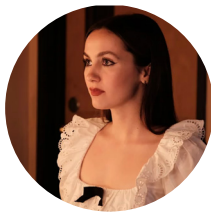




**STUDENT STANDOFF:** High taxes, insane housing prices, homelessness and crime—should we be proud of the state we call home? **PAGE 18**



**IN REVIEW:** Lexi Howard is *Euphoria's* real villain. **PAGE 5**



Get to know some of the **local stores in Downtown San Mateo.** **PAGES 8**



Upper school community examines whether the **war on Ukraine is the fault of Putin or the West.** **PAGE 14**



Interview with Dr. Melanie Rudd on the **scientific basis behind happiness.** **PAGE 15**

# THE NUEVA

APR. 8 2022 | VOL. 5, ISS. 5

# CURRENT

## Recent incident puts restorative justice into practice

Circumstances surrounding the hate speech incident allow for never before seen transparency into the disciplinary and restorative justice process

STORY ANOUSCHKA BECHTOLSHEIM & ANISHA KUMAR  
PHOTO FREEPIK



**R**epair for the harm that tore through the community as a result of the antisemitic hate speech began immediately after the assembly. A number of students and teachers stayed “stuck to their seats” in disbelief as the gym emptied out for lunch, while others approached Upper School Division Head Liza Raynal with suggestions for next steps.

“Somebody said, ‘We need to come back and be together,’” Raynal said. “I think we need to have student voices. I think we need to have teacher voices.”

The idea for the fishbowl-style meeting, where there is an open circle of chairs for community members to move in and out of as they please and take turns speaking, came from a previous MLK day event Alegria Barclay had organized as Equity & Social Justice Director.

“The fishbowl provides people compelled to speak with an opportunity, while being contained and held within the community,” Barclay said. “There’s a level of both intimacy and sacredness that’s implied by a circle.”

Barclay hoped both speakers and

listeners would be encouraged to “lean into discomfort” as they heard people share stories in the fishbowl, whether they were a part of the Jewish community or not. She herself was reminded how many Nueva families’ histories have been touched by the Holocaust.

“I think we forget people’s lived experiences, and the impact that our actions have as they trigger those lived experiences,” Barclay said. “But if you sit in a room and hear people share their pain, you’re going to remember that, right?”

After the fishbowl meeting, Jewish students and faculty processed the events privately at an affinity group meeting the next day, where the student first publicly came forward to address the group.

“His first thought was to make repairs in his own community,” Barclay said. “It seemed like an appropriate consequence, and harder than almost anything else he had to do.”

Raynal commended the student’s bravery in stepping forward after listening to testimonies from the fishbowl.

“When I said, ‘what do you need to

do to make this right?’ He said, ‘I need to make sure my Jewish community doesn’t feel afraid,’” Raynal recounted. “I don’t think everybody has the character to stand up in front of a group of 25 people and say, face-to-face, ‘This was my mistake, and I’m tremendously sorry for it.’”

At the end of the week, on Friday morning, Raynal and Barclay organized an all-school assembly that saw seniors Coby Wagonfeld ’22 and Marcus Kushner ’22 share prepared statements.

In addition to his own, Wagonfeld read a statement written by the student. Addressing the entire school in a reflection on his behavior and its impacts was part of the consequences outlined for the student by school administration.

“Sitting in the audience at the afternoon assembly on Wednesday and listening to the courageous people who spoke about their experiences and how what I said affected them was a position I never thought I’d find myself in,” the student wrote. “I was both us and them, both at the same time.”

Unlike with past instances of disciplinary action, Raynal chose to share the student’s consequences with the rest of the student body at Friday’s meeting as well.

“I knew there would be consequences. I knew they had to be fitting, they had to be strong, and they had to be shared,” Raynal said. “Because it was too public of an experience for people to not know there are consequences for actions like that.”

During the process of disciplinary evaluation, Raynal, Barclay, and others kept their reasoning grounded in principles of restorative justice, a philosophy that aims to repair damage caused by harmful actions, as well as examine and address the circumstances that led to those actions. Raynal noted how these principles aligned with Jewish beliefs around repair.

“If presented with the same set of choices, would they make a different choice?” Raynal said. “That’s how we know that something has changed, and how we prevent similar things from happening in the future.”

**cont. page 12**



# 2 NEWS

## BRIEFS

STORIES ISABELLE SHI  
PHOTOS ISABELLE SHI, MITZI MOCK, JOY FENG, AARON HUANG

### Biennial STEM Fair cultivates intergrade curiosity and learning

It was just another Sunday afternoon on the upper school campus—other than the trays of dissected pig eyeballs, a student-built red airplane in the Cafe Courtyard, a snake curling up on the Rosenberg Lawn, and students and parents intermingling with the cardboard trifold boards propped up around classrooms. Held at the upper school on Sunday, March 20, Nueva’s biennial STEM Fair celebrated both lower and upper school students’ passion for STEM-oriented learning and discovery.

Organized by the Nueva Parent Association and Academic Representative Adrienne Park ’22, the STEM Fair provides an opportunity for students to share their curiosity and love of learning surrounding STEM fields. Student exhibitors showcased STEM-related projects from

Nueva classes, Quest, and even extracurriculars and independent work.

This year, Park aimed to help with outreach for upper school students and speakers as her pilot role as Academic Representative.

“I reached out because I wanted to provide a student perspective,” Park said. “The work [the NPA] is doing feels really relevant to Nueva students’ interests.”

Due to the pandemic, the fair was limited to 500 visitors. During previous years, however, Park notes the magnitude of the event with hundreds of both Nueva and prospective students and parents and essentially anyone from the Bay Area.

“Because it was a smaller-scale event, I personally wanted to focus on having lots of participation from student exhibitors and really centering it around the Nueva

community,” Park said, recalling the many upper and lower school student exhibitors.

“I really liked seeing the younger students presenting from the lower school and middle school,” Park said. “It was really cute, and it’s also great they have a place to share the work they’ve been doing.”

The STEM Fair is a biennial event; next year will see the return of the Humanities Fair, which took place for the first time in 2021 as a series of virtual events.

With each fair, students and faculty aim to instill curiosity and inspiration within the attendees.

“I hope people were inspired from seeing all the different work students are doing and some of the cool things people are doing outside of the Nueva community and remember that sense of curiosity and love of learning the Nueva community has,” Park said.

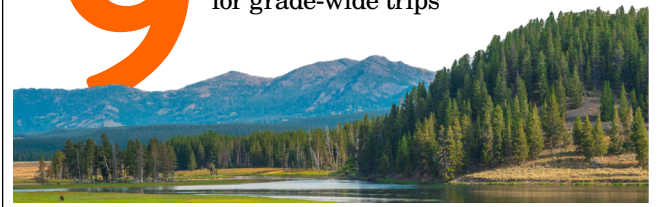


#### SHARING A LOVE FOR LEARNING

The STEM fair featured countless engaging activities for students, such as dissection, student exhibits, and friendly animals!

## BY THE NUMBERS

9 destinations for grade-wide trips



95

students wore green on St. Patrick's Day



29

performances

at the Spring Coffeehouse on April 8

163 students applied to internships from the Nueva database



3 years

passed since the last grade-level field trip before Juniors visited Haight-Ashbury, San Francisco on March 31



310

tickets sold for the spring formal

### Environmental Art Show spotlights climate change and the power of art

For the past few months, hints of the annual art show have been emerging on campus: painted strips of paper stretching across classroom walls and colorful wooden landscapes resting at the edge of the hallway. On April 8, all the pieces emerged from their working spaces to the main first-floor hallway; the Environmental Art Show, an arts event in tandem with the Spring Coffeehouse, consisted of student work from all the visual art classes strung with a theme of environmentalism.

As a collaboration between the art classes and PreK-12 Equity & Social Justice Director Alegria Barclay, this spring’s art show explores climate change through the lens of hope and resilience rather than despair.

“It’s about motivating people,” Middle & Upper School Art Teacher

Rachel Dawson said. “The goal of the show is to create conversation and awareness around climate change, to spark people’s collective imaginations in thinking about the future, and to have art as a way to motivate people to take action.”

To inspire people to think about both the reality and possibilities within the climate crisis, Dawson and Upper School Art Teacher May Wilson created projects for each of their classes to undertake. From Advanced Painting’s large-scale lenticular painting of two California landscapes—one idealized and pastoral and the other of the wildfires—to Advanced Sculpture’s tree planters containing redwood tree saplings, the student-made exhibitions showcase the many different aspects of human interaction with the environment.

“It’s a great opportunity to take a risk to do something that may be

difficult,” Dawson said. “Through artistic means, we could understand some of those difficult subjects a little better. That is why we like to pick the subjects we do because we think, ‘what conversation can we enter into? What do we want people to be talking about?’”

Dawson’s favorite part of organizing the show is “seeing it all come together.”

“The students making it often don’t always see how everything’s all going to come together. When it does, it looks really professional, everyone is really proud to have participated, and it’s just so amazing,” Dawson said.

Along with the art pieces, there was a Mending Space—a sewing station—to encourage repairing clothes rather than throwing them away. The exhibition is planned to remain in the first-floor hallway for a month.

#### POWER OF PAINTING

Rachel Dawson’s Advanced Painting class has been working on a large-scale painting of two California landscapes, in

preparation for the Environmental Art Show that will accompany the Spring Coffeehouse on April 8.





## Return of the Feminism Conference

STORY SERENA SAXENA  
PHOTO FEMINISM CLUB

Hosted by the upper school Feminism Club, the Feminism Conference returned as a virtual conference. On March 5, the conference featured three keynote speakers each focusing on a different theme: women in male-dominated fields, women in politics, and intersectionality.

The first speaker was Susan Feland, the founder and president of Academy Women, an organization that supports enlisted and senior military women professionally and personally.

To co-lead of Feminism Club Anahita Asudani '23, Feland's presentation was not only inspiring but also resonated with her personal experiences.

"She talked about how it's key to manage confidence and approachability [and] how important it is to find the balance between those two things, which is something that really stuck with me," Asudani said.

The conference's second speaker was Stacy Mason, the director of WomenCount, a crowdfunding platform fundraising for and encouraging Democratic women to run for office. The last speaker was Courtney Tunis, the leader of Super Majority and co-founder of Pantsuit Nation which advocated for Hillary Clinton during the 2016 presidential election.

As Tunis touched upon aspects of inclusivity and intersectionality, co-lead Eliza Sanders '23 found her talk to be her favorite.

"She covered issues of inclusivity through a feminist lens and instead of just talking about a problem, she offered a 'what can we do to fix this' kind of thing," Sanders said. "It got us, as a club, talking about it and thinking about ways to better our Nueva community."

In addition to the speakers, the conference also featured a raffle with prizes ranging from books such as *Feminism is For Everyone* by Bell Hooks and *We Should All Be Feminists* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie to feminism themed puzzles.

All proceeds from the raffle and conference tickets went towards the club's charity of choice: La Casa de Las Madres, an organization based in San Francisco aiding victims of domestic violence.

"One big goal we had was to help a local organization... and one of the jumping off points for us was the challenges that homeless women all often face," Asudani said. "We were really attracted to La Casa de Las Madres because their goal is something that really isn't talked about

enough, especially in the wake of the pandemic."

To Sanders and Asudani, the conference is meaningful as it provides a space for the school to come together and discuss issues through a feminist lens. This year, the conference also jumpstarted discourse within the club itself.

"We had many conversations as a club and what should be us as a community in terms of how feminism and its principles can be applied to make our community a safer and more inclusive space," Asudani said.

The club is already brainstorming ideas for the 2023 conference, with the hope of it being in-person.



## Nueva drops outdoor mask mandate, reviews indoor policy

STORY ISABELLE SHI  
PHOTOS CDC.GOV

As of March 7, the upper school shifted to an outdoor mask-optional policy—providing an opportunity for those who want to take a break from wearing masks and are comfortable doing so.

"As the pandemic wanes, we are ready to take one more step towards normalcy," Upper School Division Head Liza Raynal stated in an email sent to the upper school community.

As suggested by the school's medical advisors, the school waited a couple of weeks to collect data and give the community a chance to adjust before implementing further changes in COVID-19 protocols. As of March 11, however, San Mateo County updated its educational mask mandates and suggested schools shift from required indoor masking to being strongly recommended.

"We will align with this and share information about our timeline shortly," Raynal shared in an email to upper school students on April 4.

On campus, numerous mitigation efforts—weekly testing and air purifiers—still remain for a systematic and gradual approach towards normalcy. Faculty and staff were recently surveyed regarding indoor masking; the school's administration is reviewing its policies and complementing advice from medical experts and recommendations from the county and state. The school feels confident all divisions will move in the direction of having masks optional both indoors and outdoors.

## Robotics Team to SAC Regional Competition, learning experience for all

STORY ISABELLE SHI  
PHOTO SERENA SAXENA

You heard the machines whirring in the I-Lab, you saw the team crouched in the hallway assembling the robot—all in lead up to the Sacramento Regional Competition (SAC).

On Thursday, March 24 through Saturday, March 26, 31 members of Team 4904 Bot-Provoking drove up to UC Davis to attend the SAC regional. Since early January, the student-led team has been constructing a robot that could shoot hoops similar in style to a basketball game.

Due to pandemic restrictions, this was the first regional competition in three years. For Electronics Subteam Lead Steven Hwang '22, it was a highlight of his senior year.

"I remember entering the UC Davis stadium for the first time, seeing the whole expanse of pits and the field, and just having this feeling of instant exhilaration," Hwang said, recalling the invigoration he felt from seeing the other teams as well. "It created this magical atmosphere that made me really excited to work on our robot too."

Hwang, having spent 11 hours in the pit (the area where over 50 teams built their robots) on the first day without realizing, emphasizes not only the

robotics learning experience but also the interpersonal connections made within the team. Co-Captain Peter Choi '23 agrees, claiming "everything we do is collaborative."

"Even if one student can get a piece done better or faster, if there is an opportunity to teach a newer member, we take it," Choi said. "This way, we get more people involved in meaningful work and we set up a feedback loop of knowledge retention."

Although the robot did not function as intended at the competition, the team persevered through maneuvering, shooting, and defending the ball, and are feeling optimistic about prospects for Silicon Valley Regional (SVR), the upcoming robotics competition on April 8–10.

"Being at SAC has really given me perspective to how special team 4904 is," Choi said. "I am incredibly proud of what we were able to accomplish, and look forward to crushing it next year."



TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK Sava Iliev '24, Steven Hwang '22, Ciara Davis '24, Logan Ramanathan '24, and Sam Jonker '23 prepare their robot, named Hypatia, for inspection.



FROGGIES BE FROGGIN' Arielle Choi '22, Jaxon Jacobs '24, and the rest of The Froggies performed live music at the Spring Fling dance.

## Highly anticipated and mask-optional spring semi-formal allows guests

With guests allowed at the dance for the first time in two years, live music by The Froggies, and the outdoor mask mandate lifted, students' expectations are fulfilled at the most recent social event

STORY MARCUS HIRSCHMAN  
PHOTO JOY FENG

After darting through the doors of the upper school for the spring semi-formal, groups of friends convened on the tiled dance floor. The dance, held on Thursday, March 24 with fairy lights and flowers strung across entrances, was the first mask-optional dance in over two years due to the relaxing COVID-19 restrictions.

Despite the school's gradual return to normalcy over the past year, COVID-19 concerns were still cautiously regulated; negative test results were required for all 310 individuals attending the dance, and while outside guests were permitted, they were required to provide negative COVID tests within the 72 hours leading up to the formal as well as proof of vaccination.

Also new: a large, luminous photo booth by the snacks, built by Spirit & Social representative Nicole Kleinknecht '23, was set up in the Rosenberg

Courtyard for students. DJ-ing the dance was Huy Ha, a Nueva faculty member students were excited to see.

"I think it's fantastic how this was the first Nueva dance where a member of our community was in charge of the music," said Kleinknecht. "We worked together to create a playlist from student-submitted song requests that hopefully satisfied everybody's wishes."

"Rihanna's 'Umbrella,' which was my most requested song, got played extremely early in the night. Being able to hear my own song made the whole experience more engaging," Olivia Rhee '25 said.

Also playing music for a third of the night was The Froggies, a student-led band consisting of Jaxon Jacobs '24, Owen Yeh-Lee '24, Hannah Drew '23, Luca Lit '23, Kevin Hwang '23, Eli Smirin '22, and Arielle Choi '22. They performed songs including Rihanna's "Love on the Brain," Ye's "Runaway," and Billie Eilish's "Happier Than Ever." Guests who were unfamiliar with the band were exceptionally pleased with the live music.

"There was a lot more of a personal aspect when the performers came on the stage," Elisa Luo-Wimmer '24, a guest from Carlmont High School, said while dancing to Mac Miller's "The Spins." "At other dances I've been to, there's never anything like this. You can tell that everybody is trying to get towards the front. It's unreal."

After numerous rounds of applause and roaring cheers for The Froggies, the live performance came to an end. However, band members Jacobs and Choi lingered to enjoy the dance and reflect on their performance.

"The crowd is always amazing to see but I think the biggest thing was getting to watch my bandmates finally perform," Choi said, emphasizing that while facing challenges as a band collectively, The Froggies developed a stronger connection throughout the past few months.

"At the end of the day, seeing them grin, laugh, have fun on stage, and having the opportunity to share our hard work, it was just an amazing experience," Choi added.



## Trips Week returns with pandemic adjustments

Following a two year pause due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the upper school prepares for domestic trips

STORY NATALIE LAI  
ILLUSTRATION NATALIE LAI

As of now, grade deans have shared tentative plans for grade-wide trips all over the U.S. Freshmen, sophomores, and seniors will travel to Oregon, Hawaii, and southeastern California, respectively; juniors, on the other hand, are placed into smaller trip groups to Chicago, Montana, New Orleans, Washington DC, around California, and two different locations in New York. Trips are set to last five to six days during the week of May 15.

By reintroducing its in-person school trips, the upper school continues its gradual return to normalcy. Although students had flown internationally in the past, Nueva's guidelines regarding health and COVID-19 safety have restricted trips to domestic travel only.

"Nueva understands that there's a wide range of comfort levels regarding trips," said upper school English teacher and ninth grade dean Jonathan Quick. "Domestic travel simplifies the matter and still allows us to conjure and develop some of the experiences from the previous years' trips."

After last year's virtual trips, which consisted of "sightseeing" various communities over Zoom, students eagerly await trips away from their screens.

"Compared to the [virtual] trips we had last year, it's really cool that we now get to fly somewhere for an entire week," Adam Azevedo '24 said.

In Nueva's efforts in keeping the school community safe, the international trips to Peru for ninth graders and

Costa Rica for tenth graders have been redirected to Oregon and Hawaii.

The ninth-grade trip to Oregon and surrounding Pacific Northwest areas will immerse students in natural landscapes from the 4,000 feet deep Columbia River Gorge to Oregon's highest peak and active volcano, Mount Hood. Along with natural attractions, they will learn about the history of local cultural groups through visiting sites of indigenous people and landmarks of the Lewis and Clark 19th century expeditions.

Similarly, the tenth grade trip has shifted from Costa Rica to Hawaii. Sophomores will study the island's rich ecology and biology by immersing themselves in locations including Waipi'o Valley, Rainbow Falls, and Hawaii Volcanoes National Park. Logan Ramanathan '24 is "very excited" for the Hawaii trip, but hopes to be allowed time to go swimming in Hawaii's numerous beaches.

