experimenting with all these products, my skin had deteriorated, becoming dehydrated and thinning out from burns. I have inflamed my skin from lathering on creams that were too strong. I have cracked it from using too much acne spot corrector. I have been burdened with an onslaught of beauty products that have created more cracks than repairs.

Acne is just like any other skin condition. Like Michael Jackson’s vitiligo, acne should not be subjected to public scrutiny. We live in a society where the negative stigma surrounding acne is disturbingly prominent — those with acne are shamed because of a condition that is out of their control. We are pressured to scar our skin for short-term presentation instead of letting it naturally subside.

That classmate never anticipated the permanent damage her comment had on me, yet for six years, I continued to live by her definition of my stained, blotchy complexion. I hope to empower those with acne just as much as we do with those who are blessed with flawless skin.

We can’t change the acne on our skin, so we have no choice but to correct the way others perceive these blemishes. Only then, can we truly clear our misconceptions.
THE BAY NEEDS YOU
OUR REGION’S ECOSYSTEMS ARE DEPENDING ON US

Text by ROHIN GHOSH

The San Francisco Bay region is one of the richest natural environments in the world. Our ancient redwood forests, beautiful marshlands and rolling grass-covered hills harbor rare species seldom seen in such close proximity to cities as large as San Francisco or San Jose. And the blending of ecosystems supports a unique level of biodiversity. These ecosystems also hold immense cultural value to the indigenous people of the region and to those who use them to experience nature whether by fishing, birdwatching, hiking or just taking a run after work. People like me, who treasure the escape from the stressful grind of school or work, enjoy the peace and solitude our open spaces provide.

The fact that these natural spaces continue to survive to this day despite the numerous pressures placed upon them is thanks to the hard work and activism of concerned citizens who fought to protect their bay, their redwoods and their wildlife. Now, with the ecosystems of the Bay Area facing new threats to their survival, further public involvement in the conservation of the region’s natural environment is needed to ensure that our bay, our redwoods and our hills are thriving for decades to come. The 20th century’s rapid development saw much of the bay’s marshlands filled in to build houses or infrastructure. The old-growth coastal redwood forests were decimated by logging to supply wood to the growing cities of the West, and the fisheries of the bay and the Pacific Ocean were heavily depleted to feed the growing American population.

In the midst of the onslaught of the growing cities threatening the region’s natural environment is needed to ensure that our bay, our redwoods and our hills are thriving for decades to come. The 20th century’s rapid development saw much of the bay’s marshlands filled in to build houses or infrastructure. The old-growth coastal redwood forests were decimated by logging to supply wood to the growing cities of the West, and the fisheries of the bay and the Pacific Ocean were heavily depleted to feed the growing American population.

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It is up to the residents of the Bay Area to ensure that our open spaces remain protected and conserved for future generations.

THE PLACE FOR DEBATE

IT IS TIME TO ARGUE IN THE CLASSROOM

Text by OWEN LONGSTRETH

In our polarized world, where politics have been more divisive than ever before, debate is the cornerstone of order and progress. Yet students are not getting the practice they need at arguing face to face.

I know this firsthand from observing students who are not yet prepared to have a debate with me. Often, when I want to disagree or prove my point, I am met with anger and frustration from people who take my desire to argue personally.

This is an issue that stems from our English and Social Studies curricula not placing enough emphasis on verbal argumentation, and the solution is simple: including Lincoln-Douglas debate in the curricula.

Lincoln-Douglas debate, or LD, is a one-on-one debate format that originated from the 1858 Senatorial debates between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas, centering on broad philosophical questions about society.

This meta-thinking is, in many ways, similar to the type of analysis present in Social Studies and English classes.

Were debate not just an extra-curricular, but a central tenet of these classes, students would be able to comfortably assert their opinions in conversations with others — a skill crucial for the world that lies ahead.

I can attest from my own experience that participating in formal, structured debate has given me the confidence not to be afraid of argumentation and to embrace it instead.

An October and November Verde Magazine survey of 157 students across Palo Alto High School English classes showed that only 52% of students said that they have been taught to debate face-to-face with others in a classroom setting.

