A tribute to Kobe Bryant
Nueva community responds to the news of his death with their own memories of him and the legacy he has forged.

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SENIO RS PREPARE FOR 2020 ELECTION
California primaries mark the first time upperclassmen can vote

AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE
What politics means to Generation Z

Nueva parent writes New York Times bestseller
Abigail Wen’s Loveboat, Taipei dives into teenage life as an Asian American through diverse characters in an overseas culture program.

Get to know Lee Fertig, Nueva’s next Head of School
Moving from Belgium, Lee Fertig will assume Diane Rosenberg’s role as the Head of School starting in the 2020–2021 school year.

Escaping into the server
The Class of 2020 has bonded over the hit video game Minecraft through crafting structures collaboratively and venturing on journeys together, growing closer before graduation.

Stop complaining about school lunch
We should be grateful for the food in the Café—and acknowledge the privilege it represents.
BRIEFING

BY GRACE HOLMES, JORDAN MAK, TINA ZENG

14 exchange students from Japan will visit Nueva in March—the highest number since the program started.

DOUSHISHA KORI | Five of 75 students who travelled to Japan over February break visited Doshisha Kori, their partner school in Osaka, while the other students visited Doshisha Kokusai and Doshisha Iwakura. Photo provided by Tina Zeng.

226 classes are running this semester, with electives ranging from Shakespeare to Marine Ecology.

1,700 DUMPLINGS were wrapped, cooked, and devoured by ravenous upper school students during the week before Chinese New Year as part of the celebratory festivities at the San Mateo campus.

"The hardest part about having Mark as a teacher is having to pretend to other teachers that I like their classes as much as I like Mark's."

— an unverified submission for the Teachers’ Dead Kind Tweets video, as physics teacher Mark Hurwitz was traveling to New Hampshire with a group of physics students for the US Invitational Young Physicists Tournament (USIYP) at the time.

750 tubes of Go-GURT will have been consumed by the cast and crew of the musical over the course of rehearsals.

Vocal warmups throughout the season.

340 non-textbook titles have been added to the WRC since the beginning of the school year.

ALUM RETURNS TO PERFORM WITH KROKODILOES

Eton Shon '19 sings in Harvard's oldest all-male a cappella group

BY ANISHA KUMAR

In late January, the Upper School was treated to a performance by the Krokodiloes, the oldest all-male a cappella group at Harvard University. The audience erupted in applause when alumn Eton Shon '19 jogged onstage. Shon, who is a freshman tenor at Harvard, received a similar round of applause each time he stepped forward to sing a solo. The group sang a 30-minute set, even including Head of School Diane Rosenfeld in one of their songs.

The 12-person group visited San Francisco during their winter tour, which included destinations like New York City and Cancun. "Performing at Nueva was honestly an out-of-body experience," Shon said. "When I left, I often thought about whether Harvard was going to be my new home and Nueva would be left in nostalgia, but through performing, it felt like I had never left.

While at Nueva, Shon performed in multiple musicals and was part of the a cappella club Soundwaves. "I would not be with the Krokodiloes without the skills I developed at Nueva," he said.

According to Shon, joining the Krokodiloes early in his college career gave him a "close-knit community" of people with whom he shared a passion for music. It also helped him settle in to life as a college student.

"Following a routine in college can sometimes be difficult, but with the Krokodiloes' rehearsal schedule, following a routine was quite easy," Shon said.

His parents, sister, and grandparents also came to watch him perform.

"They were really impressed and happy," said Emy Yun '22, Shon's cousin, who attended with her parents.

Before their performance, the Krokodiloes held a workshop attended by 22 upper school students and five students from the middle school.

"[The Krokodiloes] had so much spirit and were very enthusiastic when they sang," said Aanika Gupta '22, who attended the workshop.

"They also helped us understand the college a cappella process and how to apply," said Cathy Doyle, who teaches vocal music at Nueva and attended the workshop, said the group led everyone through vocal warmups and taught them "Rumor Round," one of their songs.

"[The Krokodiloes] made sure to articulate the difference between competitive a cappella and their mission, which is to connect through music," Doyle said.

STANFORD EXCURSION EXPLORES CORAL REEFS THROUGH VR

Field trip to Stanford's Virtual Human Interaction Lab teaches students about environmental issues

BY SERENA SAXENA

On Jan. 22, eight students visited Stanford’s Virtual Human Interaction Lab to partake in the Environmental Education Research study and learn about coral reef destruction. The students toured the lab, tried many VR simulations where they observed the current conditions of the oceans, and learned about how VR could be used to explore the environment.

This experience started due to the high interest of Upper School science teacher Luke De, who collaborated with parents to form a new group called the Consortium, which aims to bring science-related opportunities to the school.

"What's happening right now is we're like, 'Oh, that's a cool idea but I don't really have time for that,' and it's going away," De said. "But somebody has time for it. Somebody’s passionate about it.

In this case, Emma Leschly '21 decided to make this visit to Stanford a reality after her father Jake Leschly, a member of the Consortium, told her about it.

"I kind of bumped [the idea] into this space where Emma picked it up, fixed it up, and ran with it," De said.

Stanford’s Virtual Human Interaction Lab hopes to use VR to incorporate it into education and spread awareness about environmental issues and increase emergency.

"It is one thing to read about [environmental issues] and see it in the news," Leschly said. "But it's a completely different thing to be in VR, where it really feels like you're in that reality.

"According to Emma, the visit inspired her and opened her up to "the possibilities" of VR.

Not only did students further their knowledge about coral reef destruction and ocean environmental issues, but many students were also surprised by the extent to which you could use VR to educate others.

"I always thought about [VR] for gaming purposes, but I never really thought about it as a way to immersively teach people about what's happening in the world," Leschly said.

The overarching highlight of the experience was getting to try the VR simulation as well as watching their peers struggle to balance while the ground disappeared from underneath them. "It could definitely pass as a hands-on experience and I practically went scuba diving, minus getting wet," said Chow.

THE RETURN OF THE TENOR | Eton Shon '19 returned to Nueva for a music-filled assembly with the Harvard Krokodiloes. "When I left, I often thought about whether Harvard was going to be my new home and Nueva would be left in nostalgia, but through performing, it felt like I had never left," Shon said.

PHOTO BY WILLOW TAYLOR CHANG YANG
EXPLORING THE MUSIC OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

This year’s programming focused on “The Sound of Revolution” and the deification of MLK

BY JORDAN MAK

Martin Luther King Jr. Day has historically been celebrated over one full day at the Upper School, but this year’s programming—focused on the music of the civil rights movement—spread out over two days. Discussions, workshops, and a screening of the 2009 documentary Soundtrack for a Revolution honored the life and legacy of the civil rights activist.

Prek-12 Equity & Social Justice Director Alegria Barclay chose Sound of Revolution as this year’s theme; she wanted to focus on music rather than another “really big, intense topic” like class, faith, and solidarity—the themes of last MLK Day programming.

“I wanted to do something that was lighter but still very meaty and powerful,” Barclay said. She also wanted a theme that would have broader applications beyond the civil rights movement and relate to current events. This year, she had seen an increasing movement to “reclaim MLK,” a campaign to explain the complexities of Rev. Dr. King as an individual beyond just the civil rights movement.

On Monday and Tuesday, students discussed this along with King’s role in the movement and the deification of his work and legacy.

“Martin Luther King was a pretty complex, really gifted individual and we’ve done him a disservice to reduce him to the figurehead,” Barclay said. “Because it’s so far removed for most of us historically, I think we forget just truly how revolutionary that movement was and how much all of us have to be grateful to those people and how much they gave—including their own lives—to make that happen.”

Beyond King’s legacy, Barclay also felt that the conversations provided a “reset” for the school.

“Because we are having a lot of difficult conversations about race and we’ve been talking about the n-word and racial microaggressions, I felt like it was important to remind people about what we’re talking about and the history we come from,” Barclay said. “At the same time, I think the more you live in a bubble—and I would say the Bay Area and Nueva is a bubble—the easier it is sometimes to reduce a lot of ideas to fairly simple ones rather than to seek out nuanced and complexity.”

The first two days were geared towards asking the community to be conscious of reducing ideas and try to see where things are “always more complicated than we think they are,” whereas Wednesday’s screening of Soundtrack for a Revolution tied in more to the theme of music.

“It felt like a good opportunity to not only get into music but also give this overview,” Barclay said, noting that some students felt they didn’t have the necessary background knowledge of the movement.

Thursday and Friday were dedicated to workshops that covered a wide range of topics including the history of “Amazing Grace” and protest music around the world.

The weeklong format for MLK Day programming was introduced this year after being suggested to Barclay as a way to integrate with the schedule and combat the fatigue students might feel after sitting for hours.

As for how celebrations of MLK Day will take place next year, Barclay said that the ultimate decision depends on a lot of other factors like the next upper school division head and their plans, but that she wants more student involvement regardless.

“I would like to collaborate more with students next year and have them be more responsible for part of it,” Barclay said. “In a sense, I want to put myself out of a job. I want to move it along so that eventually students are owning it more than I.”

BROTHERS TAKE HOME FIRST, SECOND AT CHESS COMPETITION

BY BAYAN SHIMIZU

On Jan. 12, brothers Steven Hwang ‘22 and Daniel Hwang ‘21 participated in the 2020 U.S. Junior Congress, a national youth chess competition, winning first and second place in their respective brackets.

The Hwangs also won the National Under 20 Top School Title for Nueva, bringing a total of three trophies for themselves and the school. This marks the fifth trophy won for Nueva by the team since its founding in the 2018-19 school year.

Steven and Daniel have attended tournaments since kindergarten, progressing from county level to state level, and finally to the national level. Steven recalls attending many major tournaments by the time he had reached sixth grade.

“There was one tournament last year that was super stressful because I had an essay due between the fourth and fifth rounds,” Steven said. “Time management becomes super important to plan around tourneys.”

Steven and Daniel both mentioned the extreme mental workload of attending a tournament, and the unique mindset that it creates.

SHARED SUCCESSES | Steven Hwang ‘22 and Daniel Hwang ‘21 both won first and second place in their respective brackets at the 2020 U.S. Junior Congress.

“It’s all-consuming,” Daniel said, describing the headspace he gets into while playing. “You are locked in.”

The strict time limit of chess means that players need to spend every second thinking about their next move, requiring a laser-focused headspace and thoughts of nothing but the game. Daniel recalled a five-and-a-half-hour game he once played where he needed to keep a constant state of focus for the entire duration of the match.

“There’s a kind of choses where you slowly VIP your opponent to death,” Daniel said. “It’s beautiful.”

Daniel also runs the Chess club, which meets Mondays and Thursdays in room 1206.

UPPER SCHOOL ASSEMBLY EMPHASIZES IMPORTANCE OF CIVIL DISCOURSE

BY JORDAN MAK

Civil Discourse, led by Prek-12 Equity & Social Justice Director Alegria Barclay and history teacher Arta Khakpour, brought students and faculty into the gym to discuss the current state of American politics and brainstorm meaningful ways to have arguments.

The assembly was held over two days, with three hours each day spent learning to listen to others and respond to arguments. Barclay and Khakpour placed heavy emphasis on the importance of understanding versus winning an argument.

Students were asked to take the Eggshellometer Survey so that the community could have data on how the student body felt about sharing their opinions at school.

A panel of faculty members spoke on their personal experiences that helped develop their political identities.
LIZA RAYNAL TO BE NEW UPPER SCHOOL HEAD
BY JORDAN MAK

Liza Raynal, the Middle School division head, will be stepping into the role of Upper School division head in August, replacing Stephen Dunn. The news was announced via email on Feb. 23 by outgoing head of school Lee Rosenberg and incoming head Lee Fertig. The Advisory Search Committee unanimously recommended Liza for the position.

"As impressive as other candidates were, both Lee and I agreed that Liza is the best fit for the position at this moment in time,” Fertig wrote in his letter. "In addition to her deep understanding of Nueva and its current challenges and opportunities, she brings significant leadership experience to this role."

Raynal attended Nueva as a student and has worked as a teacher and leader with the community for over 20 years. Fertig also announced that the search for an Interim MS division head would begin immediately. Internal and external candidates will be considered for the interim position, as a search for the permanent MS head will begin in the fall.

SUCCESSFUL STEEL DRUMS PROGRAM CONTINUES TO DEVELOP
BY SERENA SAXENA

On Feb. 16, 19 students and five chaperones from the steel drum band boarded a flight to St. Lucia to practice and learn from Andy Narell, a world-renowned steel drum musician. Led by music director of 16 years, Jim Munzenrider, this is the latest step in the continuing expansion of the steel drum program.

In the past, the steel drum band has traveled Trinidad, observing and taking part in its beautiful musical festivals but this year, with an invitation from Munzenrider’s long-time friend and role model Andy Narell, the band headed east to St. Lucia, Laborie.

"It was a really cool opportunity for us to learn from a professional," said Megan Branst ‘23, who plays the triple-guitar drum.

From a single middle-school academy elective to a broadening and continuously successful program, the steel drums program has developed into a leading student group. Although many schools are starting to develop steel drums programs, not many are doing it at the level that Munzenrider and his students are.

"What I love about these guys [the students] is that they are really committed to what we’re doing,” said Munzenrider.

“Everyone is enthusiastic about it and everybody wants to play.”

"If I could describe Jim in three words they would be hardworking, funny, and iconic," said Branstad.