On the other hand, the eleventh grade's domestic trips remain largely unchanged from pre-pandemic itineraries, as juniors traditionally focus on exploring U.S. history.

Instead of a large, grade-wide trip like the rest of the upper school, the eleventh-grade will split into seven different destinations: Chicago, Montana, New Orleans, Washington DC, a road trip around California, and two in New York.

"[The goal is to] allow a greater attention to the intersection of history and the contemporary world," said upper school History teacher and eleventh grade dean Tom Dorrance, who will be leading the trip to Chicago. "Students will focus on different historical events that may only be treated briefly in the larger core class."

While the Chicago trip will focus on



how historical events shaped the city, the trip to Montana will highlight the dynamic relationship between humans and the natural environment. Students on the New Orleans trip to study the intersection between historical and contemporary life and students in There will be two trips to New York studying the AIDS epidemic and the Harlem Renaissance. Lastly, there will be a road trip around California to study Asian American immigration experiences.

This year, seniors will be going to the southwest to spend time with their peers hiking in national parks like the Grand Canyon, Bryce Canyon, and Zion National Park. The main objective for the senior

trips is to foster long lasting memories between classmates. "The senior trip gets to be in large groups more often than some of the other grades do. We want them to spend time with their friends towards the end of the year," said I-Lab Engineer and 12th grade dean Rob Zomber.

As more information on specific aspects of the trip itineraries are determined and shared with the student body, a crystallized idea of trip-week will emerge. Quick provided words of reassurance to anybody apprehensive for this year's trips, and said "It's not necessarily to be surrounded by familiarity all the time. Let's experience something new together."

## Advanced biology students present at the Experimental Biology Annual Meeting

Students gain scientific exposure and experience at professional conference

STORY SERENA SAXENA  
PHOTOS JULIET SOSTENA

As they boarded a plane to Philadelphia, 28 students buzzed with excitement, stress, and anticipation. They were on route to the Experimental Biology (EB) Annual Meeting 2022, marking the return of another annual trip that COVID-19 previously interrupted.

The 2022 EB Conference, which was held from April 2-5, is one of the largest professional science conferences in the world with scientists presenting new unpublished research and findings. This year, joining these presenters were Nueva students.

Any students taking an advanced biology elective were eligible to attend as well as students in Discussion and Talks about Science (DATAS) or Project 80—a team with the goal of turning scientific literature into accessible scientific communication through a podcast.

The majority of presenters were from the Experimental and Research Team (XRT), an often multi-year course, taught by science teacher Luke De, dedicated to real-world experimentation. The

course's goal: carry out research projects with results that are publishable and professional.

At the conference, projects ranged from the effects of disabled ARR-1 gene on *c. elegans* expression of substance preferences to codon optimization in CRISPR-Cas9 gene editing technology.

The first day of the conference proved challenging as many students did not know what to expect and felt "out of place."

"I think that it was hard to talk to people at first...we felt like we had to know our research inside out before talking to someone about it," Anoushka Krishnan '23 said.

But as the hour of the day flew by, so did these doubts, and students gained confidence in both their own research and in engaging with scientific experts.

"I remember walking through the posters and seeing a lot of really complicated and novel science which was intimidating, but as I started presenting my team's poster and receiving constructive feedback from lots of scientists who were genuinely interested in the work we were doing, I became more confident," Juliet Sostena '23 said.

For Krishnan, the overall experience

was both inspiring and informative in providing exposure to new scientific research and fields.

"As someone who wants to go into science when I grow older, it was amazing to see so many projects and meet people from various scientific disciplines," she said. "It was a really great opportunity to learn from experts about fields I'm so interested in."

Krishnan presented her work on codon optimization in CRISPR-Cas9 gene editing technology and though she was initially nervous about sharing her research with other professors and post-docs, presenting ended up being her favorite part of the conference.

"It was quite daunting at first, especially when very smart people started asking very specific questions about our projects but the experience was so

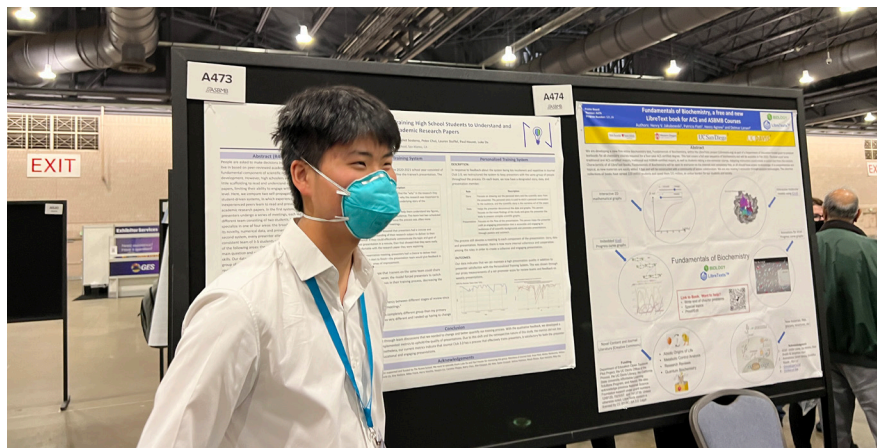
rewarding and I'm so glad we were able to share our research with people that were interested and experienced in our project fields," she said.

For Micah Brown '23, his favorite part of the conference was the people.

"I got to travel with people ranging from mentors, to friends, to people I knew very little about before the trip. It was great to see everybody in an environment where they each wanted to be there, had something to contribute, and was less structured than school," Brown said.

In addition to collaboration, students also found that the research and opportunities these biology classes provided them were truly invaluable.

"I definitely walked out of the conference with extra appreciation for the research and opportunities that I have access to in high school," Krishnan said.



Peter Choi '23 presents the work of DATAS, a group of students working to pump out relevant scientific information into the community through weekly presentations.



SNAP A PIC! Stephanie Liu '23, Luke De, Houjun Liu '23, and Max Manning '24 pose for a picture at the conference.



## Upcoming arts events

Don't miss the final performing and visual arts events of the school year

### APRIL 10—DIGITAL COLLECTION

The display of student artwork on the TV screens around campus will be refreshed with a new collection of student artwork.

### APRIL 15—POETRY IN THE CAFE

Linger over lunch in the Cafe on Friday, April 15 to watch students and faculty deliver poetry readings! April is also National Poetry Month.

### APRIL 28—GROOVE WORKSHOP

Groove Workshop takes to the stage at lunch for another electric performance—one of their last of the year.

### MAY 5—STEEL DRUMS CONCERT

Let the relaxing and energetic music of steel drums swing us closer to summer at their concert on May 5!

### MAY 3—CLASSICAL CORNER

A new addition to lunchtime concerts this year is Classical Corner, where students perform classical music. The next performance is May 3.

### JUNE 8-10—UPPER SCHOOL MUSICAL

The upper school musical theatre program will present its performance of *Head Over Heels* on June 8, 9, and 10! This musical will feature one of the largest student casts in Nueva's musical theatre history.



## OPINION

# Love is Blind returns with a second eventful yet depressing season

Turns out constant turbulence doesn't make for a great narrative arc

STORY ANISHA KUMAR  
PHOTOS NETFLIX

None has ever looked at the wide, wacky world of reality dating shows and said, "You know what this needs? A little touch of snobbish elitism!"

Nevertheless, that is exactly what Netflix's *Love is Blind* brings to the table. The popular dating show, touted by hosts Vanessa and Nick Lachey as the answer to the superficiality rampant in modern dating, returned in February with a second season, two years after the first season premiered.

For the first 10 days, men and women got to know each other by dating through a wall. They couldn't see each other, and their only way out of the separated quarters, called "pods," was to get engaged. Engaged couples met face-to-face, traveled to Mexico to meet the other couples, and then spent four weeks in the real world before their weddings, where they finally decided whether or not to say "I do."

This season, six couples flirted, drank, and confessed their way to engagements, and two tied the knot. But while *Love is Blind's* first season gave viewers a few heartwarming, surprising success stories to offset the inevitable drama, I didn't find anyone to root for this season. Yes, every cast member was that perfect reality-show blend of desperate, unhinged, egomaniacal, and sometimes oddly sweet. But there was such a disturbing lack of romantic success that the show faded into one big dreary display of how—or who—not to date.

For instance: Shayne, who a *Vox* writer described as "illegally jittery" (draw your own conclusions there) and who admitted to drinking eight espresso shots a day, used his caffeine-endowed multitasking skills to two-time two women, Shaina and Natalie. Somehow, he salvaged his relationship with Natalie and made it to the altar with her. I confess I almost liked them, especially after Shaina's attempt at a vengeful return. But the night before the wedding, they fought and broke up.

Meanwhile, Kyle, a construction worker who's either painfully naive or just plain stupid, got pulled along in that mess as Shaina's potential partner. He was largely irrelevant, except for when Shaina made him give up his veganism of eight years and they had a lovely back-and-forth about evolution and religion.

("You believe in the big bang theory?" Shaina says. "I'll pray for you, babe.")

Jarrette and Iyanna got engaged, but not before Jarrette got a ring—custom made for Mallory, another contestant. He proposed, was turned down, and went on to propose to Iyanna with that same ring the very next day. After that, it was miraculously smooth sailing, and the two ended up tying the knot.

Mallory coupled up with Salvador instead, who studied opera in college and woefully wouldn't let us forget it. She hid under a blanket as he sang his proposal to her (whether out of giddiness or severe cringe is unclear). They were turbulent; they didn't make it. Next!

The other married couple, Nick and Danielle, started off with a sweet, seemingly genuine connection in the pods that eventually turned into constant fighting as they tried to brute-force their way into marriage-readiness in four weeks. Highlights included Nick dressed as an ear of corn and Danielle attired a la hot dog fighting about maturity. When they finally, inexplicably, said "I do," Nick was sweating enough to drown on dry land.

Still, these relationships, however fraught and demoralizing, paled in comparison to Abhishek "Shake" and Deepti, two Indian-American

participants who initially bonded over never dating other Indians.

(Ah, yes, mutual internalized racism. The perfect foundation for any relationship.)

Shake started the season by asking every one of his pod matches questions about their weight with all the subtlety of a baseball bat to the head: "I love buying clothes for girls. What's your size?" After he and Deepti got engaged, he admitted about a hundred times behind her back to having no physical attraction to her, a notion belied by his tendency to enact a vice-like grip upon her rear whenever he's within two feet of her. It was incredibly satisfying to see her turn him down at the altar and watch him deflate like a punctured balloon.

The Lacheyes repeatedly insist that dating blind is the best, most authentic way to fall in love, and that the "real world" and material concerns corrupt that purity. *Love is Blind* turned dating into a game show where a successful marriage after four weeks (just 28 days!) was a testament to true love. If participants broke up, they had failed—not at the show, but at love itself.

"I deserve someone who is certain about me," Iyanna said, on learning she was Jarrette's second choice.

"I kind of feel like this whole process is uncertainty," he replied, and he was right. Because there is nothing authentic or pure about people forced together for 10 days, meeting for the first time under the looming promise of holy matrimony, and spending the next four weeks preparing for marriage like it's an extreme sport. All *Love is Blind* proves is that you can't speedrun relationships.

During Shake's reappearance on the

**Sorry, Vanessa, but in our world, blurry is as good as it gets. And pretending otherwise is real blindness.**

reunion episode, he doubled down on all his misogyny and arrogance. Vanessa Lachey roasted him within an inch of his life, and Iyanna even recommended he see a therapist for help with navigating relationships as a narcissist. But I can't help but agree with one thing he said.

"I want love to be partially blind. I want it to be, 'Love is blurry,'" he said, indignant. "It's nature, baby! We're animals!"

Vanessa Lachey's reply? "So let's be better!"

Sorry, Vanessa, but in our world, blurry is as good as it gets. And pretending otherwise is real blindness.

*Take your time, this season warns. In love, it's best to keep your eyes wide open.*





## Grace's Culture corner: Psychosis, Puppies, and Poetry Corner

Looking for something to listen to, watch, or read? Here are some recent recommendations that'll get you hooked.

STORY GRACE FINKE  
PHOTOS IMDB, CHLOE MORIONDO, OCEAN VUONG



### puppy luv Chloe Moriondo

Originally known for her ukulele covers in front of a yellow bedroom wall, Chloe Moriondo is a singer-songwriter who blends themes of childhood innocence, teenage angst, and their queer identity into their music. Her newest EP, puppy luv, is focused on the more fun side of life and her love for animals, with the recurring theme of dogs throughout, and their dog Sammy as a main collaborator.



### Time Is a Mother Ocean Vuong

Vietnamese-American poet Ocean Vuong is known for his deep poetry focusing on themes such as change and longing. His newest collection, Time Is a Mother, will focus on the aftershock of his mother's death and the meaning of grief as it relates to life itself.



### Everything Everywhere All at Once Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert

Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert

Starring Michelle Yeoh, Everything Everywhere All at Once follows an exhausted Chinese-American woman as she transcends the multiverse while finishing her taxes. This film, which features an AAPI cast, balances humor with somewhat horrific visuals, setting itself up to be a unique new name in the science-fiction genre.

## Lexi Howard is a coward OPINION

Why Lexi Howard is the real villain of *Euphoria*

STORY SELIN KANDEMIR  
PHOTOS HBO

In HBO's *Euphoria*, the character of Lexi Howard is painted as the innocent counterpart of her crazy sister Cassie Howard. However, Lexi's play, supposedly about "friendship," was an evil and brutal breakdown of the people in Lexi's life. She writes characters to reflect her classmates and friends exactly to her own perception of them, with the only subtle change being their names. Amid dance numbers and extravagant set designs, her play jabs at several people and their personal lives, traumatizing and humiliating them. Lexi's play is her big moment in the show, and it reveals so much about everyone.

Lexi Howard may be exercising her "artistic freedom," but she's doing it in a way that crosses all the lines of human decency. With the final two episodes of the recent season, she's set up to be the biggest antagonist on *Euphoria*. She is the most machiavellian character on the show, yet baits the audience into liking her by putting on a mask of an unproblematic teenager. Most viewers like Lexi for this, she's the innocent younger sister of Cassie, [smt about Cassie's role in the show]. But in reality, she's manipulative and scheming, made clear through her actions with the play.

For most of the first season of *Euphoria*, Lexi lived in Cassie's shadow. She barely had her own storyline, and was simply a secondary character in the mess. This all changed with the second season, where she acted as an "observer," and wrote about everything that was happening at East Highland, exposing all of her classmates and airing their dirty laundry for everyone to see through the play.

Her play crosses several ethical boundaries, mainly of friendship, by revealing her friends' and enemies darkest secrets. Yet, she puts on a smile, all while knowing the destruction it will cause. Lexi is the "good" sister, the goodie two-shoes, unlike the rebellious and mentally unstable Cassie. This dynamic is highlighted in this season through Cassie's expression of her inner turmoil, in contrast to Lexi's secrecy: bottling up her emotions until given a public platform to release them.

She is well-aware of the consequences that will come from the play, yet she goes on with producing it, wreaking havoc among nearly half of the audience—including her closest friends and classmates. Most of what she includes in her play are subtle jabs directed towards Cassie. Yet, Nate, a character who is mired in toxic masculinity and warped by

**Lexi Howard may be exercising her "artistic freedom," but she's doing it in a way that crosses all the lines of human decency. With the final two episodes of the recent season, she's set up to be the biggest antagonist on *Euphoria*.**

seeing his father's engagement in affairs with minors, is heavily affected by a scene clearly directed towards him. Denigrating Nate to the point that the entire auditorium was laughing at the character onstage that was clearly inspired by him is purely and outwardly evil. In the moments of that act, Lexi established herself as a much more dangerous character than she's ever been before. Her ruthlessness shows: she doesn't care who gets hurt.

Her play pits so many characters against her and each other: Cassie's anger causes her to storm the stage, as Lexi pleads with her, "please stop," as if oblivious to the self-inflicted impending doom. Lexi sits there just begging for her to stop, not using any of her power to stop her. She wants to wreak havoc, she wants the madness that ensues—she doesn't want to be a side character anymore, thus establishing herself as the villain.

Even after all of the destruction, Lexi takes no consequences for her actions, continuing the play even after seeing it ruin her friends' lives. Her disregard for the feelings of others reveals another side of her—her ice cold heart.





## Say "I don't" to The Sims 4's newest excuse for a \$20 game pack

A disappointing wedding-themed release points to a larger decline in the game's player experience

STORY JOSIE BELFER  
PHOTO SIMS, EMMA ZHAO



**HERE COMES THE BRIDE...**  
Two unhappy SIMS cut a wedding cake, in the newest SIMS4 expansion pack

**H**ere comes the bride... or not. She's staring blankly into space in her pajamas, while I am struggling in vain to get her, and the rest of the newest Sims 4 game pack, "My wedding stories," to actually function.

When the pack was announced in February, it sounded like a winning concept. Theoretically, the pack filled a void in the somewhat underdeveloped marital design from the base game while introducing a new Mediterranean-inspired world, complete with baby blue oceans and charming architecture. In reality, it was broken. Almost all of the crucial features, the same ones that had been marketed for weeks, would consistently malfunction, leaving the wedding element of the game virtually unplayable, effectively meaning that the \$20 I paid for the pack made the game worse.

It would have been reasonable for me to be disappointed, but I wasn't. The problem is, while frustrating, the broken pack was not some unprecedented oversight on the part of the Sims team. The release of the pack was one of many incidents that point to a much broader issue in the way the Sims 4 team and Electronic Arts (EA) have been increasingly willing to completely jeopardize user

experience for profit.

In an effort to continue generating revenue on their most popular game, EA has turned to releasing expansion packs. Expansion packs range from pets, vacations, etc. However, in March, the Sims team decided to change things up and release Kits, a smaller version of these expansions.

Kits are mini-collections of content that essentially add small touches to the game without making any significant changes. At five dollars each, these are the most inexpensive add-ons, but the collections are usually so narrow that they are just another way for EA to make money with little to no effort. Despite the extremely heavy marketing EA has done for them, kits are just not worth it. Comparisons have been drawn between the pack type and The Sims 3 Exchange store, which has become a ridiculously expensive collection of items and worlds. With the steady decline in the quality of their packs and the addition of kits, it is hard to feel confident in the future of the game.

As the Sims 4 continues to rely on modders and community members rather than actually putting in work to make the game better, the quality and substance of packs decreases. The wedding pack was supposed to include the ability to choose a flower pal and ring bearer, sims walking down an isle, a bouquet toss, group dances/

slow dances, speeches, toasts, and having guests gather to watch the couple exchange vows, among many other features. Because almost none of these key features functioned in the released version of the pack, many sims modders (people who develop their own free mods/modifications to the game) and community members have

begun to create their own versions of the pack that actually function. There have been talented and dedicated content creators since the beginning of The Sims series to add mods and custom items to the game, but these content creators are working for free with no help from the Sims 4 team and shouldn't be relied on to save the entire game.

When the Sims 4 was first released in 2014, it had a few main selling points that differentiated it from previous iterations in the Sims franchise. Although the game had fewer gameplay options, it was designed to be less buggy, have better graphics, and function at a higher level in general while also being aesthetically pleasing. By releasing packs riddled with bugs and non-functional gameplay, releasing fluff packs that essentially add nothing to the game, and heavily relying on unpaid-modders, EA continues to undermine the game's original purpose.

