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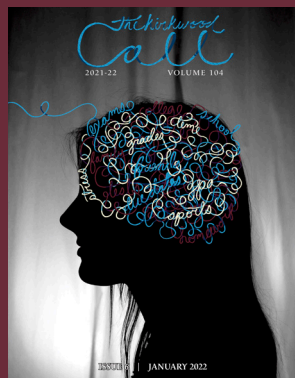
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ABOUT THE COVER



ART + DESIGN BY: MERRY SCHLARMAN
PHOTO BY: DE LILA GREEN

For the cover of this issue, I wanted to show the anonymity and darkness that mental illness can bring to anyone, hence the use of shadowing over the face. The face of mental illness can be anyone and any student.

- De Lila Green

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January 2022

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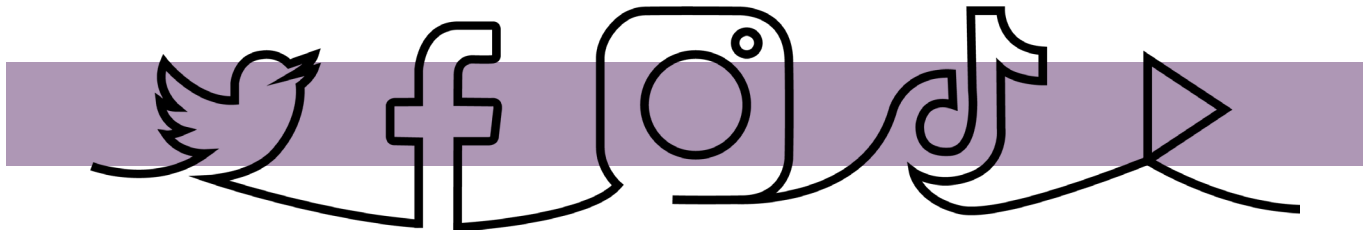
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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

When designing an issue, our main priorities are consistency and creativity. Staffers are given a page of fonts and design layouts, called “constants,” to work with when they design their page, before being set free to explore their ideas. Design acts as a way to connect with the reader beyond words – to utilize font, color and spacing to grip the audience’s attention. Now that we’re back in-person, we’ve been working hard to make sure that every *TKC* staffer is comfortable with our design software. I could not be more proud of how our issues have looked this year.

Every normal cycle *TKC* staff works together to create the Call Ed, our staff editorial. After viewing a presentation about a selected topic, we have a class discussion, before voting on an angle for our argument. Hearing and incorporating a spectrum of opinions allows us to form a clearer position on the issue we are addressing. The chosen topics reflect issues that are relevant to students or staff. With teachers being given an extra wellness day for mental health and students returning to a normal workload after the pandemic, we felt the relationship between KSD and mental health was an issue that needed to be discussed in this Call Ed. While *TKC* staffers usually offer differing opinions, the position on this Call Ed was unanimous: KSD needs to be doing more for its

students’ and teachers’ mental health. This led us to focus on finding solutions for mental health issues in KSD.

As both design editor and an artist, I was given the opportunity to visualize this mental health discussion on both the cover and in our Call Ed. We used the imagery of thread to show how mental health can get tangled up in the rest of our lives. For the cover, outside stressors like “school” and “family” are written out in the yarn to illustrate their part played in mental health. We highlighted this prevalent issue by displaying the string in vibrant colors, which stand out against the black and white photo. For Call Ed, I incorporated the same motif of string, along with uneven lines and messy brushes to create a feeling of instability.

It is through every staff member that *TKC* is able to do what we do each cycle. Each issue truly is a culmination of our efforts. Whether it be through writing, photos, art or design, journalism offers countless ways to connect to the issues at hand and the people beyond the page.

MERRY SCHLARMAN
design editor

ART BY: AUDREY BLAINE
visual managing editor



NEWS

PROP R:

OVERCROWDING & DISTRICT SECURITY

The Kirkwood community passed Prop R, a zero-tax rate increase bond, with 68% approval April 6, 2020. Prop R is designed to address overcrowding, update aging infrastructure and systems and enhance safety and security district-wide. Plans have been set for major renovations throughout KSD, including at KHS and five other KSD schools. Current KHS plans include the addition of 15 new classrooms, relocating the main office to the Dougherty Ferry parking lot and enclosing connection corridors.

Prop R plans were initiated in summer 2021, with HVAC units installed at KHS, Keysor, North Glendale and Tillman. Construction broke ground on two classrooms at Westchester Elementary School in the fall of 2021, ahead of the predicted schedule.

“Because of growing enrollment, we are out of space [at Westchester]. We had to act quickly,” Mike Romay, KSD chief financial officer, said.

“If we were to wait to build those two classrooms [with the rest of the Westchester construction], it would mean they wouldn’t be finished until summer 2023. We couldn’t wait.”

The classrooms are on schedule to be completed at the end of January 2022 and will be ready for student use during the second semester of the 2021-22 school year. Additional work over the summer and fall included a new security office at KHS’s Essex entrance, a secure entrance at North Glendale Elementary and ADA ramps at the front entrance of North Glendale and Robinson Elementary schools. According to Romay, while these projects were within budget and relatively in their timeline, they were not without complications.

“[There are] no major problems yet, though we do have some concerns with supply chain issues,” Romay said. “We were waiting on glass for the security office at the high school. The doors didn’t have glass for the first few weeks of school [because of supply chain issues].”

The new KHS security office provides KHS with numerous benefits, according to Martise Scott, KSD director of safety and security. He said the office serves two roles: a physical barrier to entry and a mental reminder of KHS security.

“[The office provides both] presence and the ability to [directly] see the entryway where visitors come thinking it’s the main entrance,” Scott said. “As the director of safety and security, being on campus [allows me] to form relationships with high schoolers.”

The next stage of Prop R work will be interior renovations at Robinson, Keysor, North Glendale and Kirkwood Early Childhood Center (KECC). The bids for construction were submitted in December 2021 and the work is planned for summer 2022.

“Because [the work] is inside the school, it cannot start until school lets out in the summer,” Romay said. “However, it will be completed for the [2022-2023 school year].”

Major construction is scheduled to begin in spring 2022. The district will issue bid requests for the additions at KHS, North Kirkwood Middle School and Nipher Middle School in January 2022, and for Tillman and Westchester Elementary School in February 2022. These building additions are set to begin in late spring of 2022 and will be completed in summer 2023.

“[This work] is a little more tricky because kids are close by,” Romay said. “We will have to phase in the work and do it at [the] time that is least disruptive. There will be some noise and disruption, but we will try to minimize it as much as possible. All work will be fenced off and students will be safe.”

Though the major renovations have not started, Scott is excited about the improvements Prop R will make. Information on updates and progress can be found on the KSD’s website.

“You can go to kirkwoodschoools.org and click on the Prop R tab,” Steph Deidrick, KSD chief communications officer, said. “Click on updates and there you can find district updates and a [Power hour] video [with the superintendent].”

All KSD school buildings will see some type of renovation due to Prop R in the coming year. While the major construction is yet to come, students will soon feel the rewards of Prop R, both Romay and Scott said.

“Every school will reap the benefits of Prop R,” Scott said. “The district needed the upgrades, there’s no doubt about it. We thank our community, staff members and students for supporting Prop R.” ♦



STORY BY: NICHOLAS WHITTINGTON
news editor

ART BY: ELENA SHERWOOD
artist

PHOTOS BY: SOPHIA BECKMANN
photo editor



Construction broke ground on two classrooms at Westchester Elementary School in the fall of 2021.



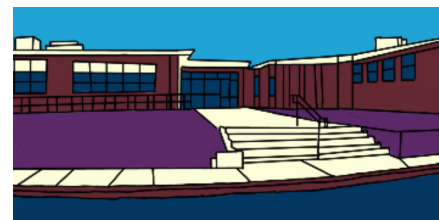
Kirkwood High School:

- Add 15 classrooms to maintain class size and address needs such as career and technical education and areas for innovative programs.
- Relocate and secure main office to the Dougherty Ferry parking lot.
- Add a security office on the Essex entrance.
- Enclose connection corridors.



North Kirkwood Middle School:

- Convert Administrative Service Center (ASC) to classrooms (gain of 8-10 classrooms).
- Relocate band to converted classroom, providing dedicated space for instrumental learning.
- Enclosed connection corridors to increase safety and alleviate overcrowding.



Westchester Elementary School:

- Add eight additional grade level classrooms to maintain class sizes.
- New library/media center, converting existing library into spaces for personalized learning.
- Additional art and music classrooms.
- Expansion of the cafeteria.



Nipher Middle School:

- Add four classrooms to maintain class size.
- Enclosed connection corridor to increase safety and security and alleviate hallway overcrowding.
- Relocate orchestra to provide a dedicated space designed for instrumental learning.



Tillman Elementary School:

- Add six additional grade level classrooms to maintain class size.
- New library/media center.
- New wellness and gymnasium facility.
- Additional art and music classrooms.



Robinson Elementary School:

- Accessibility and safety improvements.
- Upgraded elevator to enhance equitable access to learning spaces.
- Upgraded restrooms.



Keysor Elementary School:

- Accessibility and safety improvements.
- Upgraded elevator to enhance equitable access.
- Upgraded restrooms.



North Glendale Elementary School:

- Secure entrance to improve visitor management.
- Accessibility and safety improvements.
- Upgraded restrooms.



KECC:

- Secure entrance to improve visitor management.
- Accessibility and safety improvements.

「FEATURES」



‘Go hard, be aggressive.’

She repeated in her head while warming up before each game. But this time was different. It was her first competition back after a concussion, and she was playing in her home city at Chicago State University. She had family, friends and old coaches watching in the stands. Even an old teammate was on the court.



Robin Giden, KHS senior class guidance counselor and former Western Michigan University basketball player, earned 12 points and 12 rebounds in that game. But it was not her loved ones in the stands that got her through the game, she said it was the four words: “go hard, be aggressive.”

“[In games during] my freshman year, I didn’t want to touch the ball because I was so afraid of making a mistake,” Giden said. “Then you go in, and your coach is going to pull you right back out because you’re in the game not doing anything. If I wanted to play, I had to work on my confidence.”

According to Giden, realizing mindset could control her performance made her interested in mental health and led her to become a guidance counselor. She said she teaches her current students about the mental health lessons she learned through basketball, like the importance of celebrating small victories and confidence.

“I truly believe self-confidence is a superpower,” Giden said. “I say that all the time. If you believe it and say it to yourself enough you can do anything.”

Confidence is not the only struggle for Giden and other collegiate athletes. According to Giden and Lauryn Miller, 2017 KHS alum and former UCLA basketball player, athletes also deal with expectations to excel in school and sports.

“As athletes you’re seen as gladiators, in a sense,” Miller said. “You’re supposed to be superheroes of whatever campus you’re on. People lose that piece of humanity that is still there. It’s easy to see the tangible ACL tear I suffered, but it’s hard to conceptualize why [athletes] wouldn’t be fine [mentally].”