All this practice isn’t for nothing though as the band has spent hours and hours preparing for the Nueva steel drums program’s biggest concert yet. On March 25, the band will perform at the San Francisco Jazz Center side-by-side with Narell and David Rudder, a famous Trinidadian singer.

"Every minute we spend is getting ready for this concert,” Munzenrider said. Nueva’s steel drum band will be the first steel band ever to perform at San Francisco Jazz.

INTERSESSION 2020

Annual program looks to successes and challenges to improve for next year

STORY BY ELLA LIN | PHOTOS BY WILLOW TAYLOR CHANG YANG

During the first week of school after winter break, the normal school day turns into a bustling hive full of unique opportunities for students. A host of educators and experts arrive at the Upper School campus to teach students about their own occupations and artistry. Year after year, Intercession has continued to serve as an intellectual feast for students to partake in, giving students the opportunity to either deep dive into a passion they have for a subject area, or for them to discover new fields of interest.

Stephanie Liu ’23 took several workshops this year, of which her favorite was metalworking.

"I especially loved the hands-on part of it, because I got the chance to try things by myself and remember that experience," Liu said.

The activity time between presentations balanced out the longer seminars and kept engagement levels high. Students had the chance to experiment and create—some even took home their own inventions, including succulent terrariums, decorated cakes, and spray-painted tote bags.

"Intercession was a great time to destress and feel welcomed back to school," Liu said. "I got to work with my friends, meet upperclassmen, and learn simultaneously."

Liu also mentioned how this time was immensely helpful for her and gave her a gateway of opportunities. A calmer environment than the regular school day allowed her to adjust to such a change after the long break. She was able to apply her learning from school to real-life matters and go beyond the base academic concepts.

Despite all of these opportunities, freshmen like Liu feel Intercession can be improved. Because of high demand for certain workshops, not every student can participate in their first choices every year, even though over time, most students do get a chance to try their preferred activities. Others appreciate the fact that they don’t always get their first choices, as it pushes them to try things they otherwise try.

"I’ve been able to realize that I shouldn’t just choose classes based on things that I already know I like to do and instead try new things," Cast Gonzalez ’21 said. "For example, this year I tried knitting intercession and now I have my knitting here with me at school—I’ve found that it’s really fun and awesome, but wouldn’t have tried it on my own."

Liu advocated for a wider range of selections. "I wish there was a larger variety of classes because for some of the sections on the catalog all of the classes covered a similar topic, so I either liked most of them or didn’t. I just hope we can change the diversity of courses within the pool we already have," she said.

Nonetheless, Intercession is a great chance for students to interact with, learn with new people, and prepare for the upcoming school year. The program continues to grow by incorporating student interests into its catalog, and had a record number of 170 courses offered this year.

"Intercession exposes us to new things and you get to meet people who are skilled in their trade,” Liu said. "I think we should take some time to appreciate the people who came here to educate us, as well as those who made this happen."

1. Michelle Zhang ’23 examines a marmoset in an activity session titled Medical Exploration: Ferrets.
3. Caleb Moscou ’20 works on a ring in the Metal Working: Rings for Your Fingers seminar.
4. Lila Fernandez-Gimenez ’22 and Laura Schneider ’22 control the replays and screen graphics during the Sports Broadcasting intensive.
5. Ashley Panara ’21 practices to climb the wall in the Rock Climbing: Introduction activity session.
6. Daniel Bernardo ’21 and Aidan Perier ’21 practice during the Latin Jazz Ensemble intensive.

The concert will feature all of Nueva’s steel bands, from kindergarten to upper school, and they will perform three original compositions by Narell: Coffee Street, Song for Mia, and Dee Mwa Wee.

"Playing with Andy Narell and David Rudder is like basketball training with Steph Curry and Klay Thompson. These men are the best there is,” Munzenrider said.

"I’m excited that we’ll be able to get new exposure and perform in front of such a large audience, and I think that it’ll be a super rewarding and memorable experience for all of us,” Krishnan said.
AN ADAPTATION THAT ELEVATES PRINT: JUST MERCY IS EMOTIONALLY EVOKING AND RAW

By Valerie Braylovski

This year’s summer reading book Just Mercy hit the big screens on Jan. 10 in theaters nationwide. The film adaptation stars Michael B. Jordan as Stevenson and Jamie Foxx as McMillan, an Alabama man sentenced to wait on death row for a murder he did not commit in 1989. Stevenson represents him while developing the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) to provide legal representation for prisoners alongside Eva Ansley, who is played by Brie Larson. While I liked the book, the film provided something the print could not. The smalls details sprinkled throughout the adaptation reflect the accuracy of the film compared to Stevenson’s book. More broadly, they show how scenes in books can be elevated through visual representations.

This book touched on difficult and hard to imagine issues I read about over the summer, vividly describing an electric chair execution and the harsh conditions on death row. All of Stevenson’s experiences ultimately shed light on the issues deeply ingrained in America’s criminal justice system, including prejudiced courts and overcrowding of prisons.

Stevenson crafts a rich, non-fiction novel, that weaves together his own journey founding the EJI and the death row cases he takes on over the years, but always returns to the story of McMillan. He blends in facts and historical context of the criminal justice system, including prejudiced courts and overcrowding of prisons.

In the movie, director Daniel Cretton attains a lot of the book’s similar themes in a way understandable to the public, sparking movement and sound into a book’s sometimes frozen scenes. It makes it emotionally moving and uplifting, invoking a range of human emotions, including frustration and hopefulness.

The heart-wrenching acting plays a major part in that emotional adaptation. Both Jordan’s and Foxx’s performances portray the main characters to life, painting their characters in an authentic and raw way, impossible to grasp in the books. Foxx, in particular, gets to the core of McMillan’s persona, portraying a man who holds a multitude of rage inside of him, but also who acts with intention and thoughtfulness.

Prek-12 Equity & Social Justice Director Alegria Barclay was one of the faculty members who collaborated on deciding the summer reading book. At the time, no one knew of its future movie adaptation. The other members on the summer reading task force, a group of faculty that included the grade deans, librarian, and writing teachers, all read the text before choosing it and found it to be transformative and lyrical.

“It addressed a lot of the themes we were interested in, notions of redemption and justice and compassion and kindness, so things that felt relevant to the community but were also outward-facing,” Barclay said. If parts of Just Mercy were difficult to read without becoming disengaged, the adaptation provides an authentic representation of the text, and is constructed beautifully to hold the reader’s attention to a story that is somewhat unpalatable.

All of Stevenson’s experiences ultimately shed light on the issues deeply ingrained in America’s criminal justice system, including prejudiced courts and overcrowding of prisons.

ENDING IN A MEDIocre PLACE

Why the beloved comedy’s ending was disappointing

By Elizabeth Bush-Peel

It’s possible that The Good Place is one of the only shows in recent years to address such a difficult task as answering the question “What happens after we die?” with nuance, humor, and just the right degree of optimism. The show is a whimsical comedy for creator Michael Schur, features four humans who arrive in a heaven-like afterlife. They must navigate various struggles, ranging from a feeling of not belonging to a complete overhaul of the afterlife.

Now, to be clear, I love many characters from NBC shows (available for streaming on Netflix). For a basic overview of ethics, it’s pretty simple and doesn’t do terribly (except for a truly heinous explanation of free will that boils down to “doing irrational things means we have free will,” which is just an awful argument). As a show with nuanced characters, distinct growth, and a sense of humor about itself, it’s very successful, though it can sometimes get bogged down in trying to seem relatable for younger people—or, more accurately, in trying to seem relatable to Gen-Zers by way of millennial humor, which is at best endearing and at worst downright robotic.

Season four ended well, but I had a strange feeling of emptiness while it was over. Usually shows that end well make me happy, if nostalgic—one good but predictable example, perhaps, is The Office, whose eighth season had a far better ending than its beginning and middle. The Good Place, however, did not produce the same feeling. As its ending was sweet and reassuring for the afterlife justice system it portrayed, the bittersweet nature of the show was lost in various parts of the final season. Fortunately, the last episode executed its cliffhanger well, resolving the afterlife problem and the characters’ respective relationships.

Perhaps it isn’t that the show executes its ending so much as the nature of its premise. Just as its initial question—“What happens after you die?”—is almost an impossible premise to work off, the same ambiguity exists for the ending of The Good Place. What happens after the afterlife?
BOOK REVIEW

NONSENSICALLY DRIFTING THROUGH ADOLESCENCE

A unique structure doesn’t save this book from missing its target audience.

BY GRACE HOLMES

This is a book for adults looking for middle school literature; every testing abbreviation inexplicably placed in spoken dialogue drips with condescension and poorly calibrated attempts at relatability.

We Used to Be Friends by Amy Spalding focuses on a pair of best friends—social butterfly Kat and varsity athlete James—who, during their senior year of high school, “break up.” The story is told in two timelines, one moving forward and the other backward from the year they dissolved their friendship. Each attempt to provide insight into what the loss meant and was bound to mean in the context of their tumultuous, drama-rich lives. It feels like a nostalgia trip without the catharsis delivered by truly well-written reprises of years lived before awareness and articulation come on line. Notes-app realistic fiction from written reprises of years lived before awareness and articulation come on line. Notes-app realistic fiction from

The Wongs have many rules, both spoken and unspoken. No wasting water, no drinking. Dress like a nun, curfew at 10 p.m., straight A’s, and many more. Ever Wong’s goal for this summer is to move closer to her parents and in a foreign country—is to break them all.

Reexamined Jan. 7, Loveboat, Taipei tells the coming-of-age story of 18-year-old Ever, who unexpectedly finds herself in Taiwan in a crowd of 30 other Asian Americans as part of Chientan, a Taiwanese summer language and cultural program created for overseas Chinese students.

Among the 30 other students are the book’s three other protagonists—Rick Woo (a famous Yale-bound prodigy Ever’s parents compare her to), Sophie Ha (a Smartison forward and her crazy cousin), and Xavier Yeh (the playboy heir to a massive fortune). Little does Ever know that many of her friends were sent to Chientan in search of a spouse where, unbeknownst to their parents, they can learn about class, party, and drink snake-blood sake.

The story—from which ACE Entertainment’s Jenny Han’s To All the Boys I’ve Loved Before has already acquired film rights—is inspired by Abigail Wen’s own experience with the real Chientan program when she was in high school.

Wen said since Chientan is a program for Asian Americans, the Taiwanese government often searched through the winners of major U.S. high school awards and invited recipients with a Chinese last name.

This led her, a Presidential Scholar, to Taiwan believing she would be attending an academic camp. Of course, that was not what she discovered when she arrived. The experience left an impression, and led her to eventually write Loveboat, Taipei.

Wen, a parent of two Nueva students, currently works in AI and venture capitalism and writes Loveboat, Taipei while working full time. She’s always had a passion for writing—even obtaining an MFA in Creative Writing along with her law degrees—but has struggled to dedicate herself fully.

“I have made some key choices along the way, including the choice not to pursue a career as a law professor, and then to leave my big law firm and go in-house,” Wen said. “In retrospect, these were good choices, but at the time, it was very hard for me to step off these fast-paced paths to give myself the time and headspace I needed to write.”

Loveboat, Taipei is not Wen’s first novel—in her 12 years of writing, Wen has finished five. Despite suggestions to turn to self-publishing or work with smaller publishing houses, Wen persisted, and Loveboat, Taipei was eventually published by HarperCollins.

The version published, however, was not the one she initially wrote—the originals were told through four alternating perspectives.

“By draft 27, I realized the novel wasn’t working. I couldn’t fit that many story arcs into 120,000 words and it ended with the elephant as the climax,” Wen said. She scraped the previous drafts and rewrote the entire book from Ever’s perspective, a choice that served the story well.

“The most common feedback I have received is that the characters are all really well-realized,” Wen said.

As a Silicon Valley resident, Wen hopes her story can address some of the stresses that cause the high concentration of mental health issues in the Bay Area’s youth population.

There is a lot of pressure and even suicides, and we still don’t understand why,” Wen said. “I hoped to add to at least some of the potential underlying causes—internal, familial, and external—and to show teens that they can do and do anything they want.”

She hopes that the different relationships Asian Americans have to their cultural heritage shines through her characters and their varying personalities.

I wanted to showcase some of the diversity within the Asian American community,” Wen said. “I thought of the 30 characters I had, some are quiet, some outrageous, some humorous—and they are all flawed and talented in their own ways.”

In addition to guest-teaching Jennifer Neubauer’s creative writing elective on Wednesday, Feb. 26, Wen visited for a Q&A in the WRC. Students from all grades attended and received free, signed copies of Loveboat, Taipei.

Both the Q&A and guest-teaching were part of plans for a Humanities Center, aimed at deepening students’ experiences with humanities.

Abigail had an exceptional background in writing convincing characters, but she could offer specific advice about inventing characters and how to draw on your own experiences to create fictional lives,” said Jennifer Paull, who is part of the new initiative. “As we think about the different relationships between experts, resources, and field trips that a Humanities Center could offer, author visits like Abigail’s would be terrific opportunities.”

NUEVA PARENT WRITES NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

Abigail Wen’s Loveboat, Taipei explores Asian American and Chinese culture through the lens of a teenage girl.

BY TINA ZENG

The Wongs have many rules, both spoken and unspoken. There was no wasting water, no drinking. Dress like a nun, curfew at 10 p.m., straight A’s, and many more. Ever Wong’s goal for this summer was to move closer to her parents and in a foreign country—to break them all.