## The media fails Kanye West

The media's reaction to Kanye West shows a dangerous lack of awareness for mental health

STORY AARON HUANG  
PHOTO KANYE WEST

**T**he media has recently taken a crack at Ye, previously known as Kanye Omari West, and his supposed insanity with headlines such as, "Kanye West 'Takes Accountability' for Abusing Caps Lock, Sharing Kim's Texts" from Rolling Stones, and, "Kanye is back to attacking Pete Davidson in new 'Eazy' video," from USMagazine. This has included insensitive jokes regarding his bipolar disorder, with an Instagram comment reading, "[Kanye] off the meds, album gonna go crazy."

In neon green text, Ye inscribed, "i hate being bipolar, it's awesome," on the cover of his 2018 album, Ye. The words etched in scratchy font was Ye's confirmation of his diagnosis of bipolar disorder, a diagnosis which had long been theorized in the media since his month-long hospitalization for psychosis in 2016.

And yet, the media never acknowledges Ye's diagnosis nor his depressive episodes. Instead, the media gleefully publishes mocking headlines and articles, making tabloids out of his 'funniest' symptoms.

Bipolar disorder is more than simple mood swings—in extreme forms it can ruin lives. Unrestrained spending, impulsive actions, and feelings of invincibility are symptoms of the disorder's manic episodes, while suicidal thoughts and feelings of worthlessness are symptoms of major depressive episodes.

Neglecting the severity of his diagnosis, the media has covered Ye's manic episodes as badly as a toupee covers Trump's balding head. They

are both always there, but cheap and ugly in execution.

In the Rolling Stones' article about Ye's Instagram posts, the publication noted, "Kanye West 'Takes Accountability' for Abusing Caps Lock." What they did not report was what he was saying in all caps.

"THE WORLD IS RACIST SEXIST HOMOPHOBIC AND CRAZY PHOBIC AT OUR CORE ITS CHEAP AND DISMISSIVE TO SAY IM OFF MY MEDS ANYTIME I SPEAK UP," Ye captioned an Instagram post of someone saying he was, "off the meds."

In contrast to the societal hyperfocus on Ye's mania, his major depressive episodes are ignored. On March 8, Ye posted a poem titled DEAD on Instagram, referring to himself as deceased. Instead of addressing the dark messages within the poem, media outlets like The Week called it "bizzare." Articles like these make Ye's lines even more powerful.

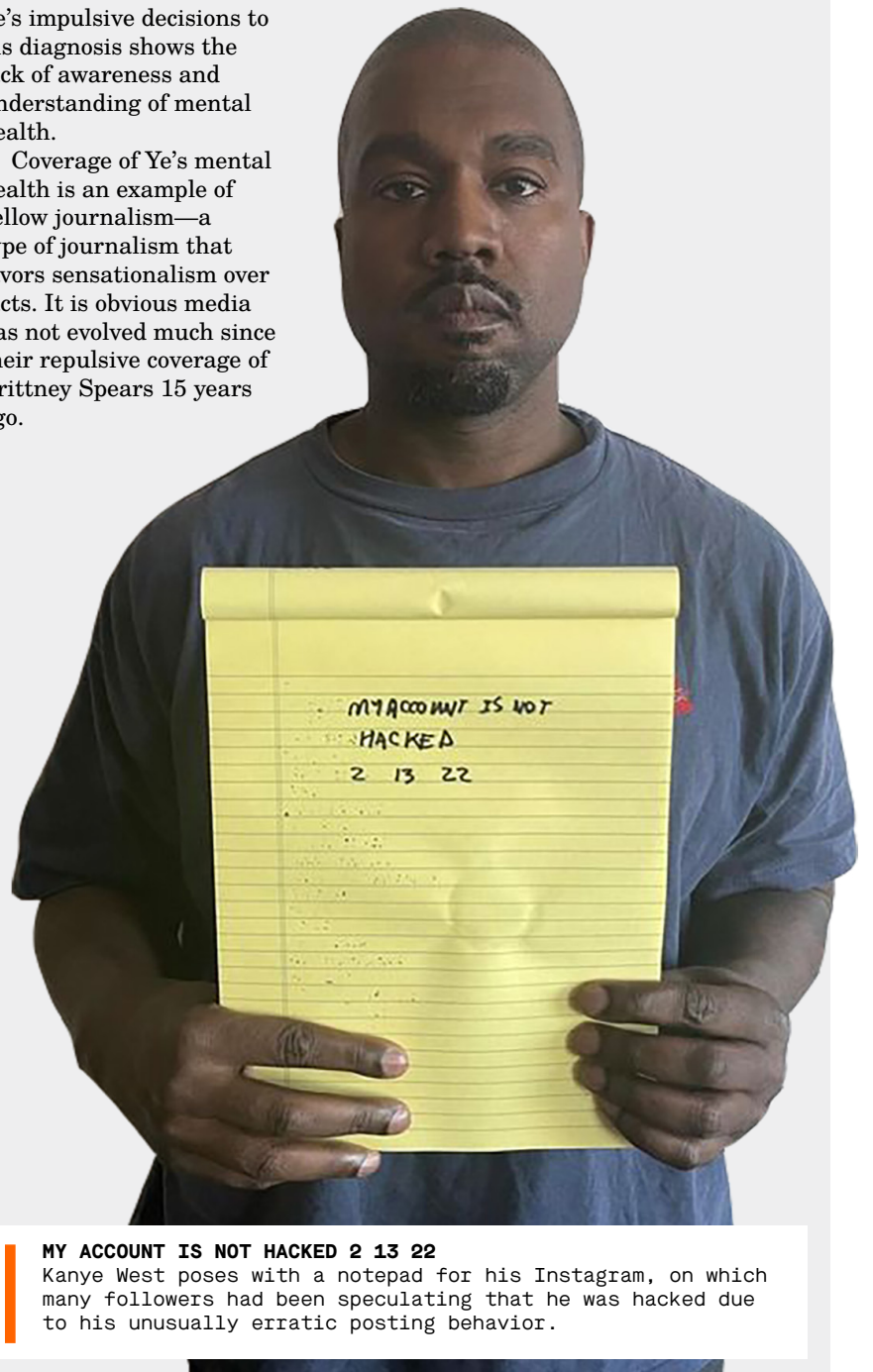
"Won't anyone listen to one word I said / Of course not sir / You know how long you been DEAD," Ye wrote.

Ye's poem DEAD is not alone in how it directly addresses the media. Songs like "Saint Pablo" or "Coldest Winter" underscore the irony of the media's ignorance with lyrics like, "People tryna say I'm goin' crazy on Twitter / My friends' best advice was to stay low... The media said it was outlandish spendin' / The media said he's way out of control."

Ye's manic episodes are exacerbated by his fame and his impulsive purchases (like the truck full of roses he sent to his ex-wife) are only amplified by his wealth. Manic episodes are not something to be made fun of; they need to be understood. And depressive episodes are not to be ignored. The media's failure to connect

Ye's impulsive decisions to his diagnosis shows the lack of awareness and understanding of mental health.

Coverage of Ye's mental health is an example of yellow journalism—a type of journalism that favors sensationalism over facts. It is obvious media has not evolved much since their repulsive coverage of Britney Spears 15 years ago.



**MY ACCOUNT IS NOT HACKED 2 13 22**

Kanye West poses with a notepad for his Instagram, on which many followers had been speculating that he was hacked due to his unusually erratic posting behavior.



## How framing arrangements formed a family

STORY GRACE FINKE, JOSIE BELFER  
PHOTO GRACE FINKE

San Mateo's Cheap Pete's not only fosters creativity in its customers, but also creates a unique community in the store

From highway blueprints to a child's experiment with crayons, artwork deserves the perfect medium to be displayed. Cheap Pete's has it all—ready-made frames, pre-cut mats, and custom arrangements for everyone's framing needs. However, in the midst of aisles of artwork and framing arrangements at the San Mateo store, the people who work there are truly what makes it special.

Manager Rose Armstrong, who has been working at Cheap Pete's for nine years, notes how much being a part of customers' artistic journey means to her.

"I love everything everybody comes in to bring in because they care about it," Armstrong said. "What matters most is the interaction with the customer, the kind of fun that they have, since you're kind of making it yourself. So when it's all said and done, it's like you design the space."

Cheap Pete's was originally established as a DIY frame store in San Francisco in 1988. Since then, it has branched out to become a place where many customers come to display important mementos from their lives. However, the customization and creativity that the store was founded on still remains an incredibly prevalent part of the business.

"Custom or not? It's the same process," Armstrong said. "You bring in a piece of art. I asked you if you have any ideas of what you'd like to do with it. Sometimes they do. Sometimes they're just not sure or they'll start explaining other things and we just try. But if you're not finding anything that you like pre-made, then we can go custom."

According to Sales Associate Ella Williams, the rough ratio of pre-made to custom orders is 60:40.

Williams appreciates the fact that the business is local to the Bay Area, with custom orders being sent to Oakland.

"I feel a lot safer in my work environment just because it's not a giant corporation, and all of the locations are in the Bay Area," Williams said. "I have seen the face of the company, I've met my boss's boss, and everyone makes me feel safe and cared for and valued as an employee."

Williams, 18, came to Cheap Pete's because she was searching for a job where she could employ her creative side. Throughout her nine months of working here, she has learned about a new trade and has also built a family.

"I just love the community that is here," Williams said. "Within our store, I feel like our staff has been like a second family to me. And everyone has been so sweet and accommodating, and just wonderful and lovely to work with every day."

In addition to these interactions within the employees, Armstrong, Williams, and fellow Sales Associate Janet Barker have found that interacting with customers and their jobs has been a truly invaluable experience. From a charred knife from an unfortunate vacation to the original maps of I-280, the stories that come with the artwork have been something that Armstrong, Williams, and Barker all treasure. Barker also notes that this business brings people together not only as a community as workers and artists.

"There was a couple that met here and got married," Barker said. "And it was so funny; this girl was here, and there was a photographer. And he was just kind of, you know, looking like he was interested. And here, they show up, a year or two later saying, 'yeah, we got married.'"



## This spring, stop by San Mateo Central Park's Japanese Tea Garden

This charming garden draws visitors from all walks of life

STORY ISABELLA XU, MARCUS HIRSCHMAN, ZARA MIRZA  
PHOTOS MARCUS HIRSCHMAN

Spring has come to San Mateo's Japanese Tea Garden located within Central Park. Hanging over an azumaya, the term for a structure that closely resembles a gazebo or pavilion, cherry blossoms

welcome the season's warmth as deep pink buds unfurl into cream petals. Below a small stone bridge, dozens of koi gather—it's feeding time. Curious eyes admire their shimmering scales: for decades, toddlers and adults alike have all found solace amidst the deep green trees.

Originally established by the city of San Mateo in 1966 to develop stronger ties with the Japanese community after

World War II, the Japanese Tea garden has become a tranquil haven for local residents.

Mother and daughter pair Claire and Claudia G. have been returning to the garden

three times a week for the last fifteen years. The mother, Claire, is now wheelchair bound, but reminisces of a time where she could walk around the park.

While their lives have changed, the park has remained constant.

"Nothing's really changed except for some silly things—I remember the gate was put up so kids couldn't walk into the water," Claudia said.

Another park regular, Arthur Shaw, introduced himself by his street name "Hitch," standing for Helping Individuals Through Crisis Health. He has been visiting the park for 32 years, and has come to befriend the park maintenance workers over the years.

"When other people come around, they ask the people that work here, 'Have you seen Hitch?'" he said.

Shaw recalls that the COVID-19 pandemic has

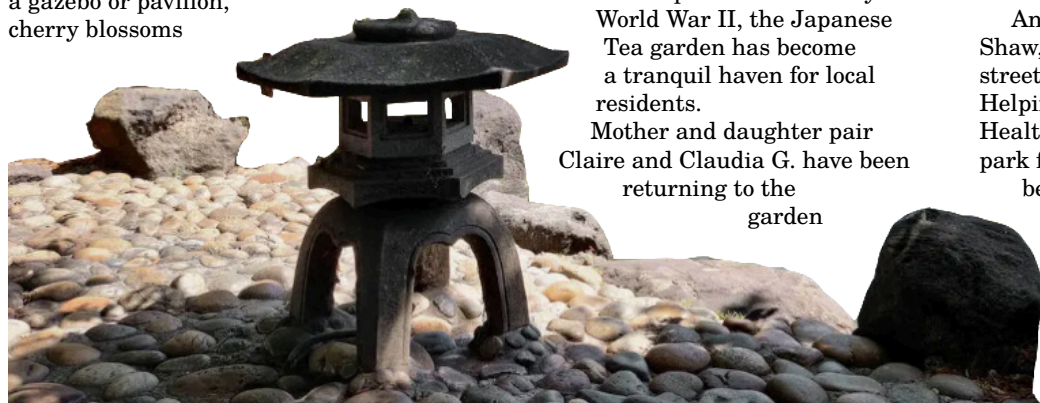
introduced a new group of people to the park, explaining that there are a lot of "new faces" that "don't quite blend in."

One of the new faces is Ryan Slamkowski, who visited the magical garden along with his two daughters.

Although he has been to other tea gardens in many different cities, Ryan had stunning things to say about the Japanese Tea Garden that resides here in San Mateo.

Slamkowski particularly enjoyed the well-manicured foliage surrounding water bursting with fish. "This is the most amount of koi I have seen before," Slamkowski remarked.

Along with the garden itself, Slamkowski talked about the delightful California climate as well and how that affected his visit. "The weather of California makes it an easy place to come and enjoy a tranquil and peaceful walk."







## Family-owned Suruki Supermarket is a staple in downtown San Mateo

At Suruki, it's the family ties that power the business

STORY AARON HUANG, SELIN KANDEMIR  
PHOTOS SURUKI SUPERMARKET

Vast unpacked boxes of Japanese snacks and Ramune bottles fill the aisles of Suruki Supermarket every Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. These are the restocking days. Tucked between these cardboard towers is Misako Suruki, daughter of the store's late founder Shuji Suruki. She has no formal role in the supermarket—rather, she is the store's Swiss Army knife, helping out wherever she is needed. It could be restocking the shelves and breaking down boxes, scanning items and running credit cards, or slicing and filleting fresh fish behind the deli counter.

Located at 98 E 4th Ave., Suruki Supermarket has been a downtown San Mateo staple for the past three decades. But before the walls of boxes and fully stocked shelves, Suruki was just a family name. The store? It was a van. Yet, even with the changes of locations and the way they sold their items, Suruki Supermarket was always known for their sashimi—fresh fish, sliced incredibly thin. Fish sales account for 50 percent of the store's income, and because of the demand they receive daily shipments of fish.

"It took me a long time," said Misako, explaining the arduous process of learning how to cut sashimi. Then, pointing to a framed picture of Shuji placed on the deli counter—where he spent most of his time—she added, "He started it all. And it's been really hard without him. I wish he could see me doing it now."

Shuji passed away at 65 in February of 2017, leaving the store to his two children, Misako and her brother Ken—as well as his wife Ryoko—who have continued store operations. But his memory also lives on through the Suruki employees, like Kitchen and Floor Manager Maashud Lakhan.

"The family is the only reason I'm here," said Lakhan, as he described the familial relationships he has developed with his coworkers. "I'm always trying to find something to do to make [Shuji] proud, even though he's not here."

Although the store has grown in the 50 years since its founding, it is still tied to its roots. Tied to the time they first walked into the San Mateo store for 30 years ago, believing they wouldn't have enough items to fill the shelves.

Although Suruki Supermarket treasures their roots, change has always been and continues to be a part of their story, the most recent being the opening of their online store. Beginning as a way to reduce COVID-19 exposure during the pandemic, the online store will now be an integral part of the market's future.

<https://www.surukisupermarket.com/groceries>

## Cookie connoisseur

Antoine's Cookie Shop only makes one thing: but it does it really, really well

STORY SERENA SAXENA, JACK PEMBERTON  
PHOTOS GRACE FINKE, ANTOINE TANG

Finding the perfect dessert is no easy feat. From browsing Yelp for hours of operation to calling shops in a ten mile radius to see if they had any inventory left, Antoine Tang's late night cookie craving only intensified as the minutes went by.

So Tang did what any other cookie-crafter would do, he grabbed the KitchenAid mixer he originally bought for his wife, looked for a standard chocolate chip cookie recipe, and got to work.

"I thought, 'you know what, I can figure this out.' It was a pretty easy recipe to follow, that's why I chose it. And [the cookies] were fine, they were okay, they satisfied my desire for a warm freshly baked cookie," Tang said, remembering the late-night moment in his kitchen. "It was like this: I wanted cookies, I'll make cookies."

Not long after, Tang started doubling his recipes—recipes that began to further from the original online recipe. He brought cookies to his friends and church group, and they encouraged him to start selling them.

"I said, 'is anybody gonna buy them?' but I started selling them anyway. And then people started buying. It became so busy that I needed to open a shop," Tang said.

Since then, opened in 2016, Antoine's Cookie Shop has grown into a dessert-lovers dream.

Nestled on a street in downtown San Mateo, the store's warm and cozy orange ambience reflects the cookies themselves. Pools of light stream through the three center windows illuminating the cookies on display which are baked to perfection.

[food writing about the cookies taste, make it good]

As a second generation immigrant, with both parents immigrating from Vietnam after the war, his family was always working blue-collar jobs and were cautious about funds—including purchases of food and ingredients.

"We were very careful about how we used the ingredients at home to not waste anything. From a really young age, we knew there were only so many eggs that we could use. There was only so much meat. So I learned from a young age to be very careful with quality ingredients," Tang recalled.

His care for the quality of ingredients is highlighted with every bite of his cookies made

from butter, pure vanilla extract, organic flour, and Guittard chocolate.

Besides authenticity, the other pillar of Tang's business is consistency.

Tang quit his job at Apple in 2015 to pursue his cookie career but received criticism from others about only selling cookies.

"People told me 'you can't just sell cookies. You have to sell cupcakes or other things because

**"I thought, 'you know what, I can figure this out.' And [the cookies] were fine, they were okay, they satisfied my desire for a warm freshly baked cookie. It was like this: I wanted cookies, I'll make cookies."**

why would [customers] just come for cookies?"

But true to his vision, Tang was consistent with and committed to his dessert of choice. He describes his shop as a "one trick pony."

"We just make cookies but it's a pretty good trick, we do it really well," he said.

In addition to the cookies themselves, Tang believes his success can be attributed to his relationships with his employees and customers.

"I had to hire a team, something I had no experience in. I hired my first four employees and basically for the first four months they were kind of just watching the work because I didn't know how to tell them to do things. I didn't know what to trust them with," Tang said.

Overtime, however, Tang developed confidence in his employees to execute the desserts and run parts of his business.

"How the cookies are made today and how we plan our bake in the morning was largely created by the employees who work here. And what they make is a very efficient way to push out a lot of cookies in a day," he said.



## Here's what our staff thinks about these two establishments!

"I absolutely LOVE Antoine's Cookie Shop. Their cookies are chewy and flavorful, and you're even able to warm them up in a microwave provided in the shop!

- Zara Mirza

"All the snacks that Suruki Supermarket sold were really nostalgic for me, and it was cool to see regular customers come in for lunch. They sell this Chinese/Japanese baby food and it slaps."

- Isabella Xu

"I've only tried the toffee cookie from Antoine's Cookie Shop, but it was possibly one of the better cookies I've had. The cookie had an appealing flavor, wasn't excessively sweet, and was topped off with flakey salt that pulled it all together."

- Natalie Lai



## International Relations course houses discussions about the Ukraine-Russia war

IR class takes a realist lense, as students voice opinions in a four-person roundtable

STORY ISABELLA XU  
PHOTO TKTK

While they mourned along with the rest of the nation as war broke out in Ukraine, the 19 seniors enrolled in International Relations class also watched with a more critical lense—in international relations terms, the eyes of a “realist.”

