

EL CORAZÓN
2021

THIS IS EL
CAMINO **REX** CHARTER HIGH
WOODLAND HILLS,
SCHOOL CALIFORNIA

VOL.
52

EL CORAZÓN 2021

THIS IS SPECIAL



AS
REX
AS IT
GETS



Illustrations

Front cover: Senior Jason Cano page 96, Senior Leilani Hernandez page 104, Junior Isys Thompson page 118.

Back cover: Junior Justin Levy page 14.

This page: Senior Gabriel Evans page 66, Senior Valeria Asbjornsen page 32. *by Alanna Jimenez*



WHAT'S

REAL?

THIS IS REAL
QUARTER ONE **008**
QUARTER TWO **034**
QUARTER THREE **068**
QUARTER FOUR **100**
REFERENCE **146**

What's this?
The quad is empty as fall semester starts Aug. 10 with students logging in for distance-learning classes from their homes due to the COVID-19 pandemic. *Photo by David Dabio*

THIS IS REAL

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Students: 3,875 Faculty: 327

Reality sets in
With their hands in the air, seniors Clare Rudooy, Corinne Eilat, Briana Ibarra, Ella Denniston and Victoria Acevedo cheer at the socially-distanced Senior Sweep car parade Aug. 6. Photo by Rebecca Tam



Real help

Knealing at the sideline, senior Jason Labra collects footballs to hand to the referees during the game. *Illustration by Alanna Jimenez*



THIS IS FINALLY STARTING TO SET IN,

and you're realizing it —
that this is our new reality.

Masks became such a big part of our lives that some of us even had our go-to's, like the ones sophomore Lilly Karzen's grandma made for her, or the school-branded ones you could always see junior David Rittenhouse wearing.

And don't get us started about Microsoft Teams. Whether we felt comfortable turning our cameras on during online class, like freshman Felipe Barrera-Macal, or whether we signed the petition against requiring cameras, like senior Nathan Schaffer, we saw our screen time skyrocket.

Kinda crazy how much has changed, right?



Welcome to our house

Introducing incoming freshmen to campus, world languages teacher Zasha Endres, the Intervention Coordinator and Academic Involvement and Mentoring (AIM) Director, delivers a speech in the center of a group of 10 students Nov. 10. Los Angeles County approved schools to bring small groups of students on campus if they followed a number of safety guidelines. *Photo by David Dablo*



Getting to the answer

Interviewing Executive Director David Hussey, junior Nida Yar-Khan gathers facts for her newspaper article about a protest held on Aug. 22. Yar-Khan said that interviewing is only one part of her job. "Producing a newspaper can get stressful when we're scrambling for pictures or quotes," Yar-Khan said. "But overall it's a wonderful experience. I love being a part of the process." *Photo by Rebecca Tam*



Book drive, woo-oo

Before the start of the school year, junior Haley Dablo grabs a bag full of her textbooks from Plant Manager Dupree Fuller Aug. 16. Because of distance learning, students were unable to check books out from their individual teachers as they usually would, so the tech office managed the computer systems during the textbook pickups, while faculty and staff members volunteered to distribute books to students in cars on the Service Road. *Photo by David Dablo*

WELL,
IT



NEVER
GOING TO BE
THE SAME.

Real power

Playing in the scrimmage against Chaminade High School, senior Jillian Kelly pitches the ball. Kelly committed to Chapman University in September. "I was so excited to pursue my dream of playing college softball," she said. Photo by David Dablo

BUT WE'RE USED TO IT NOW.

It's really our new normal —

Hours in front of the screen — and the fact that we were in “quarantine” for months — inspired us to get creative with our hobbies. From baking bread, like senior Valeria Asbjornsen, to 3D-printing face shields, like junior Justin Levy, we did things we literally never thought we'd ever do.

And then of course, there was the opportunity for change. We watched (and voted virtually) as our mascot went into retirement and Executive Director David Hussey worked with the Fernandeno Tataviam Band of Mission Indians (and all of us) to create a mascot we could all get behind.

Some of the events we always looked forward to, like Senior Sweep, were adapted to be held in-person and meet CDC guidelines (read: it was a car parade), though most things happened online, like the two-night Talent Show or Relay for Life's luminaria event. But the truth is: just because it was online, doesn't mean it didn't happen.

SO YOU REALLY CAN'T FORGET THAT

THIS IS

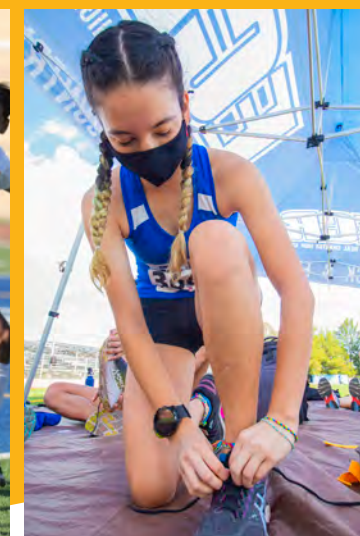
Hey senior year!