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“By draft 27, I realized the novel wasn’t working. I couldn’t fit that many story arcs into 120,000 words and it ended with the elephant as the climax,” Wen said. She scraped the previous drafts and rewrote the entire book from Ever’s perspective, a choice that served the story well.

“The most common feedback I have received is that the characters are all really well-realized,” Wen said.

As a Silicon Valley resident, Wen hopes her story can address some of the stresses that cause the high concentration of mental health issues in the Bay Area’s youth population.

There is a lot of pressure and even suicides, and we still don’t understand why,” Wen said. “I hoped to add to at least some of the potential underlying causes—internal, familial, and external—and to show teens that they can do and do anything they want.”

She hopes that the different relationships Asian Americans have to their cultural heritage shines through her characters and their varying personalities.

I wanted to showcase some of the diversity within the Asian American community,” Wen said. “I thought of the 30 characters I had, some are quiet, some outrageous, some humorous—and they are all flawed and talented in their own ways.”

In addition to guest-teaching Jennifer Neubauer’s creative writing elective on Wednesday, Feb. 26, Wen visited for a Q&A in the WRC. Students from all grades attended and received free, signed copies of Loveboat, Taipei.

Both the Q&A and guest-teaching were part of plans for a Humanities Center, aimed at deepening students’ experiences with humanities.

Abigail had an exceptional background in writing convincing characters, but she could offer specific advice about inventing characters and how to draw on your own experiences to create fictional lives,” said Jennifer Paull, who is part of the new initiative. “As we think about the different relationships between experts, resources, and field trips that a Humanities Center could offer, author visits like Abigail’s would be terrific opportunities.”

This is a book for adults looking for middle school literature; every testing abbreviation inexplicably placed in spoken dialogue drips with condescension and poorly calibrated attempts at relatability.

We Used to Be Friends by Amy Spalding focuses on a pair of best friends—social butterfly Kat and varsity athlete James—who, during their senior year of high school, “break up.” The story is told in two timelines, one moving forward and the other backward from the year they dissolved their friendship. Each attempt to provide insight into what the loss meant and was bound to mean in the context of their tumultuous, drama-rich lives. It feels like a nostalgia trip without the catharsis delivered by truly well-written reprises of years lived before awareness and articulation come on line. Notes-app realistic fiction from
COMMUNITY IN THE "BACHELOR NATION"

Fans of the show bond through discussions of episodes

BY KAYLA HWONG

WHILE CATHARTIC AND PETTY INSULTS, CONTESTANTS ON THE BACHELOR this season are making the show less about romance and more about the drama—but fans are watching not only for entertainment but also for the sense of community inside Bachelor Nation. The Bachelor is essentially the ultimate dating show: one man dates 30 women at once and, through group dates, one-on-ones, and trips to exotic locations, the man will choose a final girl to get engaged to.

This season, 28-year-old pilot Peter Weber is in search of love. Weber was the last season of The Bachelor—made it to the final three. He was portrayed as a sweet and caring guy who people overall enjoyed watching. However, he was less popular among some viewers, especially in comparison to other possible options. But somehow, fans are still watching Peter’s season for the drama and conversation. Regardless of who they’re watching, some people live for the drama.

Much of the excitement and tension comes from the cocktail parties where the women have to share their time with Bachelor. At the first cocktail party, two women fought to the point of tears: Kelsey brought a bottle of champagne for the special occasion of coming on The Bachelor. She planned to share a moment with Peter, but before she could, Hannah Ann popped her bottle of champagne. The resulting argument devolved into Kelsey making accusations about Hannah Ann’s character. This conflict took up most of the evening, upsetting the other women. While they like the drama, those who watch The Bachelor also enjoy the social aspect and connecting with other viewers. Fan Nixie Herlick ’23 said, “Part of the fun of the show is watching it every week and watching it unfold and talking with your friends about it.”

“I meet a stranger and learn that they watch The Bachelor, we could probably talk for hours,” said Anya Potsiadelo ’23, another consistent watcher of the show. There is a sense of community amongst those who watch and ample opportunity for discussion regarding the show. Fans will often make predictions or speculations about the winner. The Bachelor is a great source of entertainment and the kind of show that will get viewers hooked and talking.

NETFLIX'S ROMANCE TITLES

Binge or skip, this new content will either make you cry tears of pain or laughter

BY GRACE FINKE

Hear me out. I’m normally not the type to watch romantic comedies, but ever since I heard about the oh-so anticipated sequel to To All the Boys I’ve Loved Before, I decided to browse Netflix and see what’s up with all of these romcoms that have been flooding the streaming platform.

TO ALL THE BOYS: P.S. I STILL LOVE YOU (2020)

When I saw To All the Boys I’ve Loved Before, I actually didn’t hate it. Keep in mind, I’ve never read any of the books, so I didn’t have any idea what was going on. But I really liked how there was an Asian American lead, and how the story was simple and predictable enough that I could zone out completely and still know what happened in the plot. However, that’s the exact issue with its sequel. P.S. I Still Love You—it’s way too predictable. I mean sure, there was a bit of drama between Lara Jean, Peter Kavinsky, and another guy from her middle school that created a bit of tension. And obviously, everyone loves a cute love story filled with hearts, friends, and a quickly resolved love triangle. But it felt like either the plot wasn’t developed enough, or that the directors just kind of gave up in the middle. Ultimately, the sequel gets points for not being overly complicated—a lightweight, fluffy film that’s fun the first time, but not worth a rewatch.

TO ALL THE BOYS I’VE LOVED BEFORE (2018)

Based on Jenny Han’s 2014 novel, TAYLOR follows the depressingly single Lara Jean Covey as she starts fake-dating her middle school crush, Peter Kavinsky, to distract herself from her real crush, Josh Sanderson, who also happens to be her sister’s boyfriend. It’s a new concept, but it still ends as everyone would expect: Lara Jean and her fake crush inevitably get together and kiss on a field. A predictable but cute film.

LOVE IS BLIND (2020)

Adding another trashy dating show to an already infested pool of similar programs was an extremely bold move of Netflix. But the premise seemed somewhat promising, as it brought back the very old-fashioned tradition of getting engaged without actually seeing your betrothed, so I decided to give it a try.

My mild interest in this hook quickly faded when I saw the beach waves and spray tans that could only belong in reality TV. Even though this show made no sense whatsoever, it was engaging enough that I ended up watching the entire season, purely out of curiosity of what would happen next. However, similar to the whole premise of the show, the people in this show seemed to have very old-fashioned opinions about things like race and sexual orientation. Overall, all this drama quickly faded when I saw the用手—someone else is conventionally attractive.

POP CULTURE REVIEWS IN SEVEN WORDS

“Pleasantly surprised by Jojo Rabbit. Impressive film.”
—Isabel Chambers ’20 on Jojo Rabbit

“Magical, romantic, and creative with real-world problems.”
—Jordan Mak ’21 on Weathering with You

“An epically entertaining dark gender-swapping sci-fi adventure.”
—Sam Timinsky (History/Debate Teacher) on Altered Carbon

“Startlingly touching, full of heart and details.”
—Grace Holmes ’21 on Next in Fashion

“Making a personal emoji is great fun.”
—Scott Bowers (Director of HR & Special Projects)

“Fallen Kingdom’ is the only good song.”
—Annie Edwards ’21 on “Fallen Kingdom” by CaptainSparklez

“Jarring; bless the special effects make-up artist.”
—Eugenia Xu ’21 on Parasite
AWARD SHOWS NEED TO GET WITH THE TIMES
Oscars and Grammys face criticism of their underrepresentation women and people of color

BY ANOUSCHKA BECHTOLSHEIM

The Oscars and the Grammys have long enchanted viewers with their comedy-sprinkled ceremonies and glittering fashion. Yet as they celebrate their grand and kindy anniversaries under controversial clouds of bribery and lack of inclusivity, the question becomes whether the annual ceremonies are evolving with modern times or are becoming a symbol of the status quo in Hollywood.

Though viewership has declined in recent years, the Oscars and the Grammys continue to be one of the most watched television broadcasts each year as they seek international recognition upon the winners and the nominees.

“They are very embedded in the structure of the movie and music industries,” said Maya Rednick ’22, an eager follower of the Oscars. “Doing well seems to please viewers. It’s not like the system is unbiased and fair. It’s not just being acknowledged because of the voter base.”

Despite the cultural impact of the Oscars and Grammys, today’s increasingly aware society has criticized the award shows for lack of diversity.

“There’s a lot of ways that the Grammys are trying to become more relevant and stay relevant,” said Anna Ikle-Mazlish ’22, who enjoys watching the Grammys each year. “In some ways they’re succeeding and in some ways they’re failing, and it’s just blatantly obvious that they’re trying to stay relevant.”

For her, 18-year-old songwriter Billie Eilish’s five Grammys embody this—her relevance in music today made her a “safe choice.” Though Ikle-Mazlish supports the committee’s choice for Best Album and Best New Artist, Eilish’s success in Best Song and Best Record seemed like an attempt at relevance.

“I don’t think that bad guy as a song was better than others in the category, but I think that they were just trying to give it to her,” she said.

Eilish’s landslide wins sit among other more problematic decisions the recording academy (the committee who votes for the Grammys) has made.

“There are plenty of times where the recording academy will just be really disconnected from the general artistry as a whole,” said Alex Nickel ’20, who follows both award shows every year. “That doesn’t help the fact that art is inherently subjective.”

Nickel points to artist Tyler, the Creator’s award for Best Rap Album. "Jigor is definitely not a rap album—almost not at all, to the point where you kind of wonder if anyone at the recording academy has listened to the album,” he said.

Tyler himself has called out the Grammys for this. Being boxed into one genre—especially the urban genre—is something that is severely insulting to Tyler, a black artist.

“Half of me feels that the rap nomination was a backhanded compliment,” he said during a post-Grammy interview. “It sucks that whenever we—and I mean guys that look like me—do anything that’s genre-bending, they always put us in the rap or urban category.”

Meanwhile, the Oscars have been criticized for the underrepresentation of women and people of color over the years.

“The people who actually vote for the awards are typically old, white, and male, and very much industry insiders,” Rednick said.

This year, eight of the nine films nominated in the Best Picture category were about white people. Seven of the nine were about white men.

The Oscars continued to snub female directors, shedding light on how in their 92-year-span, only five female directors have ever been nominated, and only one woman (Kathryn Bigelow for The Hurt Locker) has ever won. In contrast, 33% of all directors were women in 2018-19, according to the Indie Women Report.

In recent years especially, the Oscars have had trouble sweeping their selection bias under the increasingly threadbare carpet of nominated movies that no longer seems to please viewers. Movements like #OscarsSoWhite have surfaced to highlight the academy’s failure to nominate a single person of color in any acting category in both 2015 and 2016.

“A component of that is just the industry as a whole: it’s a very waspy industry,” Nickel explained.

Much of the academy’s structure also accounts for this—the only way to be accepted in the voting committee is to win an award or be pledged in, often for life. Because of this, many members who joined a long time ago are still part of the academy today.

“It’s like the system is unbiased and white men are making better works of art,” Bodnick said. “In reality, a lot of women and people of color are making awesome work and it’s just not being acknowledged because of the voter base.”

The recording academy since pledged to double women and minorities in the academy by 2020, the percentages were so small in the first place that their doubling has a minor effect, certainly not enough to untangle the web of biases in nominations.

Today, women only make up 28% of the total academy members, and people of color account for only 12%.

Yet the 2020 Oscars unveiled a major surprise: Parasite, a South Korean thriller, swept the Oscars winning Best Picture, Best Director, Best Foreign Language Film, and Best Original Screenplay. It is the first non-English film to win Best Picture, the Academy’s most prestigious award.

Director Bong Joon-ho was the first South Korean to win the Best Director. “Just to be nominated was a huge honor,” Jooon-ho said as he received the award. “I never thought I would win.”

THE BEST & WORST OF CUISINETT
French comfort food in cozy atmosphere

STORY AND PHOTOS BY GRACE HOLMES

The storefront of Cuisinett is inconspicuous, just another small restaurant along a densely-packed sidewalk. It looks dark from the street, though that perception is flipped upon stepping inside—the light within is warm and just dim enough to soften the edges of the room, bright enough that the chalkboard menu on the wall is easy to read. The aroma swirling from the open kitchen is buttery with a hint of something sweet and garlicky—exactly what one might expect from ratatouille to coq au vin—and radishes shining in a ring around the dish. The menu is—perhaps left a bit too long in the oven, not quite unpleasant, like something baked on a whim too late at night.

The cheese plate, a staple of any French meal, breaks free from the monotony. It arrives with dark jewels of balsamic-marinated figs glistening at the corners, fresh pears and raunchy shining in a circle around unfortunately-chilled Brie that brings the dinner to its well-fitted conclusion: homey and all in it’s mini-mistake imperfection, comforting in the way a home-cooked meal is—perhaps left a bit too long in the oven, perhaps poorly proportioned, perhaps a bit boring, but ultimately satisfying.
MEET THE CATS OF NUEVA
Nueva community members speak about their feline friends

BY ELIZABETH BUSH-PEEL | PHOTOS PROVIDED BY RACHEL FREEMAN, MAX RICHARDSON, AND SYDNEY FELDMAN

Nueva has a lot of cute pets—many may remember my adorable bring-your-dog-to-school day where students had the chance to meet Nueva dogs out on the field—but some are more reclusive or less socially inclined (at least in large group settings). These, of course, would be cats, who are equally adorable if somewhat more introverted than dogs. Nueva has a bevy of adorable felines, though, so while they may be absent from campus, they still deserve the spotlight.