“Realism starts with the assumption that the international system is an anarchy, and in an anarchy, states are incentivized to pursue power as a means to pursue their survival,” International Relations teacher Arta Khakpour explained, describing the theory as the “basic foundation of foreign policy.”

This semester, International Relations students wrote U.S.-Russia policy memos while working under this school of thought.

During each class period, students read a variety of “realist” theory papers before convening for group discussion in class. While their first major assessment would typically be a policy memo written on U.S.-China relationships, it was “very clearly apparent” to Khakpour that the US and Russia would have higher tensions in the current geopolitical landscape, and the assignment was changed to follow suit.

On Feb. 11, with realism theory in hand, the class temporarily

shouldered the burdens of diplomatic advisors and wrote policy memos directed to President Biden, advising U.S. strategy regarding the Ukraine-Russia crisis. While they followed the same school of thought, student opinions on what actions the U.S. should take differed.

Nikki Agrawal '22 argued that Putin felt he had no other choice than to attack Ukraine.

“Putin was backed into a corner, and I think he felt like every country in the world was against him,” she said, “He started posturing, and now he can’t stop without seeming weak.”

Agrawal suggested that the U.S. offer Putin a third option, turning Ukraine into a “buffer zone, or neutral, like Austria,” which had been done in the Cold War. She also thought that they should prevent Ukraine from joining NATO, as a “form of reinsurance.”

While Agrawal took a more diplomatic stance, Maya Bodnick '22 voiced her opinion that the U.S. should take more immediate action against Russia, and at least be open to bringing in forces. She believed that the U.S. would have the capacity to execute such a plan, adding that Putin was just making a “naked power grab.”

To voice their policy memo perspectives in a debate, Bodnick and Agrawal, along with seniors JP Peasley-Lynch and Sarah Willrich, gathered in a round table to discuss what policies the U.S. should take

with Russia. Bodnick and Willrich argued for immediate aggressive action, while Agrawal and Peasley-Lynch encouraged diplomacy.

Inside the classroom, the students’ willingness to take different stances has allowed for more nuanced discussions.

“I’ve always witnessed very vibrant discussions in class,” Khakpour said. “You see kids who might see themselves as very left in some sense arguing a very hawkish position, or a conservative in some other way arguing a dove-ish position.”

Khakpour credits this viewpoint diversity to the students’ lack of preconceived notions about international policy before joining

the class, as foreign policy attitudes don’t “map as easily” onto the binary of Democrat and Republican beliefs—for students beginning their semester in the course, ignorance is almost a blessing.

However, Khakpour hopes that students will leave the course with newly-formed—and informed—opinions of their own.

“While they might not be able to fly out to Ukraine and pick up a gun to fight, by being more educated on foreign policy, it provides an ability to lobby more effectively,” Khakpour said, “If you have a more informed electorate that votes not just based on social and domestic issues, but on foreign policy, then you can actually have a lot of impact.”



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS TEACHER ARTA KHAKPOUR DISCUSSES THE GEOPOLITICS OF THE WAR.

## War in Ukraine hits close to home

Siblings Anna Aganina and Misha Aganin grapple with familial ties to a crisis transpiring thousands of miles away

STORY JOSIE BELFER

When Vladimir V. Putin launched his invasion of Ukraine, Anna Aganina '25, like most other Nueva students, was on vacation. However, after seeing the headlines, she immediately rushed to her parents, because unlike a majority of Nueva students, Anna is intimately acquainted with the present

conflict.

“We immediately called my family in Ukraine,” Aganina said. “Luckily, they were safe, but my first worry was for them and my family in Russia, who could be drafted.”

Aganina has Ukrainian and Russian ancestors, as well as relatives who currently live in both countries. Her family has discussed the tensions between the two countries for years. Now that a full-fledged invasion has begun, Aganina

finds herself torn between the shocking events unfolding on the world stage and what is happening in her own life thousands of miles away.

“Especially during the first couple weeks, we had to be constantly checking the news, and it was kind of difficult to get homework done,” Aganina said. “It’s just so fundamentally weird that we’re separated by thousands of miles and an entire ocean.”

Despite the distance, Aganina was fortunate enough to be able to communicate with her family living in both countries during the early days of the invasion.

“We’ve been calling about twice a day to check in because they get lonely.

They didn’t want to walk around too much because it’s dangerous,”

Aganina said. “It’s really important to us that we keep communication with them.”

Later

on, she was finally able to see some of her relatives in person, as her grandparents fled Ukraine for the United States.

Aganina and her family communicated with them via text messages as they traveled by bus from their home in Kiev to Moldova before boarding a flight to the Bay Area. Aganina’s brother, Misha Aganin '23, said that greeting his relatives at home was quite emotional.

“They’re elderly, they grew up there, they want to live there. And yet, because of the situation, they’re stuck here, in a place completely foreign to them,” Aganin said.

Although some of the family has been reunited in the United States, dealing with their personal and historical ties to a crisis on the other side of the world remains difficult for both siblings.

“It’s terrifying. You’re simultaneously immersed in it, and you’re completely and utterly removed,” Aganina said. “It’s kind of a weird consistence.”

At the same time, coping with the emotional stress of the situation hasn’t made school any easier for the siblings. According to Aganina, she has found that it is difficult for others who aren’t connected with the situation to understand.

“I know we had open sessions regarding the conflict, but I don’t think they address the conflict on a personal level,” Aganina said. “It’s very emotionally taxing when you know that your family could be killed.”

Aganina hopes that her peers can empathize not only with those in Ukraine who are suffering from the invasion and war, but also with those who have loved ones, relatives, and other connections to the country.

Aganina said, “I think that it’s really important for Nueva students to understand that even if you’re not directly in Ukraine, if you have family, friends, or anyone in Ukraine, it’s still going to affect you.”



Aganin and Aganina with their grandparents, who lived in Ukraine before immigrating to the Bay Area in March



## Where the cooking videos and war updates intersect

The detriments and benefits of following the Russia-Ukraine War on social media

**STORY** ELLIE KEARNS, SERENA SAXENA  
**PHOTO** MAXYM MARUSENKO VIA NURPHOTO

Amongst the 15-second videos and 24-hour stories, news coverage has reentered the diverse dialogue—or more specifically, the #foryoupage. As the Russian-Ukrainian conflict unfolds, many are watching it through their screens with social media providing real-time updates from regular Ukrainian citizens to large news outlets.

One individual on Tiktok (@valerisssh) describes her “typical day in a bomb shelter” to her million followers. With an upbeat song for the background music and the caption reading, “Living my best life, thanks Russia! #ukraine #stopwar #russiastop,” Valerisssh records some of her daily activities including waking up, cooking, and checking the destruction around her city.

But it’s not just personal accounts presenting these updates on TikTok. Larger outlets, such as @nbcnews, also posted clips of President Zelenskyy visiting towns near Kyiv and surveying the “devastation.” In the comments, a user wrote, “THAT’S A REAL LEADER! GLORY TO UKRAINE!”

Aside from participating in the 35.4 billion views of #Ukraine on Tiktok, some users have changed their profile picture to the Ukrainian flag and others have included resources urging individuals to take action and donate.

Tiktok itself presented users with a “Digital Literacy” notification including tools and resources to “#BeCyberSmart” and the names of various organizations to support, which include the UN Central Emergency Response Fund, UNICEF, and Red Cross. The notification wrote, “As the war in Ukraine unfolds, it’s important to think carefully about what you see and keep yourself informed.”

Mei Mei Loh ’24 acknowledges the uptake of videos regarding the war, and while she aims to educate herself about the situation, she is more cautious about reposting content.

“I realize that I don’t want to slowly become performative in my actions,” Loh said. “I would like to engage in what I find to be pressing issues in a real way.”

Loh’s idea of a “real way” to approach crises involves more interactive work such as volunteering, researching, participating in peaceful protests, and donating. She intends to use social media for personal reasons instead of engaging with political matters.

According to Loh and Sophia Hoermann ’22, when individuals research political matters such as the war via social media, they encounter media bias. This bias is “entrenched in pretty much everything you see,” as evidenced by Valerisssh’s video and the comment section—an easy avenue to engage in discussion with others but a potential vehicle of



### IN KIEV, UKRAINE

A woman checks her phone on March 18 after heavy shelling by Russian forces. Social media provides citizens with real-time information and updates about the war.

misinformation.

“There’s always the issue of people trying to sound smart and talk about everything and argue with people when they really don’t know what’s going on,” Theo Chiang ’23 said. “That could spread a lot of false information and then public opinion could be swayed.”

While there are harms of war updates on the media, Hoermann also believes it can be beneficial for social media to provide a perspective on regular civilians that some larger news sources or history books may miss.

“It adds a little level of humanity and dimension to [the conflict],” she said. “I find those kinds of videos really helpful for understanding the scope of things and the actual experiences of people within a crisis like this.”

Loh feels the opposite, mentioning feeling desensitized from seeing the same posts over and over.

“It’s definitely made me really sad about what’s going on,” Loh shared. “I know it’s reality, but because it’s just photos that I can skip through on my phone, I don’t see it as real life—just like basically everything else on Instagram to me.”

Since the start of the conflict, social media platforms have been flooded with videos from both sides—and they will continue to be. Phones in hand, civilians and soldiers are documenting the war as it progresses, and as technology proves central to human lives, one thing remains clear: social media has officially become an element of the battlefield.

## Ukraine’s ripple effect and the future Taiwan’s sovereignty

How the Russian-Ukrainian war has impacted China’s interest in invading Taiwan



**STORY** AARON HUANG  
**PHOTOS** REUTERS

“Today Ukraine, tomorrow Taiwan,” Texas’s 23rd Congressional Rep. Tony Gonzales tweeted on Feb. 23, just one day before Russian military forces invaded Ukraine. Gonzales’s succinct tweet was a dire prediction of Taiwan’s future in the wake of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

Since then, news outlets have pointed out the surface level similarities between Ukraine and Russia, and Taiwan and China. But how accurate is this comparison?

International Relations teacher Arta Khakpour, disagrees with this perspective. Khakpour believes there are fundamental differences to why China may not invade Taiwan while Russia did invade Ukraine.

“China’s economic growth has not been as stellar as it was from the late 70s, [but] it’s still a growing power,” Khakpour said. “Russia has been on this steady decline since the end of the Cold War in 1991. So, I think Russia feels like time is not on their side.”

Economics teacher Patrick Berger agreed with Khakpour’s

assessment, while also adding why China strategically benefits from not escalating their current situation.

“China is pretty effective at keeping a few of these [enemies] in their back pocket for when they need them,” Berger explained. “If there was a rise in pro-democracy movements and anti-communist movements in China, they would have this wealth of possibilities that they could draw on and rally the populist fury of the country against.”

According to Berger, since the Russian invasion commenced on Feb. 24, Taiwan’s situation has shifted. He explains the two contrasting trains of thought when approaching the current China-Taiwan conflict.

“The Ukraine invasion makes a Taiwan invasion a little bit less likely,” Berger said. “The unified response, particularly from the West, was at a scope and a level which exceeded most people’s expectations. Another perspective is that maybe this normalizes invasions.”

Berger favors the first perspective, but he understands that the war in Ukraine might create a sense of normalcy. And if an invasion of Taiwan were to

happen, Khakpour and Berger agree the military support from the international community would most likely vary from the support Ukraine received.

“The U.S. has been pretty successful at building a kind of balancing coalition in East Asia against Chinese expansionism,” Khakpour said. “If China makes a move on Taiwan that’s going to threaten Japanese and Korean security too, and I think there’s been a good effort with U.S. leadership to create that.”

While the Russian-Ukrainian war proves great power wars are plausible in today’s nuclear era, Khakpour has a message for those afraid Taiwan is in immediate danger.

“Taiwan can take a little bit of solace from the fact that the international community now is not as broken, and will just allow any kind of expansionism to happen,” Khakpour explained. For now, Khakpour advises that, “Taiwan should keep doing things to further alter the risk calculus—develop better alliances, develop better defensive weapons systems, [and] make the cost of an invasion higher than the potential benefit.”



# Responding to the tear in our community

*A shocking and public incident of hate speech made the tenets and values of a beloved community real for many for the first time*

STORY ANOUSCHKA BECHTOLSHEIM & ANISHA KUMAR  
ILLUSTRATION ANISHA KUMAR

Upper School Division Head Liza Raynal stood frozen before the gym projector. It was mid-morning on March 9, and just minutes before, she'd been watching a jumble of usernames flicker before the upper school, excitedly awaiting the introductory Kahoot game she'd prepared with co-lead Avery Chen '22.

But now, marked by a collective gasp from the audience, an anti-Semitic username referencing the Holocaust flashed across the screen, leaving her and hundred of others in shock and disbelief.

Amongst the sea of students suddenly pin-drop silent, Maya Bodnick '22 scanned the room apprehensively.

"It could have been anyone," Bodnick said, "which is terrifying and undermines the sense of beloved community that we want to feel in Nueva because you feel like there's people out there who hate you, who want to get you."

Hours later, after students and faculty had returned to the gym for a follow-up afternoon meeting concerning the hate speech incident, Bodnick sat alongside several students and faculty, this time facing the community from a cluster of white chairs set up for the community circle. After history teacher Chelsea Denlow opened the meeting with a statement she'd prepared, others passed around a microphone and took their turns to speak.

Communications and website manager Rachel Freeman shared her reflection on the incident and her Jewish identity, filled with a fear similar to Bodnick's.

"I'm sitting there in the middle of the room where I know that somebody said this, not knowing if it was a direct threat to me and my community's physical safety," Freeman said. "It was intense and overwhelming... but I was grateful that my stepping outside my comfort zone and being vulnerable was helpful to others."

Other students later shared in the circle or came to Freeman about how being open about their Jewish identity was something they, too, were wrestling with. One of these students was Coby Wagonfeld '22, who originally wasn't sure if he wanted to say anything to the community.

"I'd kind of been distancing myself from my Jewish identity because for me, there were little microaggressions and situations where I didn't feel comfortable identifying as a Jew," Wagonfeld said. "But after hearing specifically Rachel's story about her experience, which was very similar to mine, I decided that I couldn't just sit there if other people were going through this."

For Gigi Silver '23, it was a past occurrence of hate speech that spurred her to take a chair and speak to the school despite being "terrified" of public speaking. Seeing the Kahoot name that morning had been like déjà vu, drawing Silver back to an experience months prior when she'd been on a video game survey and someone entered the game with the same username that had been used in the gym. Not saying anything at the time is something she still regrets today.

"So when this happened again, and I had this opportunity to speak about it, I knew I needed to," Silver said, later praising the circle as a "powerful" way to unpack what had happened that morning. "It was really eye-opening for me, too,

because it sometimes feels like we live in this 'moral high ground' at Nueva—we're so educated, we're so liberal that we're above these things—so it was a really good way to address some of those problems within the community."

The conversation continued the day after at a private meeting with the Jewish affinity group. Silver said that students and faculty were casually chatting and joking around before an announcement from Raynal changed the atmosphere of the room in a breath: the student responsible for the hate speech was Jewish, and was seated in the room with them.

"It kind of felt like a plot twist," Silver said. "It was my expectation going into the meeting that it would just be a time for my community to reflect on what happened. I wish I had a little bit more time to prepare or process."

Freeman, who was also in the meeting, had a similar experience.

"Nobody knew that the student was there because everybody belonged—it's not like you walk into the room asking, 'who's the odd person out?'" Freeman said.

Equity & Social Justice Director Alegria Barclay acknowledged the concerns regarding the lack of advance notice, explaining that although ideally they would have let the Jewish community know in advance, there wasn't a way to do so with the short timeline and without a quick way to reach all Jewish students considering coming to the meeting.

"We had no way to do that without excluding people," Barclay said. "And we wanted the student to make the repair as soon as possible."

Despite the initial shock of those in attendance, Freeman felt an important understanding arose from the meeting.

"The sentiment was one of both disappointment and hurt, but some students shared that they use humor to cope with collective trauma, and that's one of the ways their family has been able to talk about their histories with the Holocaust," she said. "I don't want to say that everything was all hunky-dory. But no matter whether you forgive him or you don't, or you're angry or you're sad, it felt to me that we all have this shared collective understanding that repair is part of who we are."

Listening to the student responsible for the hate speech speak to the group shone a new light on the incident for Wagonfeld. Wagonfeld didn't only remember the student's words of reflection—he recalled the raw emotion and bravery behind his words.

"He could easily just not have said anything. Coming forward, accepting the consequences, putting yourself in the spotlight and in a really uncomfortable situation—I think that by itself showed that it was never his intention for it to happen like that," Wagonfeld said. "In that moment, I realized that it would not be difficult for me to forgive him as he went through the process of restorative justice that we've put together."

While Wagonfeld felt ready to offer forgiveness, others like Yoav Rafalin '22 thought the matter needed more consideration.

"Because it was announced that it was a mistake and it was a Jewish person, people decided that they weren't going to

be as enraged about it," he said.

Rafalin also felt that certain aspects of the affinity meeting, such as the discussion around using humor to deal with trauma further blurred the line of where the transgression actually occurred.

"Now it's muddled because someone doesn't know—was the transgression writing down that statement? Was it accidentally posting it? Was it the act of sharing it with friends?" Rafalin said.

Silver hopes for a similar sense of clarity in the classroom beyond this isolated event.

"People have said some pretty antisemitic things to me—not in a hateful way necessarily, but just because they didn't know or weren't educated," Silver said. Silver believes a few days in the curriculum devoted to grasping the impacts of the Holocaust would be beneficial for both reflection on and prevention of hate speech.

To Denlow, there's also an education wrapped up in the two words which echoed throughout the community circle and the following assembly: beloved community.

"I know students make fun of the beloved community like, 'oh, God, here we go again,'—but what a testament to it, right? When times get hard, that is the value that we lean on," Denlow said.

The shared notion of a beloved community, Freeman believes, is particularly important, as it informs how a student who has made a public mistake re-enters a community.

"I felt like we were both understanding that this student is part of our community, and we were holding him accountable—and to me that's what a beloved community is. One of the biggest pieces about that week is that it demonstrated that you can make an egregious, horrible mistake, and you're not going to be exiled from this community," Freeman said.

Having consequences that don't shut students out of the community is important for Wagonfeld, who emphasizes that as high schoolers, the opportunity or lack thereof to move forward from a mistake is key.

"High school students are in a place in their lives where you're not going to be perfect for four years. You're going to make a lapse in judgment, you're going to make a mistake," he said. "I definitely have scenarios in my head where if I had made a lapse in judgment and said something that I shouldn't have said that got blown up and everyone heard about, I would want to have an opportunity to learn from my mistake."

Wagonfeld approves of the way the Nueva administration handled the incident—although when he walked out of the gym, shaken, that Wednesday morning, he felt entirely differently, not confident that there would be a path for the student to come forward.

"My first reaction was, I hope that kid doesn't come forward or people don't know who he is, because he's in big trouble," Wagonfeld said. "I think that's the exact opposite of what we did this time. I think we built a scenario where it's okay to take responsibility for your mistake, and you're going to be okay after it."

Bodnick echoed Wagonfeld's comments, commending Raynal for both working

to heal the community and sending a strong signal that hate is not tolerated—a balance she felt was off-kilt four years prior, under a different administration, when a different hate speech incident of slur usage on Reddit sent ripples through the community.