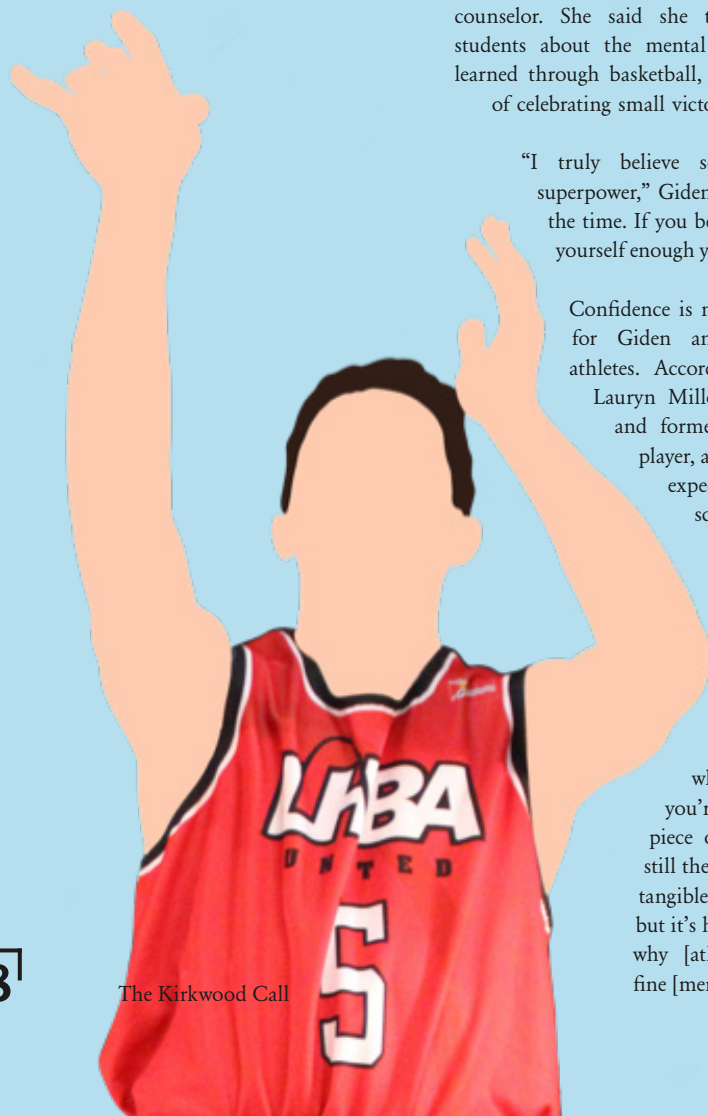
“**AS ATHLETES YOU ARE SEEN AS GLADIATORS, IN A SENSE. YOU’RE SUPPOSED TO BE SUPERHEROES OF WHATEVER CAMPUS YOU’RE ON.**”

Miller is currently dealing with an ACL injury, but is considering going overseas to play basketball next year. With multiple practices a day, classes and traveling for sports, Miller said she had trouble finding time for activities outside of homework and basketball. She believes her busy schedule helped her discover the importance of self-care.

“For [many] athletes the main [person] who loses is yourself,” Miller said. “That’s who you lose spending time with, taking care of and just checking in on because you’re so busy [tending] to the world. I had to learn [to find] ‘me time’ [so I could] still perform and excel, but make sure that I wasn’t falling behind in a personal sense.”

Miller almost returned home after feeling homesick during her freshman year, but said she changed her mind because of her strong relationships with teammates and coaches. Grace Murphy, 2020 KHS alum and former Missouri State University cross country and track athlete, also almost came home during her freshman year.

“Senior year of high school our team was so close [and] that was the best experience ever,” Murphy said. “I came into college hoping for those experiences, and I got them first semester because everyone was on a high. But once second semester hit, I found [the people on my team] weren’t my people.”





Murphy stopped running in college after her freshman year. Since then, she said her mental health has greatly improved, and she now enjoys running non-competitively. Murphy is thankful for the experience she got as a Division I athlete.

“[I realized] I’m going to struggle with anxiety the rest of my life,” Murphy said. “But there’s so many ways to cope with it, and so many other people are struggling and that’s OK. We just have to be there for each other.”

Tara Behnam, KHS varsity basketball and volleyball player, said she considered playing volleyball at the University of Massachusetts Boston, but recently changed her mind because she felt burnt out. Behnam said she does not see herself continuing for four more years, especially after an experience last winter where balancing club volleyball with basketball affected her mentally.

“For a while I was super stressed and anxious all the time,” Behnam said. “[I was] worried about when I was going to get school work done, about this next game [or letting] my team down. [I was] also worried about myself. I felt so tired [and] needed a break.”

“**WHETHER I HAVE A DOUBLE-DOUBLE OR PLAY FIVE MINUTES, IT DOESN’T DIMINISH MY WORTH THAT I ADD TO THE WORLD OR PEOPLE AROUND ME.**”

Miller believes mental health is starting to become more de-stigmatized in the athletic world. She credited this to the recent honesty of high level athletes who have struggled with mental health, especially men like Kevin Love, former UCLA and current Cleveland Cavaliers NBA basketball player.

“When you have huge public figures, especially men, who are willing to be honest and put themselves out there, [it’s easier to break the mental health stigma],” Miller said. “[Society] already thinks women are hysterical and emotional, so it’s not off-brand when we admit to [mental health issues]. When men are honest and are able to share [their struggles], especially men who are admired in an athletic sense, people soften their hearts to the idea.”

According to Miller, Love has gifted every UCLA athlete a subscription to Headspace, a mindfulness app. She also praised the UCLA women’s basketball program for having some form of mental health training every week. Miller said the lessons taught her to separate her performance from self-worth.

“How I impact people is not dependent on how I play basketball,” Miller said. “Whether I have a double-double or play five minutes, it doesn’t diminish my worth that I add to the world or people around me.”

Miller said playing at UCLA was worth all of the mental struggles because of the networking, relationships and experiences it has given her.

“The woman I am now is nothing like the girl who left Kirkwood,” Miller said. “Not only because of what I got to experience, but even some of the adversity, because at some point I was forced to grow.” ◇

STORY BY: **AVA DUGGIN**
web managing editor

ART BY: **EMMA FRIZZELL**
art editor

PHOTOS BY: **SOPHIA BECKMANN**
photo editor



FEATURES

“It ain’t braggin’ if you can do it.”

This is one of the many encouraging notes hanging in Kirkwood resident Dennis Kelly’s basement, carefully handwritten by his wife. The “it” in this case is building and flying his own airplane. Kelly built the Thatcher CX4, a small airplane designed by David Thatcher, in his workshop in the basement of his house.

“[My wife and I] drove down to Pensacola, FL to see his airplane, and I fell in love with it immediately,” Kelly said. “So we bought the plans and the manual, and we drove back home and I started building that airplane. Two years later, I went to the airport with it and started flying it. It first flew in 2009. I’ve been flying and tinkering with it ever since, tweaking it a little bit here and there. It’s really a beautiful, neat airplane.”

Kelly’s interest in aviation began long ago, when he was drafted into the Air Force in the 1960s. After working as a jet engine mechanic in the military, Kelly graduated from the University of Texas and began working for McDonnell Aircraft, an aviation company now owned by Boeing. Kelly shared his first aircraft, a 1947 Cessna 140, with a friend and earned his pilot’s license. After that, Kelly bought a 1946 Cessna 120, which he owned and flew for 27 years. Kelly first attempted to build an aircraft called a Mustang II 20 years ago, which he abandoned due to cost and complexity. The Thatcher CX4 was more practical for Kelly in many ways.

“It was a much simpler design than the first plane I started and a lot less expensive,” Kelly said. “This airplane doesn’t have an aviation engine in it, it has a little Volkswagen Beetle engine. An aircraft engine is \$35,000-45,000. This thing is \$4,000. I spent a total of about \$16,300 on [the CX4]. To finish that other plane, it would’ve cost me at least \$50,000.”

After getting the engine, sheet metal and other parts for the airplane, Kelly set to work. He constructed the fuselage, tail and both wings of the aircraft on a workbench in his basement. Kelly occasionally received help from his wife Trinity, who held down the pieces while Dennis riveted them together. When Trinity wasn’t helping Dennis assemble the plane, she was upstairs working in her calligraphy studio, which Dennis said is conveniently far away from his plane workshop.

“It was no problem,” Trinity said. “It was Dennis enjoying what he was doing and I just stayed out of the way when it was something heavy. I was doing my thing in my studio while he was down there riveting away. If he needed a helping hand to hold something down, I was there.”

Dennis finished the individual pieces of the airplane and moved them to his garage to coat them with a special type of flexible aviation paint. The toxic paint required Dennis to wear a

NO PLANE, NO GAIN



sealed hazmat suit while painting. Dennis said his neighbors who watched him construct the plane for years found this step of the process particularly entertaining. When the paint was complete, Dennis borrowed two trailers to transport the pieces to the airport where he assembled the plane.

“
WE BOUGHT THE PLANS, AND I STARTED BUILDING THAT AIRPLANE. TWO YEARS LATER, I STARTED FLYING IT.”

“The hardest part of building the plane was flying it,” Dennis jokingly said. “It was a little squirrely on the ground. When I first decided to go out and do just a little test liftoff and settle it back down, the darn thing shot off to the right of the runway and lifted right over the soybeans, scared me to death. I darn near put the wing in the ground, but I got it up. I ended up making a beautiful landing, but it took me two weeks to get up enough courage to get back in that airplane. And I have worked on that squirreliness problem over the years and made some design changes to the rudder pedals and brake systems, and that helped it a lot.”

Dennis had to learn the differences in the CX4 compared to the much “sloppier” controls of the Cessnas he was used to flying. After mastering this, Dennis has continued to fly the CX4 at Creve Coeur Airport almost every weekend when the weather is nice. In 2011, Dennis received a call from Tom Hrdlicka, a Missouri resident with no background in aviation who was interested in building a CX4. Hrdlicka had found Dennis’s phone number on the CX4 website, which had Dennis listed as a previous builder of the plane.

“I gave him a call and he couldn’t have been any nicer,” Hrdlicka said. “So I met him at the airport

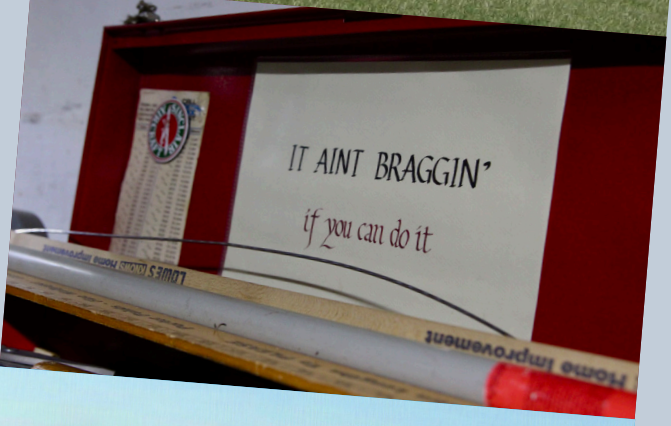
and saw his plane, and he talked to me about building it. I went ahead and bought [the] plans and started building my own plane after that.”

It took Hrdlicka three and a half years to finish his CX4 after working on the aircraft during his free time, similar to Dennis. Hrdlicka said Dennis helped him throughout the building process by answering questions and loaning him specific tools.

“I still talk to [Dennis] today. He is a friend of mine now,” Hrdlicka said. “He was the biggest help. I believe I would’ve completed my plane, but I wouldn’t have done it in three and half years without Dennis’s knowledge and his help. I can’t thank him enough.”

Along with helping Hrdlicka work on his plane, Dennis has continued to tweak and adjust his own CX4 regularly. He plans to continue flying it simply for his enjoyment.

“I never think of an airplane as getting from point A to point B,” Dennis said. “I just get in there to have fun.” ♦



STORY BY: **MEGAN GLASGOW**
editor-in-chief

PHOTOS BY: **ANNIE GEORGE**
photo editor

COURTESY OF DENNIS KELLY

OPINIONS

*Opinion

To some, 2021 may be remembered for the Capitol riots, the COVID-19 vaccine becoming available and life getting back to some normalcy. For me and the Asian community, 2021 will be remembered for the abundance of Asian representation both on screen and in the media. With all the positive representation our community was gifted, we had to face hardships too. We watched as anti-Asian hate rose, fearing for the future of our community.

Growing up, “Ni-Hao Kai-lan,” a Chinese children’s show, and “Mulan,” an animated Disney movie were the main forms of Asian representation I had. Amaya Gaus, sophomore, had a similar experience. Gaus is half Chinese and said she didn’t realize there was a lack of representation in the media when she was younger.

“My mom, [who is] from China, helped me with [Asian exposure], but in American media it’s not [prevalent],” Gaus said. “I didn’t really realize how much of an issue it was, because even though I’m half Asian, I’m very white passing. It never occurred to me that I needed representation for the Asian part of me.”

While teenagers like Gaus and I didn’t have much representation to grow up with, younger generations of Asian kids may have a different experience. With the recent release of Marvel’s film, “Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings,” came a new superhero for Asian children to look up to. Sarah Neumann, junior, is Chinese and said it is good that Asian children will have an idol who looks like them.

“When you’re a kid, you look up to people that look like you, so [for] kids it’s great that they can finally see someone [in film who] looks like them,” Neumann said. “It’s also disappointing because [Shang-Chi] is not [one] of the bigger Marvel characters, like Black Widow or Captain America. It would be nice to [have] representation in a big character [role].”

“Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings” made history as Marvel’s first Asian-led film,

“WHEN YOU’RE A KID, YOU LOOK UP TO PEOPLE WHO LOOK LIKE YOU.”

which caused conversation surrounding Marvel’s intentions in producing it. Gaus said while she found aspects of the film stereotypical, she appreciated the authentic portrayal of Chinese culture.