Sydney Feldman ’23 and her family bought two cats, Miso and Ajax, after begging her parents for well over four years. Both cats are young—barely three years old—and are extremely close. "I was sitting at my kitchen table and Miso wandered into the room with a pitiful meow," Feldman said. "He kept meowing and staring at the door to my parents' room...I picked him up and cracked open the door, and out ran a terrified Ajax. Miso jumped out of my arms and he and Ajax began play-fighting in relief." Feldman believes she is Miso’s favorite, while Ajax is Sydney Feldman’s mother’s favorite. "Miso purrs incessantly," while Feldman, who has perfect pitch says that Ajax’s meow "sounds like an A—the note—but slightly lower." Both cats love "basking in the sun" and Feldman says that, aside from a couple pet pees, there’s "nothing [she] doesn’t like about them," while she says that her sister described them as "amazing little boys."

Max Richardson ’20 adopted their cats, Puff and Moosh, in July of 2015. They have "always had cats growing up," including Maddy, Max, and Pete. While they waited a while before getting new cats, Richardson also made sure to do research before adopting, including talking to local shelters and their pet sitter. After a lot of research and many conversations with "a network of people who care for tiny kittens," Richardson and her family realized that they "couldn’t get two littermates out of our heads," and decided to adopt Puff and Moosh back in July of 2015, when the cats were only a couple months old.

Richardson has found the cats’ presence extremely comforting. "When we first got them, Puff especially was a wild child, but a couple months after we got them I got my first two concussions so I spent a lot of time at home in bed," Richardson said. "Puff really took to me and bonded with me—even now, any time he gets scared by something he runs to my room looking for me." Richardson said that his favorite thing to do is to climb up the vertical face of his wardrobe and pull out the top drawer to hunker down up there. "Moosh’s favorite thing to do is to climb up the vertical face of my wardrobe and pull out the top drawer to hunker down up there," Richardson said. "She also tends to do it in the middle of the night so I think my room is haunted."

Though Neubauer has considered teaching yearlong electives, she also anticipates challenges in student interest. She received feedback from her students that though yearlong electives would be valuable, they wouldn’t want to be required to enroll for the full year as they want to have the option to change their mind. Davis Turner ‘22 opts for a balance between semester and yearlong electives. For him, sampling different classes and subjects is important. Whereas semester-long classes serve more like an appetizer to a subject, yearlong courses could be a full entrée that he may later “regret.”

While yearlong courses may be a drawback for an introduction to a subject, for people hoping to experience a deep-dive into a specific area, a lack of sufficient time is often a struggle. “When we first got them, Puff especially was a wild child, but a couple months after we got them I got my first two concussions so I spent a lot of time at home in bed,” Richardson said. “Puff really took to me and bonded with me—even now, any time he gets scared by something he runs to my room looking for me.” Richardson said that his favorite thing to do is to climb up the vertical face of his wardrobe and pull out the top drawer to hunker down up there. “Moosh’s favorite thing to do is to climb up the vertical face of my wardrobe and pull out the top drawer to hunker down up there,” Richardson said. “She also tends to do it in the middle of the night so I think my room is haunted.”

They’re both super affectionate and cuddly and really love people, though Puff takes a while to warm up to new people, Richardson added. Communications and Website Manager Rachel Freeman adopted two cats—Buster, who is “so clever it drives [Freeman] bonkers,” and Posey, who is sweet and calming—”from the Nine Lives Foundation in September. She decided to get cats because of her friend’s cat Wendel, who was the “gateway cat” and “the first time [she] really thought a cat was cute.”

“I knew when I went to the shelter I was going to name my kittens Buster and Posey, after the San Francisco Giants baseball player—I love the Giants!” Freeman said. “I actually picked out a different black female cat at first but she was very feisty, and knowing that Buster was super affectionate, I wanted a calmer second cat.”

Their names actually fit them perfectly, Freeman added. “Buster is fearless, excited, and constantly moving and Posey is...like a dainty flower.” Freeman has known this since the moment she brought the cats home. “[Buster’s] legs were a little wobbly but as soon as he started walking around I couldn’t get him to slow down,” Freeman said. “Posey, on the other hand, walked slowly and gingerly...and disappeared. She had scurried under the couch. We was defi- nitely scared those first few days but Buster helped her come out of her shell.”

The cats were “essentially a bonded pair” when Freeman adopted them, and “love each other so much,” often napping together. The pair shares a Giants blanket (very appropriate to their origin) and a window seat to watch the “trees blowing outside.” Freeman “cannot contain how much [she] loves them” and has well over 3000 photos of them on her phone. Freeman, who is “an extreme extrovert,” finds that having cats makes her like being at home. “[Cats] have such vibrant and distinct personalities,” Freeman said. “I think before Wendel, I didn’t really realize how animated and fun cats are. Having Buster and Posey in my life has been such a joy.”
A DIFFERENT WAY TO SEE DISEASE
Junior develops novel model to aid in trachoma treatment

BY GRACE HOLMES

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aniel Hwang '21 grew up with an eyepatch—now, he’s helping figure out how to prevent other children from having to do so. His experience with strabismus, colloquially known as lazy eye, isn’t identical to that of children impacted by trachoma, but similarity between his experience and that of the children his research aids is part of what drew him to the opportunity. “It stuck out to me because the disease is most prevalent among small kids, and I can empathize with it in some sense,” Hwang said. “That, along with the notion that this only affects the developing countries and that we know how to eliminate it—it will be eliminated—and all we have to do is speed it up… that was the motivation for me.”

Trachoma is the leading cause of infectious blindness in the world, blinding an estimated 1.9 million people worldwide. In the most severely impacted areas, the World Health Organization estimates that active disease is present in more than 50% of children below 10 years of age. Trachoma infections can be cleared with antibiotics, but there’s no way to induce resistance to the disease; instead, frequent courses of antibiotic treatment are used to approximate immunity. However, simulation predictions suggest that disease prevention is possible if children can be treated early enough in childhood.

Hwang is currently engaged in a research project aiming to determine the most efficient way to identify and treat the disease by using antibiotics to identify the minimum number of people that need to be treated in order to eliminate the disease for trachoma. Though this idea has been applied to trachoma before, prior models treated each member of the simulated population as identical, which failed to explain the disparity Hwang saw between trachoma prevalence in children and adults.

The mismatch between the data being gathered from the real world and the predictions made by the homogenous prior models has prompted close monitoring of the outbreak. COVID-19, previously known as the Wuhan coronavirus or 2019-nCoV, has infected over 81,000 people and caused over 2,700 deaths globally to date, according to data compiled by the Center for Systems Science and Engineering at Johns Hopkins University. Recently, fears of widespread contamination have prompted a potential outbreak in the U.S.

The spread of this new illness has prompted close monitoring of the outbreak.

BY JORDAN MAK

Nonetheless, there have been times when this process of synthesis has required “every spare moment” from Hwang. One such stretch occurred during the weeks surrounding and including Thanksgiving break, during which Hwang “really just crashed it up and produced tons of results” in preparation for submitting his abstract and paper to a biology conference hosted at USC.

“I usually try to focus on at least a few things, but during that time my primary focus was just doing research,” Hwang said. “I wasn’t getting that much sleep. I was trying to just write. I was spending all of my free time, thinking, ‘Just get the homework done and then just do it. Do it, do it, do it.’

Over the break itself, Hwang spent much of his time travelling back and forth from USC to run his code on their processors.

“There was a lot of asking my parents to drive me to USC and back at really weird hours of the night,” Hwang said. “We were headed there at 10:30, 10:45 and I’m thinking, ‘My dad works at USC so he has an ID card, even though there’s a police car there it’s okay, we can explain this.’

The late nights and dubious decision-making are difficult, but the opportunity to present his research makes it worthwhile to Hwang.

“This coming May, he will present his abstract and poster at the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology Annual Meeting in Baltimore, a weeklong gathering of international experts in the field. “I hope to be able to talk with and kind of develop the project even further since I’ll be able to talk to so many people coming from a variety of perspectives, but all really knowledgeable about the topic,” Hwang said. “What I’m doing already is taking other people’s expertise, applying it and kind of enhancing what I’m doing with it; there are developments and really important things that come out of those conversations.”

Hwang will present his research at Science Thursday on March 12.

POSTER-PERFECT PRESENTATION | Hwang’s poster, the product of many late nights, was on display during the conference at USC and will travel with him to the ARVO meeting in Baltimore this May.
By Isabel Chambers

As the days trickle toward Nov. 3, two things happen. Candidates looking to bump up their campaign-sending speed and voters across the country prepare to cast their ballot. For students over the age of 18, the California primaries in early March will provide the first chance to influence who will become the leader of the United States.

March 3, this year’s Super Tuesday, will also mark the final big vote in the 2020 presidential election cycle. While California has two other states that will host their primaries—the biggest day in the primary election cycle. While not as large as the national race, candidates still vote at 7 if they’ll be 18 by the general election, California doesn’t, which forces some students to wait until March to vote.

“I’m kind of disappointed,” said Clay Adams ‘20, who won’t turn 18 until Octobre. “I probably would’ve voted had he been able to vote in the primaries regardless. I was going to go out and vote, like a democracy day with your friends, which would have been a lot of fun, but that’s not happening anymore.”

For many candidates, appealing to younger voters is a strong tactic. The U.S. Census reported that in the 2016 presidential election, 46.8% of eligible voters between the ages of 18 and 29 cast a ballot—the smallest percentage compared to the three other age groups. American History teacher Michael Denlow said these voters are “extremely important” to candidates.

“If you’re a Democrat, you’re going to hope that voting bloc gets mobilized,” Denlow said. “We’ve seen a lot of grassroots enthusiasm and that usually comes from the younger generations. I think there will be a democratic victory—that’s where we will see it.”

As candidates try to appeal to the younger generation, first-time voters are preparing themselves for the big day. Calista Huang ‘20 has been educating herself through conversations with friends and family.

“I like to look at different news outlets, even if I don’t agree with them,” Huang said. “I think it’s important to have those different perspectives when you are doing something that is prone to fake news or partisan media.”

For Billy Pierce ‘20 he’s followed along. “I took American Government, I watched some of the debates. And, truthfully, I have not done enough,” Pierce said. “I believe they’re adequately educating yourself on candidate stances poses a challenge for busy workers and students. Huang said that in past years, she’s looked over the ballots with her father with showed her “how complicated it was, especially voting for the propositions.”

Despite feeling powerful now that she can vote, Huang isn’t planning on voting in person but instead by mail.

“It’s definitely more convenient,” Huang said. “I don’t want to have to take break up my schedule to go to a voting center and also it’s time-sensitive.”

Many voting centers can have lines hours long which can delay the process and deter people from voting when Denlow first voted back in 2008, she found in her absentee ballot by mail from Colorado—where she was for college—to her home state of Missouri.

“There’s been a lot more of a push for absentee ballots or voting by mail,” Denlow said. “That’s actually a bigger turnout.”

Pierce, a registered Democrat, feels his vote will mean a bit more voting in person than by ballot box or mail.

“I want to spread more confidence in my vote there,” Pierce said. “I want to see what it’s like going to a real voting place.”

For Pierce, while he feels he still has lots to learn before the elections, he understands the importance of his vote in the democracy and the country as a whole.

“From a very basic level, I feel like I’m knowledgeable enough to meaningfully contribute to my general sense of civic responsibility,” Pierce said.

**By Anouschka Bechtolsheim**

Glistening from alabaster dust pine-decked branches. Blankets of snow shroud uneven brown outcrops in winter cloaks. The light breeze scatters smooth drifts of powder as skiers dart down easy routes, carving the feather-light powder, relishing the icy mountain breeze.

It’s moments like these that make skiing such an unforgettable experience and, as winter winds down, something some students will continue to enjoy.

“If you know where to go, it’s golden,” Emma Leschly ’21, said. “You can say ‘Open your eyes and the people and the lines and the pretty much ski by your friends.’”

Northstar, with its reputation for easier runs and being more “family-friendly,” is a popular choice for younger skiers or beginners.

Avery Chen ’22, who has been skiing since she was 5, visits Northstar every year. Even though she takes pleasure in knowing the mountain like the back of her hand, the runs—which are mainly geared towards beginner skiers—sometimes get repetitive for her. Additionally, during the holiday season, lift-lines and restaurants overflow with crowds.

But Northstar also holds hidden gems, such as its mouth-watering food. “In the village, they have really good Belgian waffles,” Chen said.

For Leschly, Northstar’s artistry-Carlton has her favorite treat—wild mushroom mac and cheese. (“They’re so good, it’s ridiculous,” she said.)

Chen recalled taking her sister to her ski team practice right at the mountain’s 8:15 a.m. opening, and—despite feeling tired—experiencing the magical feeling of etching the first tracks into the mountain’s freshly fallen snow. “It feels like flying,” Chen said, recommending that other skiers get up earlier to experience newly groomed runs.

However, Tahoe’s proximity and near-perfect weather also facilitates potential drawbacks like its hard-packed snow—or, as Leschly describes, “Sierra cement.”

“You don’t get the nice powder, and things just get heavy and sticky with your skis,” she said.

Tahoe’s dense snow at lower elevations is also what ski resorts prefer at higher elevations. “They’re so good, it’s ridiculous,” she said. (Their resort is Squaw Valley, where they can easily glide down powdery slopes.)