This leads to less-than-optimal confidence. When asked to rate their confidence arguing academically, with one being the worst and five being the best, only 30% rated themselves a four or five; this number should be much higher.

California Common Core Standards do not explicitly include debate, but they do mention argumentation in a more abstract way. "According to the Common Core standards, there is a section for "Speaking and Listening," and this is an area a teacher could have students practicing debate skills," Paly Social Studies teacher and Instructional Leader Jaclyn Edwards said.

While the possibility for more practice with LD certainly exists, the reality falls short of this, leading to students missing out on many skills.

"It [LD] teaches more soft skills," Paly Speech and Debate Director Jennie Savage said. "How to work as a team, how to win humbly, how to lose gracefully, how to get kicked around and not have your self-esteem suffer."

The reality is simple: Debate is under taught. And, students are missing out on the skills learned and the real-world benefit that they would get from learning it. LD delivers these skills, and because of that must be given a larger share of time in English and Social Studies classes.

*Source: The data presented here comes from a Verde Magazine survey of 157 Palo Alto High School students in nine randomly selected English classes (English 9A, English 10A, English 10B, English 10C, and Advanced Placement English Language). Verde conducted the survey from late October to early November through a digital form. Responses were anonymous and Verde provided students with the option to opt out for any reason.

Photo by ROHIN GHOSH

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In all honesty, it is kind of hard to not be happy around her.

In the future, if you ever meet a pair of twins, do us all a favor and please refrain from asking: “Can you read each other’s minds?”

Americans consume more sugar per capita than any other nation in the world.

Boba companies should not be promoting their products as healthy.

I’ve never heard anyone call sodas healthy.

What sweetness level would you like? With that simple question, boba buyers weigh a series of questions. What will taste good? Will other people think I am weird if I order too little sugar? Or too much? What about health? According to a Verde Magazine survey of 157 Palo students, the most common choice is 50% sweetness. However, this choice is not without its struggles. If you receive evidence that would answer many of the questions above: What amount of sugar is actually in each level of sweetness?

Boba Guys, located at Town and Country Village across the road from Palo, took a step in the right direction when they shared an estimated nutrition chart in a 2017 blog post. According to their chart, each additional 25% of sweetness contains 15 grams of added sugar. Assuming other boba locations have similar sugar contents, that would mean students who drink boba are adding 30 grams to their sugar intake through the liquid of their drink alone. The Food and Drug Administration recommends a daily limit of 50 grams of added sugar. Therefore, students who drink boba consume over half their recommended daily limit in just one cup, and that doesn’t even include the sugars in many boba drinks.

These numbers, however, are only estimates. Since food retailers are not required by the FDA to display nutritional information until they have 20 locations, very few boba places provide any nutritional information at all. When they do, nutrition facts sheets are often designed too small to be seen at first glance or don’t always display added sugar amounts.

The amount of sugar present in boba contributes to the largest health epidemic faced by Americans today: diabetes. According to the U.S. National Institute of Health, this diet of sugar in place of fiber has also contributed to the thinning of the gut mucosa layer, which can cause inflammation or infection. Americans consume more sugar per capita than any other nation in the world, according to the World Atlas. We have adjusted to this unusually sweet diet with dire consequences. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development states that Americans also spend more than any other nation on obesity healthcare. This problem could be allayed by explicit and upfront labeling of the sugar content in our food.

Despite the mountain of evidence explaining the adverse effects of excessive sugar consumption, many boba companies continue to peddle misleading claims in their advertisements. “I am not a boba expert,” said Ba Bay Area boba chain, wrote “Cheers to Your Health! Our boba tea is GOOD and ARE GOOD FOR YOU!” on their website in 2016. As evidence, the company highlighted their use of “all-natural” sugars. According to Harvard Health, there is little variation in the impact of different kinds of added sugars on health. Gram for gram, agave nectar, sugar, blood vessels and cane and high fructose corn syrup are about the same. Boba companies should not be promoting their products as healthy — I’ve never heard anyone call sodas healthy.

Americans need to know what they are consuming, or not consume it at all. People, especially growing teens, have a right to know what they are putting in their bodies. All boba places should provide clear labeling of the sugar content of their drinks.