“It’s hard to find that line between authenticity and stereotypes in some cases,” Gaus said. “[It] was neat how they [had] nice fight scenes with Asian martial arts [as] opposed to having just cool gadgets. Some of it taught [the cultural] background stories and legends, and it really taught people more about the [Chinese] culture.”

Asian representation has also made an appearance on the Olympic podium. Suni Lee, Hmong-American and gymnast, is the first Asian-American to win gold in the women’s individual all-around competition. While most eyes were on Simone Biles, I was mesmerized by Lee. It was refreshing to see how excited her family was for her.

Edrin Chen, KHS Chinese teacher, said she was excited to see Lee win gold.

“I was screaming when she won [gold],” Chen said. “You want to see someone similar [to you] who shares the same background [and] shares the same story [as you].”

We need more girls and boys like her to bring their [ethnic history to the light] so everyone can learn from them because everyone has a different story.”

Since her Olympic win, Lee has gained fame and 1.6 million Instagram followers. She has appeared on Dancing With the Stars and attended the Met Gala. Sadly, according to the Los Angeles Times, Lee experienced anti-Asian hate through

racist slurs and pepper spray in September. Lee is a role model for me and many other Asians, so hearing that she was attacked is a reminder that we still have to deal with hardships. Lee has helped represent us, and Gaus said it’s disheartening she has to face racism because of it.

“It’s great [the Hmong are] finally getting the representation they deserve,” Gaus said. “[But] once you get representation, people are out to target you and that’s really disgusting and sad.”

Along with Lee, 9,000 other Asians have experienced anti-Asian crimes in America since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to NPR. My sister, who is adopted from Korea, is part of the 9,000. She dealt with verbal hate from a white woman in the beginning of the pandemic. COVID-19 originated in Wuhan, China, contributing to the 73% increase in anti-Asian hate, according to FBI data.

“I WAS HEARTBROKEN WHEN [ANTI-ASIAN CRIMES] STARTED HAPPENING.”

“I was heartbroken when [anti-Asian crimes] started happening, and then I [realized] right away that it could happen to me where I live,” Chen said. “If you are in the community and you see hate-related crimes, please stand up and speak up for those people who are the victims.”

Not many Americans are aware of the increase in anti-Asian hate. Yet when six Asian women were murdered in Georgia spas, many people showed our community support through donations to Asian-American Pacific-Islander (AAPI) organizations and by attending protests. Due to how quickly posts on social media supporting Asian-Americans came and went, Gaus said some of it seems ingenuine.

“I’m sure some of [the support] is genuine but some of it seems really performative,” Gaus said. “People who have never experienced hardships because of their race don’t fully understand and grasp the harm people actually endure. People belittle it sometimes and treat it as a trend to get brownie points.”

Throughout my time in KSD, I have experienced multiple forms of racism from my peers and teachers. Kids have pulled their eyes back at me



and teachers have attributed my grades to my race. Other Asian students, like Neumann, have experienced similar situations.

“ A LOT OF THE TIME WHEN YOU FACE RACISM, YOU’RE ALMOST FORCED TO SHOVE IT DOWN AND IGNORE IT.”

“This one kid came up to me in my social studies class [in] eighth grade and the first thing he said to me was ‘Ching-chong,’” Neumann said. “I [didn’t] want to express my anger because I felt like it was going to draw a lot of attention to myself. A lot of the time when you face racism, you’re almost forced to shove it down and ignore it.”

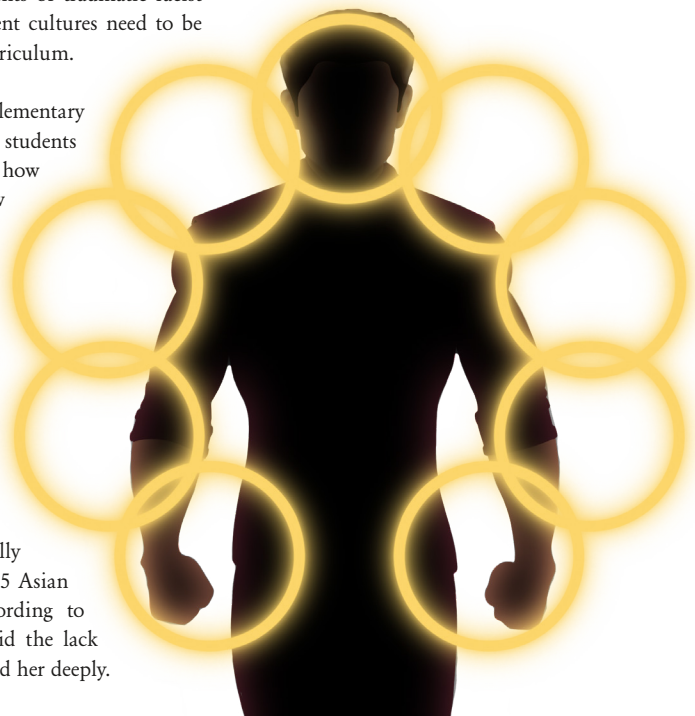
Due to the lack of Asian representation in America, there has also been a lack of education surrounding Asian culture, causing the ignorant interactions I have had with others. Gaus said she never acknowledged how problematic the racism she experienced was, simply because it was normalized. Racism is learned, so we need to

teach children about race when they are young. In order to relieve Asian students of traumatic racist situations, Gaus said different cultures need to be integrated more into the curriculum.

“Part of the curriculum for elementary school should be teaching students not only about Asians, but how we are all different and how it’s OK to be different,” Gaus said. “If we could teach [children] how to treat people correctly and teach them what’s right from wrong, [racism would decrease].”

My Asian friends and I like to joke about being minorities. But not having people you can ethnically relate to is difficult. Only 25 Asian students attend KHS, according to KSD records. Neumann said the lack of Asian students has affected her deeply.

“[The lack of Asians is] horrible because when you don’t have other people that look like you, you feel like the odd one out,” Neumann said. “When you don’t have that sense of community, you feel like you’re not represented and not appreciated.” ◇



STORY BY: MAYA KIM
web editor

ART BY: MORGAN HOOKER
assistant design editor



「OPINIONS」



I took my love for coffee to the streets of Downtown Kirkwood, where cafés are everywhere. I tried coffee from three different shops and reviewed them based on the taste, cost. My first stop was at a beloved coffee franchise that many hold close to their hearts – Starbucks.

I ordered an iced vanilla latte with almond milk and the sweet vanilla immediately struck me, followed by the classic Starbucks espresso taste with a nutty flavor from the almond milk. The latte was good, but it was too sweet for my liking and the ice-to-coffee ratio was sub par, with the ice dominating the drink.

Starbucks has a large variety of drinks that are easily customizable to meet everyone's needs.

Service: ●●●●●●
 Vibe: ●●●●●●
 Taste: ●●●●●●
 Price: \$3.75(12oz)



My next stop was Kaldi's Coffee on Kirkwood Road.

I enjoy the darker, cozier atmosphere inside Kaldi's. It reminds me of a bookstore: private, comforting and homey. There are always people studying at Kaldi's, and I understand the appeal. The lines aren't bad and the atmosphere seems more relaxed.

Here, I ordered another iced vanilla latte with almond milk. There was too much milk in my latte and not enough coffee or vanilla flavor. I found this frustrating, especially because of the money I just spent on such a small amount of coffee. But, the espresso was delicious, freshly roasted and strong.

Similar to Starbucks, Kaldi's has a large variety of coffee drinks to choose from that are easily customizable.

Service: ●●●●●●
 Vibe: ●●●●●●
 Taste: ●●●●●●
 Price: \$4.40(8oz)



The last stop on my coffee excursion was Teleo Coffee. Teleo is tucked away on Monroe Avenue, but those who stumble upon it are in for a treat.

The baristas are always smiling, and the coffee is consistently tasty. If you are looking for a welcoming, local small business, then Teleo is the place to go.

Here, the name of the coffees are unique. Instead of lattes you order "Love Your Neighbor" and "Honey Bear." I ordered the iced "Mini On Monroe" latte with almond milk., which includes maple syrup and brown sugar. This drink has the perfect amount of sweetness.

The limited menu emphasizes the seasonal drinks by adding something new to the mix. The less diverse menu may not be preferred by pickier customers, but I love it because I don't have too many overwhelming options. ◇

Service: ●●●●●●
 Vibe: ●●●●●●
 Taste: ●●●●●●
 Price: \$4.75(16oz)

KIRKWOOD COFFEE CRITIQUES



ART BY: **JANINE GASSEL**
 artist

STORY BY: **LILA SHEPARD**
 news editor

PHOTOS BY: **COCO LEGRAND**
 photographer

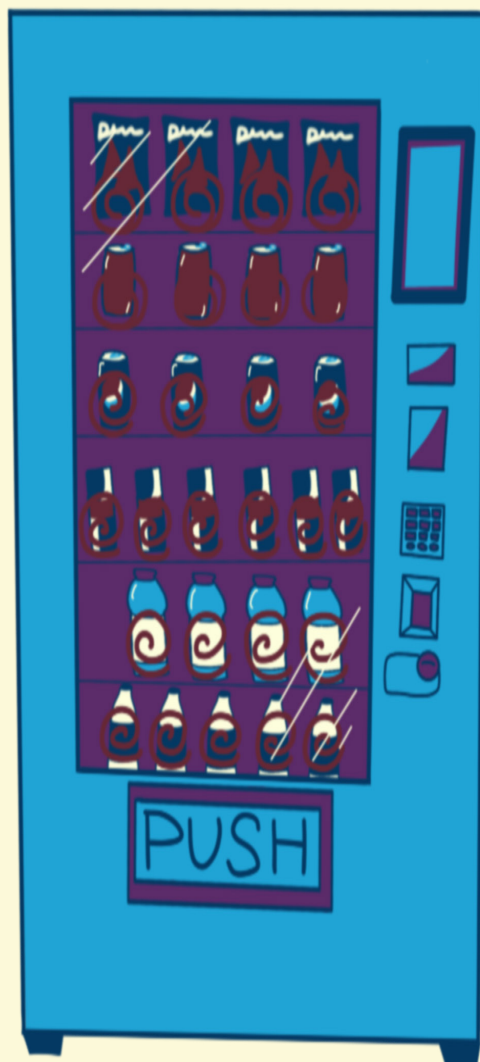
This piece is entirely satirical.

Dear KHS administrators, why do you hate us? KHS students want to be able to use the vending machines. Every day, students walk past these snack and drink-filled machines, but instead of using them, they complain that they are closed during school hours. Even during lunch, you can't purchase any drinks or snacks. Long classes and difficult schoolwork can make anyone hungry and thirsty, but there is no way to get rid of these issues with the only snacks in school locked up. For me and most of the student body, these machines create a lot of irritation.

Many times I have forgotten my water bottle and wanted to buy one from the vending machines, but I couldn't. I could use the drinking fountains, but who knows what those nozzles have touched. For all I know someone could have wrapped their entire COVID-19 filled mouth around it. If I want to be safe from COVID-19 but it is hard to do so by drinking water from where so many other mouths have been. By opening up vending machines, our best interests and health are kept in mind.

The vending machines are closed during lunch, which makes my blood boil. I know we are offered lunches from the cafeteria, but honestly, they don't look that appetizing. You never know if you're gonna get soggy chicken nuggets or overcooked ones. Am I expected to get through the entire school day with no snacks? I'm a teenager, I've got a lot of responsibilities to juggle, like catching up with my friends, schoolwork and my nagging mom. I'm forgetful, so I can't remember to bring extra food to munch on throughout the day.

The idea of having vending machines is great, I just wish I was able to use them. Assistant Principal Jeff Townsend said the reason they are closed is so students don't linger during the day



and for COVID-19 safety. But, honestly, a vending machine has never caused kids to linger. It is more likely that you see 30 girls in one bathroom stall than out by the vending machines. If kids are going to stand around during class, it won't be out where teachers are.

So many people have been upcharged by the machines or completely gotten their money stolen by the machines. The school thinks that these machines can steal our money and that we won't notice. It's like taking candy from a baby, unreasonable and ethically wrong. I'm sure that the administration wouldn't be happy if their money got stolen by the vending machines, so why should we let them steal ours? These machines can't be depended on to be open or to charge us correctly. The vending machines also would give KHS a better profit if they were open more, the whole school would benefit from this, not just our stomachs.

Pioneer Perks is opening, and will be serving KHS students and staff different drinks. Will this cause students to linger? How is this different from the vending machines? They both serve drinks and both should be used.