They get a ton of snow and the terrain is really steep and fun to ski,” said Malott, who has been skiing since age 5. Squaw is also known for Wildflower Baking Company stationed near its base.

“I have little cousins, and we go skiing with them we always buy chocolate chip cookies,” said history teacher Chelsea Denlow, who began skiing in fourth grade. “You can buy the kids cookie passes, and they just love it—they feel like they have their own money.”

But beyond Tahoe’s bustling commercial district, there are also picturesque backcountry ski slopes tucked behind the resorts.

“When you’re out there and you don’t see people and lifts, it’s just magical,” Leschly said.

Being in nature draws many skiers to their love for the sport, such as Chen, who finds the quiet “relaxing.”

“You can’t [experience] it anywhere else,” said Morgan Tarpenning ’20, who began skiing when she was a year old and switched to snowboarding five years ago. “I guess if I were good at skateboarding, it would be similar, but I’m not,” she laughed.

Tarpenning recalled leisurely carving the feather-light powder around trees with her brothers. “It would take so long to get down because we were playing in the powder,” she said. “It was less about snowboarding and more about the playing and the fun.”

Malott likewise emphasizes how skiing is truly about having a good time. “A big part of my skiing day is spending time with my family and friends,” he said. “Rather than focusing on hitting the biggest jump or maxing out vertical, I’m just trying to enjoy the day.”

**By Isabel Chambers**

California primaries serve as a practice run for first-time voters.

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California serves as a practice run for first-time voters.
FEATURES

AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE: WHAT POLITICAL MEANS TO GET Z

T he 2020 Presidential election will be the test of a new generation. Generally defined as the people born between 1997 and 2010, the majority of the 72 million people eligible to vote will make up the millennial generation, a generation that goes into the world of political activism.

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However, few have considered whether this era actually exists and whether an outpouring of young people to the ballot box. The Parkland shooting are perhaps the most significant moment of the modern day—Greta Thunberg the survivors of the Great Gatsby, the survivors of the Bay Area. The results reflect the complicated and varied phenomenon, with a number of extensive studies by the Pew Research Center as among most well-cited, and a number of well-known young political activists of the world outside the Bay Area, such as Tumay, Sara Barek, and Greta Thunberg, who are all involved in the political sphere.

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What drew you to your Head of School position? Sometimes society doesn’t think highly capable, highly talented, highly experienced people have their own vulnerabilities. Maybe many of you come from well-resourced families; you’re smart, you’re intelligent, and you have that school savvy to succeed. But that doesn’t mean that students like you and your friends and your classmates are not susceptible to other things. What I like about Nueva is how seriously it takes this inclusivity of all students on their own learning journeys, and really committing with integrity to those journeys. Yes, the school wants students to get into good universities, and yes, we want you to be successful and have a good skill set from that point onwards. But eventually. When I heard loud and clear that one of the process was Nueva cares about the journey of learning that the students are on, and want to ensure that it’s a happy, safe, balanced, healthy journey.

What are your goals come August? I hope diversity is one of the things I focus on. I get the sense that there are decision makers and community members truly interested in seeing if we could broaden socioeconomic and racial diversity... and I have a sense that there is eager to increase the level of diversity. I get the sense in general that the notion of becoming as inclusive as we can is something that is desired, which is great. I just want to confirm that first, that it is indeed a community desire. If I confirm that quickly, then I will mobilize my skill set and push that forward a little bit more.

What transition challenges do you foresee? I haven’t been an educational leader the way Diane has been immersed for 19 years, the way your teachers have been immersed in this community, but even though I’m American, I have lived overseas for many years. And there’s a part of me that’s nervous to go back to the States. I’m looking forward to it, but I’m getting nervous now, because a lot of people are talking to me about some of the changes in the community. I hope diversity is something that will be a very welcome and valuable addition. I just want to make sure I’m jumping in, in the right way.

What do you think your largely international experience will bring to Nueva? A lot of what my career has entailed has forced me to learn new languages, new cultures, new ideas. It has been a wonderful experience, it has helped even though I’m American, I have lived overseas for many years. And there’s a part of me that’s nervous to go back to the States. I’m looking forward to it, but I’m getting nervous now, because a lot of people are talking to me about some of the changes in the community. I hope diversity is something that will be a very welcome and valuable addition. I just want to make sure I’m jumping in, in the right way.

How would you describe your ideal relationship with teachers, parents, and community members? I want to reconfirm that the first principle is that the Nueva community is a communitarian desire. If I confirm that quickly, then I will mobilize my skill set and push that forward a little bit more.

Many of the international schools you’ve worked at follow the IB curriculum. Can you tell us how the IB compared to Nueva’s curriculum, and how it might factor into an academic transcript? I am welcoming a bit of a break from the IB. It’s gotten so big, so fast, and I think it’s got some growing pains associated with it; it’s lost the ethos of learning that they had earlier on.

I’m excited to be at Nueva that has more autonomy to play, to innovate, to experiment through trial and error and fail, and my job is going to be trying something new. I really felt that loud and clear when I was [on campus]: the spirit of trying, of experimenting and innovating, knowing that we might not always get it right. However, I also believe strongly that there are communities across the different stakeholders. Even just as a candidate, I already heard a lot of same language, desires, and values coming from faculty, board members, and parents. There might be some differences that pop up also.

I will also be inquiring, when I’m there and during my transition visits, about what people most appreciate about the Nueva community. What are the non-negotiable, sacred cows that we don’t want the new Head of School to touch? What needs to be preserved and enhanced? I do want to get even further out, to innovative, to continuous improvement plans that leverage where we are already strong, it’s a good start with the community.

Do you play any instruments? I used to play a lot of guitar. I haven’t played in a long time, but I used to be in bands. I was in a folk duo, and we called ourselves the Red Creek Combo. I have no idea why. I was also in a three-person rock band for a while called Impact. I’m looking forward to maybe one day playing with the steel drum ensemble.

You mentioned that you might want to jointly teach a class on leadership, this would be an example of how you might use your many years of experience as an educational leader. What would it be about? I think the subject I teach best is psychology; I have taught various levels of psychology, including the IB program. Empowering young people to understand human behavior, including their own, is very rewarding. If there were opportunities to teach a class on leadership, this would be interesting to me as well.

Tell us about some of your hobbies. I walk a lot and like to be moving on to other schools after Nueva, just because, one, my age, and two, I think it’s time for my wife, my three children, and I to reacquaint ourselves with the United States. What could happen is I’ll stay at Nueva for seven, eight, nine, 10 years, whatever it is, and then afterwards maybe do something consulting with schools but, not being in the Head of School position again.

Did you always want to be an educator? I would love to be able to say that ever since I was a little boy, I wanted to be a teacher. No, I know that sounds like an easy answer, but that really isn’t true. Probably elementary and junior high. I wanted to be a basketball player, and then I wanted to be a professional musician, and then I was interested in becoming a teacher. It just kind of happened. And once I got in it, I loved it. It has remained my passion for many years in various settings. I left schools for a couple years, working for a school technology company, so still working with schools, but with the adults, not the kids. And I’ll be honest with you, there was a hole in my heart. I missed it. I went back to being a school leader.

You’re going to Nueva in mid-March for an open visit. Do you have any goals for that visit? Sadly, during the process, I did not get to really spend a lot of quality time with students or teachers, or parents and community members. I’m really looking forward to that.

We went through that process, one of the things we all felt very strongly about was his sense of humor and his joy.”
He has a great presence, like he was here, he was there,” Walker said. “That really struck me. He’s such a thinker about like schools and the educational system. It’s not that you see that he’s going to jump right into trying to understand all of the things that make up Nueva.”

Throughout the selection process, Fertig almost exclusively interacted with the committee members — in fact, the Board in its entirety hadn’t met with Fertig as of mid-February. While the process involved a visit with the committee “snuck” Fertig, as he described it, onto the campuses, as well as a formal meeting with each of them, he’d met with and information about candidates and finalists were kept to a small, closed group. Decisions of the committee were not to be shared with anyone. As such, a confidential process is called, was necessary, in the search committee’s opinion.

“In order to attract the best candidates, it had to be a closed search. In this day and age of the internet, people who are known to look [for new jobs] can see the current ones,” Barnes said. “Many, many of these candidates were sitting heads of schools and were very happy with what they were doing. Lee in that category as well. We could not expose the candidates to that. As a whole, the search did mean, however, that the larger community was unable to be privy to the entire process. The search committee believed that it would have led to a more of a community meeting,” Barnes said, but the circumstances necessitated less transparency.

The majority of community input was gathered in the initial stages of the search process, with the drafting of the Position Statement, a written job and school description provided to applicants, which also served as one of the main guiding documents for the rest of the process. The 23-page statement was written by the search committee in conjunction with the search firm RG175, using information from focus groups and an extensive online survey of the Nueva community, including faculty and staff, students, and families. It included an introduction to both a self-assessment of what we needed for the next stage and for us to communicate to potential candidates about what we wanted,” Donohue explained. “The broad swath of the voices that we heard at that event helped us to be critical in shaping the search and the outcome of it.”

Now that the outcome has been determined, the committee is progressing into the transition process.

“Our goal is to welcome him to the community, to show him what we think is so wonderful about Nueva—call it the Nueva magic if you want to,” Donohue said. “And we want to help him really understand that on a visceral level so that he can take us to where we need to go next.”

After cresting the top of the airship tower, the view is immense. Students and faculty alike marvel at the function as the elevators between each achingly high stairway; oak wood planks creak under footsteps and echo off the carved stone bricks. On the fifth floor, the floating ships rest, armed with fireworks. Every block of the skyscraper has been stacked with the precision of a jeweler placing a diamond.

Across the shallow pond dotted with wooden homes and lily pads is a different scene. Minecraft scene. Nintendo characters are emblazoned on vibrant wooden murals. Train tracks snake around their straight edges and ladders climb way up hundreds of feet high. Farms of bamboo grow alongside wheat and the spruce trees of a neighboring forest. Off in the distance, the pearly quartz blocks of a massive courthouse and city hall shimmer. It’s a separate world here.

One where 37 stressed seniors can find solace during the college application process by collaborating on buildings and tightening the stitches of the friendships that keep their small grade close.

The Minecraft server, which doesn’t have an official name, wasn’t always this big. Created in early June of last year, there were only four players at the start: seniors Ben Lee, Steven Raanes, Casey Manning, and Aidan Wen.

“The opportunity to play Minecraft wasn’t what motivated me,” said Raanes, who thought of creating the server. “It just seemed like it was a fun way that I’d be able to hang out with friends.”

Minecraft, which recently celebrated its 10th anniversary, is a wildly popular open-concept sandbox game (a box with few limitations and no official storyline) with over 112,000,000 monthly players. Players can create their worlds, whether in survival mode, where they have to scavenge for resources, or creative mode, to craft their creations, or creative mode where players can freely fly and have access to unlimited resources. Many players can play by themselves or join servers where they can interact and create with other players. Since the creation of the server in the last week of school and an inaugural LAN party, the server has swelled to 37 players, more than double the size it originally started as.

The server and its attached Telegram chat have allowed seniors to connect with peers they haven’t spoken to in awhile. “It’s a really interesting dynamic because I’ve never played social video games before,” said Amy Cave, a senior who’s played since early October. “Lots of people would ask if I’m doing it and I’d have to tell them, ‘It’s a private island.’”

The influx of players has caused some problems for the server. Lee, who hosts the server on ExtraVM (a hosting service for Minecraft and cloud servers) by paying a monthly fee, said the number of players kept crashing the server in the beginning.

“Now I don’t have to do that much,” Lee said. “It’s kind of self-sustaining.”

While not as much work has to be put into keeping the server up, attention to any arguments on the server has to be noticed. While there is a document listing rules, if enough players agree that someone has broken a rule such as destroying others’ property, the player will be temporarily banned from the server.

“It happened once or twice,” Lee said. “Usually we try to avoid it, but if people agree that it’s necessary we’ll do a ban for a couple of weeks.”

Most of the time, however, the server does its job of providing stressed seniors with a place to relax and bond with other players.

Arguably the busiest time for the server was during the months of October and November when seniors were working on college applications. Students would flock to play during the weekends, at times reaching close to 10 people on the server at any given time.

“That portion of senior year where everyone’s writing college apps, it brings the grade closer together, like mutual suffering,” Tyler Groshong ’20 said. “Being on the server was another way to maintain that community.”

The server was seen as “an acceptable form of procrastination.”

“There were times where you had…moments of people saying, ‘Oh, I’m procrastinating on my college apps’ and then the rest of the server going, ‘You can do it, go get them,’” Raanes said.

Raanes found building on the server a better use of his time than scrolling through Reddit or YouTube.

“Being on the server actually feels more productive,” Groshong said. “You’re working [with] a great community, you’re building things.”

For Raanes, this involved a fantastical technical build in an unusual location: the world border. “I’ve got to research a challenge for Raanes, who wanted to get out of the densely populated town center and explore the rarely reached end of the world. Coming up with the method of getting to the edge was easy, making it work, however, proved a bit tricky. Raanes first set up a spring machine on the flat roof of the Nether (the underworld in the game) to push him forward at thousands of blocks per hour.

“That was going about 10,000 blocks an hour, and for reference, to get to the end of the world border, you have to go 3,750,000 blocks,” Raanes said. “Once I realized how slow that was, I started thinking about more and just [red a horse].”

Leaving for his journey on Oct. 6 and arriving 24 days later, Raanes figured the end of the world would be “a bit of a letdown.”

