

SPORTS

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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THE NUEVA CURRENT

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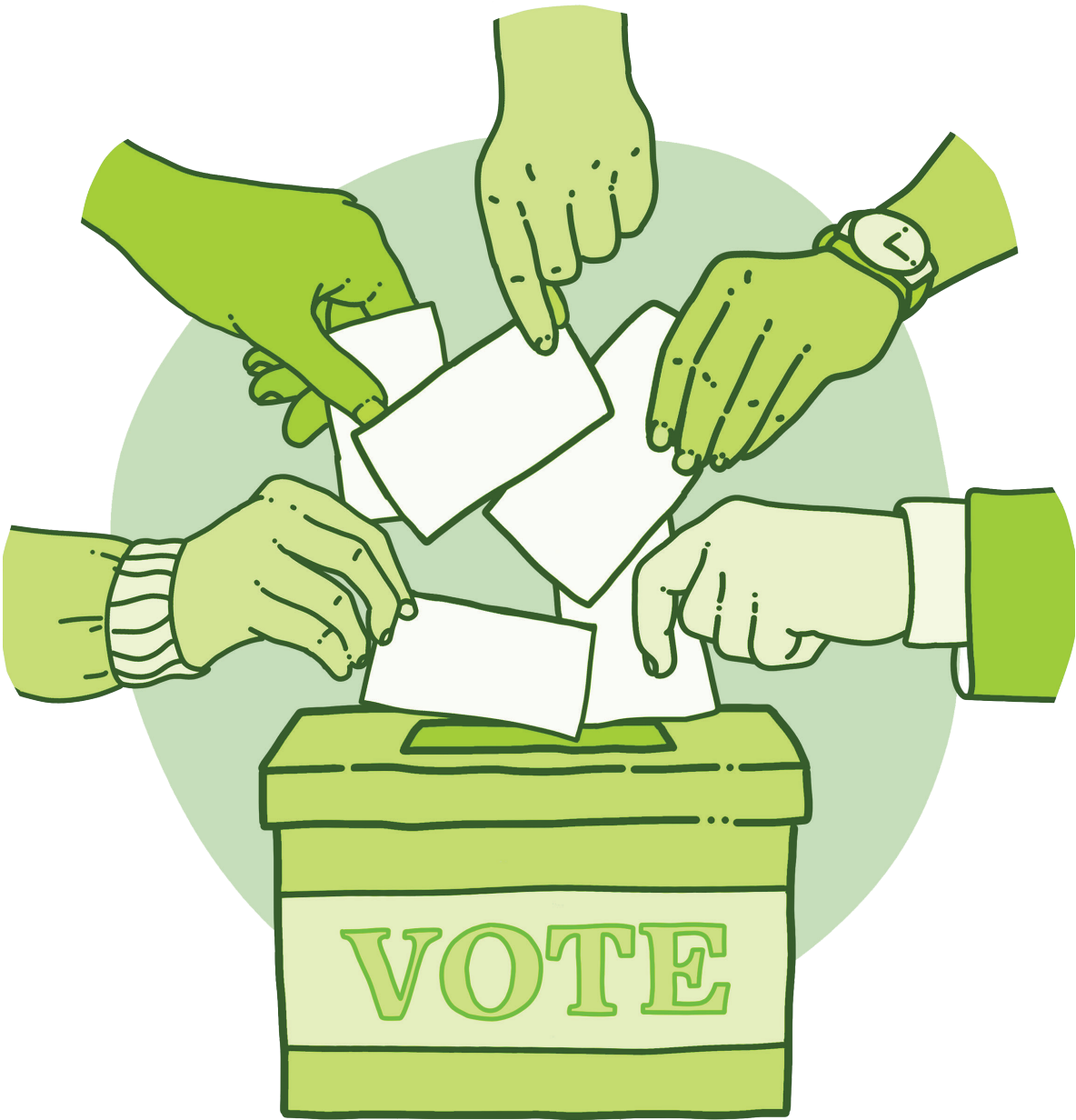


ILLUSTRATION BY THALIA RENAKER

SENIORS PREPARE FOR 2020 ELECTION

California primaries mark the first time upperclassmen can vote

BY ISABEL CHAMBERS

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AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE

What politics means to Generation Z

BY WILLOW TAYLOR CHIANG YANG

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CULTURE Nueva parent writes New York Times bestseller

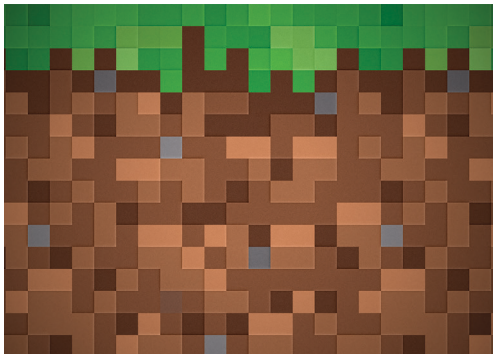
Abigail Wen's *Loveboat, Taipei* dives into teenage life as an Asian American through diverse characters in an overseas culture program. PAGE 6



PHOTO COURTESY OF INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF BRUSSELS

FEATURES 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. PAGE 14



FEATURES 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. PAGE 15



PHOTO BY WILLOW TAYLOR CHIANG YANG

OPINION Stop complaining about school lunch

We should be grateful for the food in the Café—and acknowledge the privilege it represents. PAGE 18

EXPLORING THE MUSIC OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

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



READING A SPEECH
History teacher Sushu Xia, Houjun Liu '23, Cole Bregman '22, Neven Lalic '23, and Alex Nickel '20 read one of Martin Luther King Jr.'s speeches during the assembly on Tuesday, which focused on King's work beyond the civil rights movement.
PHOTO BY WILLOW TAYLOR CHIANG YANG

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—was spread out over one week. 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 past MLK Day programming.

“I wanted to do something that was lighter but still very meaty and powerful,” Barclay said.

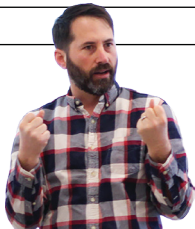
She also wanted a theme that would have broader applications beyond the civil rights movement and relate to current events. This year, she had seen an increasing movement to “reclaim MLK,” a campaign to explain the complexities of Rev. Dr. King as an individual beyond just the civil rights movement.

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



“It is such a treat to be able to pause as a school and explore a set of themes inspired by MLK. I only wish I could have attended some of the other workshops because each one seemed fascinating.”
TOM DORRANCE



“It is such a treat to be able to pause as a school and explore a set of themes inspired by MLK. I only wish I could have attended some of the other workshops because each one seemed fascinating.”
ALEGRIA BARCLAY



I see MLK programming as a chance to broaden students’ perspectives beyond what they know to help them understand the true revolutionary nature of equality. I really appreciated being able to help students see the origins of rap within this very historical context.
DANIELLE MCREYNOLDS-DELL

PHOTOS BY WILLOW TAYLOR CHIANG YANG

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 nuance 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 2018-2019 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 took home 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 chess where you slowly vice-grip your opponent to death,” Daniel said. It’s beautiful.”

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

PHOTO PROVIDED BY DANIEL HWANG

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.



READING A SPEECH | Claire Green ’21 and Abigail Pasternak ’21 brainstorm potential parameters to mutual tolerance and civil discourse as well as feedback they had for the assembly.
PHOTO BY WILLOW TAYLOR CHIANG YANG

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 Diane Rosenberg and incoming head Lee Fertig.



Liza Raynal

The Advisory Search Committee unanimously recommended Raynal for the position. “As impressive as other candidates were, both Diane and I also 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 new role.”

Raynal attended Nueva as a student and has worked as a teacher and leader within 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, and a search for the permanent MS head will begin in the fall.

SUCCESSFUL STEEL DRUMS PROGRAM CONTINUES TO DEVELOP

From St. Lucia to SF Jazz, the program expands to play internationally

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.

In between trips to beaches with crystal clear waters, hiking mountains, and visiting sugar plantations, the band practiced three to four hours a day.

“Although it was a little tiring at times, it was so cool to see firsthand how he was able to observe and fine-tune things since he knew the music so well,” said Anoushka Krishnan ’23. “It was super gratifying to see how much we improved by the end of the trip.”

During the sessions, usually from 4–8 p.m., Narell helped them get their songs up to tempo, refine the notes, and nail down the phrasing.

“It was a really cool opportunity for us to learn from a professional,” said Megan Branstad ’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.



ST. LUCIA | Calder Burkhardt ’23 and the rest of the steel drums band traveled to St. Lucia to learn from world-renowned steel drummer Andy Narell. PHOTO BY LIZZIE McALVEY

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 Thomspen. 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.

INTERSESSION 2020

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

STORY BY ELLA LIN | PHOTOS BY WILLOW TAYLOR CHIANG 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, Intersession 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 creat—some even took home their own inventions, including succulent terrariums, decorated cakes, and spray-painted tote bags.

“Intersession 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 Intersession 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 not 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,” Gavi Gordon ’21 said. “For example, this year I tried a knitting intersession 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, Intersession 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.

“Intersession 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 mannequin in an activity session titled Medical Exploration: Forensics.
- 2. Shalin Zarboulas ’21 and Ayaan Banerjee ’22 put together air terrariums in the Succulents: Aerium Workshop activity session.
- 3. Gabe Moussa ’20 works on a ring in the Metal Working: Rings for Your Fingers seminar.
- 4. Lia Fernandez-Grinshpun ’22 and Laura Schneider ’20 control the replays and screen graphics during the Sports Broadcasting intensive.
- 5. Abby Pasternak ’21 gets ready to climb the wall in the Rock Climbing: Introduction activity session.
- 6. Daniel Bernstein ’21 and Aidan Percer ’21 practice during the Latin Jazz Ensemble intensive.

AN ADAPTATION THAT ELEVATES PRINT: JUST MERCY IS EMOTIONALLY EVOKING AND RAW

Film stays authentic to the book while composing powerful narrative of wrongful conviction

BY VALERIE BRAYLOVSKIY

Nearly two dozen eager but slightly skeptical faces greet attorney Bryan Stevenson when he visits client Walter McMillian’s family in his book *Just Mercy*. Stevenson dedicates his time to answering their questions and listening to their concerns of Walter being on death row, and their cries for his innocence.

“I feel like they done put me on death row, too,” McMillian’s older sister Armelia Hand says. “What do we tell these children about how to stay out of harm’s way when you can be at your own house, minding your own business, surrounded by your entire family, and they still put some murder on you that you ain’t do and send you to death row?”

Translated into film, the scene radiates a similar energy of community and perseverance. The family is crowds around a wooden table, with Stevenson sitting at the head, dressed in a smoothly ironed baby blue shirt and black cross-stitched collar. Some family members sit with arms crossed while others stand, hovered around the table, loud pitched sounds echoing as Stevenson takes notes. In front of him is a glass of sweet iced tea, continuously refilled to the brim by an older woman, who could be a relative or neighbor of McMillian’s.

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 McMillian, an Alabama man sentenced to wait on death row for a murder he did not commit in 1987. 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 topics when I read it 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 nonfiction 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 Mcmillian. He blends in facts and historical context of the criminal justice system and mass incarceration, providing readers with a completed perspective. More subtly, *Just Mercy* reveals Stevenson’s personal quest with finding peace in the midst of fighting for justice.

In the movie, director Daniel Cretton addresses a lot of the book’s similar themes in a way understandable to the public, sparking movement and sound into the book’s sometimes frozen

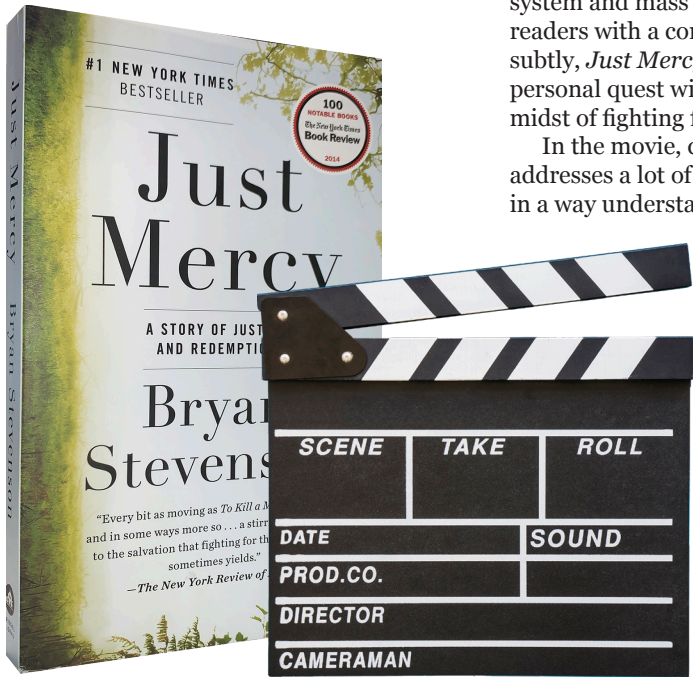
scenes. He makes it emotionally moving and uplifting, invoking a range of human emotions, including frustration and hopefulness.

The heart-wrenching acting plays a major part in that emotional adaptation. Both Jordan’s and Foxx’s performances bring the main characters to life, painting their characters in an authentic and raw way, impossible to grasp in the books. Foxx, in particular, gets at the core of McMillian’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 audience’s attention of a story that is somewhat unfathomable.



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, a very in-character comedy for creator Michael Schur, features four humans who arrive in a heaven-like afterlife and must navigate various struggles, ranging from a feeling of not belonging to a complete overhaul of the afterlife system.

Now, to be clear, I love many characteristics of this NBC show (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 heinous ninth season had a far better ending than its beginning and middle.

The Good Place, another Schur production like *The Office*, delivers in terms of its dry humor and mild political bent, but its lack of philosophical rigor—or even accuracy—and its attempt at meme-making disadvantaged the show that started out heartfelt and original. Instead of returning

to what was loved in the earlier seasons—its sarcastic-but-optimistic tone and its complex villains—*The Good Place* not only lost its feeling of authenticity, but also the feeling of real stakes for the characters. At the same time 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 goals well: resolving the afterlife problem and the characters' respective relationships.

Perhaps it isn't the way 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?



GRAPHIC BY VECTEEZY

STUDENTS REVIEW THE BARD

Three students' opinions on Shakespeare plays they've read in English classes

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

BY ISABEL CHAMBERS

Just like hors d'oeuvres, Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a joyous snack before the main courses of his heartier plays. Spoonfuls of humor which lay across a generous dollop of romance lead to a flavorful mouthful. A lighthearted breezy bite for a midsummer day if I say so myself.