I have never used a vending machine at school, but I have dreamt of doing so. When I close my eyes, I imagine a KHS with working vending machines that, charge correctly and are open all day. A place where you can buy snacks and drinks whenever you want. That is a place where I want to go to school.

Sincerely,
Everyone ◇

LOCKED UP

STORY BY: **ELIZABETH NIEDRINGHAUS**
features writer

ART BY: **LIV TIMP**
artist

「OPINIONS」

WHO NEEDS NASA? WE HAVE ZODIAC SIGNS

**Opinion*

The world's greatest threat: Cancer. Not the disease, the zodiac sign. Their mood swings give me whiplash, and their need to tear up over every little inconvenience makes it hard to have an actual conversation with them.

If you're an offended Cancer reading this, go cry about it. And if you're adamant that zodiac signs are a myth, (a) you're probably a hard-headed fire sign and (b) you may be surprised to learn that I was just like you. Over quarantine, I saw one TikTok on astrology that sent me down a rabbit-hole that I'm still trying to climb my way out of. I figured out the rest of my astrology chart and spent hours analyzing it, trying to find truth in something I initially thought was a joke. And guess what? My chart was almost spot on.

I'm eager to please, like my Libra Venus says, I'm straight-to-the-point, a trait connected to my Scorpio Mercury and I have trouble letting things go, thanks to my Cancer moon. I was a little creeped out since my chart described me so well, but my curiosity compelled me to analyze my friends and family's charts. So I did. After interrogating people for the time, date and place of their births, I let them look over their placements while I sat back with a smirk. Every single time they found a ring of truth in their chart, and every single time I would say "I told you so," (this know-it-all trait I blame on my Capricorn rising).

I often see people label teenage girls who buy into astrology as gullible, but keep in mind this belief is way older than you. Astrology is the study of the movements of the sun and stars, as well as how they influence human affairs. This practice dates back to the Babylonians in ancient Mesopotamia around 1500 BC. Later, during the Hellenistic period,

Greeks combined the Babylonians' beliefs with Egyptian tradition to create horoscopic astrology. Even ancient Chinese and Indian cultures created their own form of the zodiacs. See? Your weekly horoscopes actually have centuries worth of history.

Now, I get that astrology isn't backed up by facts, but not all our beliefs in life need to have "scientific evidence." Sometimes our beliefs illuminate our life with a bit of fun, which is exactly what zodiac signs are. So many people are drawn to astrology because we all like to have meaning to our existence. Having a specialized astrology chart gives answers to our madness, personality and relationships with others, as well as giving us predictions for our future. It's human nature to seek out the unexplainable. Hating on people who believe in astrology is lame; odds are you've seen your astrology chart and just can't accept that you're a Gemini.



So whether you're a perfectionist Virgo, a self-obsessed Leo, an indecisive Libra or an impatient Aries, let's all come together and agree that Pisces are the worst. Kidding...sort of. But seriously, zodiac signs really do bring a community together and allow us all to have a sense of purpose. So I

“**IT'S HUMAN NATURE
TO SEEK OUT THE
UNEXPLAINABLE.**”

urge you to read over your astrology chart if you haven't already, but be warned, you might have an existential crisis over how accurate it is. And just consider me passionate about this topic; it's the Scorpio sun in me. ♦

STORY BY: **SIM KHANUJA**
opinions editor

ART BY: **LAUREL SEIDENSTICKER**
art editor



WRITTEN IN



Hi. It's your new favorite "Gemini," and I'm here to tell you how zodiac signs are a hoax. How can a pattern of stars tell me everything I need to know about myself? How can they "predict my future" or tell me who I'm compatible with?

I'm going to be completely honest here, astrology confuses me. A simple article explaining my sign feels like an "all about me" project I made in second grade. It's like my computer is stalking me. Can they hear what I'm saying? How did that BuzzFeed quiz I took last week labeled, "Can We Actually Guess Your Zodiac Sign Based On Your Food And Drink Preference" know I was a Gemini? What gave it away, the fact that I like pizza? I prefer Sprite over Dr. Pepper? This theory is dumb, because my birth month has nothing to do with my personality, or food favorites. Seems like a lucky guess to me.

Astrology dates back very far, 1500 BC to be exact. People would use planets, stars and birthdays to predict individual destiny. When I looked up my fate on Google, I was told I would be a great "bubble gum wrapper joke writer." No, really, costarastrology.com told me so, and I think I'll take it as a compliment. Clearly the motive behind

“
**PEOPLE PICK AND
CHOOSE WHAT THEY
WANT TO BELIEVE.”**

astrology has changed quite a bit over the years. I highly doubt ancient Mesopotamians predicted that each other would be bubble gum wrapper joke writers.

Even from back then, there is no scientific evidence to back up that zodiac signs are real. The horoscopes we read about ourselves are vaguely specific. They are so detailed, which makes us think they are true, and that we relate to them on a personal level. Yet, they are so vague and random that our imaginations can alter them to fit anyone we want them to.

For instance, when I looked up my horoscope on the internet, it said, "There is never a dull moment when you're around a Gemini." Does this mean every other sign is dull? Are Geminis truly the greatest astrological sign? That same article by prepscholar.com said, "Geminis love to be the center of attention." A statement like this can be true for any other sign as well. After all, everyone is different. With astrology, people pick and choose what they want to believe. While one Gemini may be the most talkative person you know, another could be shy and closed off.

When Googling "Gemini flaws," you would be surprised with what comes up. Did you know Geminis are most likely to get involved in crimes of fraud? Like seriously, who comes up with this stuff? They also tend to be "indecisive, impulsive, manipulative, and judgmental." I don't judge anyone...OK maybe I am a little judgy, but this characteristic doesn't only apply to me.

One takeaway you should have from this piece is to always remember, if you ever see me in the news for committing a major act of fraud, know that it's justified.

XOXO, your new favorite "Gemini." ◇

STORY BY: JANE ROY
opinions writer

ART BY: LAUREL SEIDENSTICKER
art editor

**NO... WE STILL
NEED NASA**

THE STARS



OPINIONS

Julia Roberts, FACS teacher, walks into her first hour exhausted. She's been up all night grading papers and is still falling behind. Then, she sees a classroom full of students who look equally drained. Although the school year must go on, many students and teachers have expressed they can't keep pushing through much longer. As this burnout persists, students and staff are begging KSD to recognize their mental health struggles. TKC voted unanimously (68/68) that KSD needs to do more to support student and staff mental wellbeing.

“CONVERSATIONS NEED TO CONTINUE AND PROGRESS NEEDS TO BE MADE.”

This year, KSD teachers get an additional two days off, along with the other sick days they have. One is for their personal wellbeing and the other is a day where teachers are encouraged to get their COVID-19 booster shot. If a teacher wishes to use their wellness day, they must request it two weeks in advance and the district has the power to deny their request. Many teachers, including Roberts, said it is hard to predict how they will feel in two weeks and worry that their class will not be able to learn properly without them.

When teachers take a wellness day, the school will also have to find a substitute teacher. With a nationwide labor shortage, finding a substitute teacher seems nearly impossible. Jacqueline Ravenscraft, executive secretary, said the sub shortage has added stress and time to her job. Ravenscraft wants teachers to be able to take days off, but the scramble to find a substitute has caused walking counselors and other KSD teachers to cover classrooms during their scheduled plan time. Many KHS teachers said taking off days does not help their mental state. They said if they were at home trying to unwind, they'd probably be grading papers and worrying about the substitute teaching their class incorrectly. While teachers appreciate the effort, KSD needs to recognize the unnoticed burden that comes with teachers taking a wellness day.

Students deal with this issue as well. They are not given mental health days, but rather

four “no homework/catch up weekends,” to focus on their wellbeing. High schoolers are supposed to be enjoying these relaxing weekends, when instead they are trying to work ahead for the vigorous week coming up. Because teachers aren't allowed to assign homework on these weekends, the weeks leading up to “no homework weekends” tend to be more stressful and work-heavy for high schoolers. Along with students trying to get ahead, they are also trying to catch up on work from previous weeks. As assignments continue to pile up for students, “no homework weekends,” end up being just as overwhelming. Every student loves the idea of a “no homework weekend,” and it's a step in the right direction, but in order to truly help students feel less overwhelmed, KSD needs to cut down on the volume of homework they allow teachers to give. Teachers argue that repeating content learned in class helps students comprehend the material. However, how beneficial is it to do 20 math problems as opposed to 10?

A hot topic of conversation any student can relate to is the hours of workload they receive. Hearing students complain about how they were up till 1 a.m. studying for critical tests in all their classes is an everyday occurrence. One junior said she spends four to six hours each night doing homework because of her extracurriculars, causing her to go to bed at 12 a.m. By the time the weekend comes, she finds it too exhausting to hangout with friends because of the long and taxing week she just experienced. Being a part of the dance team and taking all honors and AP classes means her time to unwind is limited. So why do students choose to take AP and honors classes?

The pressure surrounding students to immerse themselves in hard classes is astronomical. Whether this pressure comes from teachers, parents or peers, as students, it's the norm at KHS to take on more than you can handle. The worry that you won't get into a “good college,” unless you take five AP classes is prevalent among students. The competitive culture at KHS regarding grades cannot be ignored. Although students don't want to juggle five AP classes, KHS culture makes them feel like they have to. If all teachers expect students to get everything done on time and with their full effort, the amount of homework given needs to change.

“IT'S THE NORM AT KHS TO TAKE ON MORE THAN YOU CAN HANDLE.”

Abbey Paul, junior and Mental Health Committee board member, said that little of the homework she receives is honest learning. Busy work is a better term for the countless hours students spend doing pointless assignments. On top of that, most of the work students complete either goes ungraded or graded with minimal effort for completion. As teachers continue to assign work, their stack of ungraded papers pile up, leaving not only students stressed out, but teachers as well. This build-up in stress and mental health issues need to be part of the conversation. Just recently, KHS lost one of its own. During that week, sophomore students said the amount of homework and quizzes they had did not change despite the loss of one of their classmates. Several of their teachers didn't acknowledge that students lost one of their peers and went on with school as if nothing happened. School refuses to stop for anything, and this situation alone illustrates why mental health needs to be taken more seriously.

“Kirkwood is all about being a community until something bad happens,” a KHS sophomore said. “Then it's every man for themself.”

As we return to normal after the COVID-19 pandemic, going back to school full-time is more difficult than many teachers and students anticipated. Many high school students haven't experienced a



normal school day in two years and having to figure out how everything works again is draining. The added uncertainty of the pandemic led the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and

“
KIRKWOOD IS ALL ABOUT BEING A COMMUNITY UNTIL SOMETHING BAD HAPPENS.”

the Children’s Hospital Association to declare that the COVID-19 pandemic has worsened an already existing mental health crisis among children and teens. The CDC reports that ER visits for mental health crises were up 24% among children ages five to eleven and up 31% for 12 to 17-year-olds. This has caused several pediatric centers to declare a State of Emergency in mental health. In response to this anxiety, the Ladue School District, along with a dozen other St. Louis public schools decided to extend their Thanksgiving break two extra days. These days off were taken district wide, which prevented the stress of having to find a substitute for teachers. A Ladue teacher described the two days off as “monumental.”

KSD decided not to take district-wide wellness days due to the abundance of school students have missed because of the COVID-19 pandemic according to an email from Dr. Ulrich, KSD superintendent. In the same email, Ulrich said since March of 2020, KSD students have missed over 800 hours of direct, in-person instruction. This included virtual learning as well as enforced classroom quarantines. He added KSD has single parent households and employees that have hourly wages, and by taking days off he believes these people would be affected disproportionately.

However, according to Chris Kilde, Ritenour superintendent, the stress within the school environment is worse than it has ever been in 22 years. If other districts are able to provide their workers and students with mental health days to focus on themselves, KSD should be able to as well. These two days off need to serve as a wake up call to KSD who is failing to recognize the suffering wellbeing of their students and staff. And if this doesn’t serve as a wake-up call, let the students who are struggling to get out of bed in the morning be one. The students who feel isolated and alone. Students want to be able to talk to someone and be understood.

TKC suggests that KSD offers a wellness center for students to use. Yes, every school has counselors, but at a high school, one counselor can occupy up to 400 students. And many times, being vulnerable in front of an adult they don’t know is hard. Having a center where students can talk and unwind would alleviate pent up stress students are experiencing. A safe place, without judgement, where students and teachers can hear each other.