Reaching out of a red car, senior Jackson Lessard waves to the faculty members who participated in the parade. Lessard thought the event well adapted to guidelines. “I wish it could've been normal and I wish I could've hung out with everyone,” Lessard said. “But with all the COVID-19 precautions we had to take, I felt like it was still really fun and done well.”
Photo by Rebecca Tam



Two on one

While playing against Fairfax, senior Jose Coto faces up against a defender. The varsity boys' soccer team won the scrimmage 11-2, and continued a winning streak for five more games. *Photo by Ellis Preston*



Tying it all together

Attaching a tracking chip to her shoe, junior Rebeca Mendoza prepares for her race against Granada Hills March 20. The cross-country team ran around a set course on campus. “It was only my second race, so I struggled to get in the right mindset,” Mendoza said, “but I was pretty excited and felt pretty strong throughout.”
Photo by David Dablo

Real news

Holding her dog, Student Body President Lana Kobayashi, a senior, delivers the weekly announcements on video from her family home's foyer. *Illustration by Alanna Jimenez*



So what's a pandemic?
Well, it's really a lot.

We could never have expected our "spring break" to blend into summer. Or that so many of us, like freshman Cayden Kim, would adopt pets during this "quarantine" time and get to spend every single minute with them.

With social distancing required, social media use exploded, and 5.5 million TikTok users learned senior Mahak Hamid's dance to Yo Gotti's rap, a clear sign of a TikTok take-over.

And when our community reacted to police brutality, some of us, like alumna Uloni VanDusen, class of 2020, protested to send the message that Black Lives Matter.

Yeah, you could say it definitely got real.

Real emotion

Demonstrating her message, alumna Uloni VanDusen, class of 2020, waves a sign at oncoming cars at the height of the Black Lives Matter movement June 6. Photo by David Dablo

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- Hand Sanitizer **010**
- Pet Adoptions **012**
- Profile: Justin Levy **014**
- AP Tests **016**
- "Quarantine" Room Decorating **018**
- Profile: Veronica Tortorici **020**
- Unused Backpacks **022**
- Salon-less Hairstyling **024**
- Black Lives Matter **026**
- Profile: Valeria Asbjornsen **032**

**APRIL
MAY
JUNE**

QUARANTINE

QUARTER TWO

JULY
AUGUST
SEPTEMBER

Summer came and went,
and we started a new semester
fully virtual.

Fall felt different with no sports seasons, but incoming head football coach Jason Sabolic stayed positive despite his premier season being delayed over and over again.

The Senior Sweep car parade even allowed seniors like Ashley Cayne and faculty like theater teacher Jonathan Harveson to snap selfies together through car windows.

And when we were all stuck at home, missing our friends, "Among Us" came to the rescue, allowing us to scheme and plot and accuse each other, like sophomore Sierra Ferrante or freshman Paul Ecklund.

It's like we really got the hang of it.

WHAT'S REALLY HERE

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Senior Sweep **044**
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Educators for BLM **054**
Among Us **058**
Virtual Spirit Week **060**
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Profile: Gabriel Evans **064**

Real books

Data Systems Analyst Marisela Carrera scans the barcode for a book held by College Counselor Diana Yerevanian at the textbook pick-up event on the Service Road Aug. 16. Photo by David Dablo

OCTOBER
NOVEMBER
DECEMBER

QUARTER THREE

2020 was finally ending.
But as thankful as we were, there was
nothing like **this.**

The Mock Election, run by alumnus Steven Bash, class of 2019, mirrored the results of the official California election, and seniors Kimberly Lopez Jimenez and Isha Cabanillas Lopez led CHIRLA in helping students apply for DACA.

While senior Asiyah Karim managed to do online school while visiting family in Afghanistan, junior Daniel Celnik rocked out to his electric guitar during the livestreamed Talent Show, and freshman Ambika Chhikara tuned in.

And some of us still took notes by hand . . . What?

Really, what a journey we went through.

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- Wellness **072**
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- Profile: Jeremy Ahn **078**
- Presidential Election **080**
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- eSports and Video Games **088**
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- Profile: Jason Cano **096**
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Candy (wo)man can
Reaching into a bowl of Halloween candy, freshman Florencia Goldenberg gets welcomed by Academic Involvement and Mentorship Director Zasha Endres. Photo by David Dablo

It's starting to feel **normal**,
and that's exactly what we hoped for.

Amanda Gorman's poem during the Presidential Inauguration inspired freshman Eva Konstantini, sophomore Sophie Lotterstein and seniors Owyn Cadieux and Donatella Galindo.