THE TEMPEST

BY ELIZABETH BUSH-PEEL

Shakespeare's *The Tempest* is his final work and—while not a culmination of the full Shakespeare canon—provides a glimpse not only into his romance plays but also into his life. Not only is it a worthwhile read because of its author's influence on modern literature, but it also explores love in many forms.

OTHELLO

BY ABIGAIL PASTERNAK, GUEST WRITER

Othello felt like being dunked into the icy Mediterranean sea before I'd had time to wake up. Iago's highly expressive monologues were the only life raft from nearly drowning in crucial—yet underwritten—plot and characters. A politically complex tale, *Othello* leaves you gasping for air as one of the less interesting works from the Shakespeare canon.



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. No wasting money, no drinking. Dress like a nun, curfew at 10 p.m., straight A’s, and many more. Ever Wong’s goal for this summer—away from her parents and in a foreign country—is to break them all.

Released 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 culture 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 (Rick’s fashion-forward and boy-crazy cousin), and Xavier Yeh (the playboy heir to a massive fortune). Little does Ever know that many of her new friends were sent to Chientan in search of a spouse where, unbeknownst to their parents, they skip class, party, and drink snake-blood sake.

The story—from which ACE Entertainment of 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 wrote *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 Wen initially wrote—the originals were told through four alternating perspectives.

“By draft 26, however, the novel wasn’t working. I couldn’t fit that many story arcs into 120,000 words and it ended with the wrong climax,” Wen said. She scrapped 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 address at least some of the potential underlying causes—internal, familial, and external—and to show teens that they can be 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. “The 30 characters differ from one another—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, so she could offer specific advice about inventing characters and how to draw on your own experiences to craft fictional lives," said Jennifer Paull, who is a part of the new initiative. "As we think about the kinds of activities, experts, resources, and field trips that a Humanities Center could offer, author visits like Abigail’s would be terrific opportunities."

Even Sophie reunites briefly with girls from something called a Center for Talented Youth summer camp.

“How do so many people here know each other?” I ask Sophie.

“It’s that six degrees of separation thing. Only for us, it’s like, two degrees, know what I mean?”

I don’t. I don’t know a soul here, but in this moment, the loneliness I feel is overridden by the larger strangeness of blending in. In the mall back home, heads sometimes turned when I walked by with my family, but now, my Asian Americanness is invisible, erased like a shaken Etch A Sketch. It’s an unexpected relief.

EXCERPT FROM *LOVEBOAT, TAIPEI*

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 texting 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 that dissolved their friendship. Each attempts 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 the moodiest days of sixth or seventh grade—rife with fantasies about high school drama and empty of any attempts to grapple with the world at large.

It’s structured around an emotional goal (make the reader cry? I think? It did bring me near tears at one point,

though only because I checked the page count an hour on and found myself with 100 pages of puzzlement and tedium to go) with the plot merely a cobbled-together, patchwork vehicle and the characters and their development strapped safely into the backseat.

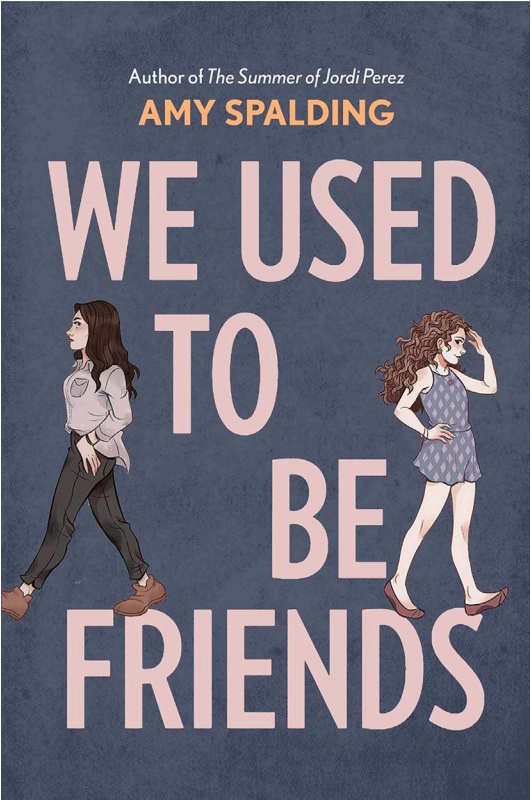
The metaphors are simultaneously bland and strangely specific—“Losing Kat is a build, and my heartache is the unknown muscles,” James says in the first chapter of the book, comparing the end of their friendship to the charity projects she’s participating in (apparently at the behest of her estranged(?) mother)—it’s the sort of writing you’d expect from an intro creative writing class just discovering the idea of character-building and complexity.

At one point Kat is describing a girl from her high school and notes that she “shops with the confidence of an adult, decisively selecting meats and cheeses and pasta and asking me questions about my family’s spice cabinet.” The only long term impact this book is likely to have on me is a low level of concern about whether I shop like an adult or, heaven forbid, one of the

one-dimensional characters who are apparently college age, though their thoughtlessness and tendency towards catastrophizing made me hope with a desperate fervor that I skip over the stage of development they model.

The second-hand exhaustion is intense, and perhaps the only piece of the middle school experience the book gets right (of course, it’s meant to be about high school, but the whole thing is made almost bearable by pretending it’s actually about eight grade).

If you’re looking for a book about the complexities of transition, friendship, and loss, this isn’t it (try *Counting by 7s* by Holly Goldberg Sloane). Likewise, if you’re searching for a coming-of-age novel or a commentary on the importance of acknowledging the depth of the bond between friends, try *I’ll Give You the Sun* by Jandy Nelson or *Wild Blue Wonder* by Carlie Sorosiak instead. That said, if you need a last-minute gift for a middle schooler you don’t know or an easy way to prevent people from ever bothering you for book recommendations again, this is the book for you.



UNFRIENDING YOUR BFF Told in dual timelines—half the chapters are told moving forward, and half are told moving backward—*We Used To Be Friends* captures the dissolution of a friendship as two characters grow into different people.



COMMUNITY IN THE "BACHELOR NATION"

Fans of the show bond through discussions of episodes

BY KAYLA HWONG

With catfights 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 on the last season of *The Bachelorette*

and made it to the final three. He was portrayed as a sweet and caring guy who people overall enjoyed watching. However, he was a less popular pick 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 squabbling happens during the cocktail parties where the women have to share their time with the 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.”

Like many viewers, Herlick prefers to watch with others.

“It’s not fun to watch by myself and it’s less interesting because there’s no one to talk with about all the drama and characters,” Herlick said. When she can’t watch with friends, she texts them her analysis

“Part of the fun of the show is watching it every week and watching it unfold and talking with your friends about it.”

—Nixie Herlick ’23

during and after the show on the plentiful drama in a typical *Bachelor* episode.

“If I meet a stranger and learn that they watch *The Bachelor*, we could probably talk for hours,” said Anya Potsiadlo ’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.

PHOTO COURTESY OF VALERIE MACON (AFP)

NETFLIX'S ROMANCE TITLES

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

BY GRACE FINKE

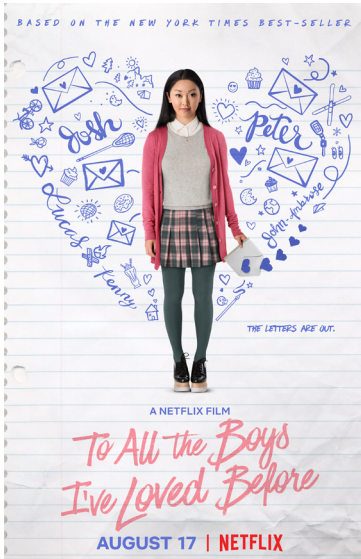
Hear me out. I’m normally not the type to watch romantic comedies, but ever since I heard about the oh-so anticipated sequel to *To All the Boys I’ve Loved Before*, I decided to browse Netflix and see what’s up with all of these romcoms that have been flooding the streaming platform.

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 had no 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)



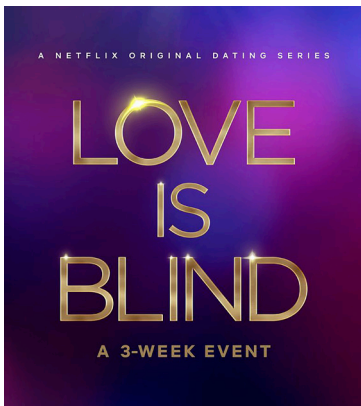
Based on Jenny Han’s 2014 novel, *TATBILB* follows the depressingly single Lara Jean Covey as she starts fake-dating her middle school crush, Peter Kavinsky, to distract herself from her real crush, Josh Sanderson, who also happens to be her sister’s boyfriend. It’s a new concept, but it still ends as 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, similarly 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 show proves is that love is blind as long—as everyone 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)



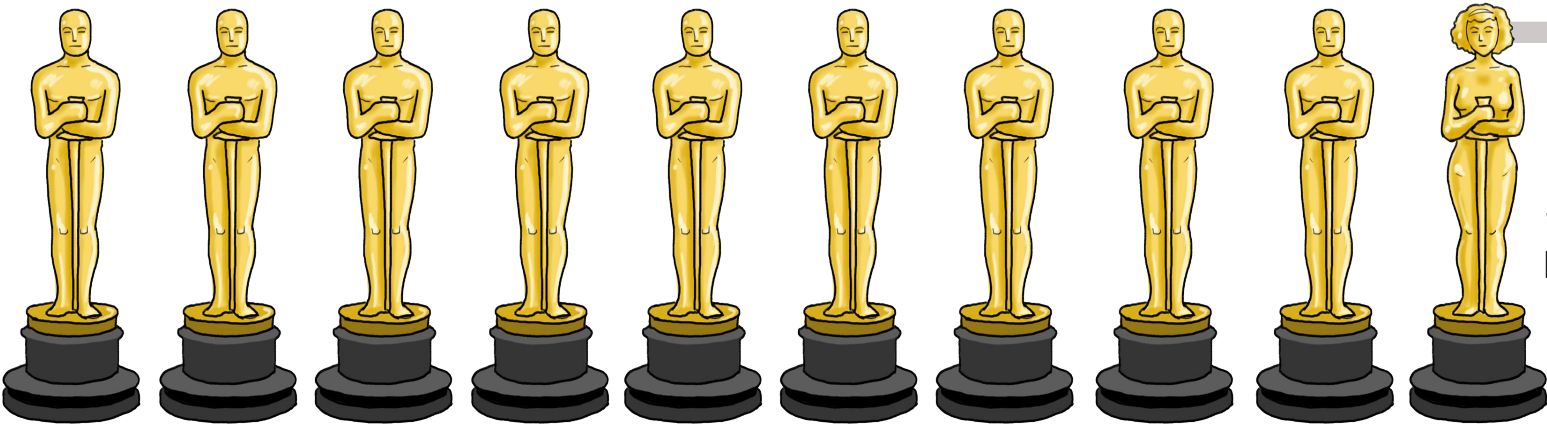
“‘Fallen Kingdom’ is the only good song.”

—Annie Edwards ’21 on “Fallen Kingdom” by CaptainSparklez



“Jarring; bless the special effects make-up artist.”

—Eugenia Xu ’21 on *Parasite*



The question becomes whether the annual ceremonies are evolving with modern times or are becoming a symbol of the status quo in Hollywood.

ILLUSTRATION BY SUSHU XIA

AWARD SHOWS NEED TO GET WITH THE TIMES

Oscars and Grammys face criticism of their underrepresentation women and people of color

BY ANOUSHKA BECHTOLSHEIM

The Oscars and the Grammys have long enchanted viewers with their comedy-sprinkled ceremonies and glittering fashion. Yet as they celebrate their 92nd and 62nd 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 and bestow international recognition upon the winners and the nominees.

“They are very embedded in the structure of the movie and music industries,” said Maya Bodnick ’22, an eager follower of the Oscars. “Doing well is really meaningful and can cause a filmmaker, actor, or artist to get a ton of prestige.”

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 win sits 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. “*Igor* 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,” Bodnick 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 not 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.”

Though the academy has 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 a mere 13%.

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 Best Director.

“Just to be nominated was a huge honor,” Joon-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 a restaurant serving French comfort food. The music is a bit too loud for conversation, the room crowded enough for sound bites to drift from other tables nonetheless, but it’s perfect to warm the chill of a long day.

The casual, homey atmosphere fits well with the food; the menu is comforting in the predictability of its core options—French standbys from ratatouille to coq au vin—and interesting in the specials that occasionally garnish it.

Lentils drenched in balsamic vinegar cushion the crispy-skinned duck confit, lush with fat and silky, clinging glaze. The near-cloying



DUCK CONFIT



LEMON TART



CHEESE PLATE

coziness of the duck and lentils is disrupted by the lemony fireworks of frisée that line the bowl, arranged in a sparkling green halo around the brown and gold. The lentils are portioned in overwhelming excess, pooling at the bottom of the plate in a quantity that necessitates a to-go box as the meal comes to a close.

The lemon tart is soft all the way through, lacking the cracking sharpness and acidity necessary to make it interesting. It is, like most things on the menu, pure, un-elevated comfort food—one note but not quite unpleasant, like something baked on a whim too late at night.

The cheese plate, a staple of any French meal, breaks from the monotony. It arrives with dark jewels of balsamic-marinated figs glistening at the corners, fresh pears and radishes shining in a ring around unfortunately-chilled Brie that brings the dinner to its well-fitted conclusion: homey in all 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.

ADVANCED STEM CLASSES OUTNUMBER HUMANITIES OPTIONS

Students suggest that more advanced humanities electives would benefit curriculum diversity

BY ANOUSHKA BECHTOLSHEIM

The electives Nueva offers are an academic dream—an incredible array of classes that offer vast landscapes of subject specificity and teacher expertise. While there are a large number of STEM electives, students have expressed interest in adding more advanced humanities electives as well.

“There tend to be more chances to go into STEM in deeper ways than in humanities,” said Eugenia Xu ’21, whose passion for the humanities has led her to classes like Capitalism and the Apocalypse.

Though the science department has various research-centered classes—such as Experimental Research Team (XRT) and Advanced Mechanics—the humanities lack analogous ones.

“Capitalism and the Apocalypse last semester was probably the first time a ‘let’s learn how to go through the research process’ kind of class was run,” Xu said.

Cate Rose ’22 has similar thoughts on the matter. Specifically, she hopes that more creative writing classes can be woven into the elective list.

“There are so many different styles of writing that you could explore, and it could be incredibly useful to have when you’re older,” she said.