“Remember I was just grinning kind of stupidly,” Raanes said of the moment he reached the edge of the world. Raanes ultimately decided against building a Game of Thrones-style wall at the world border, choosing to bring his builds closer to home. He’s now working on a farming village with “sprawling wheat fields, a quaint town and a large windmill.”

The collaborative atmosphere is one of the reasons seniors are so attached to the server.

“People are very open with their materials,” Groshong said. “It makes it a more relaxing experience.”

For more players, the low stress level of the game drew them in.

“Can’t lose in it,” Groshong said. “I feel like there’s a winner and loser [in some games] and it can get really frustrating, especially if you’re on a losing streak. It’s just very stressful to be playing a game where there’s stakes. [Minecraft] is nice because you can do whatever you want and there aren’t expectations of you.”

Raanes loves the simplicity and ease of the game. “At the end, after putting in some of this mindless effort, you can step back and appreciate what you’ve done—that’s the joy in it. Planting a massive field, harvesting it, and planting it again.”

Despite its popularity among members, the server and chat have slowed at times.

“It’s just had a seasonality lifestyle,” Raanes said. “It started out and it was very popular, then it slowed down, and then as a way of procrastinating for college apps, it kind of boomed back up. After college apps, it’s died down a bit.”

As the end of senior year draws to a close, there’s a pretty good chance the server will end with graduation.

“It’ll probably die,” Raanes said. “I know some people want to keep it going, but already there are not that many people that still play on it.”

It’s a melancholy sight to witness. Many of the seniors grew up playing Minecraft, so their engagement with it may end at the same time as their Nueva education.

“I think the appeal of the server is this specific time in our lives [when] we’re all seniors applying to college,” Groshong said. “It’s already a period that’s bringing us together and it’s also kind of nostalgic playing Minecraft.”
WHY GREEN SCHOOLS SHOULD LEAD BY EXAMPLE IN THE CLIMATE CRISIS

We should mobilize our ingenuity, resources, and common humanity costs and benefits, and adopted or rejected through informed decision-making. We should thus foster a strong student voice in determining the steps that schools can take to lower their own carbon footprint.

Student clubs and initiatives across all divisions, such as the Climate Action Club, are doing exactly that. This gives me hope every day. I came to teach environmental statistics and policy in part because I want my children to be able to pursue their lives with joy, curiosity, and free of constant anxiety over our only planet we’ve got. I want Nueva to be the greenest, lowest-impact school it can and share that knowledge with as many other schools as possible.

In January, Assistant Director of Environmental Citizenship and science teacher Aree Walker and I met with two experts in energy systems, one is a parent and the other a representative from a microgrid company. They showed us the range of options available through deploying advanced technologies and smart, distributed systems. They suggested how Nueva might reduce its carbon footprint and dependence on the electrical grid to whatever level we desire (including carbon-neutral or even carbon-negative). Of course, monetary cost and feasibility factor into the set of choices and for the most resilient option of going off-grid and carbon-neutral, as such, costs would be sizeable and likely beyond our school’s financial and practical reach. In fact, the selection of sustainable and cost-effective ways to retrofit our school’s energy portfolio would probably involve considering a switch to our local community choice aggregator’s 100% clean and renewable energy and a mixture of solar PV, on-site battery power storage, possibly fuel cells, and continued connections to the PG&E operated power grid. How might we support 100% electrified transportation for our intercampus transfers and athletic trips? How might we work on net-zero carbon strategies for our educational trips to become a climate-neutral school? It’s amazing that we can tackle such questions now and that there are tailor-made solutions available. What fantastic opportunities they provide for our community to affirm our desire to reduce our climate-burden and to rigorously explore the pros and cons of the various packages for doing so. This is what gives me hope.

WE NEED TO BRING MORE ATTENTION TO THE SOCIOECONOMIC BUBBLE WE LIVE IN

Our community is different from many of the Bay Area and we need to do something about our situation, making memes about new products and trends. I’m not saying that everyone here is blind to the disparity. With great financial resources comes significant investment in public resources and organizations aiming to improve lives. As a community, it’s so easy to get caught up in all of the stereotypes and wealth associated with living in Silicon Valley. But if we truly want to be forward-thinking and invested in the future state of the communities we live in, we need to start sharing our resources and leveraging our privilege for the good of all.
WE SHOULD REPLACE MIDTERM NARRATIVES

The role of midterm narratives would be better filled by student-teacher meetings

BY GRACE HOLMES

Midterm season is difficult for everyone. Papers pile up, problem sets increase in difficulty as tests pop up on Canvas, and even project-oriented classes that don’t have assessments due seem to intensify as the student body is reminded that the semester is nearly halfway over—and there is still, as ever, far more left to do. Of course, this applies to students who suffer from the pile-up; teachers, too, face an influx of assignments, their already-significant workloads multiplied by the necessity of hours blocked aside to write narratives. We need to be kinder to our teachers—and it’ll make the school run more effectively, too.

Narratives often lead teachers to return feedback and rubrics for individual projects significantly later, meaning that students aren’t able to improve their work based on intermediate edits or grades. The narrative is helpful as a checkpoint, but not when it requires sacrificing the concrete data points that can lead to tangible, targeted improvements. Timely feedback on projects that represent specific moments in students’ development is more useful than summarizing paragraphs that describe the entirety of the brief half-semester.

Additionally, teacher stress decreases the quality of classes and lesson plans. At times, teachers are forced to miss days of school in order to keep up with their narrative-writing, which is even more detrimental to students’ overall learning. Similarly, teachers’ stress means that they are more likely to be unavailable to students, who are also feeling the stress of midterm season and the impending round of evaluations.

Narratives are in many ways a wonderful, valuable aspect of students’ evaluations—they contribute to a holistic view of grading, help families and students understand and the context behind the quantitative evaluation of letter grades and rubrics, and are useful for teachers to provide final thoughts, celebrations, and ways to move forward—but their negative impact outweighs the positive, especially at midterms.

Thus, the role of narratives at midterms would be better filled by one-on-one meetings between students and teachers. Such meetings have the potential to open a genuine dialogue between student and teacher, allowing for the creation of solutions that include both parties and genuine improvement in students’ ability to gain valuable experience from the course. Meetings would be an effective way to ensure that students and teachers are on the same page; it will help ensure they can collaborate to create an effective set of goals—and plans —without the disconnect that can be created by receiving the first direct indication of a student’s standing through a PDF.

Ultimately, the benefits of midterm narratives are dwarfed by the negative impact of the excessive amount of work they represent for teachers—replacing them with individual meetings between teachers and students would improve personalization, aid in opening effective dialogues about students’ learning, and, hopefully, reduce the stress felt by teachers and students alike when midterm season hits.

TEACHERS SHOULD REMAIN THE SAME FOR CORE CLASSES

Switching students’ teachers mid-semester has various impacts

BY VALERIE BRAYLOVSKY

It was the first week of the spring semester, it was common to see students lingering outside Upper School Assistant Division Head Claire Ye’s office, waiting to speak to her about course changes. Some were in the wrong classes; others wanted to be put in a different elective, but a common refrain surfaced among them all: “I’m switching classes. I have new teachers.”

After receiving my second semester schedule last year, I was surprised that I now had four teachers I had never met. While all of the faculty is incredible, it was a jarring change. The Upper School is unique in that it has a wide variety of electives to match every student’s interest, offering 104 different courses this semester. Most high schools provide just one year-long elective, but Nueva enables students to take up to four different electives over the course of the academic year. Students who are passionate about painting or photography but want to learn Python can do both. In order to give each student their top elective preferences, core classes are bound to be switched.

Inevitably, I grew fond of my schedule last year. By the end of the fall semester, I began to understand the rhythm of each of my classes, and I befriended peers who I had not spoken to before. I adapted to each teacher’s distinct teaching style and way of giving feedback, and learned how best to reach out to them for more support. Most importantly, I developed relationships with my teachers, and grew comfortable seeking help outside of class when I needed it, asking more questions, and advocating for myself. Every teacher runs their classes differently; some are more lecture-based, while student discussion is central in others. Having to not only grasp the content of a course, but also navigate a new class style after previously adjusting to a different one causes a disruption of actual learning.

Aside from the discomfort of having new teachers for core classes, these abrupt changes specifically impact juniors who are forging relationships that they’ll rely on for letters of recommendation for college applications next year. Switching teachers can possibly prevent a student from getting a specific teacher recommendation, as the teacher is not able to observe the student in class or connect with them anymore.

Most high schools do not switch students’ teachers in core classes to avoid the disruption that would occur with readjusting—it causes unnecessary stress on top of academic pressure. Not only does this change impact students, but it also affects faculty. From a teacher’s perspective, they lose students they have gotten to know throughout the semester, and whose learning styles they have grown accustomed to.

However, the major switches are an unintended consequence of the scheduling system, as there were challenges using it this past semester. Nonetheless, the numerous impacts on the student body should be a sign to reconsider the functionality of the current schedules, and work to determine how best to create a process to benefit the most productive learning culture.
A t the moment, dogs and other pets are banned on our campus. This ought to change... almost a wonderful idea to campuses, so students’ pets—or teachers’ dogs at the very least—should be allowed at school. In fact, there are so many benefits, with their tongues licking, eyes wide, tails wagging joyfully. Just as a person’s happiness can be infectious, so can a dog’s... I’m not even a big dog person (basically only love my own), but I still appreciate the friendly balls of joy they can be. Even from far away, it’s all wonderful and wonderful for stress relief.

In fact, there are some service dogs whose sole purpose is to provide emotional support, and research has proven that petting animals can reduce the production of cortisol, the body’s stress hormone, and increase the production of oxytocin, the hormone associated with love, trust, and relationships. This alleviates anxiety, depression, and even help with learning—studies conducted at UC Davis showed a 22% increase in reading accuracy when kids read aloud to dogs for 10-15 minutes a week. Dogs are clearly a wonderful way to boost happiness.

If I could come to school knowing a dog would support me through my physics or math quiz, I would be much more comfortable when I walked through that classroom door. Even if they aren’t allowed in classrooms, knowing I could find a dog to help destress between blocks or during lunch would also greatly increase my enthusiasm. Though allergies are a serious concern, there are alternatives that could have specific benefits.

I myself am allergic to dogs, and as long as the school is regularly cleaned, allergies can be kept under control. Another way to alleviate this could be as simple as keeping the pets off of furniture or washing hands after contact with them. Besides, if certain students don’t enjoy the company of dogs, they could communicate with the school and stay in the dog-free areas.

Of course, dogs also should not be allowed to roam freely on campus. They should behave and be under control in the halls. They should be on leashes or have an approval process. Even if it’s not as realistic to allow dogs on campus all day every day, if they were allowed into the lunch event, they could seriously boost morale, learning, and mental health.

A t 11:15 a.m. on a typical school day, there’s probably the most traffic on the in the traffic to www.nuevaschoolcafe. com as students pull their computers into their laps and finals come into focus. The line in front of the Café’s tea bar had been replaced by their reusable cousins.

My initial reaction was one of bemused appreciation—though it’s a fairly small intervention to address something so significant. For me, I can acknowledge the effort to make the school a better environmental citizen.

This sentiment quickly turned to disgust as I scoured through the first day post-switch. On the stairs, students slushed and splashed in every direction, open-topped mugs precariously perched on lockers or have an approval process. Even if it’s not as realistic to allow dogs on campus all day every day, if they were allowed into the lunch event, they could seriously boost morale, learning, and mental health.
CURES FOR SENIORITIS

BY ELIZABETH BUSH-PEEL

As we barrel toward the end of high school, the senior class is exhausted; between the stress of college applications, first semester academics, and the creeping feeling that high school is almost over, senioritis has swept the grade. So, for anyone who finds themselves sleeping through the afternoon or losing motivation, here are a few cures for your senioritis.

1. Restful breaks. As February break fades away and the long stretch of school before spring break ensues, remember to make your breaks really breaks before decisions start coming out in late March. For overscheduled, over-achieving Nueva kids, this can sometimes be hard, but it’s important to really take time off and instate a regular sleep schedule so you can give your all to what you love to do.

2. Spend time with friends. Spending time with your friends is important in second semester, both because you’ll probably be seeing them less next year and also because spending time with people you care about gives you energy. Make sure you don’t hole up for the next couple months as you wait for decisions to come out, because once they do, you may not have as much time to spend with friends.

3. Prep for college. No, I don’t mean study for tests you may not even take. Learn the skills you’ll need to survive: cooking well, shopping on a budget, et cetera. You’ll thank yourself later.

4. Create a bucket list. Six months from now, you’ll be immersed in a totally new environment. You will miss the familiarity of 131 East 28th Avenue. So come up with a list of things you love about Nueva and get excited about checking them off before you graduate. For example: walk around Bay Meadows park and (don’t) feed the ducks. Show up at an athletics or arts event to support your fellow seniors.

5. Plan your Senior Prank Day. The best pranks are clever and go down in history—like last year’s “Elon Musk is buying Nueva” trick.

6. Think about what you want to write in the yearbook at the end of the year. This is the last edition of the Tidal publication that you’ll get. Instead of just writing “HAGS” on the signature pages, start collecting appreciations now so that you can personalize your signatures.

7. Travel locally. The last few years have been spent working incredibly hard, so students may not have had a chance to visit parts of the Bay Area. Try checking out good seafood spots in Half Moon Bay or Pescadero so you’ll have even more positive memories of home when you go away for college. For students who applied closer to home, now is a good time to check out the places you may be attending next year. If you know for sure you’re going to school locally, it’s a good time to find favorite haunts so you’re not lost for things to do next year.