We need time. Time to catch up on our endless overdue assignments, time to see our family and time to sleep. Teachers want days to work on grading papers, and students want time to work on their mounting pile of assignments that were due weeks ago. Mental health is plummeting more than ever, and the lack of recognition from KSD is inexcusable. Conversations need to continue, and progress needs to be made. Someone needs to change the narrative, and it starts with KSD. We are not asking, but begging KSD to listen. ◇

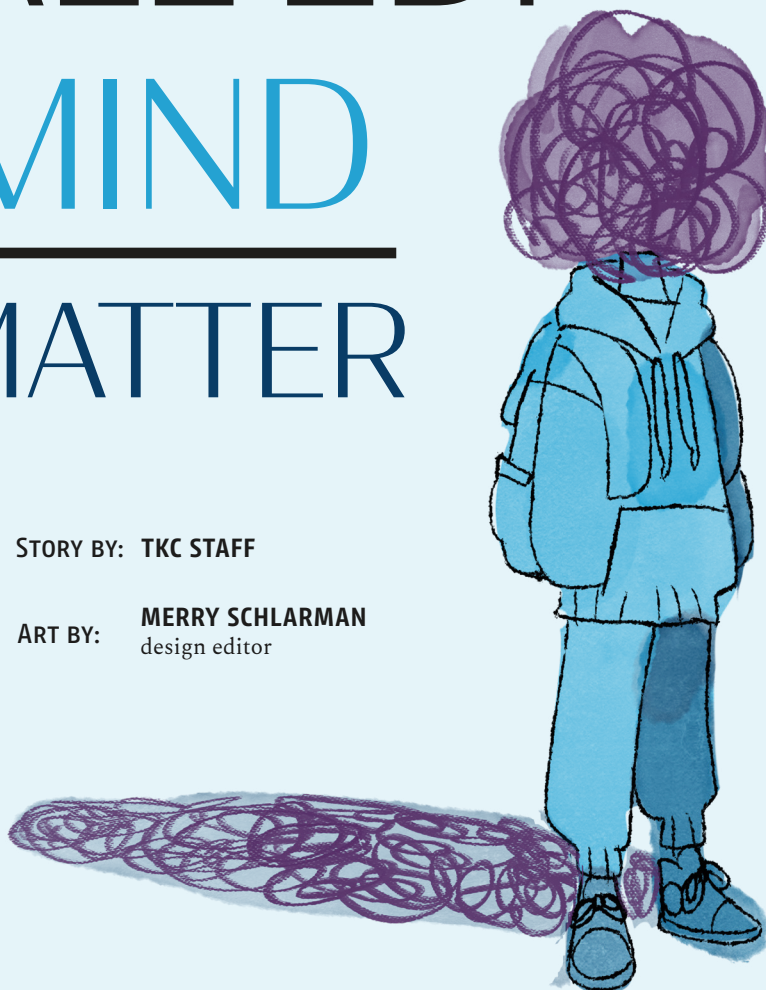
Other ideas TKC suggests are:

- Training for teachers on how to better help students when they’re struggling mentally
- Make students and teachers more aware of the resources schools provide by never shying away from uncomfortable situations and promoting that getting help is OK
- KHS limits the amount of honor and AP classes students are allowed to take to avoid internal and societal pressures
- Having teachers only assign work that is helpful and necessary. Admin could do this by comparing the amount of homework KHS gets to other districts. In addition, teachers could enter major tests they will assign that week on a spreadsheet so everyone is conscious of the workload students will have.

CALLED: MIND MATTER

STORY BY: TKC STAFF

ART BY: MERRY SCHLARMAN
design editor



「OPINIONS」

TKC asked students and staff their opinions on KSD's treatment of mental health. Here are their responses:

“**I THINK THAT MENTAL HEALTH IS A VERY IMPORTANT TOPIC IN OUR SCHOOL AND THAT WE'RE DOING A VERY GOOD JOB, BUT THERE'S ALWAYS MORE THAT WE CAN DO AS TEACHERS AND AS STUDENTS AS A TEAM.**”
- JACOB SINGLETON, STAFF

“**[KIRKWOOD HAS] COUNSELORS AND THAT'S PROBABLY THE BEST THEY CAN PROVIDE. I THINK IF A KID IS STRUGGLING WITH MENTAL HEALTH THEY WOULD BE MORE INCLINED TO TALK TO FRIENDS AND FAMILY ABOUT IT THAN OFFICIALS.**”
- LUKAS REINBOLD, 12

If you or someone you know is experiencing mental health problems, call: 314-644-5886. ♦

“**FOR OVER 25 YEARS I'VE [TAUGHT] KIDS WHO HAVE DEALT WITH A LOT OF [ISSUES] GOING ON AT HOME, PERSONALLY OR AT SCHOOL. WE HAVE TO ADDRESS THESE SO STUDENTS CAN LEARN. YOUR MENTAL HEALTH IS WAY MORE IMPORTANT THAN [ANY CLASS].**” - KELLY NEVINS, STAFF

“**AS A STUDENT, IF YOU DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE STRUGGLING OR IF YOU NEVER REACHED OUT TO ANYONE, YOU WOULD NEVER BE ABLE TO GET THE HELP YOU NEED.**” - ANNIE HOFFMEISTER, 9

“**IT'S EASY TO TALK ABOUT [MENTAL HEALTH], BUT IT'S A LOT MORE MEANINGFUL TO ACTUALLY DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.**” - CINDY KOEHLER, STAFF

“**I THINK WE CAN TRY TO MAKE [OUR COMMUNITY] MORE AWARE OF [MENTAL HEALTH]. WE KIND OF SIDETRACK IT UNTIL SOMETHING HAPPENS, OR [SOMEONE'S] DEPRESSED. IT WOULD BE BETTER IF THE SCHOOL IMPLEMENTED MORE WAYS [FOR PEOPLE TO] GO GET HELP IF THEY NEED IT, LIKE COUNSELORS COMING UP TO PEOPLE, ASKING HOW THEY'RE DOING.**”
- JACK KOCHER, 10

NAME (Last, First, M.I.)

TEST-OPTIONAL

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In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, many U.S. colleges offered test-optional applications starting in 2020. As school has begun to return to normal, the future of standardized testing has been uncertain. TKC takes an in-depth look into the role of standardized testing in future college applications. ◇

IN-DEPTH

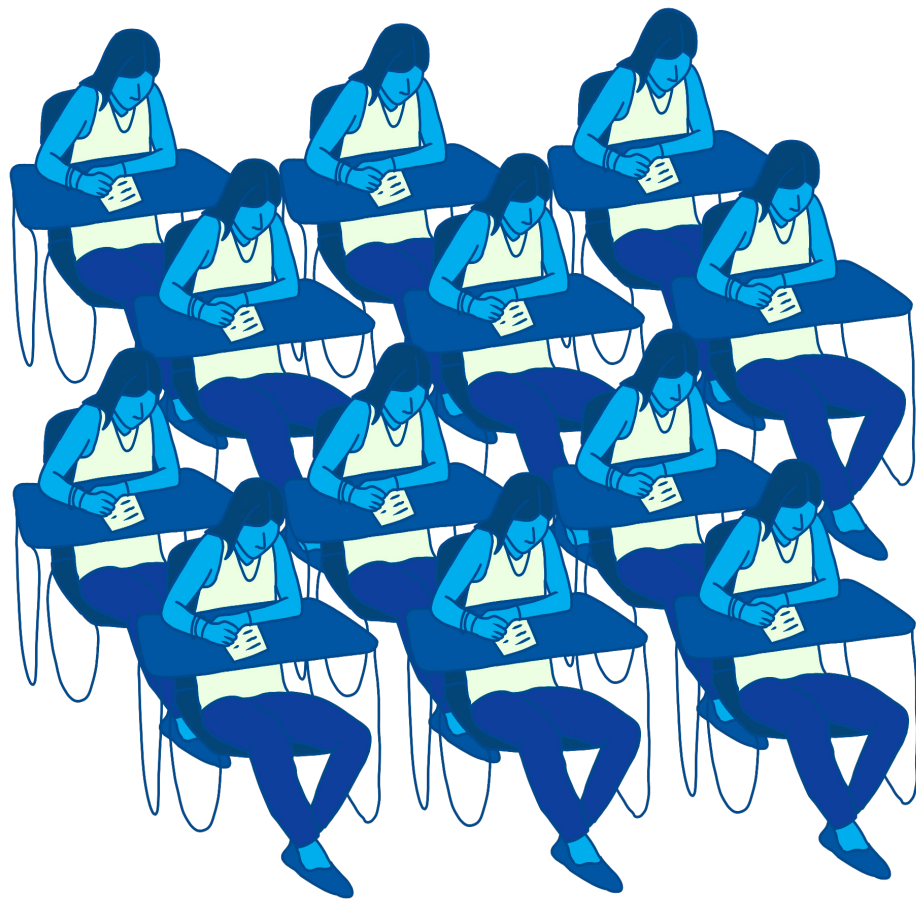
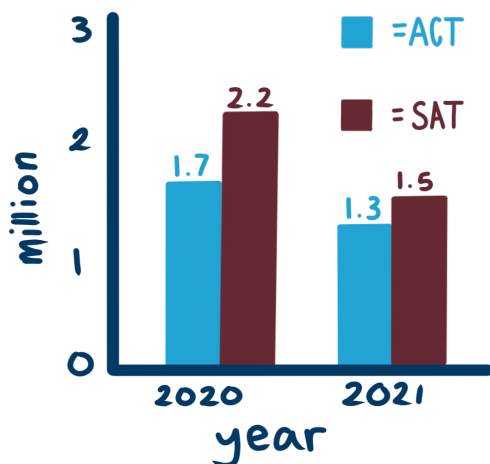
After three hours of staring at the tiny bubbles on a Scantron sheet, even a good student can start to go cross-eyed. Taking the ACT or SAT is a time-consuming process, especially for those taking tutoring classes and retaking the test in hopes of getting a better score. The COVID-19 pandemic changed standardized testing opportunities, with some tests getting rescheduled and others canceled completely, adding even more stress to the college application process.

Because of this, many US colleges announced they would allow students to choose whether or not to submit standardized test scores as part of their application. Eighty-nine percent of colleges using Common App, a college application site, offered test-optional applications in 2021. A Common App report showed that 43% of students submitted test scores in 2020, as compared to 77% in 2019.

“[Colleges] felt as though it was the right thing to do, to remain test-optional for another year,” Abby Peterson, KHS college counselor, said. If students don’t feel as though their test score is an accurate reflection of their collegiate potential, it’s given students the option to not have to send it.”

According to Inside Higher Ed, 75% of U.S. colleges are test-optional for the 2021-22 application cycle. More than half of the colleges that are test-optional for the 2021-22 application cycle have decided to remain that way for 2022-23 applications. While current juniors and seniors have test-optional application guarantees, that may change by the time underclassmen, like Mason Heller, apply to college.

“There’s a little uncertainty in the process that I’ve come to expect,” Heller said. “Colleges right now are either desperate for applicants, or they are realizing that a lot of their applicants aren’t suitable. So [students] are catching a break there.”



A TEST-OPTIONAL FUTURE

Nationally, 700,000 fewer students took the SAT in 2021 than in 2020, primarily due to COVID-19 complications, according to Inside Higher Ed. KHS does not offer the SAT, but it offers the practice SAT (PSAT) for sophomores for standardized test practice and National Merit scholarship opportunities. Kelly Nevins, KHS science teacher and former testing coordinator, said PSAT numbers have been going down at KHS since before the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We’re moving away [from the PSAT] because not all colleges are requiring [the SAT],” Nevins said. “Families are starting to realize [students] don’t need to take this test just to take a test. That idea of taking one test to determine your value, your worth or your understanding is starting to fade away.”

Nevins thinks the KHS-proctored PSAT is a low stress opportunity for students to see if they want to take the SAT. Heller took the PSAT in December and said he was not overly worried, but still mindful of how it might impact his high school and college plans.

“The thing is, you don’t want to do a ton of work and burn yourself out,” Heller said. “But with colleges being test-optional, it relieves a little bit of the pressure.”