History also has many avenues to explore, especially in class customization prior to senior year. Though classes like International Relations are an option for upperclassmen, new opportunities for lowerclassmen would be valuable.

While some of these classes do exist, such as ones that explore the history of the American presidency and liberalism, they are mostly geared towards upperclassmen.

“If you’re not a senior, you have a really hard time getting into those classes,” Xu said. “I also think that people



PHOTO BY FREEPIK

don’t realize that there is the option to take some of those classes earlier.”

English faces a similar issue with advanced classes. “I see it more possible to have advanced English electives that are [for] multiple grades—juniors and seniors—rather than juniors signing up for senior classes,” noted Jennifer Neubauer, who teaches Creative Writing Workshop and Cinema Studies, two of the few English electives—in addition to 11th and 12th grade English.

“It’s nice for students to have the opportunity to experience as many different learning opportunities as possible,” Neubauer said. However, she notes a drawback to not having a yearlong course: “You’re missing some depth if you can’t have the extra time.”

A yearlong course also builds deeper relationships between students and teachers.

“They give me the opportunity to build a yearlong relationship with my students and watch them develop their understanding of the course content and skills over that period,” said Jeremy Jacquot, who teaches chemistry as well as Chemical Engineering and Environmental Earth Science.

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 classes could be a full entrée that he may later “regret.”

Though 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

“We got a taste of what it’s like to write an entire research paper, which takes like years among grad or college students,” Xu said about her experience in Capitalism and the Apocalypse. “A lot of the people in the class were talking about how it would be useful to have another semester.”

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 that 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 mew,” 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 favors Feldman’s mother. 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 peeves, 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



BUSTER & POSEY

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 their 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 especially 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.”

“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.”



PUFF & MOOSH

“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 calmer—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 rambunctious, 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 mo-



MISO & AJAX

ment 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. She was definitely 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 billowing 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.”



NUEVA'S RESPONSE TO THE CORONAVIRUS

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

BY JORDAN MAK

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, federal officials warned citizens to prepare for a potential outbreak in the U.S.

According to Associate Head of School Terry Lee, the school's priority is to keep the school community safe and healthy by making sure that everyone is attentive to "sanitation and personal hygiene."

The school's janitorial and operations teams have also been cleaning the campus more frequently and carefully.

"Let's not forget, it's the winter; it's general viral season so it's when people get flus and colds," Lee said. "If we do those things well, then we'll also be significantly protecting ourselves from new things that we're all hearing about."

Part of practicing good habits during flu season, according to Lee, includes being aware of symptoms and staying home. He added that students should not worry about missing class as teachers will work with students to keep them on track.

"So it's not just symptoms of [coronavirus]," Lee said. "It's 'Are you well in general.'"

Lee also said that the school is in direct communication with UCSF, and has been closely following advice from state and county health departments.

"I think we feel very grateful that we are well-informed and our community is cautious," Lee said. "We're also encouraging each other to be safe but not alarmist because there's no reason to panic—not when we're being safe."

Because of the outbreak in Asia, the eighth-grade trip to China in May has been canceled in an effort to prioritize safety and health. Lee said that the school is working to find another option that provides a similar type of experiential learning, whether it means rescheduling the trip or finding a different destination.

"We've been watching our colleague and kid travel to not be sending people to places that aren't approved by world or national health authorities," Lee said. "We've been taking that pretty seriously and watching what's been going on with the World Health Organization, Center for Disease Control and Prevention, and the U.S. State Department."

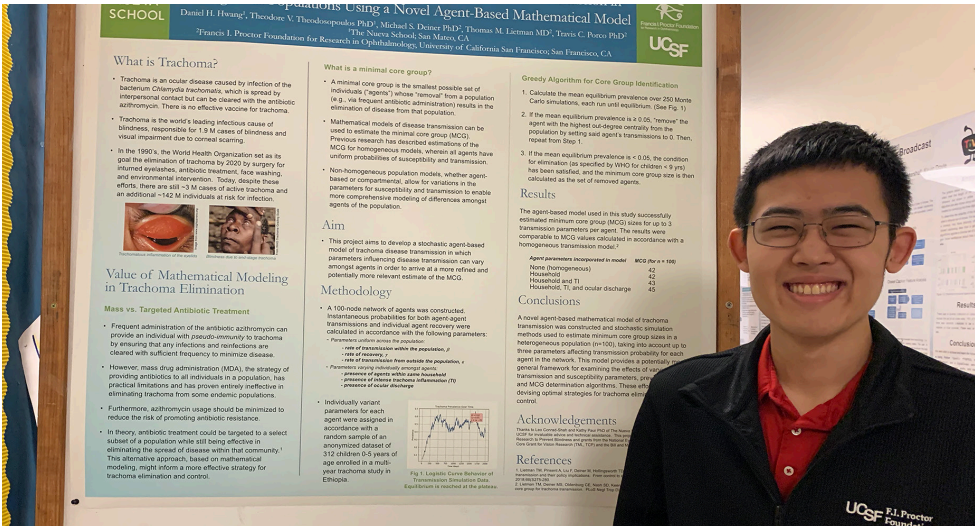
Middle School Division Head Liza Raynal announced to eighth grade families that the exchange visit from students in Spain was canceled due to the outbreak in Italy.

"While we can't predict what will happen, we are concerned that our exchange students could be stuck here or in quarantine when they try to return," Raynal wrote in her email.

The conditions in Europe are also being monitored as the school decides whether the eighth-grade trip to Spain will run.

An optional upper school trip to Xi'an and Chengdu in June has not been canceled yet, but conditions in the area are being closely monitored by both the school and travel agency.

While Lee says that the required upper school trips are still running as of now, the school will continue to closely monitor the situation in the various locations and take action based on advice from national and international organizations.



A DIFFERENT WAY TO SEE DISEASE

Junior develops novel model to aid in trachoma treatment

BY GRACE HOLMES

Daniel 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 aims to aid is part of what drew him to the opportunity.

"It stuck out to me because the disease is most prevalent amongst 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 1.2 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, resource limitations prevent distributing antibiotics to the totality of impacted populations, instead necessitating targeted treatment.

Hwang is currently engaged in a research project aiming to determine the most efficient use of the available antibiotics by identifying the minimum core group, or the smallest number of people in a given population 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 population model was what Hwang described as the "driver" for his construction of an agent-based model, which allows researchers to give each person within a simulated population a score on a variety of parameters such as susceptibility and rate of transmission. This helps to account for the increased likelihood of disease spread within families and the increased danger for young children, thus better characterizing the dynamics of disease transmission—and allowing for more precise assessment of the minimum core group, which Hwang's model determines to be several times larger than the one predicted by previous simulations.

Getting to this result took far more collaboration than Hwang anticipated

when he first embarked on the project during his graph theory class in his sophomore year.

"I used to look at a project and think, why didn't the person just do it themselves? Why are there like seven co-authors?" Hwang said. "Well, now I know exactly why—you really do need to make the most use of people around you."

The value of a second opinion became clear to Hwang upon his return to school this fall, when he shared his work from over the summer—what he described as an "extremely hacked-together" version of the model's code—with Leo Conrad-Shah '21.

"Leo took one look at my code and just said 'Oh my gosh, this is the worst thing I've ever seen,' and I was sitting there with him thinking, 'Yeah, I'm bad at coding, but I thought this was functional,'" Hwang said, laughing. "And he was like 'No, absolutely not. Are you crazy?' and that was the start of what was actually a really productive collaboration."

Conrad-Shah has continued to aid Hwang with his research, as have Osher Lerner '19, math teacher Ted Theodosopolous, and the researchers at the Parker Institute of UCSF.

"It's not really me doing all of this on my own at all," Hwang said. "It's more like I am drawing upon the expertise of a bunch of other people, then bringing that all together to create this final project."

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 cranked it up and produced tons of results" in

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND MAKING MODELS | Daniel

Hwang '21 has been researching trachoma to determine the most efficient use of antibiotics by identifying the smallest number of people that need to be treated in order to eliminate trachoma.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY DANIEL HWANG

THE NUEVA SCHOOL

Determination of Sufficient Core Groups for Trachoma Transmission in Heterogenous Populations Using a Novel Agent-Based Mathematical Model

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What is Trachoma?

- Trachoma is an ocular disease caused by infection of the bacterium *Chlamydia trachomatis*, which is spread by interpersonal contact but can be cleared with the antibiotic azithromycin. There is no effective vaccine for trachoma.
- Trachoma is the world's leading infectious cause of blindness, responsible for 1.3 M cases of blindness and visual impairment due to corneal scarring.
- In the 1990's, the World Health Organization set as its goal the elimination of trachoma by 2020 by surgery for intumed eyelashes, antibiotic treatment, face washing, and environmental intervention. Today, despite these efforts, there are still ~3 M cases of active trachoma and an additional ~142 M individuals at risk for infection.

Value of Mathematical Modeling in Trachoma Elimination

Mass vs. Targeted Antibiotic Treatment

- Frequent administration of the antibiotic azithromycin can provide an individual with pseudo-immunity to trachoma by ensuring that any infections and reinfections are cleared with sufficient frequency to minimize disease.
- However, mass drug administration (MDA), the strategy of providing antibiotics to all individuals in a population, has practical limitations and has proven entirely ineffective in eliminating trachoma from some endemic populations.
- Furthermore, azithromycin usage should be minimized to reduce the risk of promoting antibiotic resistance.
- In theory, antibiotic treatment could be targeted to a select subset of a population while still being effective in eliminating the spread of disease within that community.¹ This alternative approach, based on mathematical modeling, might inform a more effective strategy for trachoma elimination and control.

What is a minimal core group?

- A minimal core group is the smallest possible set of individuals ("agents") whose "removal" from a population (e.g., via frequent antibiotic administration) results in the elimination of disease from that population.
- Mathematical models of disease transmission can be used to estimate the minimal core group (MCG). Previous research has described estimations of the MCG for homogeneous models, wherein all agents have uniform probabilities of susceptibility and transmission.
- Non-homogeneous population models, whether agent-based or compartmental, allow for variations in the parameters for susceptibility and transmission to enable more comprehensive modeling of differences amongst agents of the population.

Aim

- This project aims to develop a stochastic agent-based model of trachoma disease transmission in which parameters influencing disease transmission can vary amongst agents in order to arrive at a more refined and potentially more relevant estimate of the MCG.

Methodology

- A 100-node network of agents was constructed. Instantaneous probabilities for both agent-agent transmissions and individual agent recovery were calculated in accordance with the following parameters:
 - Parameters uniform across the population:
 - rate of transmission within the population, β
 - rate of recovery, γ
 - Parameters varying individually amongst agents:
 - presence of agents within same household
 - presence of intense trachoma inflammation (TI)
 - presence of ocular discharge
- Individually variant parameters for each agent were assigned in accordance with a random sample of an anonymized dataset of 312 children 0-5 years of age enrolled in a multi-year trachoma study in Ethiopia.

Greedy Algorithm for Core Group Identification

- Calculate the mean equilibrium prevalence over 250 Monte Carlo simulations, each run until equilibrium. (See Fig. 1)
- If the mean equilibrium prevalence is ≥ 0.05 , "remove" the agent with the highest out-degree centrality from the population by setting said agent's transmissions to 0. Then, repeat from Step 1.
- If the mean equilibrium prevalence is < 0.05 , the condition for elimination (as specified by WHO for children < 9 yrs) has been satisfied, and the minimum core group size is then calculated as the set of removed agents.

Results

The agent-based model used in this study successfully estimated minimum core group (MCG) sizes for up to 3 transmission parameters per agent. The results were comparable to MCG values calculated in accordance with a homogeneous transmission model.²

Agent parameters incorporated in model	MCG (for $n = 100$)
None (homogeneous)	42
Household	42
Household and TI	43
Household, TI, and ocular discharge	45

Conclusions

A novel agent-based mathematical model of trachoma transmission was constructed and stochastic simulation methods used to estimate minimum core group sizes in a heterogeneous population ($n=100$), taking into account up to three parameters affecting transmission probability for each agent in the network. This model provides a potentially more general framework for examining the effects of varying transmission and susceptibility parameters, prevalence rates, and MCG determination algorithms. These efforts may assist in devising optimal strategies for trachoma elimination and control.

Acknowledgements

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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.

HOW ARE SENIORS PREPARING FOR THE 2020 ELECTION?

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

BY ISABEL CHAMBERS

As the days trickle toward Nov. 3, two things happen. Candidates looking to oust Trump pick up their campaigning 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 country.

March 3, this year’s Super Tuesday, will be the day on which California and 13 other states will host their primaries—the biggest day in the primary election cycle. While some other states allow citizens to vote at 17 if they’ll be 18 by the general election, California doesn’t, which forces some students to wait until November.

“I’m kind of disappointed,” said Clay Adams ’20, who won’t turn 18 until October but previously thought he’d be able to vote in the primaries regardless. “I was going to go out and vote, like a democracy day with my friend, 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, 46.1% of eligible voters between the ages of 18 and 29 cast their ballot—the smallest percentage compared to the three other age groups. American History teacher Chelsea 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. “What we’ve seen is a lot of grassroots enthusiasm and that usually comes from the younger generations. I think if there will be a democratic victory, that’s where we will see it.”

As candidates try to appeal to the younger generations, first-time voters are preparing themselves for the big day. Calista Huang ’20 has been educating herself through a variety of media sources and 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, but not as in-depth as he desires.

“I took American Government. I watched some of the debates. And, truthfully, I have not done enough,” Pierce said.

He believes that adequately educating yourself on candidate stances poses a challenge for busy people.

“For candidates, there’s a lot of snake oil, which is unfortunate, but you just gotta get good at that Nueva critical thinking,” Pierce said. “You have to learn how to wade through that.”

Both Huang and Pierce place importance on voting despite believing their vote may not have an impact. For Pierce, who turned 18 in February, he knows that California will almost surely go blue in November but is still planning on voting.

“I believe my vote has value, but I don’t believe it has an impact,” Pierce said.

Huang agrees.

“In California, decisions are already made, and we can feel like [our votes] don’t have that much power here,” Huang said. “Being able to have a voice in the government is not just about deciding who’s president or deciding your congressperson of your district, but also to take all the steps that you can to get the biggest voice you can.”

Huang, who turned 18 in January, registered as an independent but requested a democratic ballot in order to vote for a presidential candidate.