"Initially, I was very upset and felt like I was going to graduate high school and there would still be the same issues from when I was a freshman," Bodnick said. "Now, I feel like I'm graduating knowing that we still do have these issues at our school, but I'm feeling really confident in the new administration to handle these incidents decisively and effectively."

Despite lingering conflicts the community is still working to resolve, Denlow is glad to see how the Jewish community has come together.

"I like the way that this galvanized the Jewish community within Nueva in a new way," Denlow said, remarking on the increased affinity space devoted to what it means to be Jewish at Nueva. "It's nice to see that particular community recognized in a way that it may not have been as visible before."

*"Restorative justice is a response to wrongdoing that privileges healing and rebuilding the lives impacted by it, not punishment nor retribution."*

CRYSTAL T. LAURA



# Recent incident puts restorative justice into practice

*Circumstances surrounding the hate speech incident allow for never before seen transparency into the disciplinary and restorative justice process*

cont. from page 1

According to Raynal, the administration spoke to Jewish students before deciding on his consequences, which also involved a multi-day suspension, where for some of the time he remained at school and worked with Barclay and Raynal toward understanding and enabling restorative justice.

The suspension was intended to symbolize an institutional intolerance of hate speech, as well as an acknowledgement of transgression within the community. According to both Barclay and Raynal, time away from a typical school schedule let the student reflect on his actions and reenter the community having processed the event. Serving part of the suspension in-house ensured that he fully participated in that reflection.

"A suspension says, 'this is not okay. This is the standard we hold,'" Raynal said. "And if you break that standard, you will be asked to step away from the community for a time."

In his prepared statement, the student expressed appreciation for Nueva's restorative justice disciplinary process.

"Through the way I have been treated with such understanding, I've gained a new level of understanding for what is so special about the people here," he wrote. "...I hope that through trying to make amends through my actions and making sure there's no space for them to happen again, I can restore both your trust in our community and in myself."

While suspension and a statement were the consequences decided on for this particular incident, Nueva considers a variety of consequences in accordance with its policy on hate speech. The Nueva Student and Family Handbook includes loss of privileges, suspensions, declined re-enrollment, and expulsion as possible consequences, as well as milder responses like conflict resolution and mandatory reflection.

In the handbook, Nueva commits to "a process of investigation, dialogue, and education" where disciplinary action is involved, operating with "education,

consequences for an unacceptable action, and restoration of trust in our beloved community" in mind.

Nueva also has a privacy and confidentiality policy that keeps information about disciplinary processes confined only to those directly involved. This privacy policy extends to students' academic records with a no-report policy where Nueva is not required to report infractions to colleges.

"The intention there is not to obfuscate," Raynal said. "We want to be able to enact consequences without jeopardizing anyone's future."

While many have applauded the handling of this hate speech incident, there have been other hate speech incidents over the past few years where the disciplinary process and consequences were not as transparent, and those wronged or wounded did not feel as if they had access to the kind of repair process that took place this spring.

Five years ago, a student created a Wall of Text, a site accessible only through

invitation where people could post any text they wanted anonymously, and shared it with classmates. Anonymous contributors posted slurs and hate symbols on the page, and were reported by other students.

The anonymous nature of the site made the transgressor impossible to trace. As a result, there were no concrete disciplinary actions taken, and rumors abounded.

"We ended up in a situation where lots of students say, 'Nothing happened to those kids!'" Barclay said. "But there was no proof that those kids had actually done it. That led to a couple of years' worth of bad feelings."

In the fall of 2018, after the new branding was introduced, a few students were discovered using the "Open N" branding to represent slurs in a private Reddit space, and reported to the administration. While these transgressors were successfully identified, according to Barclay, Nueva's capability to enact disciplinary action was limited, as the misconduct occurred on the students' own time, on their own devices, rather than in a school environment.

In addition, Nueva's jurisdiction was legally limited then as it is now. On June 23, 2021, by ruling in favor of a student who criticized her school on Snapchat in Mahanoy School District v. B.L., the Supreme Court established a precedent for granting First Amendment rights to students who participated in school-related online harassment while not at school.

*"Restorative practices, at their core, are about strengthening individual and community relationships to create a sense of belonging and provide a system of communal accountability that sets the stage for repairing harm that may arise from student or educator behavior."*

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

Finally, many cases simply fly under the radar due to confidentiality, where, according to Barclay, offenses are subject to an investigation, conversations, and finally consequences, but most of the student body will remain unaware.

In these situations, especially online with no witnesses and a lack of obvious concrete, restorative actions, students have to understand the importance of "community and complicity," Barclay said.

"We're always complicit if we choose to not respond to this language or this behavior," Barclay said. "I know for a fact that there were people who knew who was responsible in all those cases. But nobody was willing to step forward."

Barclay believes that the community would benefit from a greater awareness of complicity and collective responsibility as a proactive measure against hate speech. She also acknowledged that reconciling complicity and accountability with the forgiveness essential to restorative justice is difficult.

"In the work I do, you have to be able to hold multiple truths," Barclay said. "It's a practice, it's learning to give grace to people. It's recognizing that transformation is possible."



## Are past Western actions also to blame for the Ukraine Russia crisis?

Students and faculty weigh in on whether Putin is purely doing a power grab or responding to Russian security threats

STORY ANOUSCHKA BECHTOLSHEIM  
PHOTO REUTERS

Tensions crackle between Washington and Moscow as Biden and Putin hurl barbed remarks at each other, with Biden recently calling Putin “a dictator bent on rebuilding an empire” while Putin insists that the U.S. threatens Russian security and has been conspiring to remove him from power for years. But behind the leaders’ hostility lies a greater question that has been debated in Nueva classrooms and newspapers alike: are Putin’s actions in Ukraine purely an aggressive power grab, or are the West’s past actions also at fault?

Putin has justified his invasion with the latter point of view. “Are we deploying missiles near the U.S. border? No, we are not,” he said in December 2021 at his annual news conference. “It is the United States that has come to our home with its missiles and is already standing at our doorstep.”

Following October 2021 remarks that Europe and the U.S. “never responded” to Russian worries about missiles, Russia has now forced dialogue on the subject with their ultimatum to NATO and aggression toward Ukraine. Whether Putin’s requests are genuine or performative, though, remains up in the air for students and teachers.

“Putin is finding arguments that can be used to justify a war of aggression,” said history and debate teacher Sam Timinski. “These are arguments of convenience.”

Timinski notes NATO’s stance as a “defensive alliance, whose purpose is to protect our members,” as they explicitly state on their website. Following Putin’s 2008 invasion of Georgia, Putin annexed Crimea in 2014, having previously said that “we must start working on returning Crimea to Russia” in a meeting with security chiefs discussing the former Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovich. In response, NATO suspended practical cooperation with Russia and, for the first time, deployed Allied troops to the Baltic States and Poland (NATO.int). NATO also says they gave Russia an unprecedented invitation to cooperate on missile defense—one of Russia’s core claims of security threat—but, in 2013, Russia “refused to cooperate and rejected dialogue on this issue” (NATO.int).

While Pascal Descollonges ’22, who is deeply interested in U.S. foreign policy and often discusses international relations with his friends, agrees that Putin’s statement is “a justification for an invasion and geopolitical

goals,” he also points out that Putin’s claim of a security threat has merit.

“If Russia was setting up missiles in Cuba or Mexico, we would obviously react fairly aggressively to that—in fact we have in the past,” he said, referencing the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, where the U.S. encircled Cuba with a naval blockade and demanded the Soviet Union remove existing missiles in Cuba and destroy the nuclear missile sites they were building there. In 2001, the U.S. pulled out of the 1972 Anti Ballistic Missile treaty signed with Russia to build a system against potential Iranian missiles. NATO now has military bases in Poland—100 miles from Russian territory, and barely 800 miles from Moscow itself—and Romania, which NATO declared are defensive and intended to help defend Europe and the U.S. from missiles fired by rogue states such as Iran. However, according to the New York Times, Russia worries that the MK 41s missile launchers present on the bases could be repurposed to fire offensive missiles to Russia or used to shoot down Russian ballistic missiles, which could undermine the mutually assured destruction deterring a nuclear war between Russia and the U.S. (According to Bloomberg, though, the U.S. recently informed the Kremlin they were willing to discuss transparency for Russia to verify there aren’t offensive Tomahawk cruise missiles stationed at those bases).

Other actions in U.S. and Russian history also support genuine Russian fears, says Sarah Willrich ’22, who researched the crisis and wrote a policy memorandum on the U.S. response in her International Relations class. Willrich points to the history of proxy wars between the U.S. and Russia as well as numerous U.S. interventions in Latin America aimed at regime change and promoting American business interests.

“The U.S. did basically whatever it had to do to keep itself secure,” Willrich said. “I don’t think anyone should be surprised that Russia is acting the same way.”

The U.S. also intervened in countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan for the purposes of regime change and eliminating potential weapons of mass destruction.

“Putin is not wrong to say the U.S. claims it ought to be able to invade places like Iraq and

Afghanistan—which are 10,000 miles from where they are—but we aren’t allowed any sphere of influence at all. What’s up with that?” said U.S. Government and debate teacher Leslie Phillips.

Riyana Srihari ’23, who has researched NATO policies as part of debate, sees certain past NATO actions as overstepping Russian security concerns.

“I think that NATO intervention in countries like Yugoslavia are examples of the U.S. going a little bit too far in that region,” she said, referencing the 1999 bombing of Yugoslavia where NATO carried out air strikes in response to Yugoslavia’s ethnic cleansing of Albanians, citing a humanitarian intervention (both Russia and China indicated that they would veto such action on the UN Security Council). For her, Western expansion is “definitely directly responsible for” the increase in tensions—and Ukrainian liberalism only adds fuel to the fire.

“It isn’t feasible to imagine that there’s a world in which Ukraine could have the right to self

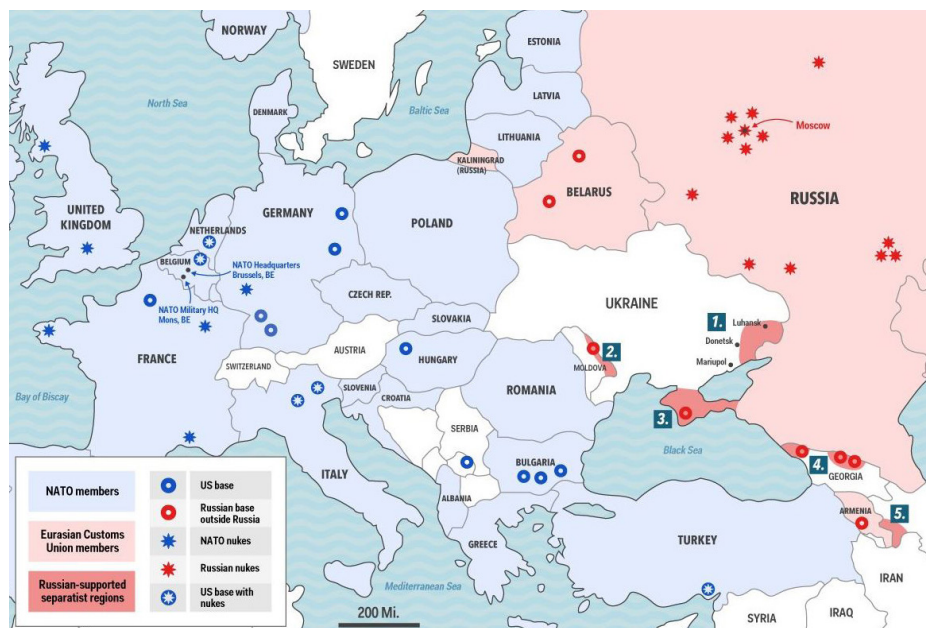
determination because there are too many big actors using it as grounds for a proxy war,” Srihari said.

Yet, as Timinski argues, large powers seeking to assert influence doesn’t have to mean abandoning a democratic Ukraine.

“I am not of the opinion that one country should be dictating what another country gets to do in terms of what it likes,” Timinski said. “I think if the U.S. or NATO completely abandons Ukraine, then Putin gets the message that he can run roughshod over whoever he feels like.”

Regardless of seeing Western policy at fault or not, all agree that it doesn’t justify Russia’s invasion.

“[Russia is] positioning this as an attempt to create a greater Russia rather than acknowledging that it is, at its essence, killing civilians,” Srihari said. “Regardless of U.S. imperialism and the spread of U.S. hegemony in that region that was really threatening to Russia’s sovereignty, any militarism from Russia is inexcusable.”





## GUEST WRITER

## Research shows scientific basis behind happiness

Dr. Melanie Rudd shares research and practices for increasing our happiness

**STORY** ELIANNA KONDYLLIS  
**PHOTO** JACQUELINE-MUNGUIA / UNSPLASH

**D**r. Melanie Rudd has a PhD in Marketing from the Stanford Graduate School of Business. She also has a BA in Business Administration (with a specialization in Marketing) from the Michael G. Foster School of Business at the University of Washington. Dr. Rudd's research interests include the study of temporal perceptions, affect (mood and emotions), well-being, prosocial behaviors, and goal pursuit. Her research has appeared in the Journal of Consumer Research, Journal of Marketing Research, Journal of Consumer Psychology, Psychological Science, Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, and the Journal of Retailing.

### In your research you have explored the connection between time perception and happiness. What have you learned from this research?

Before doing this research, I didn't really realize the extent to which our perception of time matters for our well-being. One thing I learned is that we tend to feel like we have less time than we actually do. So nowadays, especially in the US, we tend to feel busy, busy, busy. But when you track people's actual time use, it's often not much different than it hasn't been in decades past. So people are feeling increasingly pressed for time, but often they have more time than they think. So this means that we need to recalibrate how

we perceive time. It's OK to feel sometimes that we don't have time, but if we're feeling it all the time, that's not good. So if we can recalibrate our brains, we can find ways, tips or tricks, to make us feel like we have more time available.

### What are some tips and tricks that would make someone feel happy even when they're feeling pressed for time?

One tip is to seek opportunities to spend time with art and music and nature because those are great for experiencing awe, that makes us lose track of time. Some of my research has [also] shown that when you engage in slow and deep breathing, as opposed to fast and shallow breathing, you can actually expand your perception of time. And it's another great way of bringing your mind into the present moment and really focusing you on the present. Another tip that might seem actually counterintuitive, but research has shown that is helpful, is to actually give time away to other people. In this way, you can trick your brain into thinking that you must have ample time available.

### What can we learn from research about how we can be more happy?

There are some general tips that can be gleaned from scientific research. So one thing that tends to make people happy is to spend money on experiences instead of things. Experiences tend to give us a greater hedonic boost. One reason for this is that we often share an experience with other people and that can bring greater



happiness. We often are better able to get happiness from experiences because we tend to think about experiences more. You might still think about a vacation you took with your family 10 years ago and get joy from this memory even today.

Research has shown also that oftentimes the key to happiness is to feeling happy on a regular basis, a frequent basis, as opposed to feeling super happy every once in a while. So if you're giving yourself little frequent pleasures, for example, buying yourself a little treat every now and then, or doing something special more frequently, even if it's small, that can oftentimes lead to greater happiness overall, than we think.

### Do you have any advice for readers who might be going through some difficult moments right now?

I think one thing to always remember is that we are constantly changing and our emotions change along [with us] too. Research shows that we have a lot of control

over our own emotions and our own minds. And when we're not feeling good, we can engage in emotion management. So if we're in a bad state, we can engage in behaviors and do things that can boost our mood. If we're in a good mood, we can do things to keep us in a good mood. But it's also important to remember that sometimes it's important to experience negative emotions. It can be healthy to experience some sadness or some fear or disgust every now and then.

Remember that spending time with other people, especially close friends and family, is very important for our happiness. Finding the things that bring you joy often helps, too. I always recommend creating a little checklist. If I'm ever feeling down, I always go through my checklist. Have I tried all these things yet? These things are easily accessible in my environment that I can do any time, whether it's playing with my dog or having a little snack. If I've gone through my checklist and I've done all of these things that I know bring me joy and I'm still not feeling joy, then I might reach out to seek professional help in that way.

## Quest Expo returns in-person, with changes

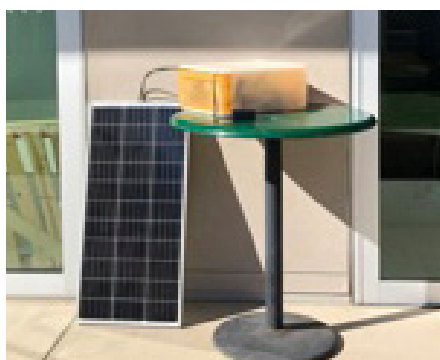
A sneak peek into Quest Expo 2022

**STORY** ZARA MIRZA  
**PHOTOS** AANYA DHRUV, CARLY BODNICK, ELI SMIRIN

**E**ach year, students choose a topic they are passionate about and dive deeper into it through a project known as "Quest." Projects range from making guitars to learning how an engine works, writing a novel, charting hikes around the Bay Area, and even making an animatronic face.

The main goal of Quest, which takes place from September to April, is to overcome a challenge and to prioritize the learning process over the outcome. It allows opportunities for students to fail, grow, and learn.

Per the Nueva spirit of trying something new, many students choose to experiment with a new area for their Quests. Here are four projects to look forward to seeing at the Quest Expo, which takes place on Wednesday, April 13.



### Aanya Dhruv: Solar-powered phone charger

For Aanya Dhruv '25, climate change has long been a passion. So for her Quest project this year, she decided to create a solar-powered phone charger. Although Dhruv did not know an extensive amount about solar panels, she did not let that stop her Quest.

"I didn't really have connections in the science or renewable energy field," Dhruv said, reflecting on the early weeks of her project. "The specific memories I have from mentorship conversations [are] how to navigate such a broad field. That was very helpful, especially because... a mentor [is needed] in [my Quest] because it's such a broad field."

Quest allowed Dhruv to explore and learn about prototyping, as she did not have many opportunities to do so at her previous school.

Despite completing her goal for this Quest, Dhruv encountered obstacles throughout her work. Dhruv had trouble soldering the wires together, in addition to assembling the portable solar panel charger in general.

Dhruv said, "it has been frustrating when things don't work...but the setbacks were helpful for me to learn different things from it and get past that obstacle."

Her next steps are to create a solar-powered computer charger for the school to be able to access.



### Carly Bodnick: Explorations in art

Carly Bodnick '25 chose to do explorations in art, which included crocheting, laser cutting, and embroidering. Bodnick was able to crochet an entire blanket and lasercut a wooden scrapbook.

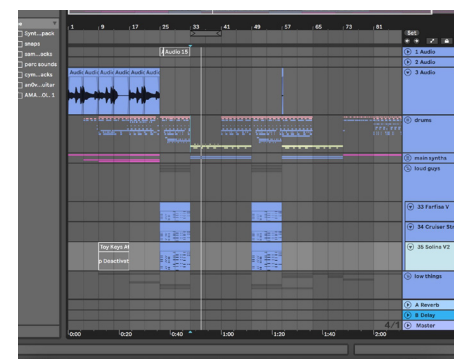
Bodnick enjoyed the freedom she was given in Quest, which allowed her to explore as many topics in explorations of art and discover which she enjoyed.

"I feel like I have a much better understanding of [the] types of crafts that I'm interested in. I don't like embroidery, and I'm still not exactly sure about sewing yet," Bodnick said.

A challenge she faced while working on Quest was time management. Bodnick said, "I did not realize how quick the school year was gonna fly by, and how much work I'd be doing...[I] did not realize how little time I was gonna have."