8. Binge your favorite shows/books now that you have free time. In a month, seniors will be so busy figuring out which schools they are going to attend, but for now, you have time to do what you couldn’t do during the first semester: relax, unwind, and catch up on every show you missed while you were away.

9. Graduate. Graduation is a great cure for senioritis. Put Sunday, June 14 on your calendar!

KEEPING UP WITH NEW YEAR’S RESOLUTIONS

BY LIA FERNANDEZ-GRINSHPUN

People worldwide make New Year’s resolutions every year in an attempt to improve their lives. Yet research by University of Scranton psychology professor John C. Norcross suggests that while about 40% of Americans set resolutions around January 1, only 40% to 44% of them will be successful at six months. Two months into 2020, we checked in with students and teachers to see how they’re doing with their resolutions!

Biography and IB Bio teacher Jehnna Ronan said, “My New Year’s resolution was to take 30- to 60-minute walks at least four times a week.” She wanted to make her occasional walk along the rolling hills of San Francisco regularly. Ronan has kept up with her resolution and enjoys the exercise and fresh air. She credits some of her success to a paper habit tracker which helps her see her progress on a “zoomed out level.”

Sleep is vital, often neglected, component of every person’s overall health and well-being. For 2020, Yoav Rafalin ’22 set a goal to get at least eight and a half hours of sleep each night. However, he says he has not done anything thus far to actually follow through. Despite mentioning that he barely had any homework, he blamed his BBYO leadership activities for his lack of sleep. When asked how much sleep he currently gets, Rafalin said, “No comment.”

Although PreK-3 Equity & Social Justice Director Alegoria Barclay does not typically have New Year’s resolutions, she does set intentions made up of a word or phrase she would like to embody. Barclay said, “For me, this year it is about being present. My mind tends to go a million miles per hour and the opportunities for distraction are never-ending.” She keeps herself accountable by setting aside some time every day to check in with herself and identify the moment she is in.

Thalia Renaker ’22 set a New Year’s resolution to eat more plant-based meals and begin replacing animal products with vegan alternatives. “I wanted to be more environmentally friendly,” Renaker said. “Learning more about the meat and dairy industries pushed me to take that initial step.” She is taking one step at a time, and so far has replaced drinking cow’s milk with soy milk.

A GENTLE REMINDER

BY EUGENIA XU

If you feel like this part of the school year is a stressful time, remember... you got this! This is a reminder to take a break, drink some water, and grab a snack. And that you’re about to be swamped with things to do.
THE NUEVA CURRENT

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

BY WILLOW TAYLOR CHIANG YANG

ACROSS
1. What break should be
2. ___ break, or the precursor to pandemic
3. Present tense of "to be"
9. Magnifying glass target, maybe
12. It's older
13. Fidget-spinning, Harlem-shaking Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission
15. Brand of popular, spherical lip balm
17. Local ice cream sandwiches
18. What the dish ran away with
20. Us, in Spanish
21. Nuvea grp. of which all families are members
22. Med.-sized portable battery
24. Festival of breaking the fast
25. Oft confused with "eg"
26. Female sports league ___ ___ Association, of Sue Bird and Diana Taurasi
28. Some are natural, some are spray
30. What some claim the elections are
32. One of a snow-sport pair
33. What you might do over break, with 25-Down

DOWN
1. Stop and smell the ___, as the old adage goes
2. ___ Union, with which Britain is breaking up
3. ___ Evolution, in telecommunications, abbr.
4. President under fire for alleged coronavirus cover-up
5. Skeptical "___ ___ though?"
6. A large hole, maybe
10. International military and defense spending alliance of which the U.S. is surprisingly still a member
11. What might be needed in bulk after a bad break-up
14. ___ Agency, which recently banned employees from making Tik Toks for it, abbr.
16. "Thus," informally
19. What you are in 7.53 billion
22. Like a listing on Yellow Pages, maybe
23. Wows
25. See 33-Across
27. 4-Down's int'l. infrastructure and investment strategy
28. Sometimes found next to "fax," for short
29. Drink suffix
31. Arguably second biggest name in investment banking, abbr.

You are allowed one submission per issue, and will earn an entry into our raffle at the end of the year. Think you got the right answers? Send a photo to us!

NUEVA STYLE WATCH

BY LIA FERNANDEZ-GRINSHPUN

REBECCA TAO '22

Go-to outfit?
Kick flare crop jeans with a white blouse, and of course my 1461 Doc Marten oxfords.

Describe your style.
I like to combine whimsical, feminine elements with casual pieces to make outfits everyday-appropriate, or else I’d always look overdressed.

Fashion inspiration?
I don’t really follow specific people for fashion inspiration, but rather brands and designers! Some of my favorites right now—not for actual purchases, just inspiration—include Sandra Mansour, Marchesa, Doen, Olive Clothing, Sister Jane, and Sezane.

How has your fashion style evolved?
My “ideal” clothing style tends to jump around very quickly. Before 7th grade I didn’t care about fashion at all, and then I wanted to look “cool”—whatever that meant to 7th grade me—then I wanted to look average but not ugly, then cute pastel preppy, then minimal and sophisticated, and now some combination of feminine, vintage, and whimsical. I tend not to buy more out there clothes, because I’ll probably be too scared to wear it in public and stop liking it after a while. Instead, I mostly stick to the things I already have, and try to make sure everything I do end up buying fits nicely into my wardrobe.

LUCY BIRTWISTLE ’21

Go-to outfit?
My favorite pair of jeans, a classic pair of boots or sneakers, and a statement top. That way my outfit still looks somewhat complex or like I put a decent amount of effort in when the patterns, colors, or graphics of my shirt are really pulling the weight. I also like to accessorize more heavily when I’m wearing a simpler outfit—jewelry is great, but I find that hair-related accessories can really add a lot to an outfit.

Describe your style.
I try to keep my style somewhat interesting and dynamic by playing with the silhouettes of my outfits, because I think that that’s where people tend to fall into a rut of whatever’s trending at the moment. I also like to incorporate a mix of trendy pieces and more classic pieces into my outfits, which I think can often spice them up a little bit.

Fashion inspiration?
Though they’re definitely not very every-day outfits, I think that Rihanna and Janelle Monae always have incredible red carpet looks that are always super eye-catching, unexpected and original. I use Instagram and Pinterest to get fashion inspiration if I’m either intentionally searching for guidance or particularly bored. Really the main thing I do, though, is go into my closet and spend a good chunk of time looking through my clothes and trying to piece together unexpected outfits, which I think can help me get the style gears turning, if not create actually wearable outfits and save myself time in the future.

ENTERTAINMENT

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SWIM TEAM SPIRIT STRONG DESPITE SETBACKS
Growing team continues with dryland training as they search for a practice pool

BY ANISHA KUMAR

The swim team dove into its second season this week with their first scheduled meeting on Monday, Feb. 24. Swimmers were excited to hear that they have access to a shared practice pool for the first time—last year, their practices consisted solely of weekly dryland workouts, which helped increase speed and endurance without time in the water. However, they are now unable to use the pool and are searching for a new place to practice. Until they find one, they will continue with dryland training.

Despite this setback, the swim team has strong spirit. “My favorite part is the warm-ups and cool-downs after and before our meets, because everybody’s swimming together,” said captain Willow Teter ’22. “It’s such a good energy, and we’re there as a team.”

Teter appreciates the encouraging atmosphere at meets. “We’re always cheering for each other, which is something other teams don’t always do...so we’ve got some pretty good team spirit,” she said.

This year, the team has swelled in numbers with a roster of 16 swimmers. “We have a lot more people, and I think it’s due to the fact that there’s less pressure to be on a club team,” Mayra Avidia ’22, who is in her second year of swimming with a club team. The team will have a six-meet season with their first meet on March 26 at Woodside Priory.

RECRUITING EFFORTS UNDERWAY FOR NEW BADMINTON CLUB
The newly formed team seeks to grow its ranks

BY BAYAN SHIMIZU

Without the three shuttlelocks stuck in the net of the gym’s basketball hoops, one might not notice that Nueva has a badminton club, though that’s sure to change due to the newly established official badminton team. The Nueva Badminton Club has almost completed the necessary preparations to create a team, fulfilling a goal they’ve had since the club’s creation. The team will have its first meeting on Feb. 26 after a semester of planning.

However, despite the first meeting being scheduled, club leader David Chan ’22 makes it clear that the team is still understaffed; there are only seven members, one short of the eight necessary for a match. The Badminton Club meets during Thursday lunch in the gym, a space shared with the rock climbing club. Both Chan and club member Eli Cooper ’22 mentioned that the club is low-commitment and is not exclusive in regards to skill.

One of the club’s members, with the exception of club leaders Chan and Ian Lum ’22, had played badminton prior to joining the club; the team is centered around having an enjoyable experience rather than playing at a competitive level. “Anybody who wants to try a new sport [can join],” said Cooper. “It’s very, very casual.”

Though the team doesn’t plan to attend tournaments anytime soon, they’re planning for the possibility. Several exhibition matches are currently in the works for the team and, next year, they plan to join a league. Chan anticipates that the team will have more serious training when they begin to play outside of school; currently, the club lacks a coach, though biology teacher Tri Sweepney acts as their advisor. Chan mentioned that the team is “talking with some...past Olympic coaches,” whom he plans to meet during the team’s first practice.

As of now, however, the primary goal is recruiting. Chan hopes that the presence of a coach and formation of an official team will increase membership and fill the final spot so that the club can qualify for tournaments and other competitions.

TRACK AND FIELD TEAM BEGINS SEVENTH SEASON
Team anticipates great season ahead

BY ANANDA ASUDANI

Short intervals on the track. Monday is a long-distance run with bursts of speed every few minutes. Wednesday is a recovery run with hills at the track. Friday is a 45-minute umbilical jog. Long high-speed runs or races take place on Saturday. This is a typical week for distance runners on the team, and athletes who often run about 35 miles per week.

The track and field team, which is in its seventh year, consists of a variety of runners who complete vigorous training routines every week.

Coach Robert Lopez, who is leading the track and field team for the second year and coaches the cross country team in the fall, says that it can be difficult to coach a sport with so many different events—16 running events plus the pole vault.

“This is very unique, and all of them need special attention,” Lopez said. “Even within the distance group, there are shorter distances and longer distances, so the training is very specific for each of those.”

Students looking to join the team are evaluated in the first few weeks so that the coaches can assess whether they would be more successful as sprinters or distance runners.

Lopez splits the distance runners into three groups: the 400–800 group, the 800–1600 group, and the 1600–3200 group. This way, the runners can do exercises more specialized for the events they compete in. For middle-distance runners, people who run the 400- and 800-meter events, he breaks the practices up so that they run with both the distance runners and sprinters.

Every month, Lopez sends out a workout calendar that specifies practice and meet times. Two to three days of the week are spent practicing on the track at the College of San Mateo and the rest on or around campus.

Workouts include tempo runs, where there is a specific point in the run where athletes increase their speed, and negative split runs, where runners gradually increase their speed throughout the run. Training also includes time at the track and in the weight room and stretches before and after practice.

Runners will also train outside of the team. Vienna Gao ’21, a mid-distance runner, does resistance training and cardio every week. “Because resistance training (i.e. weight lifting, circuit training, etc.) is such an integral part of my weekly routine, I’ve noticed that I am now a lot stronger and am able to push past a lot of limits I was not able to before,” Gao said. “Additionally, cardio is really great for recovering after resistance training, as stimulating your cardiovascular system increases the capillary growth in muscles, so various exercises have helped me optimize the results of every one of my workouts.”

Similarly, sprinter Jake Vercellino ’20 practices in the weight room during the off-season and does aerobic and anaerobic exercises.

Many team members also bring experiences from other sports they play throughout the year onto the track and field team, including swimmer Shannah Zarboulas ’21.

“I swam competitively for a while before I switched to running, and I think it has helped me,” Zarboulas said. “Both require a lot of mental strength and are, in many ways, very individual.”

Lopez thinks it’s important for athletes to play multiple sports, as it protects from burnout and provides skills that can translate onto the track. Soccer players, for example, often have high levels of endurance from running back and forth on the soccer field for 40 minutes at a time. Basketball players have great jumps, particularly useful for the vertical and horizontal jump events, and are used to lots of quick starts and stops, helping with short bursts of speed in track.

Luciano Malavasi ’20 is a distance runner who has been running since middle school and has run during all four years of his time at the Upper School. He speaks fondly of the bonds he has formed with his fellow distance runners: “Our distance team is really tight-knit because we spend two seasons a year competing together. From racing together to tackling hard workouts, we are all supporting one another to get better every day, and on long-run days we spend our miles cracking jokes and talking about anything on our minds,” he says.

The girls team is also close, especially because of its small size. From chatting on the easier recovery runs to playing soccer before practice, the runners support one another in many different ways. “It’s a solo sport, but you very much feel like part of a team,” says Callisto Lodwick ’22, a long-distance runner.

Zarboulas recounts one particular experience from last season. “There was one very memorable experience where the sprinters were at the College of San Mateo track and it was pouring extremely hard,” Zarboulas said. “All of the runners abandoned hope of staying dry and we just sprinted through the rain, getting drenched while laughing and having a great time.”