Extra steps like requesting ballots are what tend to trip some voters up. For California citizens who registered under No Party Preference (NPP) or Independent, they must request a ballot from the approved political parties online or through the mail if they wish to vote for a presidential candidate. Currently this includes the American Independent Party (different from registered Independents), Democratic Party, and Libertarian Party. The California Republican Party acts as

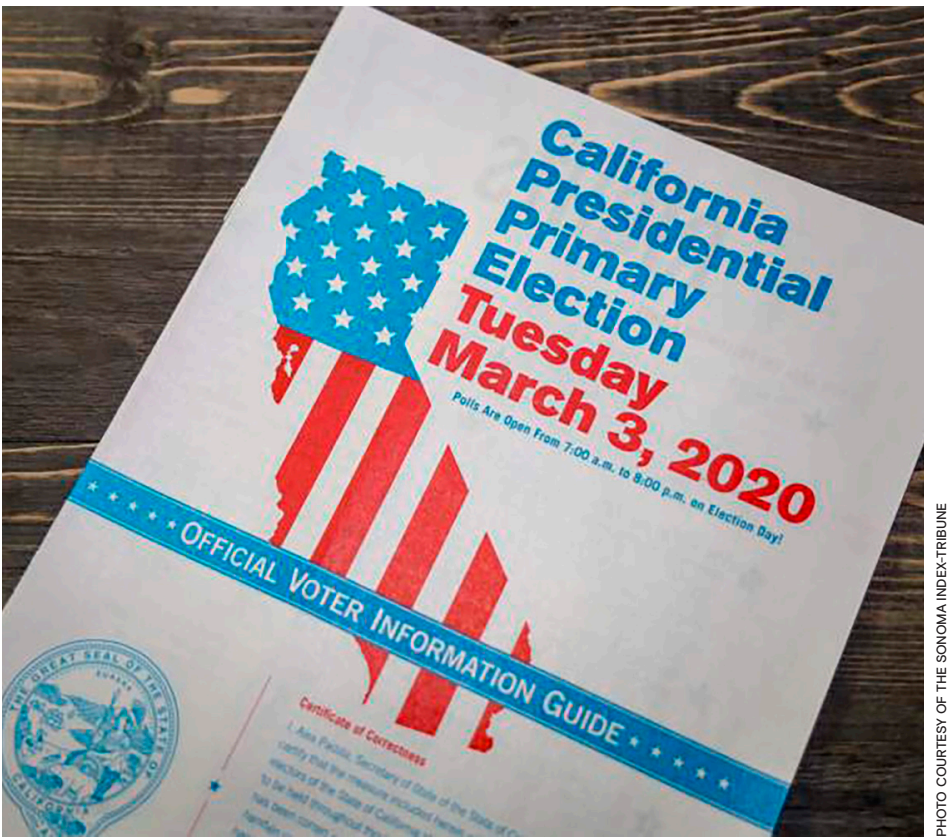


PHOTO COURTESY OF THE SONOMA INDEX-TRIBUNE

one of the “closed” parties, where you must be registered as a Republican in California in order to vote on their ballot.

Yet these regulations aren’t the only pitfalls of voting. Ballots can be confusing to interpret and physically voting can be challenging for busy workers and students. Huang said that in past years, she’s looked over the ballots with her father who showed her “how complicated it was, especially voting for the propositions.”

Despite feeling a bit more politically 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 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 sent 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 higher turnout.”

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

“I feel more confident 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.

HEADING FOR THE MOUNTAINS

Nueva skiers share their favorite ski destinations and experiences

BY ANOUSCHKA BECHTOLSHEIM

Glints of alabaster dust pine-flecked branches. Blankets of snow shroud umber brown outcrops in winter cloaks. The light breeze scatters smooth drifts of powder as skiers dart down early morning slopes, 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 get away from the people and the lines and pretty much ski by yourself all day.”

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. Though she takes pleasure in knowing the mountain like the back of her hand, the runs—which are

mainly geared towards beginner to intermediate 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 Ritz-Carlton has her favorite treat—wild boar nachos. (“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, “Sier-ra 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 why other skiers, such as Clay Malott ’23, prefer resorts at higher elevations with more advanced runs like 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 when 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 4 years 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 ski day is spending time with my family or friends,” he said. “Rather than focusing on hitting the biggest jump or maxing out vertical, [I’m] just trying to enjoy the day.”

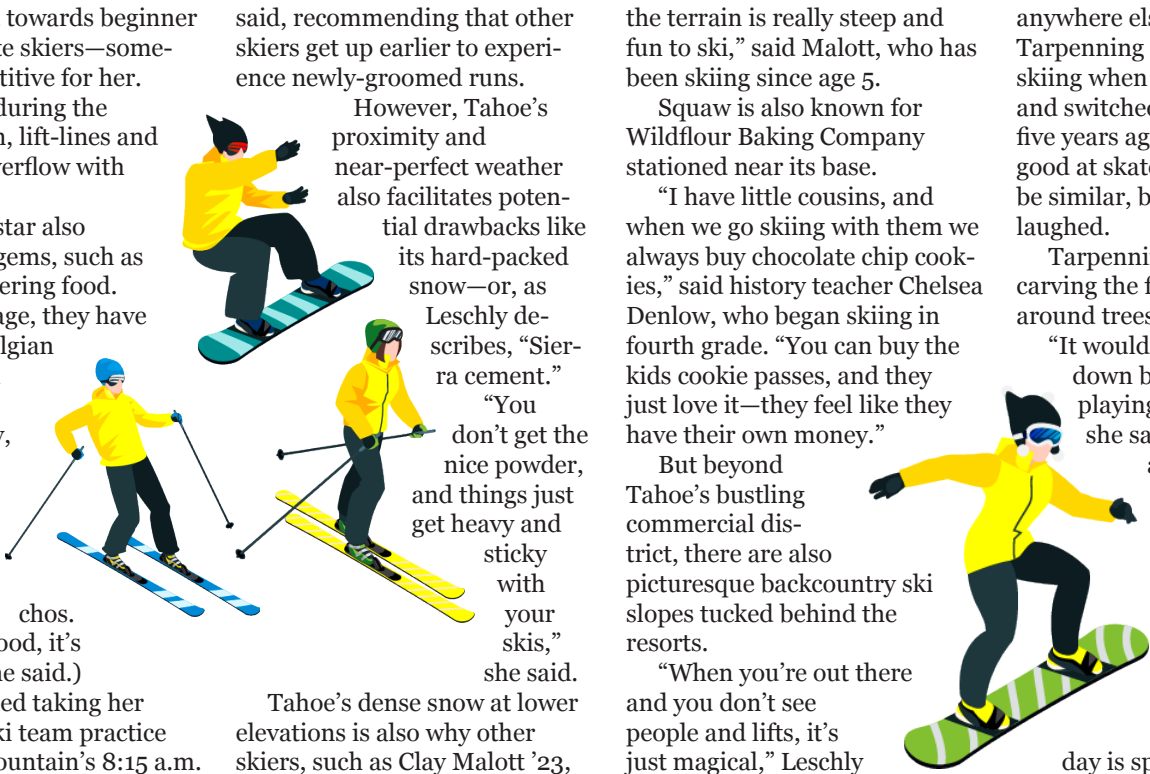


ILLUSTRATION BY FREEPIK

AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE: WHAT POLITICS MEANS TO GEN Z

STORY BY WILLOW TAYLOR CHIANG YANG

The 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 "Gen-Zers" will make their first legal foray into the world of political adulthood.

Gen Z's formative years have taken place in an era of tremulous political uncertainty. Born in the age of Clinton's impeachment and 9/11 and steeped in the War on Terror, the internet, and general political radicalization—but, at the same time, unprecedented yet incomplete global peace—these young people have been forged by highly unusual societal circumstances. What's more, the nation's claim as the economic, political, and social leader of the world is tenuous if not downright nostalgic, while the climate crisis has reached severity bordering on apocalyptic.

Some have said these factors drove the generation into becoming a part of a massive network of teenage activists and protesting opportunities. Those who rise into the national spotlight are both hailed and criticized for their outspoken stances on the biggest political issues of the modern day—Greta Thunberg the survivors of the Parkland shooting are perhaps the most well-known. They are often compared to the Beat Generation and counterculture movement half a century ago, galvanized to action by both high-stakes causes and the instability of their childhood.

But few have stopped to consider whether this rise actually exists—and whether an outpouring of activism is actually how the generation will interact with politics.

At Nueva, at least, that assumption of future activism is debunked, if only by the uncertainty of the student body.

A survey of the upper school student body attempted to explore two main facets of the relationship between young people and politics: students' political involvement and their attitudes towards politics. Its results paint a highly messy, highly arguable, and at times contradictory landscape of the youth and their relationship with the current political environment.

Respondents were asked to define what "politically involved" meant to them, and then asked whether they considered themselves to be so; nearly 40% of the 103 responses said they were, progressing from one-third of freshmen to over half of seniors identifying that way. Fifty-nine of 69 reported having attended or organized a protest, the highest participation of any political activity measured in the survey; the next most common was the 32 students who had attended or organized a rally

COMMITTED Twenty-five students eligible to vote answered whether they were "committed to" a candidate in the 2020 election, defined as a specific candidate that they would vote for in the primaries if they could and who will have their general election vote.

for a cause.

The survey also revealed some cynicism in the way students perceive the American political system. Students were asked the intentionally interpretive question, "Will American democracy as we know it be over in the next 20 years?" Responses were scattered, split majorly between "No," and "50/50" chance, with 40.7% and 33.6% of the responses respectively. Of the remaining respondents, 18.6% chose "It's already over"; 7.1% reported that it will end.

The results reflect the complicated and varied reactions that juniors Sian Bareket and Daniel Arad experienced and saw throughout their own political involvement in climate activism.

Bareket and Arad entered the world of climate advocacy in the past two years as they have organized protests and coalitions. Recently they have seen a marked change in their attitudes towards politics—a progression towards deeper cynicism, but also, paradoxically, towards actionable hope.

"I think that as you get involved, you realize that a lot of it is broken...without easy solutions," Arad said. "At the same time, I'm also more empowered...As you get involved, you also realize that there is not a lot separating people who are 'in' and people who are not, in terms of the ability to analyze situations and jump in and actually have an opinion about politics."

Bareket had a similar experience, and noted that her hope and cynicism differed at regional and federal levels.

"I'm very critical of our national political system at this point, but getting involved locally has led me to be more hopeful in general," Bareket said. "Before becoming politically active, I didn't know that there were many organizations and motivated groups of people. After I joined, I was more hopeful, at least environmentally, about the future of the Bay Area."

The pair's experiences with local politicians and environmental lobbying has, however, ultimately turned them away from futures as "inside players," as Arad put it, in the political system, though he and Bareket will continue to participate in activism. This distrust of the established political system and turning towards outside avenues of political influence is a phenomenon that they see among other student activists and young people in the Bay Area.

"As we begin to enter politics, it will be a different style of politics than what gets brought to the forefront," Arad said of Generation Z. "I don't know if that will manifest in a good way or not."

And like Bareket and Arad, many of these students are influenced by the "bombardment" of information about political issues, as Bareket put it, that causes students to "turn to this despair that we can't actually do anything." She said that the information tends to focus on the negative impacts of climate change, for example, rather than the solutions being tested and the ways the public can affect change.

The cynicism they noticed among the student activist movement isn't just relegated to their circles; Stephanie Shields '20, a political volunteer and intern for the

female candidate fundraising organization Women-Count, said she's seen a "black hole" of negativity since being formally introduced to the political sphere last year during Intersession.

"It's really challenged me to be an optimist, to find a positive perspective, just because there is so much negativity plaguing our government," Shields said.

Shields has seen this cynicism especially in the two history-political courses she's taking at Nueva, The American Presidency and U.S. Government. The classes inevitably touch on current political happenings; with that, she's noticed that the classroom opinions can be distinctly homogeneous.

"In both of those classes, it was really difficult to have a diversity of perspectives when it comes to the modern left-versus-right thing," she said, noting that this lack of opposing viewpoints is common at Nueva as a whole. "I know one open Republican in this entire school. It's just odd, especially because it feels like America is so perfectly polarized and our school is just equally polarized. There's also a lot of animosity towards those that hold different viewpoints, and sometimes that can lead to not being able to have civil conversations, not being able to listen, or not being open to learning from other viewpoints."

She's seen political outbursts in clubs and in classrooms that are "particularly frustrating."

"In my opinion, it's really important to respect, maybe not all, but a much wider range of political viewpoints than just the ones that I believe in," Shields said. "We can learn so much from each other. The polarized state that we're living in isn't productive for anybody." Increased political partisanship in the past

several decades in the U.S. is a well-documented phenomenon, with a number of extensive studies by the Pew Research Center as among most well-cited, and is pointed to as detrimental to productive conversation and cooperation, both across formal political aisles and in the general public. Along with that rise in polarization, average "trust" in the government has decreased sharply to the lowest it's ever been, according to the trust index created by the American National Election Studies. Chelsea Denlow, the upper school history teacher who runs the American Presidency course, says she "worries" about this distrust developing among Nueva students.

"This era of Trump could generate a feeling of not trusting democracy, not trusting the government, and not having any faith in the system. I also think that when you have the opposite party in power, it's really easy to feel pessimistic about the state of the world," said Denlow, who makes a point of being transparent about her own political background in her classes and trying to create spaces for open conversation.

"In some ways that can be good because it might get

people to get involved, and some ways it can make people just turn off and disengage."

Arta Khakpour, an Upper School history teacher who also teaches several history-political classes, believes that education can help as a solution or salve to this issue by promoting civil discussion in classrooms. Given that some of his classes are potentially controversial, like International Relations and Conflict in the Middle East, he always tries to create a safe environment for discussion, especially at a place like Nueva where classes are liable to an imbalance of student opinions.

"In the world of academia, I saw professors who were just clumsy at creating an environment where people felt like they could dissent or even gently disagree with each other," he said, recalling his own experience teaching college students. "So, it was always my hope as an educator that I could create the other kind of environment, one that doesn't have those walls. If you're a good educator, you're empathetic with all your students. It actually hurts to see students gang up on any of your other students—it's an environment that feels mob-ish. I think the act of teaching actually is a little microcosm of civil discussion."

He and PreK-12 Equity & Social Justice Director Alegria Barclay hope to incorporate conversation-based civility at Nueva by creating the Center for Civic Discourse.

However, Khakpour noted that students are strongly influenced by the world outside Nueva, where Centers for Civic Discourse are few and obscured by the swath of internet and media. The figures on TV, YouTube, and other platforms, Khakpour said, are increasingly partisan and hostile on both ends of the political spectrum, and aren't modeling the civility he hopes students will adopt.

"If you're not seeing it, how do you do it? How do you emulate it?" he said. "Everything is, 'Let's own the libs,' or 'Let's own the conservatives.' You can't help but ape some of that yourself."