Fall sports turned into mid-spring sports, and student-athletes like quarterback junior Ryan Fienberg and freshman senior Coco Cohen were really ready to get their heads in the game.

With sports in action, the journalism programs got back to sports reporting, including seniors Luc Slater, Ryan Gilder and Andree Souza live broadcasting with LA36.

Finally, we knew that waiting was the only way to get back to what we missed most.

Real sports

At the first home game of the season, junior Troy Spellman runs to the end zone to score a touchdown while watching out for Chatsworth defense. Photo by David Dablo

WHAT'S REALLY HERE

- Capitol Riots **102**
- Profile: Leilani Hernandez **104**
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**JANUARY
FEBRUARY
MARCH**

QUARTER FOUR

REFERENCE

WHAT'S REALLY HERE

FACULTY AND STAFF 148
FRESHMEN 152
SOPHOMORES 014
JUNIORS 016
SENIORS 018
SENIOR TRIBUTES 265
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COLOPHON 312

With almost **4,000** of us, things can get a little crazy. But really, this is **the place to be.**

Seniors like J-zel Laberinto could schedule portraits at White's Studios thanks to extra sanitizing methods, but in true pandemic-style, underclassmen like sophomore Chidera Ochiaeri uploaded their own yearbook photos, with the ID Picture Day delayed until late April.

Clubs like Girl Up were still thriving, and sports teams lucky enough to have a real season, like baseball and softball? Well, they're here too.

That's the realest part of the year — we didn't need to meet on campus to feel like we were still a part of El Camino Real.

Circle of motivation

Jumping in the air, the girls' varsity soccer team huddles together before their second preseason scrimmage against Chaminade March 30. Photo by David Dablo

Real twin sisters
 During a mountain biking race, juniors Rebeca Mendoza and Marisol Mendoza bike side by side. Illustration by Alanna Jimenez



AS A LOT AND WE REALIZE

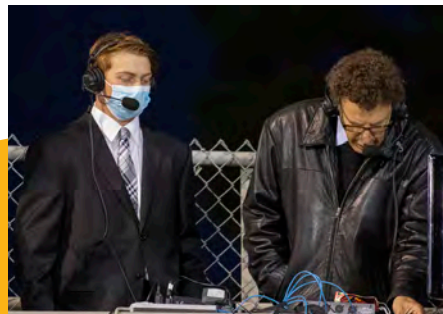
that everything changed.
And we all needed to adapt.

With COVID tests every two weeks, the cheerleaders like junior Isys Thompson came back to their stations on the track at the first football home game, and athletes like baseball player sophomore Jacob Rosenfeld began taking down wins in the hope of a championship game.

And we thought the news would never come, but when we learned that we would finally get a new mascot, we couldn't wait to find a new identity for our school, whether or not it was inspired by one of the illustrations submitted by junior Kanattage Mahisha Perera or senior Evelyn Horton.
But what'll we say when the pandemic is over?



Virtual reality
 In his empty classroom, business technology teacher Stefan Webster instructs his fourth period class, tapping the Promethean. During distance learning, some teachers taught from their classrooms, while others taught from home. Photo by David Dablo



And we're live
 In the stands, senior Ryan Gilder and professional broadcaster Randy Rosenbloom, from LA36, commentate on the football game. "It's a great honor to spread my knowledge of sports to an audience," Gilder said. Photo by David Dablo



"Good game"
 Celebrating a successful play, senior Courtney Cohen gives senior Abigail Miller a supportive pat. "I love working productively as a team to achieve our ultimate goal of playing hard and winning," Miller said. Photo by David Dablo

Been there, run that
Following the service road, junior Max Liberman and senior Aidan Emery run their second cross-country course March 20. In the 2.5 mile race against Granada, Liberman placed second and Emery placed fourth. Photo by David Dablo



WE CAN HOPE FOR THAT MOMENT.

But after a year of waiting —

Things were finally looking up when we heard we might be able to return to campus for hybrid learning. With the help of “RoyalPasses,” we knew that we might finally get back to normal.

Whatever “normal” is.