"I feel like I've been trying a lot of stuff. And the stuff that I really like I want to do more after Quest," remarks Bodnick, who plans on continuing her Quest after Expo.

"I emailed an interior designer about questions about this chair I was making, and she had very good feedback," Bodnick said. "I still need to finish that chair."



### Eli Smirin: Music Production

Eli Smirin '22 has had a blossoming love for music production. Jumping into music production in eighth grade, he has since experimented in songwriting, playing instruments, and song-creating.

For Quest, Smirin had the awe-inspiring goal to release an album and to continue song-writing.

"I wanted to create a project that I'm proud of that's more than just showcasing my skills...so I wanted to just challenge myself to do that," he said, revealing the emphasis Quest has on doing something for (your) enjoyment.

Smirin learned more about technical skills and organization through his Quest. "[Quest is] more like a lesson in how prepared and organized you need to be," Smirin expresses.

One challenge he encountered included doing the vocals on his songs. Smirin said, "I make songs that I really love and they would sound really cool with people singing on them and I really want to be the one to sing on them...I can make good songs but I can't sing and that's kind of frustrating."

He did not hesitate to try singing out although it proved to be a roadblock for him. "It sounds bad at first, but the more you do it the more confident you get."

Smirin reflected on the significance of Quest, saying that "it's just a reminder of how dedicated and how much time you need to put into something to get really good at it."



## 16 OPINION

## Autism awareness month needs to be reframed

Instead of #lightitupblue, we need to change how we view autism

STORY GRACE FINKE  
ILLUSTRATION GRACE FINKE

Every April, Autism Speaks—the largest Autism research organization in the US—celebrates Autism Awareness Month. This organization promotes the slogan #lightitupblue, as they have coined blue as the “autism color,” and fills the month with rainbow puzzle piece-shaped motifs—another “autistic” thing that has been coined by Autism Speaks—galore.

As nice as this attention to autism is, Autism Speaks is widely regarded as an autism hate group. Their ultimate goal is to “end autism”—which is a palatable way of defining eugenics as a solution for decreasing the autistic population. In addition, autistic people are simply used as the pawns of their mission, as Autism Speaks is simply helping the caretakers of those with autism instead of us. This organization is incredibly harmful to the autistic community, and the intentions surrounding this month need to be reframed to accept autistic people for who we are rather than simply being aware that we exist.

The original video that gave this organization traction was titled “I am autism,” released in 2009. This video harvests fear as it paints autism as a menacing disease, almost in a monstrous tone. The video contributed to the stereotyping and profiling that autistic people, such as myself, face every day.

I didn’t receive a diagnosis with Autism Spectrum Disorder until I was 17. Being assigned female at birth,

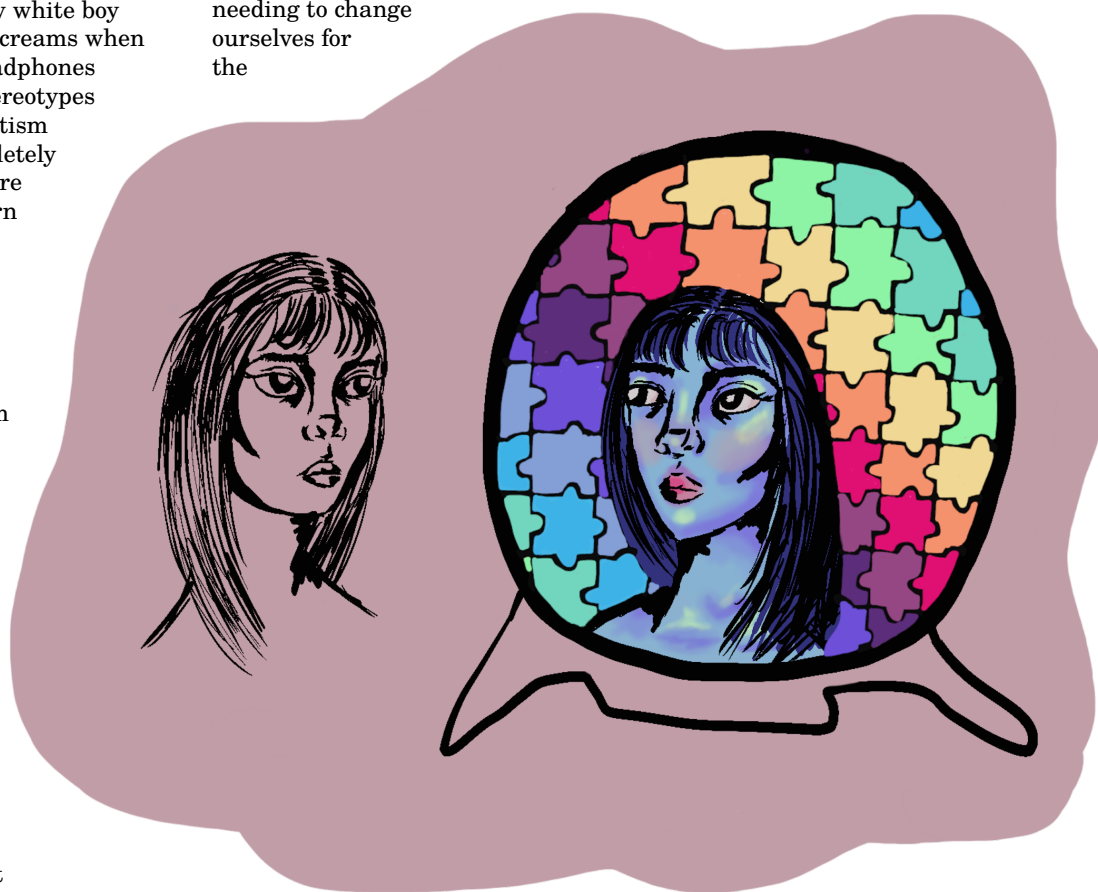
as well as being able to function in a classroom, led numerous doctors and therapists to believe that I was socially stunted but would grow into my behaviors. Part of why I received such a late diagnosis was because the original research of autism was conducted on white males; scant research has been focused on women.

In popular culture, autism is stereotyped as a quirky white boy who has no filter and screams when his noise-canceling headphones are removed. These stereotypes cause the notion of “autism awareness” to be completely skewed; assumptions are made when people learn about my diagnosis, and I feel a sort of dehumanization based on the perpetuation of stereotypes provided by organizations like Autism Speaks. Autism Speaks dehumanizes us, as they amplify attention on our “caretakers,” those who are burdened to be around us, without acknowledging the feat it takes for an autistic person to make it through their day.

The fact is, “awareness” is the wrong word to use. Everyone is aware that

we exist in some capacity, whether through stereotypes or personal experiences. However, the roots of autism awareness month simply take away the meaning and make our experiences feel invalidated. What the world really needs to focus on is acceptance for who we are as we are, rather than pitying us or trying to cure us. Rather than needing to change ourselves for the

world, the world needs to create a more accepting space for us and acknowledge the neurological differences simply as just a part of our being and not our entire identity.



## We need to talk The small but scary issues of a girl on her own

STORY AMIYA MINHAS  
ILLUSTRATION NAOMI ELLIOTT

Last week, a stranger spoke to me at the Caltrain station, and I felt uneasy.

He was loud. He approached me on a bike, and he didn’t leave me alone even when I ignored him and walked faster. He asked me if I had earbuds in, and I gave him the same look I’d give a wall. He asked me if I was taking the next train and I shrugged. Through my body language, I communicated that I was not comfortable with this conversation and that I wanted to be left alone, but he persisted in speaking to me. When finally he left, I felt relieved that I could keep my eyes down and mingle among strangers, clinging on to safety in numbers.

Later, I saw him talking to someone else at the other end of the station, and I wondered if I had misjudged another human being. Maybe he had innocuous reasons for striking up a conversation, but society has taught me that I should be on alert if a man I don’t know talks to me in a public setting.

This fear haunts me at the back of my mind, an anxiety surfacing when I’m the only girl at the train station or there is a news report of yet another incident of sexual assault. I was

compelled to take a self-defense class over the summer and talked to other women who actually had experienced what I was afraid of. The instructor for the class told us one in three women will be assaulted once in her life.

What really terrifies me are the stories I hear of how women are treated after they have been assaulted. What terrifies me is that there are people who would blame a victim because of her clothing or behavior. Even well-

intentioned people may contribute to the stigma by fueling rumors, being internet trolls, and participating in victim-blaming that only cause further harm to the victim.

Some might consider me paranoid or overcautious. To me, however, I can never be too careful.

We need to talk more. I know logically, I can’t be the only person worried about it, but it often feels like it. There are books that speak about the

troubles of being a girl on the shelves of bookstores. But are people really talking? Do people ever talk about the small things that contribute to how unsafe I feel because I’m a girl? It’s easy to speak of problems outside of near proximity, tragedies that happen to strangers and events that make terrifying headlines, but do we ever talk about the ones that are faced every day?

We need to talk.







## The power of poetry

STORY ISABELLE SHI  
ILLUSTRATION GRACE FINKE

As juniors grapple with America's fraught history through modernist poetry and sophomores venture into ecopoetry and humanity's entanglement with nature, I appreciate the incorporation of poetry into our English curriculum and how we are able to engage in the world through poetry.

Poetry has always given voice to both our celebrations and losses—reflecting traces of the happiness, sadness, fear, and beauty of the world. Reading the poems of Claude McKay and Langston Hughes as part of the eleventh-grade English modernism unit taught us about the art and culture of the Harlem Renaissance while simultaneously learning about its politics in history classes. E.E. Cummings proved to us the innovative power of the English language. Through rhythm, structure, and their innovative use of language and diction, poets upset convention; they reveal the beauty and potential of the English language that sets poetry apart from the other commonly taught forms of literature.

However, what is taught in poetry—and much of literature in general—is often over-taught, and thus, under-taught. Instead of becoming complacent in our curriculums and not just stopping at some of the classics and beating the lines out of Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken" or Emily Dickinson's "Hope' is the thing with feathers," I appreciate the English teachers constantly prompting us to peel into the many layers of poetry through reading, teaching our peers, and writing our own poetry. While classics are important to teach, I appreciate our curriculum's questioning around why they are taught.

This April is the 26th anniversary of National Poetry Month, and it arrives in the midst of hardships, including a pandemic and war. Whether it's eco-conscious poetry celebrating the beauty of nature while examining human's impact on climate change or Harlem Renaissance classics uplifting black culture from the deeply embedded racism in the country's history, exposure to poetry is critical in learning and interrogating the world around us; at least for me, poetry may many times be the greatest solace.

## The 'Don't Say Gay' bill will endanger the LGBTQ+ community and create a new generation of ignorance

Not only will this legislation harm the queer youth in Florida, but it will foster more homophobia and ignorance that queer people are already fighting

STORY GRACE FINKE  
PHOTO NBC NEWS

Florida has somewhat of a convoluted reputation, to say the least. Search the words "Florida Man" on Google, and thousands of headlines of seemingly improbable laws that were broken by male residents of this state will immediately appear. However, more than just being chaotic, the politics in this state have been harmful, and one of its newest bills is outright homophobic and goes past the hilarity of this state.

On March 9, the Florida Senate passed a bill dubbed "Don't say Gay," dictating how education (or, in this case, lack thereof) about LGBTQ+ families and identities would be suppressed in public institutions in this state. Though Republican governor Ron Desantis has yet to sign this, he has shown active support of this bill and what it stands for. Not only will this bill corrupt and create more ignorance around different identities in the younger generation, but this also puts the personal safety of LGBTQ+ people at risk.

This bill will ban "classroom discussion about sexual orientation or gender identity" in Florida classrooms, and will also mandate that if a teacher sees "signs" of a student having a queer identity—whether confirmed or not—the teacher will need to out the student to their parents.

This bill harms the queer youth in Florida by harvesting a new wave of ignorance, hurting the queer community at large. The longer that education about queer people and our identities is omitted, the more alien we become to those being educated. The absence of accurate education about queer identities will simply alter the tolerance of the youth of Florida around queer identities, instead of directly affecting their knowledge, as LGBTQ+ rights and identities have now become such a normal and well-known part of everyday life. The fact is, this bill won't prevent youth in Florida from knowing about queer identities, but will create a new generation of those who believe that our lives are alien or wrong, putting us at risk.

Coming out is a personal journey that should belong solely to the individual. At schools where families are in support of this bill, closeted queer students may feel uncomfortable coming out to their parents for their own safety, yet the bill's mandates will automatically put their safety at risk, violating their right to come out on their own terms. My heart goes out to the queer youth in Florida who are still on their journeys to expressing their true selves, as internally accepting our queer identities is a feat in itself. To have that journey disrupted by a corrupt education system, as well as to have their personal safety violated, will immensely harm and create potential trauma for those who are learning to accept their own identities.

Growing up, I myself didn't an

abundance of education around queer identities until starting at an independent middle school which covered LGBTQ+ identities and education as a part of the SEL curriculum. Though I grew up in a family which had always supported this community, the opinions of my elementary school peers shaped the way I viewed queer identities, leading to years of self-denial and invalidation of my own identity. I am, at the age of 17, only now starting to be comfortable expressing my identity.

The fact that children as young as elementary school will not only be forced to "figure it out" sooner, but will also be ostracized by the ignorance of peers hurts my heart and angers me. Ignorance at times can turn into hatred, and raising a new generation of those who are unaware of our lives can lead to a generation of those who, out of fear or hatred, will violate our own senses of safety. The politicization of LGBTQ+ rights in itself is dangerous to those of us in the community, and the fact that powers such as Governor Desantis can use their own political and personal convictions to dictate the safety of the lives of a significant population of the United States is truly terrifying. I stand in solidarity with the queer youth of Florida, and I can only hope that those who are affected by the horrible legislation can find safety and security in their own identities, as well as the identities of those around them.



**CORRECTIONS** The Nueva Current welcomes comments and suggestions. We seek to publish corrections and clarifications in the subsequent issue. Please email any corrections to [thenuevacurrent@nuevaschool.org](mailto:thenuevacurrent@nuevaschool.org).

Corrections: Issue 4, published Feb. 18, 2022: On the top of pg. 1, in "Amy Coney Barrett shouldn't rule on the Roe v. Wade repeal," Barrett was misspelled. On pg. 8, in "Newly-hired full-time counselor brings a wealth of experience," Jacobstein was misspelled. On the same page, "front" is misspelled. On pg. 9, in "It's not rocket science...oh wait, it is," Ramanathan is misspelled. On pg. 13, in "A gateway to interdisciplinary adventure," Huynh is misspelled. On pg. 17, in "Crossword Puzzle," the "Down" and "Across" column headers were switched. On the same page, the answer to Down 34 should be "ornery" not "onery." On pg. 19, in "Winning as one," "Girls soccer sprints into CCS season," "Gotta get your head in the game," and "The community of the boys soccer team: how teamwork bolsters victory," photographer Diane Mazzoni was not credited for the accompanying photos.



Should we be proud of the state we call home?

## STUDENT STANDOFF

### Why I'm proud of California

Despite rising discontentment with the Golden state, we continue to innovate and grow.

STORY ROAN WANEK  
PHOTO VIATOR

California is often sneered at or resented by people who think its inhabitants are easygoing west-coasters. And lately, there are things to complain about. The state has gained a reputation for rising crime rates, rampant homelessness, high taxes, and lowering job rates. Nevertheless, I'm proud of California, and I think you should be too.

This great state is made up of National and State Parks, lakes, reservoirs, redwood forests, and beaches framing the Pacific Ocean. This environment still exists because California is a leader in environmental initiatives. Headlines blame the exodus of people and businesses on taxes, yet this phenomenon is not entirely the result of taxation—rather regulations. These regulations primarily enforce harmful emissions, preventing an increase in levels of pollution and forcing businesses to innovate more carbon neutral solutions. If these companies don't want to be here because we're stopping them from destroying our environment and polluting our air, maybe they shouldn't be here to begin with. California has historically been a leader in environmental initiatives that are adopted domestically and internationally, and we are leaders in the field of climate protection.

Not only are Californians leaders in environmental work, but we're also innovators too. Look around at all the innovations that have come from this amazing state! Tesla, founded in San Carlos, Google in Menlo Park, and YouTube in San Mateo. Without the center of invention in Silicon Valley, the world would likely not be the same. And why are we such amazing innovators? Because we are made up of a very diverse community with different experiences, different cultural backgrounds and different educations. California census data from 2020 shared that 26.6 percent of people in the state are not from the United States, making it the state with the

largest non-native population. People come because they love the weather, the diversity and the great and vast opportunities that exceed that of any other state in our country.

I can't stop without addressing the two biggest complaints about California, taxes and the cost of housing. People like to talk about California having a high state income rate. We actually have some of the lowest state tax brackets for the low and lower middle class. According to [taxfoundation.org](http://taxfoundation.org), the lowest state tax bracket in California is just 1 percent, as opposed to Idaho's lowest tax bracket of 1.12 percent. In fact, someone being taxed at a rate of 6.92 percent making \$8,500 a year in Idaho would only be paying 2 percent state income tax in California. We make it easier, from a tax perspective, for working class people to live here.

The cost of housing, however, is California's big downfall. We don't have enough multi-family housing and what we do have costs too much. According to the California Budget and Policy Center, "[In 2015] more than 1 in 5 households statewide faced severe housing cost burdens, spending more than half of their income toward housing expenses." The problem has only gotten worse. We cannot deny this issue for us Californians, but we can celebrate what we are doing about it. We are working to change things through our policy and non-profit work. Just one example is the signing of SB8, 9, and 10 by Governor Newsom last September. These new laws will lead to "over 84,000 new housing units and exits from homelessness, including [an] announcement of \$1.75 billion in affordable housing funding," per the Office of Governor Newsom. These are the things we can celebrate, but it is critical that we pursue all possible options to ensure we can continue to make this a great state for everyone.

Whether it be sourdough bread or electrical power transmission, blue jeans or the Walt Disney Company, California is a place of firsts, a place where we show the rest of the nation what can be done. It is the center of diversity, innovation, and the war against climate change in the United States. California is definitely a place I'm proud to live in and to be a part of, and definitely a place that should not be disregarded. California is a place where anything is possible.



SAN FRANCISCO CITY HALL

Sanctioned homeless encampment outside of San Francisco city hall (2020)

## California—a failed State?

The once golden state we call home has been stained with the epic failures of "progressive" policy.

STORY SAM ZUKIN  
PHOTO CNN

For the first time in its history, California will lose a congressional seat. This comes after a decade-long trend of slow population growth further fueled by the recent accelerated exodus from the state. The list of mostly self-inflicted issues causing Californians to jump ship is extensive, including three issues that affect my life, and likely your lives as well: COVID-19, crime, homelessness, and affordability.