But just as the internet can be a potentially polarizing influence on students and their relationship with the political scene, it's also a point of hope to Shields, who has seen it used for positive political participation. She says that she and her friends put links to political organizations like Vote Forward in their Instagram bios to encourage their followers to volunteer or get involved in other ways.

"Social media can be such a powerful tool, if it's used correctly," she said. "To me, that's really exciting."

However, she noted that the internet and social media is a place of misinformation if left in the wrong hands; this problem, she says, is especially one prominent in previous generations, who didn't grow up in the age of technology.

"We're better at learning to recognize fake news and misinformation, or we're at least learning to be doubtful of information that we read on the internet," she said. "Older generations are so used to having trustworthy news anchors that would never be dishonest. And then they see a post on

IMPORTANCE OF VOTING Of the 113 responses to the question, only 3.5% said they believed that voting was not important for most adults to do, and 10.6% responded "Maybe."

60%
OF ELIGIBLE STUDENTS
HAVE A CANDIDATE
THEY'RE "COMMITTED
TO" VOTING FOR IN THE
2020 ELECTION

COMMITTED Twenty-five students eligible to vote answered whether they were "committed to" a candidate in the 2020 election, defined as a specific candidate that they would vote for in the primaries if they could and who will have their general election vote.

40.2%
OF RESPONDENTS CONSIDER
THEMSELVES "POLITICALLY ACTIVE"

"POLITICALLY ACTIVE" Students were asked what "politically active" meant to them, and then whether they considered themselves to be in order to gauge students' attitudes towards their involvement. (n = 107)

85.8%
OF RESPONDENTS THINK
THAT VOTING IS IMPORTANT
FOR MOST ADULTS TO DO



Q&A WITH LEE FERTIG

Nueva’s next Head of School on transitions, goals, and the importance of listening

BY WILLOW TAYLOR CHIANG YANG



When Lee Fertig speaks, you lean in. Even through the warped tinniness of the computer mic and camera, his measured tone is undeniably genuine; it’s a voice that calmly infuses sincerity into each syllable and, no matter the topic, plants and grows the validation of being heard. Fertig himself is much like his voice. He’s openly friendly, with a head of white hair and broad smile that spreads often and unforced. He often gestures as he speaks and expresses an obvious passion for education, a field in which he’s worked for over 30 years—and one in which he will continue at Nueva as the new Head of School.

What drew you to our Head of School position? Sometimes society doesn't think highly capable, highly talented, highly aspirational students such as yourselves 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 notion of supporting 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 to enter the workforce eventually. But what I heard loud and clear throughout the entire interview process was Nueva cares about the journey of learning that the students are on, and wants to make sure 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...I know the admissions team 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 first, that it is indeed a community desire. If I confirm that quickly, then I will mobilize our skill set and push that forward a little bit more.

What transition challenges do you foresee? I haven't been immersed in [the missions] the way Diane has been immersed for 19 years, the way your teachers have been immersed for many, many years. And 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 going to need some help with that. I will be looking to other people in the community to help me be a very quick learner. I just want to make sure I jump 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, and meet new groups of people. I think I'm extremely open to new perspectives, new ways of doing things. I've built my career [around] allowing things to fester a little bit, letting people have their spirited debate, as long as it's grounded in some norms and consensual agreements. It sounds cliché, but I really do believe in my heart that that there is strength in diversity and diverse voices. Hopefully the Nueva community will appreciate that.

How would you describe your ideal relationship with students, teachers, and parents? In general, I think I tend to be myself in these relationships—authentic and empowering. I strive to be visible, helpful, resourceful, and fun. Of course, I also need to be professional, competent, and reliable in these relationships... but I truly believe all of these characteristics come along when we engage in collaborative and candid relationships.

Many of the international schools you've worked at follow the IB curriculum. Can you speak to the IB compared to Nueva's curriculum, and how it might factor into our academic development? 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 then get back up and try something new. I really felt that loud and clear when I was [on campus]: the spirit of trying, and experimenting and innovating, knowing that we might not always get it right. However, I also heard...from some of the administrators that some faculty are looking for a little bit of glue that connects these things. And I don't know from a student perspective, but I wouldn't be surprised that sometimes, maybe students feel like things are a little disparate. It might be nice for students to feel that there's synergy across classes. I don't want the cohesion to be restrictive and constraining; I think there's a sweet spot. There's a balance in there, some place where you can continue to play, continue to innovate, continue to experiment, continue to be open and try new things, but be anchored, be grounded in some broad, base curricular principles.

You've mentioned a strong interest in sustainability and nature. How might this translate to environmental goals for the school? I've been involved in several master plans for campuses and new buildings, and each and every time I've worked with the architects and the designers to make sure that they are as environmentally sustainable as possible. I take that kind of stuff very, very seriously. I also work with faculty and parents to do even small things. In a previous school, we still were selling water in plastic bottles, so we got rid of all the plastic. I think it's important for our school communities to come together and demonstrate not only symbolically, but authentically, that this is a value of ours.

You've been at a number of different schools—is Nueva another stop along the way? I don't envision I will 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 some 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, it was nothing that romantic. Probably elementary and junior high, I wanted to be a basketball player, and then a sports writer. I never ever, ever thought about becoming a teacher. It just kind of happened. And once I got in it, I loved it. I was a high school principal 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, so I went back to being a school leader. **You'll be coming 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, so that's one of the things that will be a priority item for me. I believe the plan is to schedule me to meet with groups of students, faculty, and parents and community members. I'm really looking forward to that. I'll also be looking for where there are commonalities 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 that you don't want the new Head of School to touch? What needs to be preserved and enhanced? I do find that when we build 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, 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 in the future, time and workload permitting. 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 hike. There are wonderful forests and wooded areas everywhere in Brussels. I have three dogs—one of them is kind of old, but the other two I take to the forest every morning just to walk in the woods. I do like water sports and like to swim... canoe, kayak, or stand-up paddle a little bit. I like to be out there in nature. I'm also a foodie. I eat anything and everything. I will be looking forward to some great food on the West Coast.

What artifacts might we see in your office? I will probably have a family photo or two...might include my dogs! I also tend to have a handful or two of books that have influenced me a lot—professional resources about leadership and related topics. I tend to keep my office fairly “uncluttered” as I like to use it as a place of conversation and collaboration. I also tend not to be in my office a lot as I prefer to walk around campus a lot and meet people in their location instead.

AN INSIDE LOOK AT THE HIRING OF LEE FERTIG

Lee Fertig’s magnetic warmth is something others saw in their first interactions and subsequent conversations with him as well. “As we went through that process, one of the things we all felt very strongly about was his sense of humor and his joy,” Susan Barnes said, referring to the 10-person search committee that she co-chaired. “I think that kindness and caring is essential here,” co-chair Kathleen Donohue said. “I think Lee’s kindness will be evident early on, along with his tremendous intellect and deep experience as an educational leader.” The committee was also drawn by his wide-ranging experience in a number of different fields. “You know that tool that people only use for cracking open hard-boiled eggs?” Aron Walker, one of two faculty on the committee, half jokingly asked. “What was appealing was that he's not one of those tools. He has a much more versatile toolbox.” The committee believes that these aspects will be key in this next phase of the institution, especially with its evolution and expansion over the past two decades. “I do believe Nueva is complicated. It's grown a lot; its needs keep changing. Diane has had the benefit of 19 years of being with Nueva, so she understands those operations. For someone to come in, it's a little bit daunting. We wanted to find somebody who had the experience and skill set to understand Nueva and how to operate effectively here, and that’s something Lee definitely has,” Walker said. That depth of knowledge was one aspect of Lee that was well-cited by the search committee, who mentioned its presence along every step of the process, from the preliminary over-the-phone interviews to the full-day-long, in-person meetings in the finalist stage at the end of the “elaborate” nine-month process, as Donohue put it. “[Fertig] had fabulous answers to our questions, but he also had fabulous questions,” Donohue said. “And the depth of his questions suggested an understanding of our school, independent schools, and their functioning that felt very much aligned with Nueva that clear even at that early stage.” Walker recalled as well that those questions seemed largely informed by what Fertig heard from the committee and community members he met with.

Continued on next page

LEE'S FACTS

Fertig's extensive experience leading high schools for the past couple decades is largely international, with his most recent position as Director at the International School of Brussels in Belgium. He attended Ohio's Oberlin College after growing up outside New York and double majored in math and psychology.

After graduating in 1983, his first teaching job was a math teacher at Ethical Culture Fieldston School in New York. After that, he fell in love with education, as he put it, and secured a teaching job contract and a one-way flight to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. From being a teacher and administrator in Ethiopia, he embarked upon a globe-circling journey from Brazil, to Minnesota, to Spain's Barcelona, back to Brazil, and finally to Belgium. The path took him to four continents and from teacher to administrator, and led him to teach and train other principals and directors around the world.



A GROWING COMMUNITY The multi-colored interactive wall, train lines, and large-scale homes which rest in the spawn are only one part of the expansive server run by seniors. SCREENSHOT BY ISABEL CHAMBERS

ESCAPING INTO THE SERVER

Seniors bond over shared Minecraft world

BY ISABEL CHAMBERS

"He has a great presence, like he was there, he was listening," Walker said. "That really struck me. He's such a thinker about like schools and the systems in schools. It was neat to 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 search committee—in fact, the Board in its entirety hadn't met with Fertig as of mid-February. While the process included a visit where the committee "snuck" Fertig, as he described it, onto the campuses, as well as a formal meeting with Rosenberg herself, meetings with and information about candidates and finalists were kept to a small, closed group of the search committee. The closed search, 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 lose their current ones," Barnes said. "Many, many of these candidates were sitting heads of schools and were very happy where they were—I would put Lee in that category as well. We could not expose the candidates to that."

The closed search did mean, however, that the larger community was unable to be privy to the entire process. The search committee "would have loved to have had 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 13-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 was a way to both do kind of a self-assessment of what we needed for the next stage and for us to communicate to potential applicants about what we wanted," Donohue explained. "The broad swath of the voices that we heard at that early stage was 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 immaculate. Cerulean tunnels of bubbly water function as the elevators between each achingly high story; oak wood planks creak under footsteps and echo off the carved stone bricks. On the fifth story, 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 Minecraft scene. Nintendo characters are emblazoned on vibrant woolen murals. Train tracks snake around their straight edges and ladders creep up walls 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 game 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 materials to craft their creations, or creative mode where players can freely fly and have access to unlimited resources. 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 a third of the senior class. 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 Cavet, a senior who's played since early October. "Lots of people who I wouldn't expect to play Minecraft are on it. It feels very wholesome."

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 have agreed that someone has broken a rule such as destroying others' property, the player will be temporarily banned from the server.

"It's 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."

Raanes said 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.



Groshong 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. The journey posed 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) that would propel 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 it more and just [rode a horse]."

Leaving for his journey on Oct. 6 and arriving 24 days later, Raanes finally reached the end of the world.

"I 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 students love the game so much.

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

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

"I 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, too.

"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 sinusoidal lifecycle," 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 boosted 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."





MASTHEAD

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WHY GREEN SCHOOLS SHOULD LEAD
BY EXAMPLE IN THE CLIMATE CRISIS

We should mobilize our ingenuity, resources, and common humanity

BY TANJA SREBOTNJAK, GUEST WRITER

In 2018, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released a special report on the “impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways.” It states that so far human activities have increased average global temperature by about 1°C and that global warming will reach 1.5°C sometime between 2030 and 2052 if current greenhouse gas emissions trajectories continue unabated.

At the same time, investigations into the role of man-made climate change in adverse events such as droughts, floods, wildfires, and coral bleaching are pinpointing growing evidence of ecosystems moving to the breaking point. These changes affect all of us, but notably the most vulnerable among us: the poor, the ill, the young and old, the underrepresented and the voiceless. Are we going to stand by as powerful special interests are locking in a future for our children that they have not asked for, a future of increasing climate instability and accelerating harm to critical ecosystem services that we depend on for growing food, securing our water supply, cleaning the air, and protecting coastlines? A future in which our options to collectively decide which mix of measures and pathways we want to choose to transition to a fair and equitable zero-carbon economy are increasingly limited? I believe that we and our children ask more of ourselves.

Schools are a case in point on how we can mobilize our ingenuity, resources, and common humanity to learn about and implement solutions to the vexing climate problem. Schools are examples of environments where decarbonization proposals can be debated, assessed for their

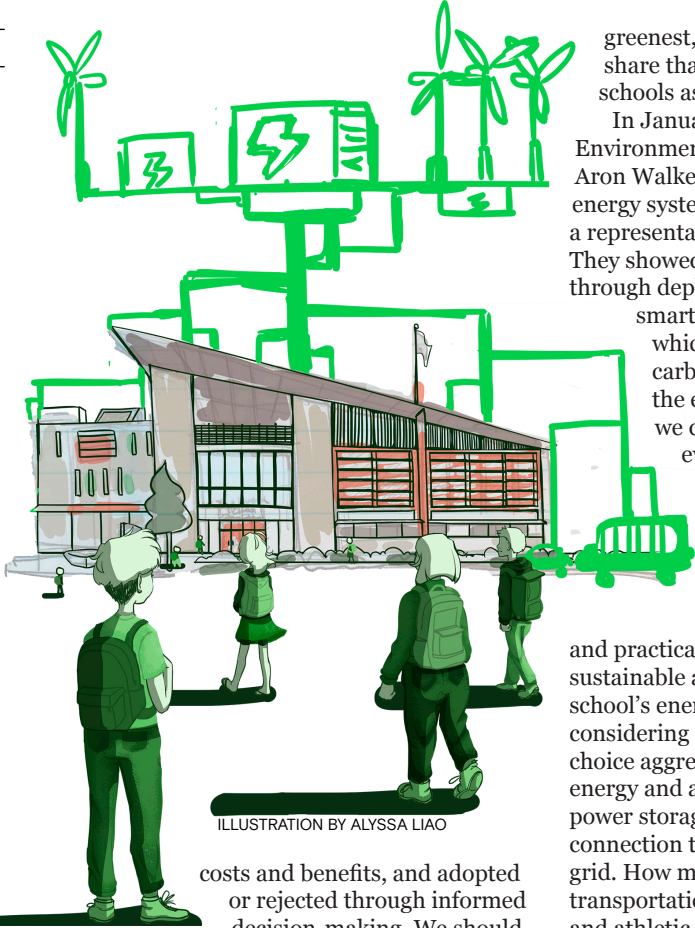


ILLUSTRATION BY ALYSSA LIAO

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 footprints. 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 of overtaxing the only planet we’ve got. I want Nueva to be the

greenest, lowest-impact school it can be and share that knowledge with as many other schools as possible.