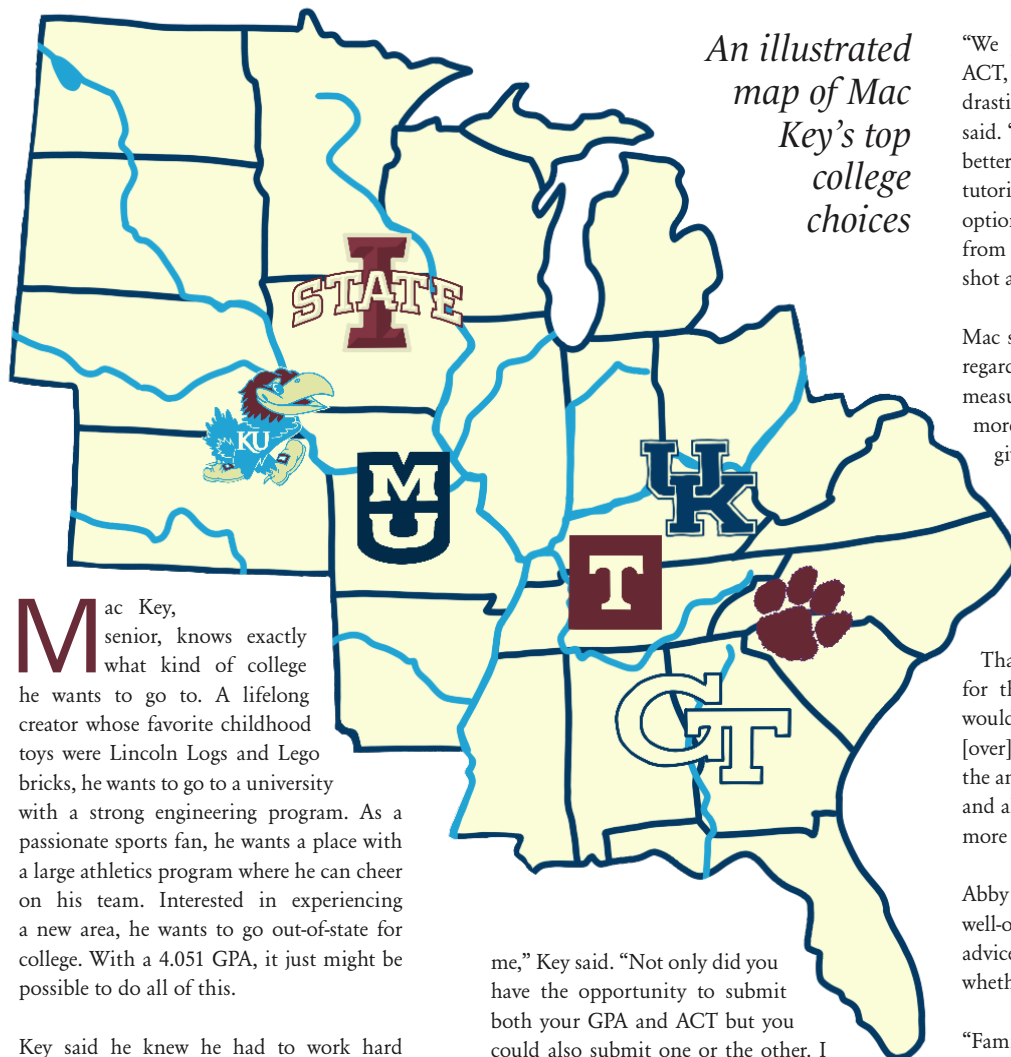
Peterson and Joshua Jaworowski, the other KHS college counselor, still recommend students take the ACT or SAT. However, Peterson said GPA is more important to a student’s application, especially for students who are not strong test-takers.

“[Colleges going test-optional] has put emphasis on knowing what school you want to apply to and all the things that they want from you – GPA, selective courses, essays and letters of recommendation,” Peterson said. “There is power in knowing that every single piece of an application matters.” ♦

STORY BY: **MYA COPELAND**
features + in-depth editor

ART BY: **KAIN STOBBE**
art editor

An illustrated map of Mac Key's top college choices



Mac Key, senior, knows exactly what kind of college he wants to go to. A lifelong creator whose favorite childhood toys were Lincoln Logs and Lego bricks, he wants to go to a university with a strong engineering program. As a passionate sports fan, he wants a place with a large athletics program where he can cheer on his team. Interested in experiencing a new area, he wants to go out-of-state for college. With a 4.051 GPA, it just might be possible to do all of this.

Key said he knew he had to work hard throughout high school to earn a high GPA, understanding it might earn him admission and scholarships from colleges. But when his ACT score came in, he was faced with a dilemma.

"I worked super hard on my ACT," Key said. "I did everything right. I got a tutor early, worked hard, studied hard, balanced hard classes [during] my junior year with tutoring, took the test around four times, [but] never got the score I would have loved to have."

Key's original score of 21 was raised to a 26 composite score and 28 superscore through months of effort and three retakes, placing him well above the 20.7 composite average in the state of Missouri, based on statistics released by the ACT. But Key said his ACT didn't match the strength of his GPA, and made him ineligible for the highest scholarships at the colleges he was applying to.

"[At the University of] Tennessee, if you go test-optional, they give you the exact same [scholarship], so Tennessee was perfect for

me," Key said. "Not only did you have the opportunity to submit both your GPA and ACT but you could also submit one or the other. I opted to send my GPA and that got me the highest [scholarship]. Even though I only have a 28 superscore, the only other way to get that same amount was to have a 32 [on the] ACT."

When Key applied for scholarships at the University of Tennessee and other schools, he knew submitting his GPA without his ACT score would earn him the highest amount of money. As a result, he decided to take advantage of the test-optional policies at the schools he was applying to.

"I focused on applying to schools [where] I could go test-optional and get the max amount of money for my grades," Key said. "I have the GPA requirement for the highest scholarship, but I don't have the ACT [score] for the highest scholarship. So that's why I decided to go test-optional."

Christal Key, Mac's mother, said she believes colleges and universities should keep test-optional policies even after COVID-19 is out of the picture. She sees them as an opportunity to address inequalities in the college application process.

"We paid to have Mac tutored [for] the ACT, and he has a very good score [which] drastically changed after tutoring," Christal said. "[But] I don't think [Mac] became any better prepared for college by doing ACT tutoring. It's just sort of the game. [Test-optional policies] help children who come from less affluent backgrounds to have a fair shot at scholarships."

Mac said he agrees with his mother in this regard. He said GPA is the most accurate measurement of a student, on top of being more equitable. He hopes colleges soon give it more weight.

"I'm lucky enough to have parents that supported me with the ACT," Mac said. "I was fortunate enough to get a tutor, but I know there's a lot of kids that don't have that option. That hurts them further and it's harder for them to get a higher ACT [score]. I would like to see more colleges cater to GPA [over] the ACT because at the end of the day, the amount of work that goes into that GPA and all those hard classes should amount to more than one test."

Abby Peterson, KHS college counselor, said well-off families are more likely to access advice from professionals when deciding whether or not to take a standardized test.

"Families who have higher income levels most likely live in school districts that have positions such as college counselors...or they may have the funds to be able to send their children to private schools," Peterson said. "That college counselor will probably have experience talking to families about the options for test prep. Which is a huge advantage in the first place."

Emily Werner taught Mac last year as a junior in Honors Precalculus. As Mac assembled his applications, he asked Werner to write him a letter of recommendation because of his positive relationship with her.

"[Mac] always worked really hard in math class and always wanted to understand every question and when he understood, he was willing to help other people," Werner said. "He is a great student but an even better person. He's going to do great things." ◇

STORY BY: OWEN SPIEGEL
news writer

ART BY: KAIN STOBBE
art editor

「IN-DEPTH」

TKC sat down with a senior, a gifted specialist and a college counselor. They each shared their thoughts and experiences about standardized testing and test-optional college applications.



STORY BY: **ALLI LUTH**
features writer

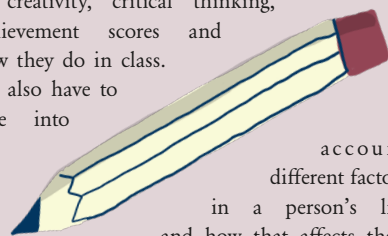
ART BY: **AUDREY BLAINE**
visual managing editor

TKC: WHAT ARE YOUR OPINIONS ON STANDARDIZED TESTING?

Ellie Buchanan, senior: I've never liked it because I'm a bad test taker. I do well on my homework and work hard for good grades, but the second I have to take a test, I get really stressed out and bomb the whole thing. Your test scores can affect whether you get a \$2,000 scholarship or a \$20,000 scholarship. It's so different for so many people, but standardized testing has never worked for me.

Cindy Coronado, gifted advisor: [My opinions are] mixed. I understand that there are thresholds that need to be met before people can earn a spot at a highly prestigious college. We've had to shift our thinking over the years to [take into account] the whole child. We look

at creativity, critical thinking, achievement scores and how they do in class. We also have to take into



account different factors in a person's life and how that affects their education. While I understand the reason for [standardized testing] existing, it should be used as one tool while keeping in mind that a person is much bigger than a test score.

TKC: HOW DO YOU SEE STANDARDIZED SCORES AFFECT STUDENTS IN RELATION TO THE COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS?

Josh Jaworowski, college counselor: The test-optional model really helps students because they can look at what their application requires and decide if their test score would help their application or not. From that standpoint, I like the test-optional piece because it allows students to decide if they want to utilize that or not.

TKC: HOW DID TEST-OPTIONAL COLLEGES CHANGE YOUR APPLICATION PROCESS?

EB: I applied to Mizzou, which is test-optional. I chose not to submit my test scores, and that's true

for a ton of other people. The reason [students] are choosing that is because a lot of them haven't taken the [ACT or SAT] tests because of COVID and it's so hard to study for the tests. If a student has a good GPA and grades throughout high school, why would they submit bad scores for a test they're not required to take? My experience with standardized testing has never been good. You only have 30 or so minutes, and [having to complete the test] within that short amount of time feels impossible. For tests like the ACT, it's less about how much you understand and more about your test taking strategy. It doesn't feel fair at all.

TKC: WHAT ARE SOME IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF STANDARDIZED TESTING?

CC: The scores are a measure of something and can't be ignored. You have to be careful to avoid setting students up for failure. Why would we put somebody into a university [where] they might not be successful? To pay all that money and say "good luck" doesn't make sense. Everyone deserves their fair shot, but you also don't want to stress anybody out. [Test scores] are a parachute of sorts to help people understand where they best fit in. I think what I'm opposed to is the reliance on one test score because everybody has a bad day. It's not about a singular test score. It's about the whole person.

TKC: HOW HAVE YOU SEEN STANDARDIZED TESTING CHANGE OVER THE YEARS?

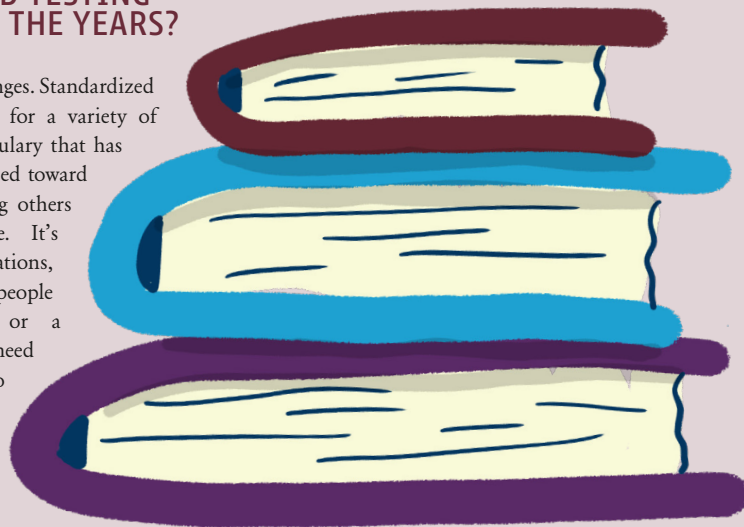
CC: I've seen slow changes. Standardized testing isn't equitable for a variety of reasons. There's vocabulary that has been proven to be biased toward certain cultures, giving others an unfair advantage. It's timed in a lot of situations, which is unfair to people that have ADHD or a learning deficit and need a little more time to process the questions and the reading. Standardized testing has changed so that if you have medical problems or mental health

issues, you can get extra time or a different work environment to level the playing field. There's a lot of people whose true score we don't know because other things get in the way.

TKC: WHAT DO YOU THINK WILL HAPPEN WITH COLLEGES AND STANDARDIZED TESTING IN THE FUTURE?