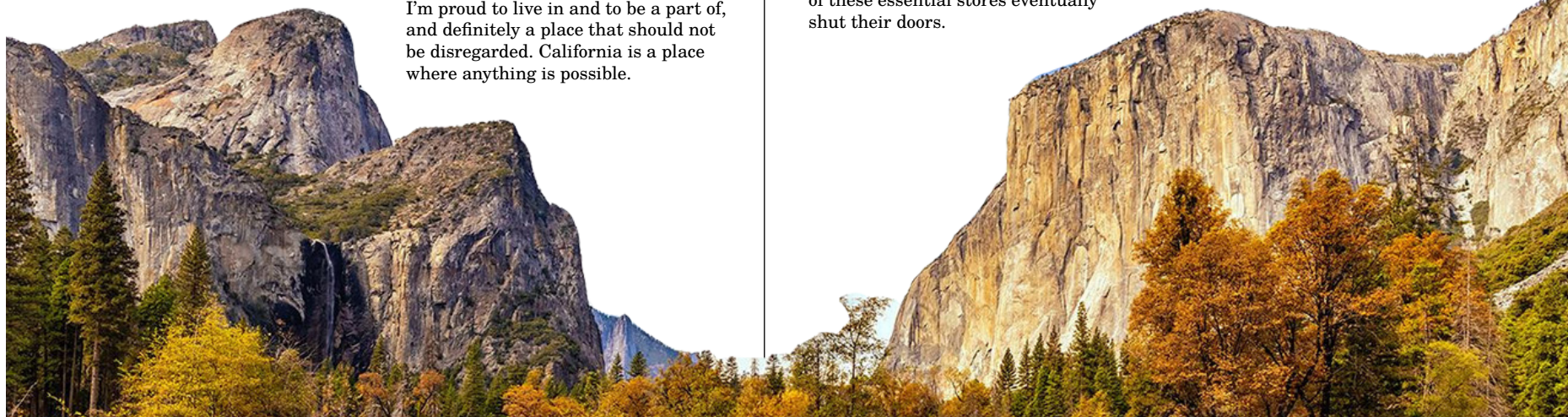
I was especially disappointed with California's COVID-19 response. California imposed draconian measures such as excessive lockdowns (later deemed ineffective by a Johns Hopkins study) and never-ending mask mandates to curb the spread of the virus. States such as Florida that took a less restrictive approach, despite its elderly population, fared similarly to California in terms of deaths per capita, but the economy and quality of life for their citizens differed greatly. What upsets me about California's response is the hypocrisy of the officials who implemented these harsh policies—while we were all forced to stay at home, Governor Gavin Newsom was partying maskless with lobbyists at one of California's finest Michelin star restaurants, further highlighting the juxtaposition between the government's hypocrisy and the residents' personal lives.

Whenever I visit San Francisco it's a bittersweet experience—I love the beauty and liveliness of the city, yet I can't help but notice how, over the years, San Francisco has been severely depressed. Crime and homelessness exacerbated through ineffective policy now characterize California cities and soon will begin to further penetrate the suburbs. Broken car windows are now expected sights in San Francisco and watching viral videos of stores such as Walgreens being looted by masked and hooded individuals, while store employees stand by helplessly, is all too common. This trend stems from progressive policy initiatives set up by politicians such as SF district attorney Chesa Boudin who wants to decriminalize lower-level offenses. One such initiative set a threshold of \$950 for shoplifting to be considered a misdemeanor, which doesn't prompt law enforcement to make an arrest. Instead of helping achieve their goal of lower incarceration rates, San Francisco is ravaged by organized crime syndicates profiting millions off of stolen goods, all to the detriment of San Franciscans as many of these essential stores eventually shut their doors.

Arguably the greatest failure of the California government has been solving its ever-worsening homelessness crisis. According to Stanford's Hoover Institution, San Francisco spends \$852 million annually on tackling homelessness, or over \$106K per homeless individual. According to ABC News, Los Angeles is even worse, spending up to \$837K to house one single individual (\$1.2B total). To put this into perspective, Sacramento's entire annual city budget for 2020-21 was just \$650 million. Despite all this spending, well-meaning progressive efforts, such as decriminalizing homelessness, and safe injection sites for addicts, homelessness, drug abuse, and untreated mental illness remain rampant.

While all these issues may increase the difficulty of living in California, the biggest driver of the exodus from our state is affordability. Due to regulation and taxes, housing, goods, insurance, utilities, and groceries cost more in California than in most states. For example, because of the housing crisis exacerbated by arduous regulations, California has the third-highest median home price in the U.S., and according to Forbes, one would need to work 107 or 112 hours a month (in a median paying job) to pay off mortgages in SF and LA respectively. In Milwaukee, it's 26 hours. This crisis can be solved through a decrease in regulation and an increase in spending on affordable housing projects, reported McKinsey & Co. While Newsom entered office with a Democratic supermajority and a budget surplus, almost all of his efforts surrounding housing have been focused on the homeless instead of tackling the root causes of the affordable housing shortage—cutting red tape and allowing the free market to match demand.

While I love my state's diversity, culture, and beauty, California's policies are unsustainable. They drive away businesses and middle-income individuals who make up the backbone of any society—teachers, healthcare workers, first responders and other essential workers. Unless California changes its course, people and businesses will continue to leave the state for better opportunities elsewhere, decreasing the quality of life for those who remain. What California needs is more diversity of opinion in government—a check on failed policy; more dissenting voices in Sacramento, ending one-party rule, and fueling future bipartisanship. Together we can ensure a bright future for our golden state, one of accountability, cooperation, sustainability, and progress.





EDITORIAL

Remaining unbiased in the face of polarization

STORY THE NUEVA CURRENT STAFF

Recent events, both inside our Nueva community and outside of it, have left many of us shaken and reprocessing history. Recurring incidents of hate speech have left a mark on our community. We endeavored to explore both the impact it had on Jewish students and faculty, as well as transparently detail the disciplinary process for our community to see.

In this issue, we tried to tread the line between sharing our own thoughts and experiences and

reporting in an objective, unbiased manner that captured the varied voices of our faculty and student body. But as this incident personally affected some members of *The Nueva Current* staff, we also felt we had the responsibility to share honest student reflections, opinions, and perspectives on the matter.

With Russia's invasion of Ukraine, we sought to portray varied aspects of the crisis, its backstory, and its meaning for international relations, with a focus on unpacking student

and faculty reflections and reactions. We wanted to paint a picture of how the crisis has both directly affected certain members of our community and shaped students' academic experiences.

We hope that through our paper and what we write, we can both inform and bring together a community where healthy discourse can occur. Whether or not we felt affected by what happened, we still hope that writing about these topics can help our beloved community grow past incidents and truly focus on accountability.



GUEST OP-ED

It's Time to Scrap Wednesdays of Wonder

Pre-COVID, Nueva's weeks worked on an easy, predictable schedule. We still had our A days and B days (with their equivalent prime days), but we also had a fifth day that was, almost always, full of normal classes. Fridays would either be an A or B day, which would rotate each week. Every day's learning was maximised, and if any week missed a day, it was no problem: we could just revert to the four-day schedule. But now, Nueva students have to spend their Wednesday afternoons sitting in either a poorly-attended, quickly hacked together Wednesday of Wonder, or worse, sitting listlessly in a study hall. Why has the administration chosen such an unproductive, time consuming, and often flat-out boring use for our time?

The current Wednesday of Wonder/study hall system currently suits no one's needs. Students who are excited and engaged in the fantastic classes

Nueva teachers provide miss out on a minimum of three hours of instruction: what they gain in a two-hour long block they lose in the minimum of four class days taken up by WoWs. Teachers have to scramble to create new, two-hour lessons on top of the classes they're already running. Meanwhile, the admin has to spend its time sending out reminder after reminder to sign up for the WoWs, betraying their underlying truth: no one actually wants to go to them. Indeed, WoWs are chronically under-attended, and the system of implementing a study hall does little to help matters: students who want to use the time to work will skip their WoW anyway, and those who don't now have to spend half of their Wednesday afternoons doing nothing.

So what was wrong with the old schedule? Some bring up the eight block days, a dreaded combination of every class slotted in one after another that was both overwhelming and unproductive. But those only occurred

STORY CALLISTO LODWICK

when there was an isolated five-day week among four-dayers, which were few and far between. This semester, we only have three five-day weeks that aren't back to back: one used its spare day for MLK sessions back in January, and the others will host trip prep and culmination. Therefore, had we used the old five-day schedule this spring, we wouldn't have had any eight-block days at all.

In the face of this stagnating WoW system, why haven't the admin thought to change things up? Switching back to the old system would give teachers more time to focus on creating interesting and exciting classes in the areas that they teach, and would keep students focused and engaged a full five days a week. Nueva is proud of cultivating a passionate community that loves to learn and explore. Why shouldn't they spend their time in the classes they love so much?



PERSONAL ESSAY

Struggling with forgiveness

The recent antisemitic hate speech left a long road to repair

STORY GRACE FINKE

As a Jewish member of the Nueva community, I was one of many who felt a personal impact from the incident of antisemitic hate speech that happened on March 9. Not only did I feel ashamed of my Jewish heritage and culture, but I also felt that my safety was at risk at the school I had come to see as a safe space. However, I didn't have a full understanding of the situation until finding out later that the student who did it was Jewish himself, and that the school is working to rebuild the beloved community.

Regardless, I still felt that the situation didn't receive the closure that it warranted. Though repentance is an important value in Judaism, the way in which the incident was later handled as well as the aftermath hasn't sat right with me. In order to truly rebuild as a community, we need to rethink the intentions behind these actions: this was not an isolated incident, and the way in which courage seemed to be championed over the hurt of those who suffered made me feel disrespected.

Hearing directly from the student, as well as other Jewish community members, in the intimate space of the affinity group was healing yet harmful. Forgiveness is something that I value in my life, as I have always believed that people truly can change for the better. I heard true remorse in the student's voice, and in the statement he wrote that was presented to the upper school student body, and I do believe that he knows the implications and will work to change for the better.

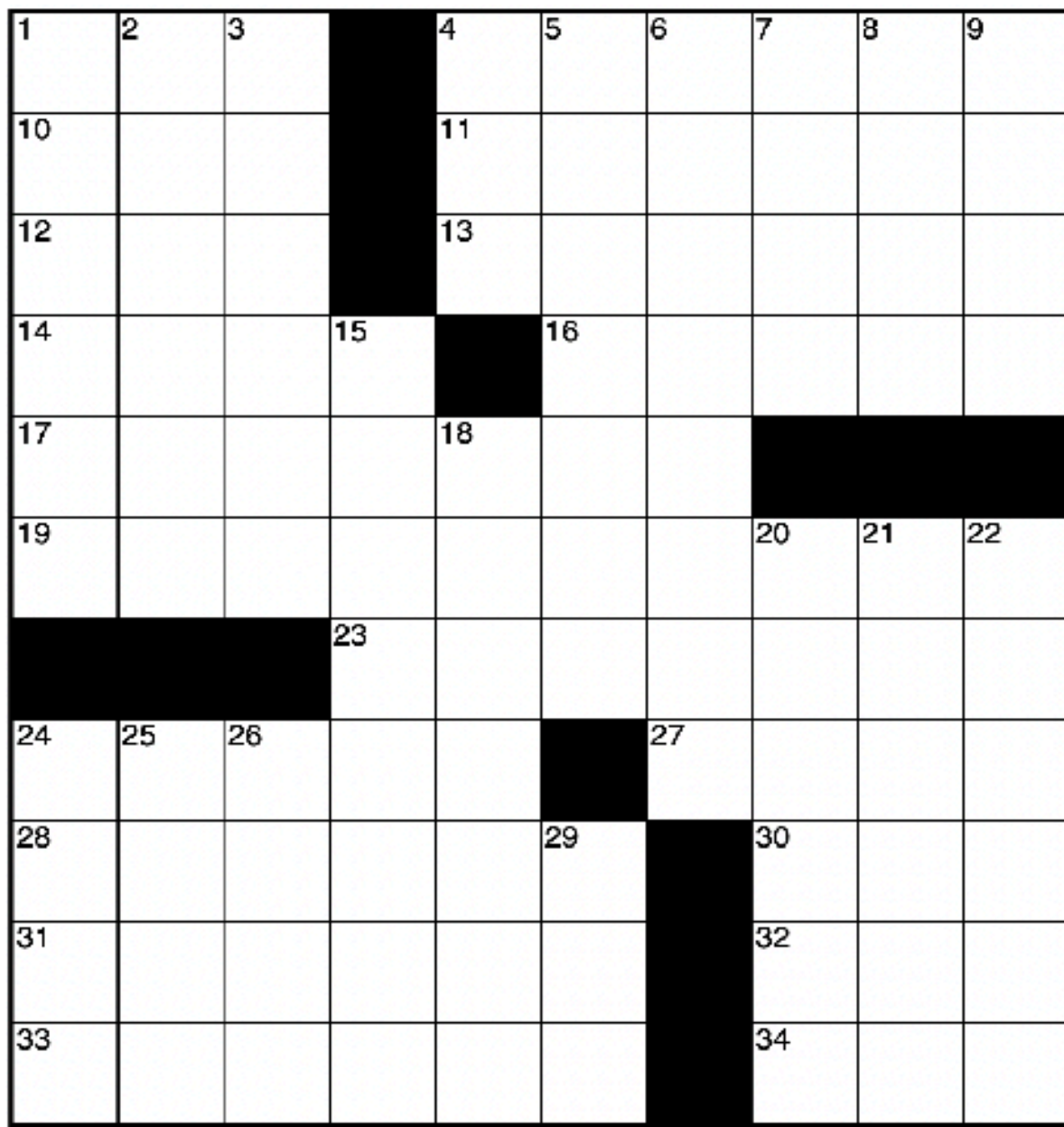
I do commend the student for coming forward and owning his mistake. However, the way in which the aftermath was handled by admin didn't sit right with me. I respect that the student was willing to take responsibility, but I still feel as though there wasn't enough closure. Hearing anecdotes that had been shared in confidence in the affinity group space in the student's public statement of apology, as well as attributing the incident to an inside joke, felt as if the responsibility was somewhat diverted, and taking time to appreciate the bravery of the student felt hypocritical.

Like I said, I believe in forgiveness and second chances, and I do think that this student will take the time to repent and reflect on the harm he caused. However, I still felt that the intentions behind this were hazy, and the incident caused monumental harm to the Jewish community that will stay with me for the rest of the school year. Though my safety no longer feels violated, I still don't know when I'll feel ready to forgive. I truly believe that each person involved can grow and change, and all I can hope is that this incident can be one of the last in the pattern of hate speech and antisemitism that has been perpetuated.



## Crossword Puzzle

BY CHARLIE DODD



### ACROSS

1. Sign of comfort
4. Game fought with spoons
10. Triumphant call in a card game
11. Strategy
12. Airport code near Disneyworld
13. Where some grade-wide trips might depart from
14. Quaint descriptor for age
16. Do better than
17. Grim and Jack
19. Sometimes predicted via groundhog
23. One side might read "shin"
24. Easter egg
27. Assc. known for the LHC
28. Part of the collective unconscious, according to Jung
30. BIO, PHYS, or CHEM in the course catalogue
31. In place of
32. Welsh lamb
33. Ketchup or hollandaise
34. To and \_

### DOWN

1. There are four, according to Ancient Greek philosophers
2. Release
3. Positive representation 4 Boy group with songs such as "DNA" and "Run"
5. Chief engineer under Picard
6. What some performances at the Coffeehouse might be
7. Branch of Palestinian government
8. Type of science unique to Nueva 9 8, prefix
15. COVID-19
18. On the way
20. Caesar's death date, with "March"
21. Obsolete word for cloth merchant
22. Illusive weather phenomena
24. Bilingual middle school in San Francisco
25. Karenin's wife
26. Korean drink made from grain powder
29. Characteristic of an imposter

## MASTHEAD

### THE NUEVA CURRENT

Student Newspaper of  
The Nueva School

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### THE NUEVA CURRENT

strives to provide informative and impactful articles for our community. Our issues cover stories related to our school, the Bay Area, California, and other relevant spheres. We are dedicated to helping readers understand the ways in which we can all make a difference in the world around us. The opinions expressed in The Nueva Current belong solely to the writers and are not a reflection or representation of the opinions of the school or administrators.

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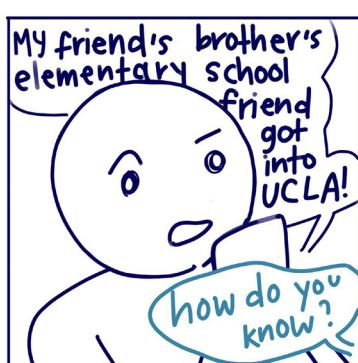
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## Comic

BY ANISHA KUMAR





## These *Euphoria* outfits outshine the rest

Here's what students have to say about their favorite *Euphoria* looks

STORY SERENA SAXENA  
PHOTOS HBO

**H**BO's *Euphoria* is everything in excess: a showcase of some of the best up and coming actors, a daring display of teenage years, sensory overload, swinging cameras, and a complex mosaic of emotions and characters. Called simultaneously a "cultural phenomenon" (*UMass Media*) and a "cultural mistake" (*Vogue*), the show attracts controversy. However, one thing most viewers can agree on is that the fashion speaks volumes—it's individualistic and enhances each specific storyline. Whether it's Jules's Y2K-inspired wardrobe, Cassie's girlish ensembles, or Rue's go-to shapeless looks, there is a diverse range of outfits across the two seasons. Here are some student favorites.



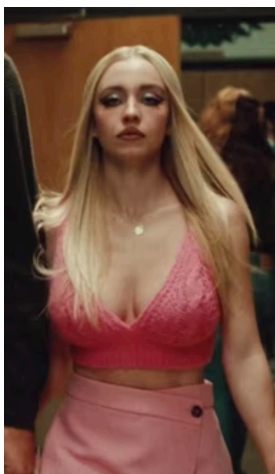
MEI MEI LOH '24

"My favorite *Euphoria* outfit is the matching purple set that Maddy wears at the carnival in season one. I love Maddy's style because she stays true to herself and doesn't dress for anyone else (unlike Cassie). Plus, I love the deep purple shade of this outfit, the cutouts, the flare pants, and Maddy's high ponytail."



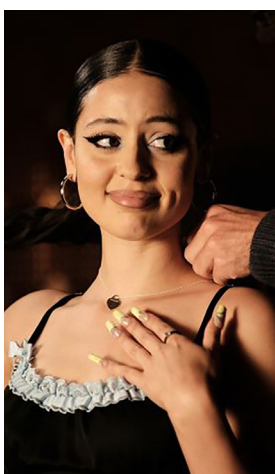
SOPHIA YIN '22

"I really like Lexi in anything Miu Miu because it makes so much sense for her character and also because it is school appropriate. The only thing is that the brand itself is so expensive."



MEGAN BRANSTAD '23

"I loved Cassie's full pink outfit from season two. I love the color pink and the monochromatic look, but I think the outfit was powerful because she was wearing it when walking with Nate and it just screamed Barbie Doll. It really fit her character because it was just all so plastic and forced perfection."



RILEY SZE '23

"My favorite outfit in season two is probably Maddie's birthday dress. I feel like it really contrasts her other outfits because it's so simple and shows how Maddie's power has shifted. She is finally the 'good guy' and is the innocent one in the Nate-Cassie-Maddie love triangle. Also it is just such a cute dress!"

## Who wore what: Spring Fling

Learn more about some of our favorite looks at the semiformal dance

STORY THE NUEVA CURRENT STAFF  
PHOTOS JOY FENG



EMMY LEE '25, LILLI GRAHAM '25

"I got my dress from Princess Polly. I actually originally bought it for the winter formal!" Graham said.



CARLY BODNICK '25

"I ordered the dress online. I really like it because it has a newsprint on it. My cousin convinced me to wear heels, which I changed out of five minutes into the dance," Bodnick said.

JULIET SOSTENA '23, LUCA LIT '23

"The dress is actually borrowed from my friend, but I was drawn to it because of how 'spring' it felt," Sostena said. "The color reminds me of lilacs, which matched the theme of 'flower explosion' perfectly."