In January, Assistant Director of Environmental Citizenship and science teacher Aron 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, automated system management, which can reduce Nueva’s operational carbon footprint and dependence on the electrical grid to whichever 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 retool 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 connection to the PG&E operated power grid. How might we support 100% electrified transportation for our intercampus transfers and athletic trips? How might we layer 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 much of the Bay Area and we need to do something

BY GRACE FINKE

Once or twice a month, my mom and I drive to San Jose to volunteer at a non-profit organization aimed at assisting low-income families. The past two years I’ve been volunteering have really made me think about the Bay Area and the world we live in when I see how society responds to the conditions of low-income families.

Home to some of the largest tech companies in the world, Silicon Valley is one of the wealthiest areas in the United States. By now we know that tech creates many high-paying jobs. Eventually, the cost of living goes up as more jobs are filled. However, that can lead to low-income families being left behind.

Whenever I leave California, I’m stunned at how low the prices at restaurants or coffee shops are. For many people living outside the Bay Area, it would be shocking to walk into a shop and pay five dollars for a cup of coffee. Even so, these expenses are portrayed as normal things that everyone can afford.

As someone growing up here, it can be easy to get used to how extreme Bay Area life is. Being constantly surrounded by technology and money can put our mindsets into a very small space. In Detroit, Michigan, one million dollars can get you a four-bed,

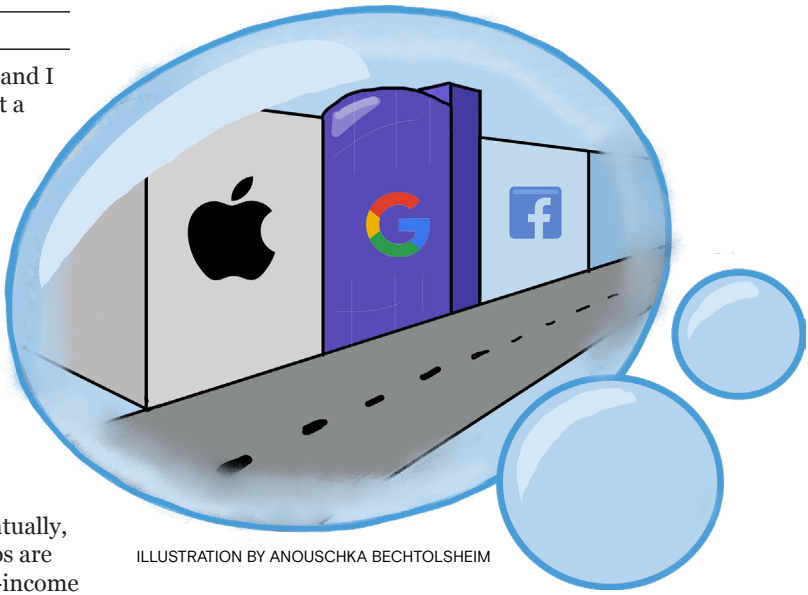


ILLUSTRATION BY ANOUSHKA BECHTOLSHEIM

six-bath estate...in California, it will only get you a two-bed, one-bath condo in Palo Alto. It’s almost too easy to forget the reality that is most of the rest of the world, where it’s absolutely realistic to find a place to live on a budget under a million dollars.

But not all of the Bay Area lives in this luxury. Seeing the families that we are helping always makes me think that we’re not doing enough. Less than 20 miles from Apple’s headquarters, there are families struggling to make ends meet with an income that doesn’t cover the overpriced cost of living. And yet we still crack jokes

about our situation, making memes about new products or 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.

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 into view 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, it isn't just students who suffer from the pile-up; teachers, too, face an influx of assignments, their already-significant workload augmented 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.

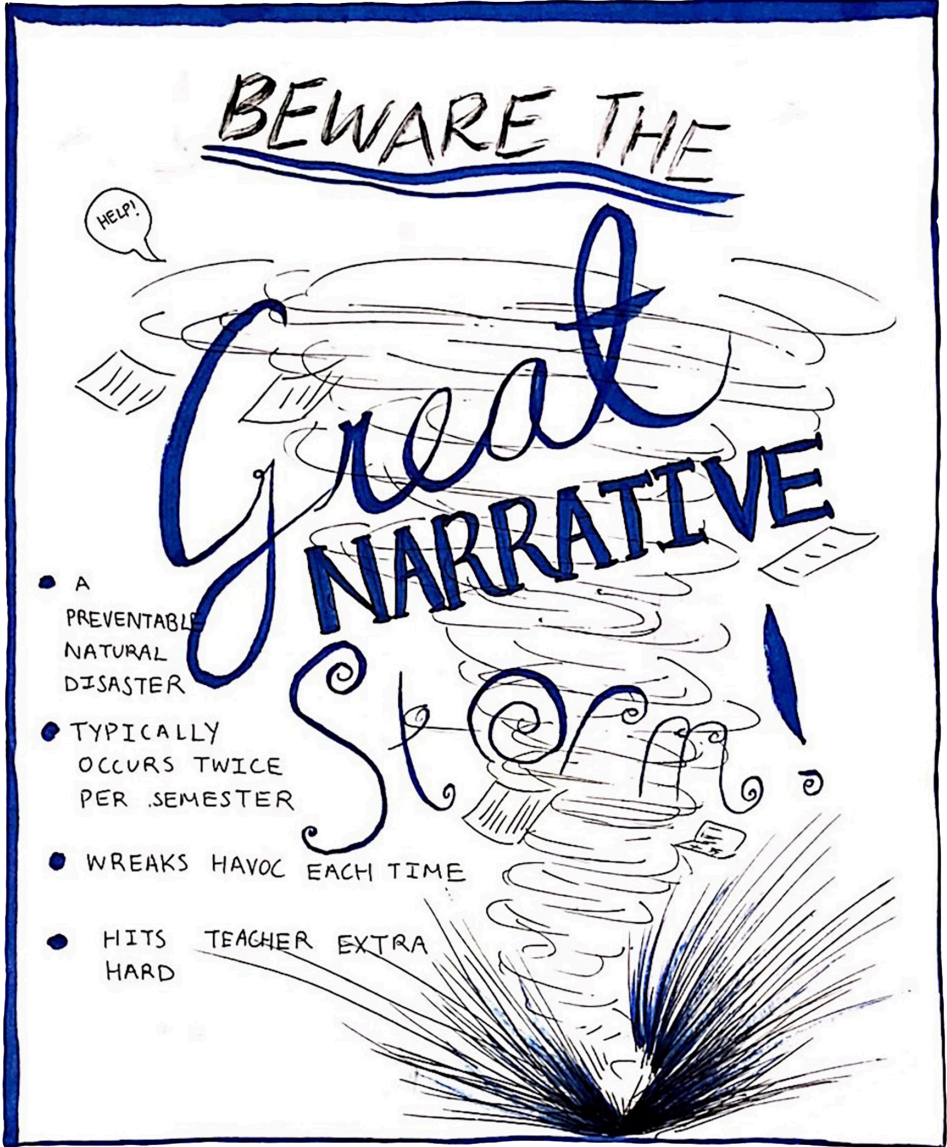
Additionally, teacher stress decreases the quality of classes and lesson plans. At times, teachers are forced to miss days of school in order to keep up with their narrative-writing, which is even more detrimental to students' overall learning. Similarly, teachers' stress means that they are more likely 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 alike understand 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.

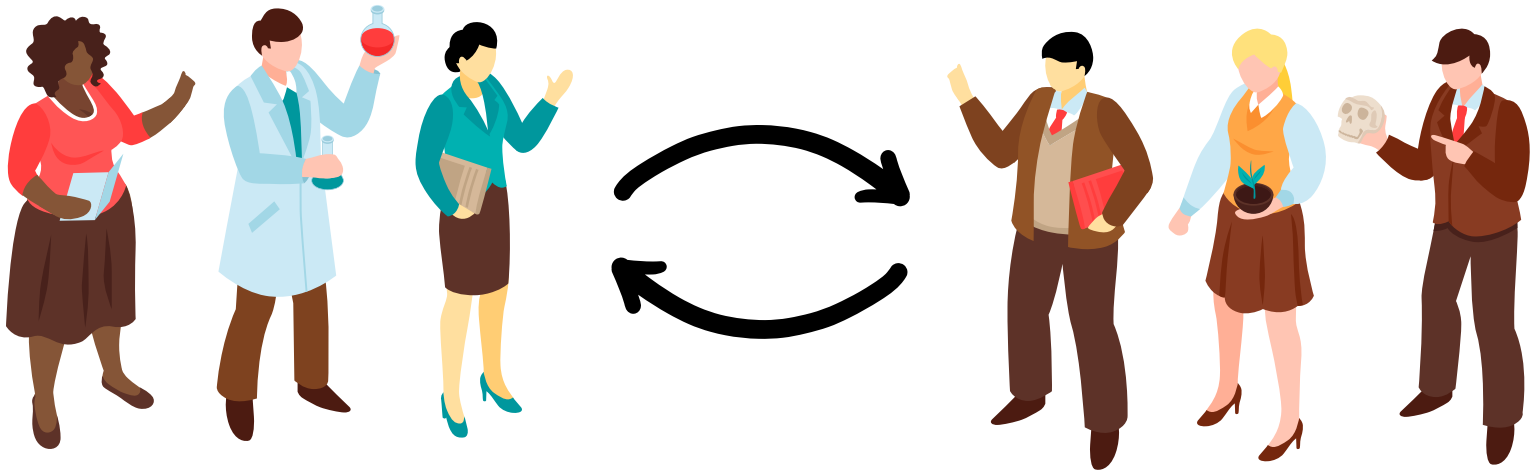
Thus, the role of narratives at midterms would be better filled by one-on-one meetings between students and teachers. Such meetings have the potential to open a genuine dialogue between student and teacher, allowing for the creation of solutions that include both parties and genuine improvement in students' 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.



ART BY EUGENIA XU

GRAPHICS BY MACROVECTOR



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.

TEACHERS SHOULD REMAIN THE SAME FOR CORE CLASSES

Switching students' teachers mid-semester has various impacts

BY VALERIE BRAYLOVSKIY

In the first week of the spring semester, it was common to see students lingering outside Upper School Assistant Division Head Claire Yeo'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 amongst the student body: "All my teachers have switched!"

After receiving my second-semester schedule, I was disappointed that many of my teachers had changed for core subjects such as History, Math, English, and Science of Mind, although I was not taking any new classes. I expected one or two teachers to switch, but 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 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 to best create a process to benefit the most productive learning culture.



WE SHOULD HAVE DESIGNATED DOG DAYS ON CAMPUS

Our canine friends would greatly de-stress students and faculty

PHOTO BY FABIAN GIESKE / UNSPLASH

BY TINA ZENG

At the moment, dogs and other pets are banned on our campus. This ought to change. Dogs are a wonderful addition to campuses, so students’ pets—or teachers’ dogs at the very least—should be allowed at school.

Dogs are always so happy, panting with their tongues lolling, 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 (I basically only love my own), but I still appreciate the friendly balls of joy they can be. Even from far away, a dog’s energy is palpable 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 relationship-building. Dogs also alleviate anxiety, depression, and even help with learning—a study conducted at UC Davis showed a 12% increase in reading proficiency 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 other ways to get around them besides banning dogs. For example, we could designate certain dog-friendly and dog-free areas, like some other schools have specified nut-free tables.

I myself am allergic to dogs, and as long as the school is regularly cleaned, allergies can be kept under control. Other ways 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 should also not be allowed to roam freely on campus. They should behave and if they cannot do so, 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, a monthly dog day or weekly dogs-at-lunch event could seriously boost morale, learning, and mental health.

DISREGARD ELECTABILITY, TRUMP’S GOING TO WIN ANYWAY

Democrats should vote for a candidate they want instead

BY WILLOW TAYLOR CHIANG YANG

Electability is the word spilling out of everyone’s mouths this Democratic election cycle. No one can define it; no one can pinpoint what it entails. Perhaps no one really cares, because all anyone can talk and think about is how to beat President Donald Trump—or rather, who can. It’s one of the main issues for Democrats; according to AI and data analysis service Avalanche, 97% of Democratic voters believe it’s “very” or “extremely important” to beat Trump in the general election.

Inevitably, opinions burst forth, speculations abound, and punditry booms, all arguing for the most victory-able, electable candidate of them all, nevermind that electability is a fraught and unstable idea, highly variant from voter to voter, and developed by preconceptions of “middle America” that are often baseless and harmful.

But electability—and all of its consequential vices—don’t really matter, because Trump will win

anyway. Every poll, every statistic points to the outcome Democrats and liberals alike quake in the brutal face of; he’s a sitting president, one with a mobilized and devoted voter base, the backing of nearly all Republican politicians, and funds enough to cheaply feed a medium-sized country for a day. (\$250 million raised, \$109 million on hand, according to Open Secrets.) While it’s still early to definitively claim defeat, the odds of Democratic victory seem as meager as Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard’s recent polling percentages.

What really matters at this point is that the Democratic Party forgets the useless and wholly unfathomable electability issue, and instead figures out what it wants.

The party and its voters are split between established Democrats and a faction of more radical liberals, and the one thing the frustratingly wide field of candidates is good for is its provision of

candidates that suit both of those broad categories, and then some. This gives an opportunity for Democrats to vote not against Trump, but for someone they truly believe in, for the Party to be defined not by speculation of what half the country may not even want, but by the hopes and dreams of its members.

I cannot claim that voting like this will heal any ideological rifts in the party, but looking at electability hasn’t solved it either—in fact, it may have exacerbated existing conflicts, especially around gender. If these divisions will persist regardless, the party is far better off defining its purpose and mission than flailing in its current limbo between ideals and beating Trump.

Either way, whether it’s an established Democrat or a radical liberal, the voters will choose their loser; better make it someone they believe in, someone they trust to lead the party if it survives.



THE SWITCH FROM CUPS TO MUGS

A conscious choice may result in regret

BY GRACE HOLMES

At first, I assumed all of my friends had suddenly and simultaneously completed their evolutions into true hipsters. By the time the fifth person stepped into class with a ceramic mug for their tea, however, I realized something far more dramatic had happened: the biodegradable cups at 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 as significant as climate change, I can acknowledge the effort to make the school a better environmental citizen.

This sentiment quickly turned to distress as I wandered through the first day post-switch. On the stairs, students slished and sloshed in every direction, open-topped mugs precariously balanced in overloaded arms, scalding liquid dripping onto steps and fellow

students. In classrooms, maneuvering tables into new configurations became a danger-filled exercise, shifting notebooks without careful calculations a surefire way to drench notes in classmates’ drinks. On the landings, spills stained the carpets with every shade of creamy brown and a few bordering on red.