JJ: When COVID hit, almost all schools went test-optional. Then, a year passed, and several began to require test scores but there were still plenty that were test-optional. Next year, more schools may go back to requiring tests. However, I think test-optional is here to stay. COVID made [standardized testing] change at a quicker pace because it forced a lot of schools to go test-optional for at least that year. They all experienced it, and that allowed some schools to see the system work for them. It forced [the colleges] to try it, and many saw it worked for their applications process. There will be a lot of schools that remain test-optional, but others that will begin requiring test scores next year.

CC: Will [standardized testing] go away? Possibly. Will it go away tomorrow or next year? Probably not. They could go away if there was a better means, like a portfolio of a child, to get all the information. A college application board doesn't have those resources. I don't think they're leaving until we come up with a better way. ♦



ENTERTAINMENT

Welcome to 2022, an entertainment year unlike any other. There are so many things to watch, do and explore. From video games to meteor showers, 2022 has it all. After the fast-paced year of 2021, take 2022 to pick up a book and have a break. Here are five things to look forward to in 2022.



AVATAR 2

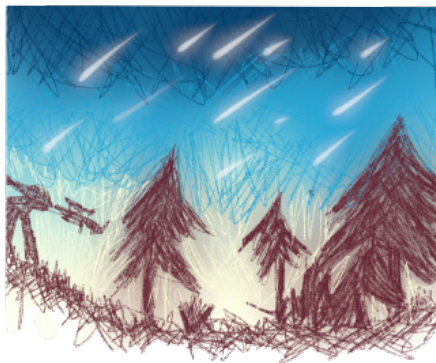
The first "Avatar" movie was released Dec. 18, 2009 and quickly became a box office hit with a \$2.797 billion in revenue. This broke the record as the highest-grossing film of all time. The movie was briefly usurped by "Avengers: Endgame," but quickly won back its title in March 2021, grossing \$2.802 billion. "Avatar 2" will take place years later, when the main characters, Jake Sully and Ney'tiri, must leave their home to explore Pandora. They are forced to face an ancient threat and wage war against humans. "Avatar 2" will premiere Dec. 17, 13 years after the original was released.

THE PARIS APARTMENT

"The Paris Apartment" is a highly anticipated novel written by award winning author Lucy Foley. It is set to be released Feb. 22. The book is a murder mystery thriller that takes place in a Paris apartment where all the residents are suspects. The story follows the main character Jess, who, after falling onto hard times, moves into her brother's apartment. But when she gets there she realizes her brother is missing. Now Jess must find out what happened to her brother, and meet all his odd and unwelcoming neighbors along the way.

LYRIDS METEOR SHOWER

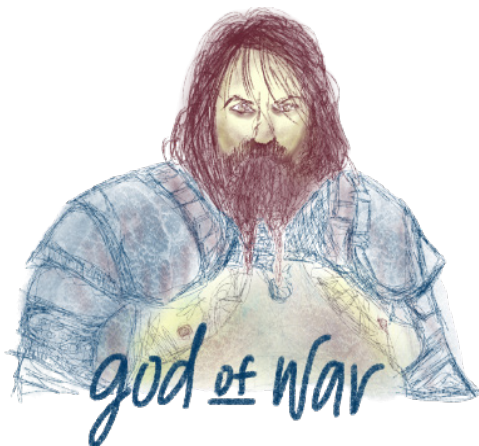
The Lyrids meteor shower will be visible from April 12-30, but the best time to view it is at 3:30 p.m. EST April 22-23. Brightened by the moonlight, the meteor shower will be best seen when the moon is in its final quarter. While the Lyrids shower is shorter than most meteor showers, at a peak of 20 meteors an hour it is still a spectacular sight, known for its luminosity.



5 THINGS TO LOOK FORWARD TO IN 2022

GOD OF WAR "RAGNAROK"

"God of War 'Ragnarok'" is an upcoming single-player video game published by Sony Interactive Entertainment. It is set to be released in 2022 for the PlayStation 4 and 5, the final installment in the "God of War" series. The storyline for the game is a continuation of the previous "God of War," centered around Norse mythology, with the players battling Norse gods and monsters.



NEW MEDIA SERIES: NUOTAMA FRANCES BODOMO

The newest installment in the Saint Louis Art Museum's New Media Series is a short film called "Afronauts," created by filmmaker Nuotama Frances Bodomo. The film is inspired by the 1960s Zambian space program, the narrative follows the life of 17-year-old Martha Mwamba. The purpose of the program was to beat the Soviets and Americans to the moon. This is a free exhibition at the Saint Louis Art Museum, opening Jan. 14 and closing April 17.



As we head into 2022, there is much to look forward to outside of this short list and even the realm of media. There are concerts, the Winter Olympics, upcoming summer festivals and a brand new year of fashion trends. With so many exciting opportunities, it's bound to be an amazing year. ♦

STORY BY: **KAILEY SHIRRELL**
social media editor

ART BY: **AUDREY TURLEY**
artist

QUIZ: WHAT CHILDHOOD BACKPACK BEST FITS YOU?

STORY BY: **NATHAN SWEENEY**
features + in-depth editor

ART BY: **EMMA FRIZZELL**
art editor

Think about your childhood backpack. Did it have Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles on it? My Little Pony? Or was it just a plain design? If you could go back in time, what kind of backpack should your younger self have had, based on your personality? Tap into your elementary self and take this quiz to find out.

1. It's raining outside, so you have inside recess. What are you doing?

- a. Playing with Lego's.
- b. Drawing.
- c. Playing "house."
- d. Taking a nap.
- e. Reading a book.

2. It's time for lunch. What are you eating?

- a. School lunch.
- b. PB&J with no crust.
- c. I don't know, my mom packed it for me.
- d. Lunchables.
- e. Something good. I packed it for myself.

3. How would you describe yourself?

- a. Athletic.
- b. Organized.
- c. Creative.
- d. Lazy.
- e. Smart.

4. What's on your Christmas list?

- a. Pokémon cards.
- b. Scented markers.
- c. Barbie dolls.
- d. New pajamas.
- e. A new book.

5. It's Halloween. What's your costume?

- a. A creeper from Minecraft.
- b. A princess.
- c. Something rainbow colored and self-made.
- d. A fake mustache and sunglasses.
- e. A businessman.

6. It's Pajama Day at school. What're you wearing?

- a. Camo onesie.
- b. Pink patterned PJ shirt and pants.
- c. Unicorn onesie.
- d. A white shirt and black PJ pants.
- e. I will not be participating.

MOSTLY A'S



Green camo backpack. Your elementary self tends to like the stereotypical "boy things," like Minecraft, camouflage and Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. You were athletic and probably did whatever dare came their way, including eating old food off the cafeteria floor. Just a tip: tell your younger self to discover deodorant before it's too late.



MOSTLY B'S



Monogram backpack. Your elementary self stays organized. You liked sandwiches with no crust, drawing inside the lines and you 100% had a matching lunchbox full of nutritious snacks your mom packed. You were a little boring and basic, but hopefully you've grown out of that by now.



MOSTLY C'S



My Little Pony backpack. Your elementary self tends to like stereotypical "girly" things. But you were also creative, vivacious and weren't afraid of picking your nose out in the open. Remind your younger self to enjoy it, because this is almost always just a phase.



MOSTLY D'S



Backpack with wheels. Your elementary self is lazy. You did the bare minimum, so it only fits that you wouldn't have carried your own backpack. Please just tell your younger self to stop clogging up the whole hallway during dismissal when they walk one mph with a bag rolling three feet behind them.



MOSTLY E'S



Bland North Face backpack. Your elementary self is sophisticated. To other kids, you were boring, but you're the one that grew up to be a genius. You were self-sufficient and enjoyed your own company, but please tell your younger self to loosen up and enjoy childhood a little bit before it's over. ♦



SPORTS

Intense. Passionate. Dedicated. These were the three words junior guard Kellen Rhimes used to describe his head coach, Jimmy McKinney.

For McKinney, boys' basketball head coach, his passion for basketball started in middle school, behind his true first love: baseball. Although starting at a time generally considered too late in the basketball world, McKinney made the most of it and picked up on the sport quickly. Practice became natural, and so did the game of basketball.

"My dad put the ball in my hands," McKinney said of his father, Jimmy McKinney Sr. "Basketball was something I picked up just playing around the neighborhoods."

From those St. Louis neighborhoods, McKinney spent his next four years at Vashon High School in St. Louis developing as a basketball player. The nationally-known Vashon basketball program was where McKinney thrived as a 6 foot 4 inch leading scorer and won three Missouri state championships in 2000, 2001 and 2002. The memories and experiences are something that prepared McKinney for the future and something he said he would never give up.

"I would give an arm and a leg to get those four years at Vashon back again," McKinney said. "The experience was one of the best experiences of my

life. It was greater than college and professional because of the group, and the relationships I built are the same ones I have today."

After getting the attention of colleges at Vashon, McKinney knew he wanted to play at the next level and he had to make a choice. Ultimately, he decided to stay close to home and his parents, receiving a full scholarship to play for the University of Missouri. In his four years there, he started 115 of 123 games played, scoring over 1,100 points, securing 422 rebounds and averaging 30.6 minutes per game.

“**I NEVER KNEW I WAS GOING TO BE A COACH, OR EVEN FALL IN LOVE WITH COACHING.**”

"My mom is very supportive, my dad is very supportive and to this day they are very supportive. I wanted to stay somewhere close where they could watch me play and could come drive and reach me when they needed to," McKinney said. "When you go into a gym and see nothing but tents and kids who slept overnight when it is below zero in the snow just to watch you play, there is no greater experience than that."

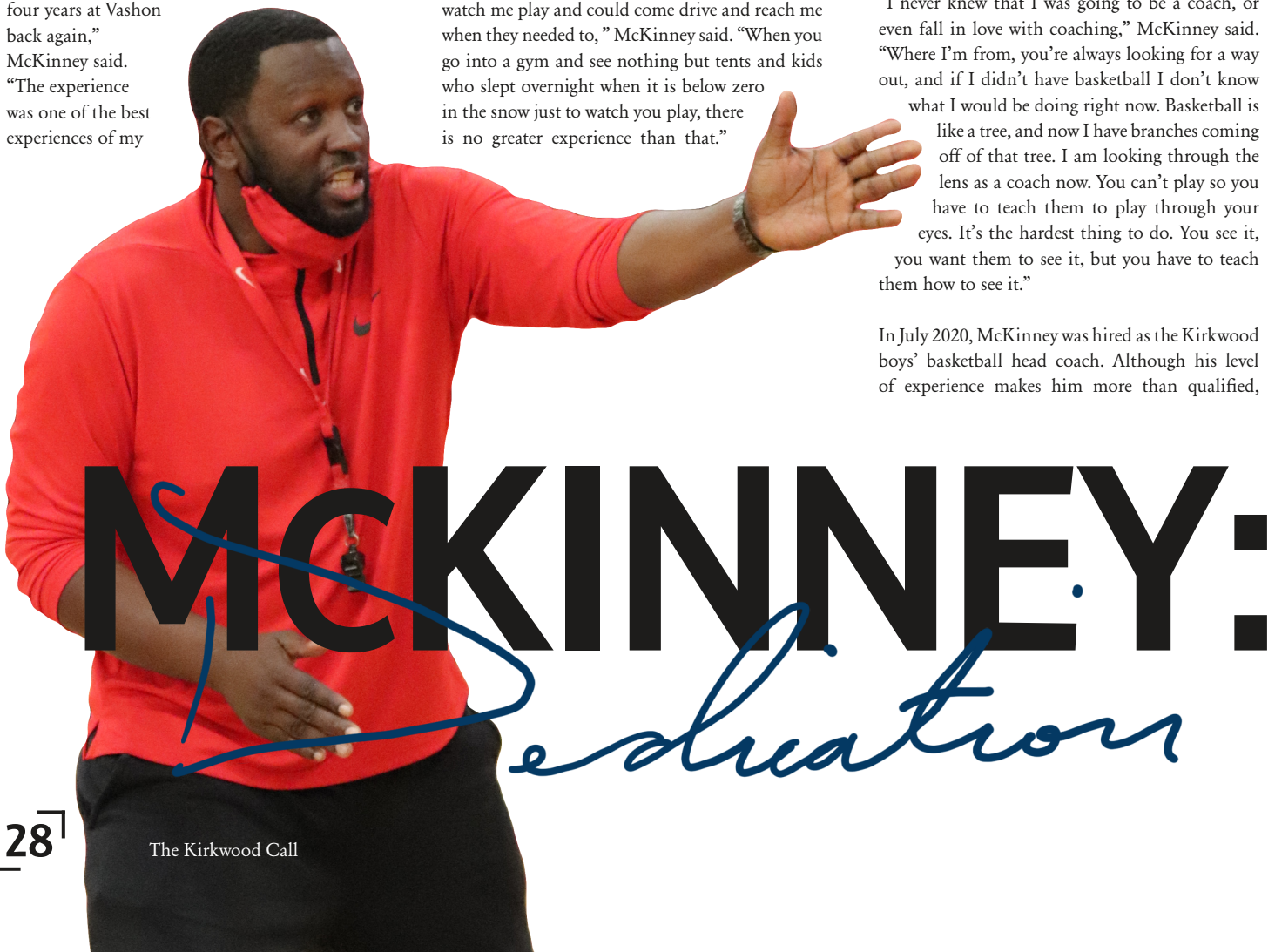
With his years in college running out, McKinney was not ready to put the ball down just yet. He decided to continue his basketball career in Germany. For the next 10 years, McKinney would be thousands of miles away from his family. Only being able to come home and see his son for three months of the year, he spent his time at home as a parent watching his son play from the sidelines.