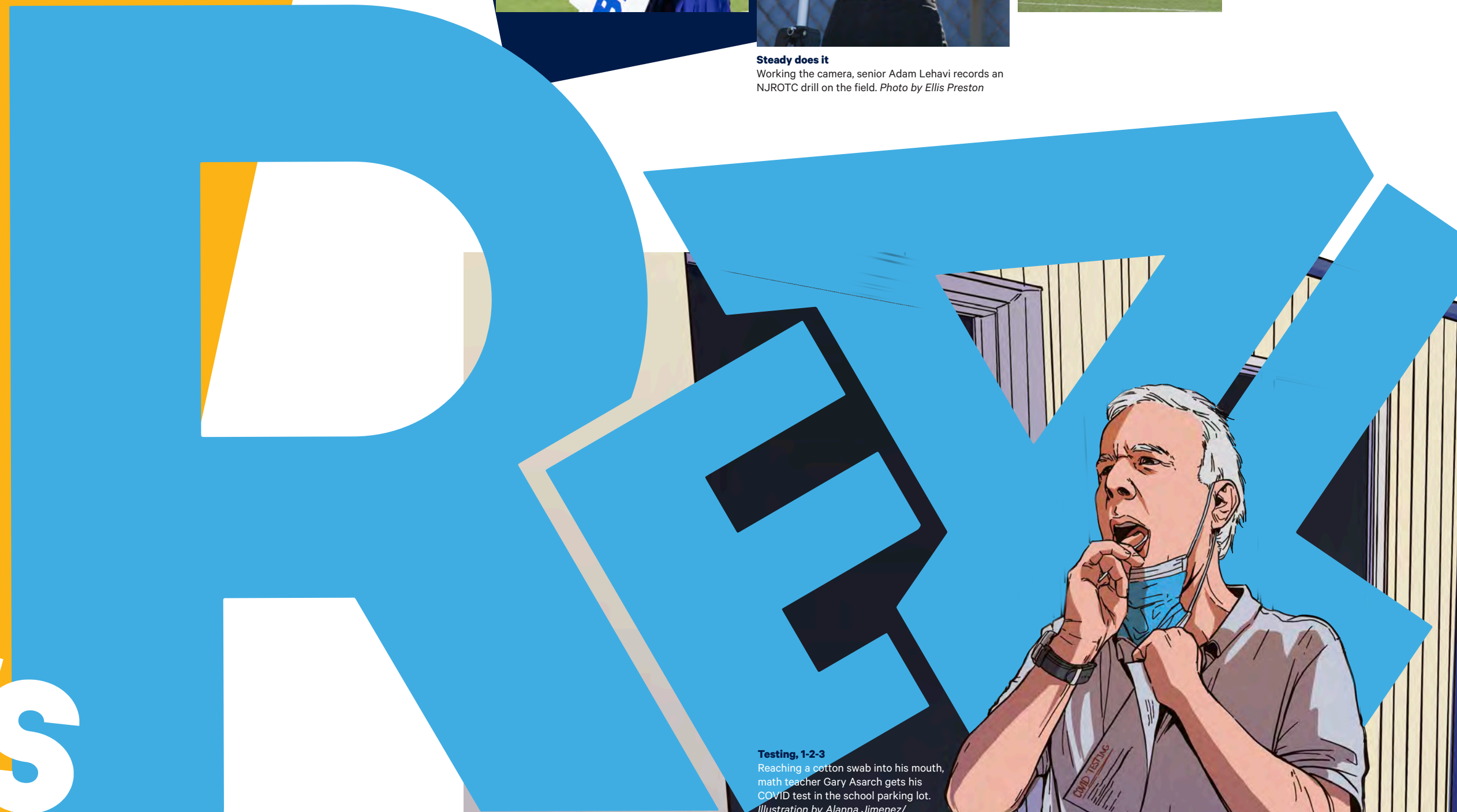
Is “normal” having a COVID-19 testing location taking up the entire student parking lot? Maybe, since we could see our teachers like math teacher Gary Asarch pulling up and getting cleared.

Is “normal” lining up for vaccines once the CDC greenlights them for our age group? Maybe, since seniors Aidan Curedale and Zoe Hogan did just that at Dodger Stadium.

Really, “normal” has become a bit meaningless, don’t you think? At the end of the day, it doesn’t matter whether it’s “normal.”

WHAT MATTERS IS THAT

THIS IS



All blue

After performing at halftime, juniors Leena Wang and Isys Thompson relive the events of their last home football game of the season. “I was pretty thrilled to be back,” Wang said. “Cheering in front of a crowd was refreshing, and I am so proud of my teammates.” Photo by David Dablo



Steady does it

Working the camera, senior Adam Lehavi records an NJROTC drill on the field. Photo by Ellis Preston



Run for it

Looking for a clear path to the end zone, sophomore Colin Ermita holds the ball close to his chest as he runs down the field. Photo by David Dablo

Testing, 1-2-3

Reaching a cotton swab into his mouth, math teacher Gary Asarch gets his COVID test in the school parking lot. Illustration by Alanna Jimenez/



YEP, THIS WAS REAL

Real curveball year

Following through on a pitch, senior Luc Slater watches the Crespi batter March 31. "My favorite part of the game is having quick innings on the mound," Slater said. "When you are doing well, it really fires you up. Photo by David Dablo

What a year —
even with all the **uncertainty**,
we learned that we could handle
anything that came our way.
Turned out, our **reality** was
really what we made of it.



**THIS
IS
REAL**