Perhaps the largest issue liable to be caused by the mugs, however, is one that only surfaced as I walked through the halls that evening: the mugs were everywhere. On my way from the third floor to the front door, I counted 19 mugs peeking from behind stacks of papers in classrooms, teetering on bookshelves, or piling precariously on couches and ottomans. The mugs are apt to be the next frontier for the dish-dumping disaster, the newest piece of diningware to wind up in the trash, costing the school—and those who clean it, who too often bear the



brunt of the consequences for students’ irresponsibility or forgetfulness—dearly. And, unlike the missing plates and bowls, the mug issue won’t be resolvable through restricting usage to the Café, or even the first floor: far too many students, myself included, rely on a hot cup of tea to get them through morning classes or calm test-taking nerves.

Ultimately, though the aim is admirable, the likelihood of the plan shattering—as ceramics are apt to do—due to safety concerns, simple chaos, or resources sent down the drain makes the swap more harmful than beneficial.

STOP COMPLAINING ABOUT SCHOOL LUNCH

Check your privilege and consider how good we have it with hot lunch

STORY & ART BY ANISHA KUMAR

At 11:15 a.m. on a typical school day, there’s probably a noticeable uptick in the traffic to www.nuevaschoolcafe.com as students pull their computers into their laps and furtively check what’s for lunch while the teacher’s back is turned. If they’re brave enough, they might announce the menu to the rest of the class, provoking a slew of reactions:

“Mexican food again? I swear we have it every day.”

“When will the vegetarian option ever be anything but tofu?”

“Um... I don’t think they should attempt Indian food.”

These comments have a couple of things in common: they’re all incredibly inconsiderate, and they’ve definitely all come out of my mouth at some point.

When I was in first grade, I yearned for the hot lunch option my school offered. Every day, I would watch as my friends unrolled the tops of fancy brown paper

hot lunch bags with their names on them and carefully lift out plastic containers, the clear lids foggy with steam. They would pry the lids off with tiny fingers to find bright yellow mac and cheese, sliced chicken nuggets ambitiously labeled “schnitzel,” and chocolate-chip cookies the size of our six-year-old faces. I dreamed of the day I would get my own brown paper bag, but before I could, I switched schools.

At Nueva, my hot lunch dreams came true a hundred times over. The downside? With every meal, I became more jaded. Water dispensers choked with ice and freshly sliced fruit, pyramids of tiny sandwiches, soups so hot that the bowls scalded my fingers... I started to take them for granted, and I know I’m not the only one.

As I became accustomed to the myriad offerings of Nueva lunch, I began to feel entitled to it. If a dish wasn’t to my liking, I felt justified in

criticizing it—often harshly. I lost the ability to see beyond my own great privilege. If you offered me a brown-bag-faux-schnitzel lunch then, I would probably turn my nose up at it and push it away.

For me, the mindset change came on slowly after I overheard people tell shadowing students that the lunch is “...not that great,” or putting the entire lunch system on blast after eating one meal they don’t like. There’s an insane amount of effort that goes into creating healthy, locally-sourced, balanced lunches for us every day, with tons of variation. We’re lucky to be able to afford and enjoy our school lunches, and passing judgement without considering how fortunate we are makes us sound ungrateful.

I’m not saying this in the vein of “think of the starving children in [insert developing nation here] and be grateful!” That’s too much of a leap for our minds to make, and despite its

painful truth, it isn’t at all relatable. But try widening your perspective to include the Café staff, or students at other schools. I still make the odd disdainful remark, but I’d like to think I’m improving and that I’m trying every day. Acknowledging our privilege is the key to getting past it.

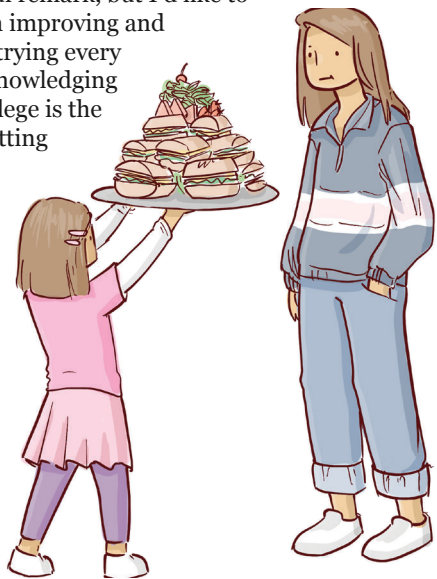




PHOTO BY JORDAN MAK

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 Mavericks. Take a power nap on every green and blue couch. Play a board game by the fireplace.

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 seldom frequented. 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 super 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!



PHOTO BY FREEPIK

KEEPING UP WITH NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

BY LIA FERNANDEZ-GRINHPUN

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!



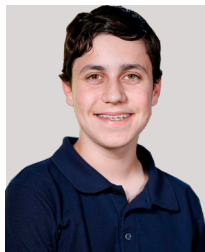
Biology and ISOS teacher **Jehnna Ronan** said, "My New Year's resolution was to take 30- to 60-minute walks at least four times a week." She wanted to make her occasional walk along the rolling hills of San Francisco regularly. Ronan has kept up with her resolution and enjoys the exercise

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."



Although PreK-12 Equity & Social Justice Director **Alegria 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.



Sleep is a 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."

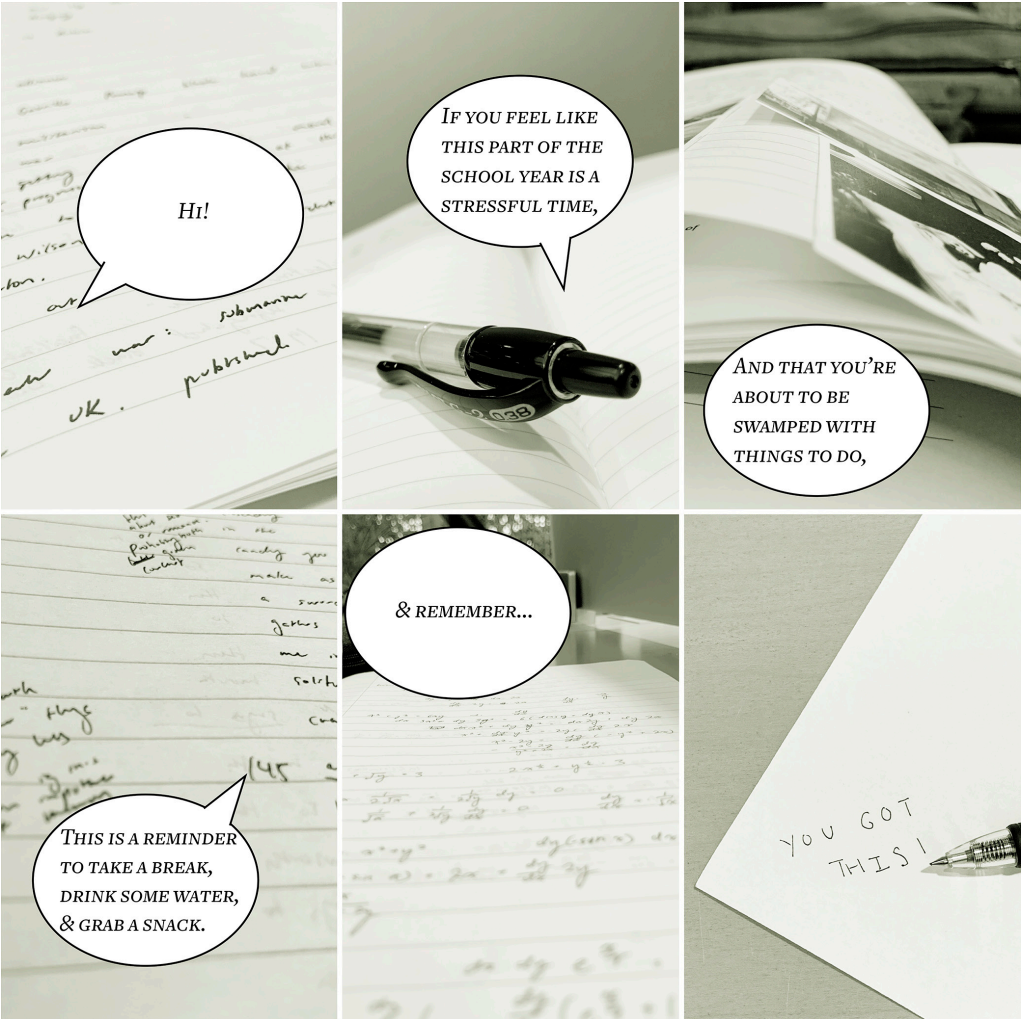


Thalia Renaker '22 set a New Year's resolution to eat more plant-based meals and begin replacing animal products with vegan alternatives. "I wanted to be more environmentally friendly," Renaker said. "Learning more about the meat and dairy industries pushed me to take that

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



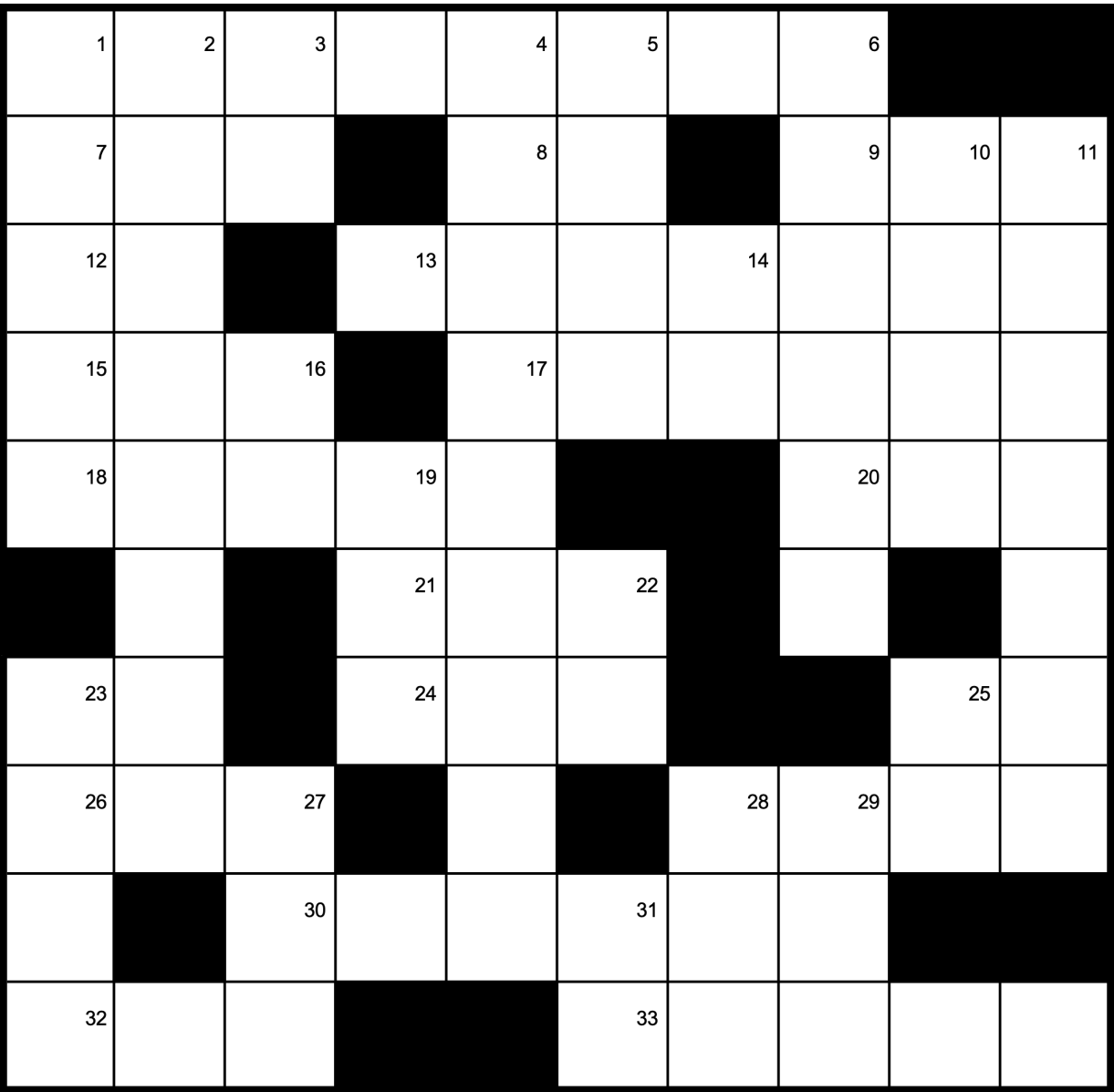
CROSSWORD PUZZLE

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

BY WILLOW TAYLOR CHIANG YANG

- ACROSS**
- 1. What break should be
 - 7. ___break, or the precursor to pandemic
 - 8. Present tense of "to be"
 - 9. Magnifying glass target, maybe
 - 12. Jr.'s elder
 - 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. Nueva grp. of which all families are members
 - 23. Med.-sized portable battery
 - 24. Festival of breaking the fast
 - 25. Oft confused with "e.g."
 - 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 intl. infrastructure and investment strategy
 - 28. Sometimes found next to "fax," for short
 - 29. Drink suffix
 - 31. Arguably second biggest name in investment banking, abbr.



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.



Fashion matters. To the economy, to society, and to each of us personally. What we wear is one of the rapid ways to express who we are—or who we want to be. Here are two students who have cultivated a distinctive style and the stories behind them.



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 everyday 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.



PHOTO BY JOY FENG

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 before and after 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,” said Maya Avida ’22, who’s 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 shuttlecocks 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. 28 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.

None 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 Trip Sweeney acts as their advisor. Chan also 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 ANAHITA ASUDANI

Short intervals on the track on Monday. Tuesday is a long-distance run with bursts of speed every few minutes. Wednesday is a recovery run with hills at the track, finishing with a few sprints to loosen up. Thursday consists of running long intervals on the track. Friday is a 45-minute amble jog. Long high-speed runs or races take place on Saturday. This is a typical week for distance runners on the track and field team, 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.

“All of them are 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 in the weight room and stretches before and after practice.

Often, 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 Shalin 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 aspects, very individual.”

Lopez thinks it’s important for athletes



PHOTO BY AUSTRIS AUGUSTS / UNSPLASH

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 stops and starts, 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 each other 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.