"I saw how much time I wasn't spending with my son, and it really hit me," McKinney said. "I started coaching him out of the blue one day. I wanted to be a parent, and I wanted to watch. But, being the person I am, I wasn't worried about my son. I was looking at the other kids and saw they needed help, too."

This is where McKinney's love for coaching began: his son's first grade Larry Hughes Little League basketball team. For the next three years, each summer he would come home and coach the team. Eventually in 2017, he went back to Vashon to help train the high schoolers. After playing 262 games in Germany and leading up his 11th year overseas to play for a new team in Greece, McKinney decided he was ready to hang his jersey up and view basketball from the other side of the line.

"I never knew that I was going to be a coach, or even fall in love with coaching," McKinney said. "Where I'm from, you're always looking for a way out, and if I didn't have basketball I don't know what I would be doing right now. Basketball is like a tree, and now I have branches coming off of that tree. I am looking through the lens as a coach now. You can't play so you have to teach them to play through your eyes. It's the hardest thing to do. You see it, you want them to see it, but you have to teach them how to see it."

In July 2020, McKinney was hired as the Kirkwood boys' basketball head coach. Although his level of experience makes him more than qualified,



something else spoke volumes to the athletics department: his commitment to the kids.

“He is a guy who demands a lot, and there is definitely a level of expectation and standard that you are going to work at as a basketball player and he is not going to deviate from that standard,” Corey Nesslage, KHS athletics director, said. “In the interview process, hearing him talk about how passionate he is, not only about basketball, but more importantly the kids is where it became very obvious. He has expectations not only on the floor, but in the classroom, life and the type of people he wants these young individuals to become.”

Every single day, including weekends, you can see McKinney in the gym working with his players. Although some players and parents may not like it, this is the only way he knows: to work on your craft every single day.

“It’s all about working hard and being dedicated,” Rhimes said. “I look at [practicing every day] as a good thing because we are getting better every day and that is going to help us win. He opened my eyes and pushes me to be better than what I am. You can tell he is passionate about the game and is going to push us as much as he can.”

This year McKinney leads the Pioneers in his second season as head coach. Coaching is more than just the skill aspect for McKinney; it’s about developing the players not only as athletes, but as people and preparing them for the future.

“Coming to Kirkwood, I am trying to develop a culture and a mindset that hard work is everything, preparation is everything, and development is everything,” McKinney said. “Sports prepare you for life, period. I tell kids all the time, God gives everybody a talent and you have to use it to enhance your life. I guarantee if you come out of every practice and you work hard, you have no other choice but to get better.” ◇

STORY BY: **KINLEY BOKERMANN**
sports editor

PHOTOS BY: **ELLA DAVIES**
photo editor



SPORTS

BOYS' BASKETBALL

JIMMY MCKINNEY HEAD COACH

"I am a firm believer that preparation, time and consistency are everything. How we prepare is how we play. Every single day you have to work on your craft and on everything you do. The team is smart, intelligent and picks up on things very quickly. Come game time, I just want them to come out, play hard and that's it."

KELLEN RHIMES JUNIOR

"I am excited to see what the team is going to look like, because we are a smaller team. We are hardworking, tough, and I know we are going to get better as the season goes. It's all about being dedicated and playing defense. We have a good coach, and it's going to be fun to be around people who are like my family."

HOCKEY

MARK FISCHER HEAD COACH

"The goal every year is simple: win the state championship. We have a really good mix of young and old talent, and everyone is buying in. The kids are buying into the culture and the message that has taken so long to build, and I am confident it is going to work out. We're excited for the opportunity to play in front of fans and have a more normal season."

MAX KIRTIAN SENIOR

"The energy in games is amazing. We're all hyping each other up, feeding off of the crowd's energy and making sure we are playing the best we can. We have a talented group of hard-working, compassionate guys that have the same goal in mind. We play selflessly and for one another, and we're looking to go to state and come home with a ring."

GIRLS' SWIM AND DIVE

MATT BEASLEY HEAD COACH

"Coming off a big and exciting year, it is going to be fun to be back for the challenge of trying to repeat a state title. We always do a good job of filling in the gaps [of the seniors that left last season]. We are going to fill in where we need to fill in and see what happens at the end. Nothing has changed. You show up every day and do the best that you can. Over time you are going to improve, and by the end of the season big things will happen for you."

ELIZABETH GREENE SENIOR

"We have a really good group. We definitely lost some important seniors last year, but the people who are here are ready to step up and see what can happen. We are a family and are here every day, on weekends and mornings, and spend a lot of time with each other. We're just excited for a more normal year and a more normal team atmosphere."



WINTER IS COMING

WRESTLING

CRAIG DICKINSON HEAD COACH

“Wrestling is a complete sport. It requires strength, balance, agility, conditioning, and it requires the athletes to be explosive and powerful. We’ve been working to get everyone into wrestling shape and on technique so we are ready for competition. We want to get as many kids [as possible] past districts and we want them to come home with state medals.”

NICK HIBBARD JUNIOR

“Wrestling is the basis of my work ethic. You have to come into the wrestling room, lead, work hard and leave it all out on the mat. It’s all about the work you put in. Sometimes you go out there and get put on your back in front of everyone. It’s about being humble — you can’t blame it on other people. It’s your fault if you don’t succeed.”

STORY BY: **KINLEY BOKERMANN**
sports editor

PHOTOS BY: **MARIANTHE MEYER**
photographer

GIRLS’ BASKETBALL

MONICA TRITZ HEAD COACH

“I want to see how much they have improved and grown from last year. It’s all about the physical aspect and that’s why there aren’t a lot of girls who play basketball, because they can’t take the physical and mental game. The girls are nice, but they need to be mean. I want the intensity to pick up and to see dedication and growth over the season.”

KHAMORI CORNELIUS SENIOR

“We’ve been working throughout the summer in practices, training and workouts. It takes dedication to the sport. You have to come into every practice working hard and do drills that are going to develop us and help us in the game. I’m excited to play with my teammates and leave it out on the court.” ♦



「PHOTO」



Photo by Lawrence McKee, March 3

THE BEST PHOTOS OF



Photo by Annie George, Sept. 24



Photo by Marianthe Meyer, Nov. 26



Photo by De Lila Green, Dec. 3



Photo by Tess Hubbard, Dec. 6

To recap this previous year, TKC photographers showcased some of their best photos of 2021.

2021

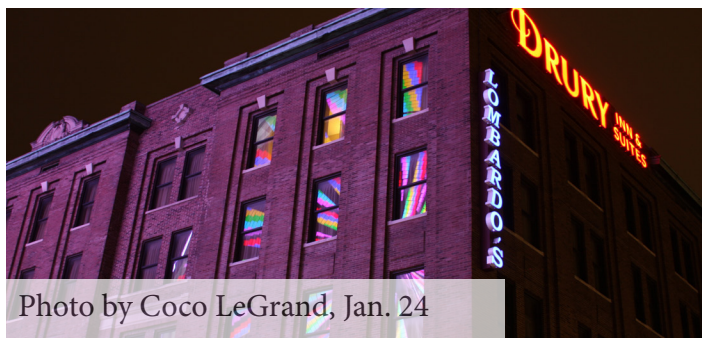


Photo by Coco LeGrand, Jan. 24



Photo by Elizabeth Riti, Dec. 2

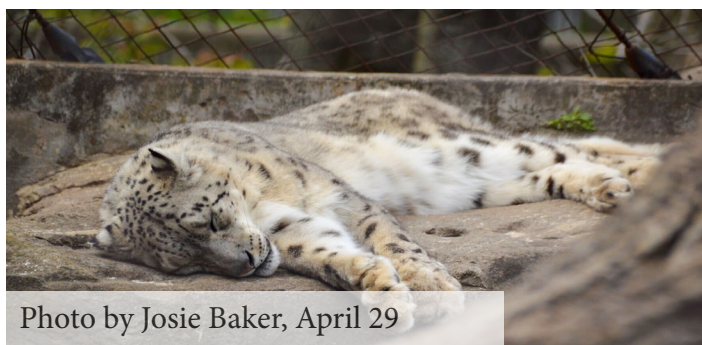


Photo by Josie Baker, April 29

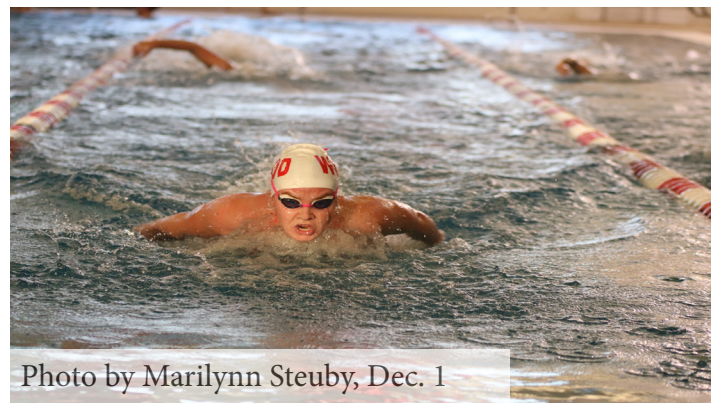


Photo by Marilyn Steuby, Dec. 1

「ART」



WEAR LOTS OF LAYERS



Keep Cozy
with the

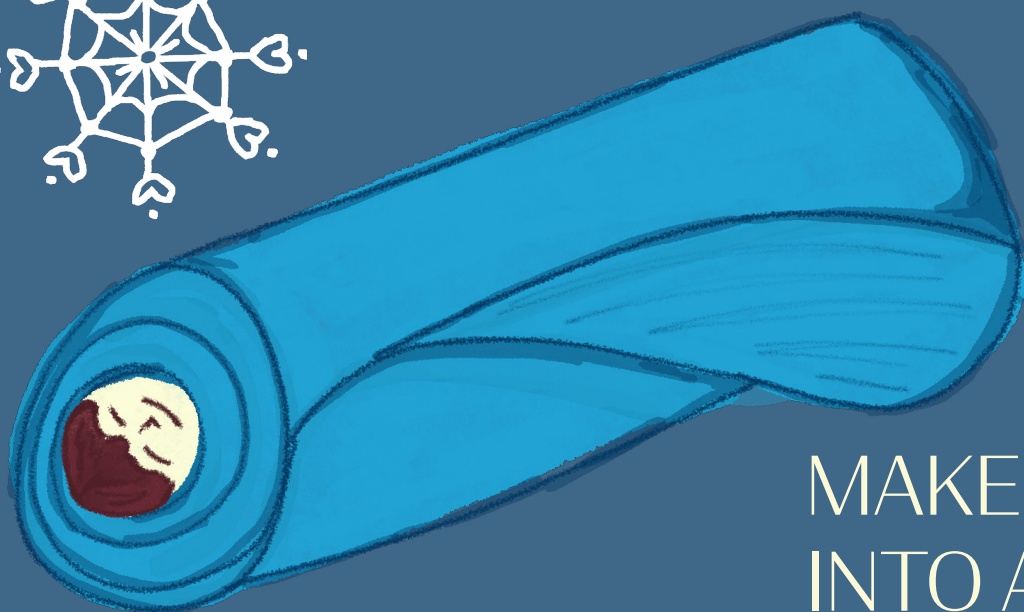


EMMA FRIZZELL
art editor

MERRY SCHLARMAN
design editor

KAIN STOBBE
art editor

ART BY:



MAKE YOURSELF INTO A BLANKET BURRITO

SURROUND YOURSELF WITH WARM DRINKS

coffee