Activities off the field can help bring different parts of the team together. “Sometimes the sprinters are only going to see the sprinters because they’re working out for their specific events,” Lopez said. “This gives us an opportunity to bring everybody together and just remember we’re all part of the same team.”

While team members have different workouts and practices, they still warm up and travel together. “Most importantly, we cheer each other on in races,” Malavasi said.

Vercellino agrees, adding that “the shared experience of adrenaline, teamwork, and suffering is very memorable.”

While members of the team enjoy traveling, the best experience is often right at home. “Sometimes, our best memories are made just running fast workouts together, succeeding in local meets, and being proud of how we’re progressing as a team,” Malavasi said.
BY MIRIELLE WONG

You hate sports. Or maybe the word “hate” feels too strong—sports are just boring, and you don’t understand why people invest so much time and energy to watching a pitcher throw something in front of a guy holding a stick, or following a nearly-invincible puck around a rink, or enthusing about three-hundred-pound front of a guy holding a stick, or following people invest so much time and energy fashion. behind them. And they do, in spectacular the next year, determined to put failure their is toppled by a lowly nobody with story. An epic story, where an invincible regurgitated by brainwashed fans. it often sounds like the propaganda of a idols, or the hilarity of watching from afar and makes them into superstars and thousands of other people, or how sports raise people of all races out of poverty and makes them into superstars and idols, or the hilarity of watching from afar the absurdity inherent in certain sport franchises. But I’m pretty sure someone’s told you about all that before, and anyway, it often sounds like the propaganda of a behemoth corporation internalized and regurgitated by brainwashed fans. Instead, let me tell you a different story. An epic story, where an invincible hero is toppled by a lowly nobody with nothing but heart, determination, and an unbelievable amount of luck on the eve of the would-be coronation. The defeated hero leave, lick their wounds, and rise the next year, determined to put failure behind them. And they do, in spectacular fashion. I am, of course, talking about No. 16 seed UMBC’s shocking upset of overall No. 1 Virginia by 20 points in the 2018 NCAA men’s basketball tournament. Before the game, Virginia was favored by 22 points. But on March 16, 2018, UMBC led the entire second half. They didn’t win on a freak prayer shot that went in at the last moment. No, UMBC dominated Virginia’s bigger, stronger, better front, or following the Rams team known as the Greatest Show on Turf in the aftermath of 9/11. Perhaps the hallmark of that story is the performance of a little-known upstart quarterback named Tom Brady, who entered an improbable comeback victory in the final minutes of the Super Bowl. In 2002, the Patriots were America’s team, the righteous heroes, only to be hit by scandal, namely Spygate in 2007 and Deflategate in 2014. Now, outside of New England, they’re branded as the monstrosity Goliath, the Evil Empire of the National Football League. Was their recent wild-card playoff loss a mirage or the true fall of the dynasty? Only time will tell. In the end, the sphere of sports is another canvas, like the blank page or film, on which stories are written. Beneath the outlandish lingo, the stats, and the drama, sports are a microcosm of the world: heroes and villains crowned and sometimes fabricated, urban myths, legends, and truth mixing to make stories just like the ones in the window of a bookstore.

In the end, the sphere of sports is another canvas, like the blank page or film, on which stories are written. Beneath the outlandish lingo, the stats, and the drama, sports are a microcosm of the world: the rejoicing people, crowned kings and queens of the land. Yet the years go on, and those who were once heroes are now scorned as a plague upon the land, an evil bastion of corruption that lords over the land. Knights errant rise to fight the empire, trying to hold the evil at bay, but, each time, the opposing forces only return stronger than before. To paraphrase Mark Twain, reports of their death are often greatly exaggerated. Does it sound like a grand fantasy novel? That’s the story of the New England Patriots, who rose to fame by defeating a team known as the Greatest Show on Turf in the aftermath of 9/11. Perhaps the hallmark of that story is the performance of a little-known upstart quarterback named Tom Brady, who entered an improbable comeback victory in the final minutes of the Super Bowl. In 2002, the Patriots were America’s

BY ROHAN SACHDEV

The beach volleyball team started last year with only four people. The team was started by varsity volleyball player Cate Lee ’22 in her freshman year as cross-training for members of the indoor girls volleyball teams. They participated in a Northern California league organized by parents for their first season. “It was more of a club thing,” said Laura Schneider ’20, who also plays on the varsity volleyball team. “It wasn’t an official sport; we just did it on the side.” Nonetheless, the team managed to qualify for a Bay Area High School tournament at Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk. This year, the informal nature of the team is set to change. “They are treating it more like an actual team this year,” Schneider said. The team plans to use Notre Dame Belmont’s courts to practice this year, though Schneider hopes that Nueva will one day build a beach volleyball court of its own. Due to high participation on the JV girls volleyball team, Schneider is cautiously optimistic about beach volleyball participation this season.

BEACH VOLLEYBALL TEAM SETS UP FOR SOPHOMORE SEASON

New practice court and forecasts of a growing roster fuel hopes

“we have a much bigger and more developed JV team for indoor volleyball this year,” she said. “Hopefully many of them will transfer over as well.” Though she hopes to see crossover in membership, Schneider emphasizes the difference between beach volleyball and indoor volleyball. “It is so similar yet so different,” she said. “You have to use the same skills in an entirely different way.” In beach volleyball, there are only two people per side, meaning that you naturally get more touches on the ball. Schneider also said that the positions and jobs of players in beach volleyball are not as specialized as they are with indoor volleyball due to the constraint on the number of players on each team. The beach volleyball team hopes to start practicing for the upcoming tournaments soon and is excited for many of the tournaments which will follow. Lee also hopes to organize a Nueva tournament for those who are less experienced with beach volleyball.

BY KAYLA HWONG

The boys volleyball team will enter their second season ever with 29 boys signed up, 20 more players than they had in their inaugural year. The growth opens the possibility of a JV team in addition to varsity. Last year, the team generated excitement by encouraging people to join in on school spirit through supporting them in their games. However, they didn’t have access to the Nueva gym for any home games, making it harder to gain support from students. Last season, the team struggled with finding enough players as most of their roster also played on the basketball teams and there was an overlap between seasons. As a result last year, the team had only six students consistently started. The team started when a group of current seniors decided to begin their own boys volleyball team. Athletics Director Chris Wade agreed that there was enough interest to create a team and they arranged to have Spanish teacher Francisco Becerra-Hernandez coach. The team played against other local schools but did not participate in a league. The team also did reach out to the Middle School to get the fifth-graders excited about volleyball. This inspired several fifth-grade boys to form their own middle school team, which will continue again this spring. The upper school team’s first game is scheduled for March 10.

BOYS VOLLEYBALL TEAM RETURNS FOR SECOND SEASON

Roster of 29 generates excitement for upcoming season despite no league placement
Falcons under 49ers head coach Kyle Shanahan, her sexuality. She returned to her original passion, the opportunity to continue as a coach because of the program aimed at helping minorities earn NFL coaching positions, Sowers was able to connect with players and many others with her simple message of achievement will be the lasting win, as she motivates and listens to—to the core. Just shocking, something that didn’t seem true. Even after a month, the words still have a certain hollowness to them. Known simply as “Kobe” across the nation, Bryant was not only one of the absolute greatest to ever play the game of basketball, but also one of the rare few to transcend the sport. Beyond his fame, what made the news of his death all the more shocking was that he was only 41—only a few years off the court. He had his whole life ahead of him. Rich and famous, he was a superstar amongst superstars, involved in sports, Hollywood, and a million other enterprises. That’s the biographical aspect, I suppose. But when we pitched this story, I told my editor, “I don’t feel qualified to write this.” Frankly, I watch more college basketball than professional—and,compounding that, I’m a bit too young. Sports multi may be, but Kobe Bryant occupied a hazy place in my memory. Not old enough to be the legendary hero of stories passed on by my parents. No, that’s His Airness Michael Jordan and, to a lesser extent, Magic Johnson and the 1980 Showtime Lakers. Not young enough for me to remember clearly myself—at least not in a basketball sense. That spot belongs to the Warriors’ perennial NBA Finals adversary Lebron James. Just as I wouldn’t want a historical story told entirely by someone who didn’t live it or if a college basketball story from the NBA perspective, I don’t want my limited NBA experience, in both years and games, to diminish Bryant’s impact. So we took our questions to the Nueva community—questions about the profound impact of one man on people across the nation, women who have never met and those whose teams he didn’t play for.

“Kobe Bryant was such a big deal, not just because he’s such a sports icon, but also because of what he did after. Some people were saying that he was going to be the one to bring women’s sports to the top of the conversation. It’s a shame his legacy is now 40-plus years premature.”

—Rachel Freeman, Communications Website Manager

“I did a data science project a few years ago in a computer science class. I was looking at his career and every shot that he’s taken, and his career progression—specifically, how good would he have been like if he never got hurt? And I think that project actually told me that I wanted to be a data scientist for an NBA team. And so when you think about it, Kobe and looking at that data set is the reason why I know that I want to go into sports.”

—Jeremy Dumag 20

The news of his death shook me—just like everyone else I’ve spoken to, read about, listened to—to the core. Just shocking, something that didn’t seem true. Even after a month, the words still have a certain hollowness to them.

...
NEW PLAYERS AND INJURIES SET BOYS SOCCER TEAM BACK IN PSAL

BY LIA FERNANDEZ-GRINSHPUN

This year’s boys soccer team has competed through the growing pains of an almost entirely new team and a number of injuries. The season has been one of rebuilding, filled with massive growth of skills and game experience.

The main challenge this year has been that the team lost so many seniors last year, so it is almost an entirely new team,” said Christopher Martin ‘20, who joined the team this season and plays defense.

Nine players graduated last year, opening many important roles to younger players. The team has also had many injuries, making it necessary for game plans to be flexible.

“The team’s leading goal scorer had to miss several games due to an ankle injury,” Athletic Director Chris Saxena said.

While disappointing, this vacancy has allowed other players to step in and gain invaluable experience.

Despite having a 2-5-3 record (their wins were against Design Tech and Summit Rainier), players’ spirits are high. It has been great to work and always be present with all of the freshmen; our team bond has only strengthened since the beginning of the season,” said Ayaan Banerjee ‘22, one of the team captains. “We have seen our fair share of defeats and disappointments; however, there have been many times when we were able to pull through, come together, and play some beautiful soccer, which is extremely promising as a sign that there is huge potential for this team.”

The team has also had many injuries, missing the entire season third place in the PSAL with an 8-4 league record.

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Girls basketball wins first CCS playoff game

BY SERENA SAXENA

Never before has the girls basketball team won a CCS game, but this season, led by coaches Mike Green and Laurel Donnenwirth, the 14-player team proved that they could. With the addition of six new freshmen, the team had rigorous practices to enhance their skills in order to bring a new competitive edge to their game.

On Feb. 7, the girls faced league rival Pacific Bay Christian, a team they had never defeated in the past. They mastered a 46-44 win, the second addition to the energy of Senior Night.

“The game was something else, it was truly remarkable,” said captain Tara Saxena ‘21. “It just showed that we are capable of beating teams we have never defeated before and set the stage for our success in CCS.”

After finishing league games with a 9-3 record, the team was determined to keep their CCS hopes alive.

On Feb. 22, the team competed against Pacific Collegiate in the second round of CCS playoffs after a bye in the first. With a close game throughout every quarter, it came down to the last minute when Alex Enger ‘20 scored a layup and Nueva took the 44-42 lead.

After many steals and tough battles, Eliza Shields ’23 was fouled and sent to the free-throw line. She split her free throws, increasing the lead to three points and securing the 45-42 win for Nueva and the first-ever CCS win for the girls team.

“It feels really amazing. It’s a testament to how much work we’ve done; being able to look back on the season and say that we achieved the goal we set out is great,” Saxena said.

Although the team suffered a 75-10 loss to Notre Dame Salinas in the quarterfinals, this was the farthest the girls team has ever gotten.

“The new players on the team have brought tons of enthusiasm and the range of skill sets we now have makes us able to contend in CCS a lot better than in the past,” Saxena said.

Girls soccer undefeated for second season in a row

BY AMANDA WANG

For the second year in a row, the girls soccer team has been undefeated in the PSAL. Unfortunately, the team of 21—led by coach Daniel Zerubrik—lost in their CCS playoff game against Sacred Heart Prep despite an early 1-0 lead.

The team has worked hard to get to the playoffs through their daily practices, completing drills, scrimmages, and conditioning.

Their record of 20-0 in the league and 12-3 overall results from the excellent chemistry between teammates. They have worked hard to build teamwork and improve their ball handling skills.

“We start off a little slow, and we really have to work to pick up our intensity,” said center defender Emma Leschly ‘21. “We’re really good on our possession game. Sometimes we aren’t always on top of our touches and passes, but we always have to work together to improve that.”

Even in the losses, the team has picked each other up and pushed players forward, boosting morale and building their success.

“In our first preseason game...against Priory, we lost, but we really got to see the team play together,” Leschly said. “Every single girl was super supportive even though we were down, and all the girls got to know each other well as players in the game. As many of us know in sport and in life, the lead may not always be in one’s favor. However, with a spirit, an attitude and a commitment to do your best, all of that can change,” said Athletics Director Chris Wade. “Watching our girls soccer team demonstrate that on the field was another reminder of how special this group is. Scores, wins, records can never be remembered forever, but moments and the ways those moments empower and make one feel do live on forever.”

The team earned recognition as the CCS Scholaric Team Champion, with a CCS Section team GPA of 3.85.