HATE SPORTS? READ THIS.

The artistic, myth-filled nature of competitive sports

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-invisible puck around a rink, or enthusing about three-hundred-pound men hitting each other to get to an oblong leather-covered ball. Not to mention the weird lingo that sounds like a foreign language, where a “Hail Mary” isn’t a prayer, a “screen” has nothing to do with your lap-top, a “blitz” does not refer to the London blitz, and announcers routinely scream “AND ONE!” when basketball players strut around after running into a metal pole.

You’re under no obligation to like sports. I suppose I could tell you about the pageantry of college football, or the fun of rooting for a team alongside tens of 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 heir 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 heir leaves, licks their wounds, and rises 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 a team that was bigger, stronger, better conditioned, used to the bright lights and the big stage and the primetime games in a way a mid-major can never be. They emerged victorious, forever memorialized in basketball history. The next season, questioned and doubted by media who well remembered their March loss, Virginia escaped the ghosts and whispers in the sweetest way possible: winning the national championship.

Or perhaps another epic, of a group of heroes rising from obscurity to rule a kingdom. These heroes are embraced by



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 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 engineered 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 monstrous 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.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY THE NUEVA MEDIA ARCHIVE

BOYS VOLLEYBALL TEAM RETURNS FOR SECOND SEASON

Roster of 29 generates excitement for upcoming season despite no league placement

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 new sport last year, the team had only six students

consistently playing.

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 reached 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.

BEACH VOLLEYBALL TEAM SETS UP FOR SOPHOMORE SEASON

New practice court and forecasts of a growing roster fuel hopes

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 Schnieder ’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.

“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.”

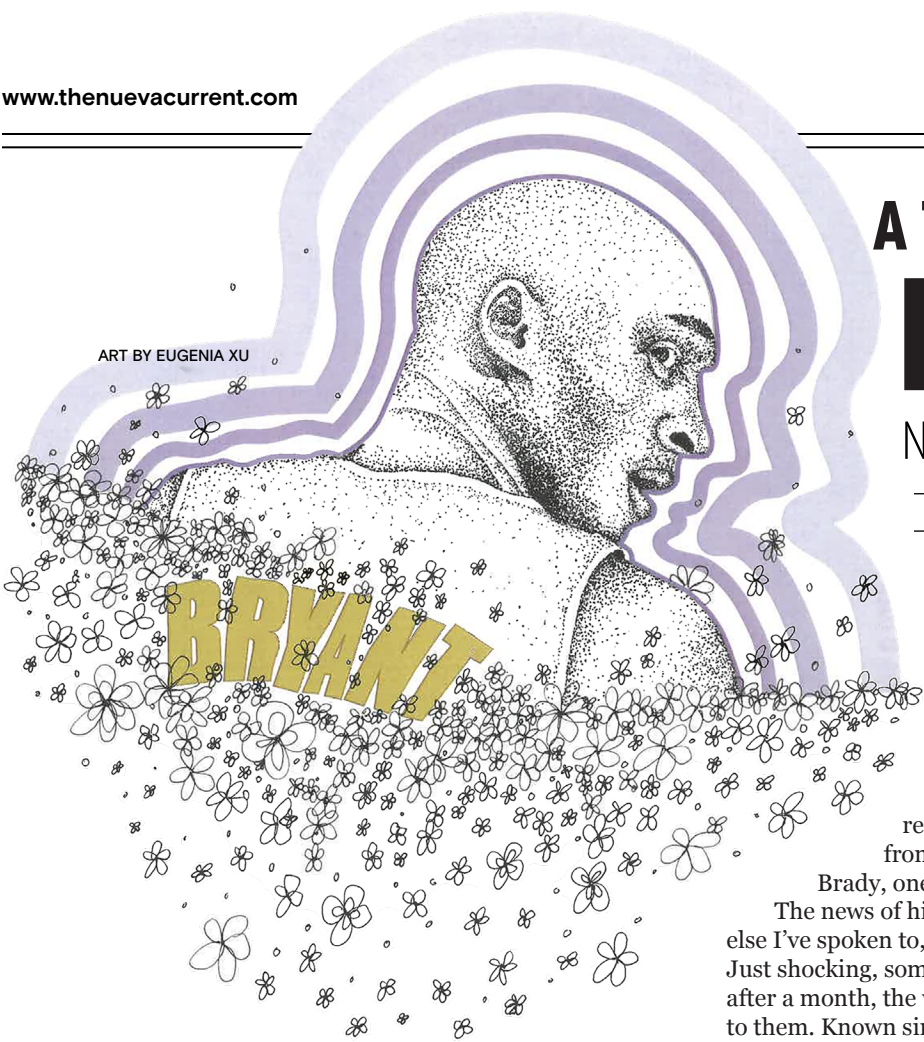
Though she hopes to see crossover in membership, Schneider emphasizes the difference between beach volleyball and indoor volleyball.

“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.



ART BY EUGENIA XU

A TRIBUTE TO KOBE BRYANT

Nueva community won't forget the legendary player

INTRODUCTION BY MIRIELLE WONG | REPORTING BY WILLOW TAYLOR CHIANG YANG

I saw it on Twitter on what was a lazy Sunday, about 30 minutes after the news first broke on Jan. 26, 2020.

"Kobe Bryant is among those dead in a helicopter crash outside Los Angeles, a source confirms to ESPN," wrote ESPN Senior NBA Insider Adrian Wojnarowski. Then, interspersed with the factual reports: personal tributes by everyone from dime-a-dozen armchair GMs to Tom Brady, one after another.

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. 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 nut I may be, but Kobe Bryant occupies 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 1980s 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 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, people whom he 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 think there are two main things that drew me to him. First, I'm a Lakers fan, so of course, he's one of my favorite players. The second thing is his work ethic, his Mamba Mentality, which is unmatched. There are a ton of stories about him going into the gym super early to work on his shot, or staying after games to work on things that he did wrong. I think that this hard work also brought him a lot of success, both in and out of basketball."

—Tyler Huang '22

"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 the 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 Dumalig '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.

BLAZING A NEW TRAIL

Katie Sowers becomes the first female and openly gay coach in the Super Bowl

BY AMANDA WANG

Game after game, season after season, barriers are broken and athletes do the impossible.

Every season, players push their bodies to the limit just to gain that extra yard or make an extra tackle. Every season, I watch as the big, burly men led their teams to success, but rarely see women on my screen. An unbroken barrier stood tall for 54 years, requiring more than physical strength to knock it down. It stood unanswered until Katie Sowers, 33, smashed it, becoming the San Francisco 49ers' offensive assistant in 2018.

In the Super Bowl LIV match between the Kansas City Chiefs and the San Francisco 49ers, Sowers became the first female and openly LGBTQ+ person to coach full time at the Super Bowl. She's only the second woman ever to land a full-time coaching position in the NFL. Though the 49ers ultimately lost by 11 points to the AFC Champions, Sowers' achievement will be the lasting win, as she motivates players and many others with her simple message of believing in oneself.

She inspires more than the players with this message. Young girls and women have another role model, another example who proves the haters wrong. Sowers' story is another exemplar that shows me, "You can do it—even if you're a girl."

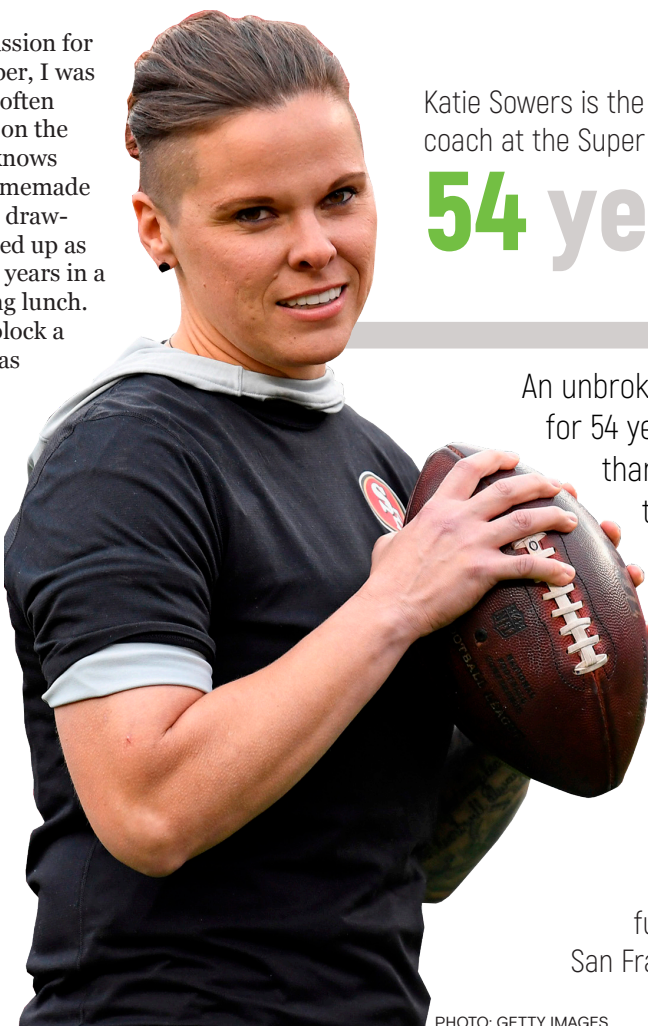
Sowers started playing football at the early age of 8 and took up basketball on the side. In college, she played basketball competitively but was denied the opportunity to continue as a coach because of her sexuality. She returned to her original passion for football and played in the Women's Football Alliance for almost a decade. In 2013, she played for the U.S. Women's National Football Team. She eventually got her start in coaching with the Atlanta Falcons under 49ers head coach Kyle Shanahan, who was then the offensive coordinator. Through

the Bill Walsh Diversity Coaching Fellowship, a program aimed at helping minorities earn NFL coaching positions, Sowers was able to connect with Shanahan's coaching staff. She stayed with him when he moved to San Francisco.

Like Sowers, I have always had a passion for sports. But for as long as I can remember, I was only ever one of maybe two girls—and often found the only girl—in of a sea of boys on the field. Anyone who's been in my room knows that I have a football wall collage of homemade posters, cutouts, magazine covers, and drawings of various football players. I dressed up as a football player for Halloween for five years in a row. I played the game every day during lunch.

When I sacrificed my own body to block a wide receiver, no one believed that I was concussed because of football. "You mean football like soccer, right?" was the question I received day after day, year after year. To many, it was unbelievable, that I, a young female, could even touch the pigskin, let alone throw, catch, and run alongside the boys.

Seeing Sowers achieve what many thought would never happen has encouraged me to reconnect with football. She pushed past all the negativity regarding both her sexuality and gender to get to where she is. Sowers simply had the belief in herself and was able to start moving the sticks towards a future where female coaches aren't an anomaly—a future where young girls like myself will think about the possibility of coaching or playing football and no one will question us.



Katie Sowers is the first female coach at the Super Bowl in its

54 years

An unbroken barrier stood tall for 54 years, requiring more than physical strength to knock it down. It stood unanswered until Katie Sowers, 33, smashed it.

1 of 24

full-time coaches for the San Francisco 49ers is female.

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

SEASON ENDS FOR BOYS BASKETBALL AFTER TOUGH CCS QUARTERFINALS LOSS

BY CHERISE WONG

While the boys basketball season ended last Tuesday with a loss in the CCS quarterfinals, the team demonstrated significant improvement over the course of the season.

This year’s 14-person roster is a mix of sophomores, juniors, and seniors. Nine players returned from varsity; the others played on the JV team last season. Tyler Huang ’22, who moved to the varsity team this year, felt that returning varsity players played a big role in helping him transition to the new team and environment.

“[They] have definitely helped me a ton, especially earlier in the season, when I was getting adjusted to play against more difficult competition,” Huang said. “Although it has been challenging at times, our team has been super welcoming and we’ve built pretty good chemistry.”

“The mix of experienced and new players has been great,” said returning varsity point guard Connor McGraw ’22. “The JV players who were pulled up have all made a huge impact on the team and played important roles in our success.”

The team faced some adversity early in the season due to multiple injured players. Although their roster contains more players than usual, the injuries have made the season more challenging than anticipated.

“We’ve been a little unlucky with injuries this year,” varsity player Jeremy Dumalig ’20 acknowledged. Dumalig missed three games this season due to a wrist sprain.

Several other players have been sidelined at different times over the course of the season including Huang, who broke a finger in December, and McGraw, the starting point guard, who missed significant time due to knee and back injuries. While players were sidelined, the rest of the team all contributed to fill their roles.

“While I have been out, the whole team has stepped up and it’s been great to watch them consistently improve each game,” McGraw said.

Despite their injuries, the team finished the season third place in the PSAL with an 8-4 league record.

Dumalig counts the Fremont Tournament Consolation championship against American High School as one of the team’s best and most memorable games of the season. After trailing by about 10 points in the fourth quarter, the team was able to come back and win in overtime.

“Ryan Cheng [’21] hit a three to tie the game with about five seconds in the fourth quarter,” Dumalig recalled. “[It was] a great team win and a fun way to finish the tournament and win the consolation bracket.”

After the end of the regular season, the boys competed in the PSAL tournament, which they won last year. They advanced past the first two rounds with victories against University Prep Academy and Summit Shasta and advanced to the championship final against Pacific Bay Christian in which they lost 22-40.

The team most recently completed a run in the CCS playoffs. Their regular season record earned them the ninth seed, and they beat Mid-Peninsula in the first round on Feb. 21 to advance to the second round, which they played on Feb. 22 against the number eight seed Crystal Springs. They won with a final score of 67-49 and moved on to the quarterfinals on Feb. 25 against the number one seed Woodside Priory. The game was close during the first half, with the team trailing by only six points at halftime, but they ultimately fell to Priory with a final score of 49-63.



VARSITY ATHLETES IN ACTION | From left to right: Trevor Golob ’21, Gaelen Clayton ’21, Hope Hsiao ’22, Jake Vercellino ’20, Tyler Huang ’22
PHOTOS BY JOY FENG

1,647

The cumulative number of points scored by the boys basketball team

213

points were scored by Tara Saxena ’21, captain of the girls basketball team, 102 of which were from three-point shots

71

total goals were scored by the girls soccer team in the regular season, 21 of which were scored by Gaelen Clayton ’21

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 Wade 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 play 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.”

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 Zerabruk—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 10-0 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 handlings 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. “Everyone 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 Scholastic Team Champion, with a CCS Section team GPA of 3.85.

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 mustered up a 46-44 win, the perfect 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 haven’t 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 eyes on CCS as they pushed for a first-time win.

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 Alice 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.