ANJULI MISHRA '25,  
MARCUS HIRSCHMAN '25

"I think my favorite thing about my outfit was the neckline of the dress, I think it was super unique and classy. Also the boots! I'm not really a knee high boots girl, so kind of went out of my comfort zone there, but I thought the brown matched really well with the pink in my dress," Mishra said.



CULLEN DEARING '24, BODIE CURRIER '24, ILARION KOVATCHEV '24, MAX MANNING '24

"My outfit is mostly from thrift stores, but the sweater is from J.Crew. I really liked the style of the outfit because it's not what I typically wear or what I associate with a dance. I also really liked [Manning and Dearing's] matching floral outfits," Kovatchev said.





# 18 SPORTS BRIEFS

## Ready, set, spike

STORY SERENA SAXENA  
PHOTO DIANE MAZZONI

Coached by Alumni David Shields, Arielle Choi '22, and Isabella Yalif '23, the 14-player varsity boys volleyball team practices four times a week with hopes of improving their game after COVID-19 disrupted their last season.

Being relatively new to the upper school, one of the main challenges on the team has been the lack of player experience.

"This is a lot of people's first years or first time actually playing games, so we are a little uncoordinated on the court," Cullen Dearing '24 said. "However, everyone is starting figuring out what to do where and when and things are starting to come together."

As the season progresses, players have gotten more comfortable and experienced with the game, and Dearing believes this can be attributed to the team's commitment to improve.

"I think the fact that people are showing up consistently, something that didn't really happen last year, and wanting to win is allowing us to improve a ton," he said.

Paul Burke '22 agrees, sharing how "individually, everybody wants to improve."

The team has had seven games thus far and are the fifth seed in the PSAL league with a record of 3-4. A season highlight was winning the second seeded team in the league 5-16 in one set.

"We want to bring that same energy and level of play to all our sets in all our games," Burke said.

Looking forward, the team's next game is on April 12 against DCP El Primero, and fans are most definitely encouraged.



## Boys tennis: the end of a six year drought

STORY SAM TATEOSIAN  
PHOTO DIANE MAZZONI

Piercing squeaks and hesitant cheers thrust the boys varsity tennis team into a situation that Nueva hasn't experienced in six years. Since 2016, Nueva's boys tennis team has been on a winless streak with countless students entering and leaving the upper school's doors without ever seeing a tennis ball fly over the net followed by the clatter of a racket and cheers of disbelief and elation.

On March 7, that all changed.

When the team showed up at Hillsdale High School for a seemingly routine match, they would never have guessed that this would be a major milestone in Nueva sports history. Despite a rough start to the match with valiant losses from captains Coby Wagonfeld '22 and Joshua Yao '22 in singles one and two, singles three and four players Aaron Huang '24 and Harrison Kepner '22 fired back with two straight wins.

The tennis team's chemistry shined as every doubles team dominated their opponents, signifying the end of a winless era for Nueva boys tennis.

"The first win was such a cool experience for me and all the seniors, we'd been working so hard for four years and finally getting the result with teammates who've bonded with for [that long] was so satisfying," said Wagonfeld.

And on March 21 in a match against Woodside Priory, the team won again, breaking a Nueva record by winning two matches in one season. This once in a generation team has astounded players and fans alike, receiving plenty of praise from team leaders.

"In my four years on this team, this is the strongest and deepest our roster has ever been," Yao said, "and it's not just the seniors taking lead; we have players from all four grades starting consistently each match."

However, it's not just success that shows the excellence of this team: sportsmanship has highlighted every player's integrity on and off the court. In a moment after their second win, one player showed that some things are more important than wins.

"Aaron displayed incredible sportsmanship by staying with a player who had suffered an injury similar to that which he dealt with. It made me happy knowing that he could be supportive towards the other team in a moment that was very exciting for our team," said Tyler Huang '22 about his brother, Aaron '24.

Now with a record of 2-9, the team remains hopeful for the future and optimistic for a win in their next match against Priory High School on April 13.



## Golf program in full swing

STORY SERENA SAXENA  
PHOTO DIANE MAZZONI

While for most sports, COVID-19 impeded seasons, caused unwanted challenges, and ultimately did more harm than good. For the golf program, Chris Wade, Director of Athletics, believes that COVID-19 may be one of the reasons participation is higher than ever before.

"The pandemic hurt most of the time but helped us in the long run because now we know that general golf interest really did take off from students," he said.

The 27 person roster of junior varsity and varsity practices at Mariner's Point in Foster City, a course just a ten minute drive from the upper school.

In addition to practicing at Mariner's Point, this season, players have the opportunity to use a Dryvebox golf simulator stationed once a week in the Café Courtyard during practice. The simulator was introduced by Head Coach Andrew Ho who knew of the six-month old company and reached out in hopes of bringing them to Nueva.

To Wade, this was a great chance for players to get coaching and practice without necessarily being at Mariner's Point.

"Some players don't need all of the feedback

that some of our beginner students might need," he said. "The idea for the simulator is to bring on additional kinds of one-on-one feedback opportunities for our students."

Avery Chen '22 frequently uses the simulator and enjoys the simulator's Trackman feature which reports statistics like swing speed, head angle, and club path.

"I have never used a simulator before so it was a really cool opportunity to get to use it," she said.

"It is great to be able to bring that level of coaching and bring that technology to our students. We really are hoping and intending to continue to spark that passion to want to improve," Wade said, echoing Chen's sentiment.

Having played only a few matches thus far, the team's season is still in the beginning stages yet Cami Yun '25 describes the dynamic as "fun and determined."

"We always discuss making sure we have fun, play as a team, and strengthen our mental game out there," Yun said. "I'm looking forward to future matches and getting to know her team better."

The team's next match is on April 12 at the Crystal Springs Golf Course.



## Swim team enters season with a splash

STORY ELLIE KEARNS  
PHOTO DIANE MAZZONI

Along with the unmistakable stench of chlorine, a blaring noise fills the air, only to be replaced milliseconds later with the sounds of splashes and shouting voices.

As the largest team in Nueva history, the 16 swimmers are diving into the spring season of tiring workouts, competitions, and van rides.

During meets, the team competes in relays and individual events, incorporating the various swimming styles: freestyle, breaststroke, backstroke, and butterfly.

While five meets into the season, the team has emerged successful with a few boys breaking school records.

"Our relays are pretty darn fast this year relative to what they've been in the past," Ethan Kim '23 shared. Kim is a co-captain of the team with Cherise Wong '23.

According to Kim, the team has raised the bar since previous seasons, likely due to the fact that they now have access to a pool and certified coaches.

Twice a week, the team practices at Bay Club Redwood Shores with Bay Club coaches Laszlo and Alex.

While in their own lanes, the swimmers feel connected during their social van rides and meets.

"While it tends to be more of an

individual sport, the meets and practices are always such a fun time and you really get to spend time with your teammates and become close," Noor Zarinnegar '24 said. "Seeing everyone cheer one another on and the positivity that radiates during the meets is definitely one of my favorite parts of swimming."

In addition to their team goals, individual swimmers have the opportunity to grow as an athlete and person. Swimming has taught Christine Zhao '24 lessons on perseverance.

"I remember one time we were just swimming nonstop and the coach was pushing us with intervals," Christine Zhao '24 said. "In the moment, it felt horrible, and I wanted to vomit... but I got through it, and it felt good in the end. So I think that's both a victory and a challenge."

Kim echoes her sentiment, reflecting on how individual goals can align with team efforts.

"[Swimming is] individual in the sense that your times count for yourself, you can race for yourself, and you want to beat yourself," he said. "And also, you want to make your team look good... it's nice to have pride in your team."

With their pride, goggles, and bubbles, the team is suited up for more season success.



## Passing the baton to track and field

STORY ELLIE KEARNS  
PHOTO DIANE MAZZONI

With the arrival of spring season, so too arrive the track and field runners, ready to sprint, jump, and cheer each other on.

Competing in 10 track events and six field events, the 39-person team maintains a successful trajectory and positive team environment.

"I think they have some pretty good goals for themselves. And

I think we're well on our way to hopefully achieving most of those," shared Robert Lopez, Director of Track and Cross Country.

Within a new league, PSAL, Lopez looks forward to the opportunity to check out new schools, coaches, and competition.

So far this season, the team has competed in five meets, including two travel meets, and already achieving successful results. At an early race, the boys' team set a new school record for distance medley relay (DMR).

"Our team is progressing really, really well," Lopez said. "They're doing the things that they need to do in order to be competitive."

Throughout their success, the team also encounters challenges. Primarily, the lack of a track prompts difficulties with transportation and organization. Currently, the team trains for about two hours at CSM six days a week.

"I think our kids have done a really good job of adapting, accepting the scenario that we're in, and making the most of it," Lopez said.

Lopez recognizes the efforts from the seniors, whom he has mentored for the past four years. Together, they prioritize the team dynamic, making sure "everyone feels included [and] connected" and that the team emphasizes

"building team camaraderie."

"We want to make sure that people are really enjoying themselves but also enjoying one another... I think when you have a strong connection with all your teammates, you're willing to do more for them, and they are willing to do more for you," Lopez said. "In the end, I think it develops a true team culture that everybody can be proud of, and everybody can work towards."

The captains for the boys' team are Emerson Lange '22, Dominic Lahane '23, and Alex Cocquyt '22 and the girls' team are Sasha Cocquyt '24, Carina Totty '24, and Kate Vercellino '23.

"We have some very strong, amazing students that put a positive spin on things... I feel like we have a very good dynamic, a very good vibe," Anna Feland '24, a runner on the team, said.

In addition to the annual Mammoth retreat, the team, as the Bay Meadows Track Club, flew to Spokane, Washington and Chicago, Illinois to race against intense competition and bond together.

"Going on trips with your team and staying in hotel rooms together naturally brings people closer," Alex Cocquyt '22 said.

The team had the opportunity to check out the cities while training.

"Running is so conducive with exploring," Cocquyt shared, mentioning their early morning wake-up to run along Lake Michigan in 30 degree weather.

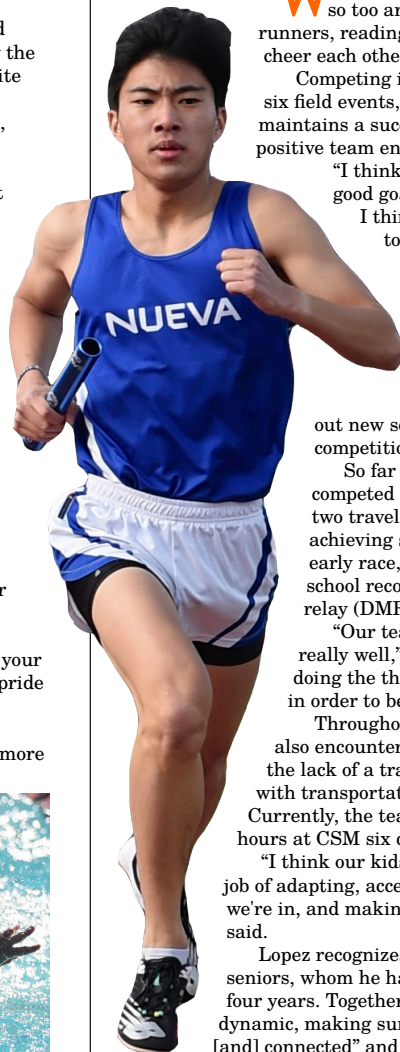
More frequently, the track and field team posts team updates on their social media account, @nuevaxcf. Started by Kelly Poon '24, the account now has videos, vlogs, athlete profiles, and inside jokes, and "brings people together."

"A lot of the stuff that's in the athlete profiles is stuff that only people on the team might get," Lange said. "So a lot of it is really weird and cultish... but, it's still funny for us."

"The more memories, the better," Cocquyt added, looking forward to returning to the page after he departs for college.

In the future, Feland hopes for the account to maintain respect, as she was featured in a post without her knowledge or consent.

As the Instagram account shifts, the season progresses and training intensifies, the team continues to stay motivated, stay tough, and #stayhard.





## QB Deshaun Watson to Cleveland Browns, criminal charges lifted

STORY SERENA SAXENA  
PHOTO NFL

Unable to find enough evidence, the grand jury announced on March 11 that former Houston Texans Quarterback Deshaun Watson would not face any criminal charges regarding the 22 civil lawsuits alleging sexual assault and misconduct in his name.

His attorney, Rusty Hardin, said in a statement to the Texas Daily that Watson would attempt to assert his fifth amendment right.

"We are delighted that the grand jury has looked at the matter thoroughly and reached the same conclusion we did," Hardin said. "Deshaun Watson did not commit any crimes and is not guilty of any offenses."

On March 18, Watson was traded from the Texans to the Cleveland Browns and was fully guaranteed a \$230 million contract.

Cleveland Browns general manager Andrew Berry commented on the scrutiny of the decision in a news conference. It was his first time speaking with the media since the Browns acquired Watson.

"We as an organization know that this transaction has been very difficult for many people, particularly women in our community. We realize that it has triggered a range of emotions. And that, as well as the nature of the allegations, weighed heavily on all of us," Berry said.

"It was because of the weight of the anticipated reaction and the nature of the allegations that really pushed us to do as much work as possible, both internally and externally, in terms of understanding the cases and who Deshaun was as a person. It was through this, really, five-month odyssey and the information that we were able to amass, the reference work and obviously working through due process and the legal process, that got us comfortable pursuing a trade for Deshaun."

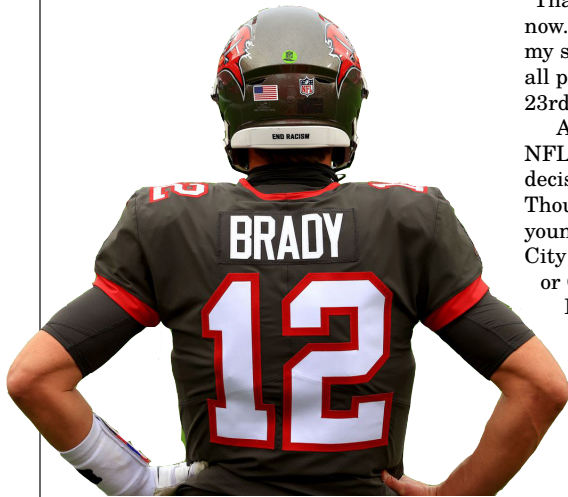
Regardless of the decision, Watson is expected to carry a huge load in Cleveland due to his contract and guarantees. In the same news conference, Watson explained how he intends to fight each allegation and prove his innocence.

"The main focus that I want to do is continue to show people who I really am and get my story out eventually," he said.



## Tom Brady returns to field after 39 day retirement

STORY SERENA SAXENA  
PHOTOS TOM BRADY, NFL



Seven-time Super Bowl champion Tom Brady officially announced his retirement after 22 seasons on Feb 1. Thirty-nine days later, he announced his decision to return to the Tampa Bay Buccaneers for a 23rd season.

On both Twitter and Instagram, he shared how he still has "unfinished business" on the field.

"These past two months I've realized my place is still on the field and not in the stands," Brady wrote. "That time will come. But it's not now. I love my teammates, and I love my supportive family. They make it all possible. I'm coming back for my 23rd season in Tampa."

As the current oldest player in the NFL, the 44-year-old quarterback's decision to return surprised most. Though it is not likely he will outplay younger quarterbacks like Kansas City Chiefs QB Patrick Mahomes or Green Bay Packers QB Aaron Rodgers, fans are hopeful for another Tampa Bay Super Bowl win next season.

"Tom Brady loves to play football as much as anyone I have ever been around," said Tampa Bay Head Coach

Bruce Arians. "He is still playing at a championship level and was as productive as anyone in the league last season. We are ecstatic that he decided to continue playing and working toward winning another championship."

**"These past two months I've realized my place is still on the field and not in the stands. That time will come. But it's not now. I love my teammates, and I love my supportive family. They make it all possible. I'm coming back for my 23rd season in Tampa."**

## Victory under their wings: Kansas Jayhawks and South Carolina Gamecocks win March Madness 2022

STORY SERENA SAXENA  
PHOTOS YOUTUBE, ESPN

The Kansas University Jayhawks emerged victorious against the University of North Carolina Tar Heels on April 4, claiming their title as NCAA Champions.

Trailing 40-25 at half time, the Jayhawks overcame a 15-point deficit at halftime—the largest comeback in national championship history—and secured their first NCAA Tournament title since 2008.

Key to this comeback was center David McCormack who opened the half with a dunk, made two decisive shots in the final two minutes and brought a renewed energy to the court.

Kansas University coach Bill Self also shared wisdom at the half and rather than panicking, used a lesson from their 2008 national title.

"I told them at halftime, would you rather be down 15 with 20 left or down 9 with 2 left?" he recalled.

And with that, Kansas University defeated University of North Carolina 72-69 to

win the 2022 NCAA Men's National Championship.

In the NCAA Women's Champion, the game was dominated from the beginning, with the University of South Carolina Gamecocks outscoring the University of Connecticut Huskies 64-49 on April 3.

After a crushing one-point defeat in the Final Four against Stanford University in 2021, this year, the team found redemption.

With an overall season record of 15-2, the team hoped their regular season success would carry through the tournament.

"Our path was divinely ordered," South Carolina coach Dawn Staley told Gamecocks fans as she accepted the championship trophy.

The national player of the year, Gamecocks forward Aliyah Boston, recorded her 30th double-double of the season with 11 points and 16 rebounds, and was named the Final Four's Most Outstanding Player.

When asked by an ESPN reporter what the next season's goal is, Boston responded "same as this year."

With a second champion in tow, University of South Carolina continues to cement their status as the top of the sport.



## MLB and MLBPA agree to CBA, lockout ended, opening day April 7

STORY SERENA SAXENA  
PHOTO MLB

After over three months of delaying the MLB regular season, the MLB lockout has officially ended with Major League Baseball and the MLB Players Association (MLBPA) ending their stalemate and accepting a new collective bargaining agreement (CBA)—the governing document between the owners and players.

The lockout was enacted on Dec. 2 and spurred from labor concerns, economic distress, and battles between the owners and the MLBPA over who deserves what monetary cut. The action was implemented as a means of creating leverage during negotiations with the players' union.

The lockout stopped the offseason, forbid unsigned players from signing major-league contracts with teams, and the league was prohibited from operating until a new CBA was formed.

On March 10, the MLB and MLBPA reached a deal and the league's owner-imposed lockout ended on its 99th day.

Now, opening day is April 7 and the full schedule consists of 162 games played.

The new five-year CBA includes increased minimum salaries of \$700,000 and \$780,000 in the CBA's final year, a pre-arbitration bonus pool of \$50 million, a threshold raise in Competitive Balance Tax (CBT) to \$230 million and \$244 million in the CBA's final year, and the introduction of a CBT penalty tier that starts at \$60 million above the threshold—20% million more than where the highest tier used to sit.

Also new to the game is the expansion of the postseason format. Under the new MLB CBA signed in March, 12 teams will now make the MLB playoffs—six for each league.

Moreover, the single-elimination wild-card games will be replaced by a best-of-three round.

The additional two teams means that 12 out of 30 teams will arrive at the playoffs and although historically, making the MLB playoffs has been difficult, the importance and engagement of the regular season continues to decline as more teams are able to qualify.

Regardless of the new CBA's details, the delayed season has proven difficult for many teams as baseball is a spot of routine. Players and fans hope that by opening day, the sport will have moved past previous challenges and America's pastime will continue to roll.



## Figure skating's expiration date

15-year-old Kamila Valieva's Olympic doping scandal exemplifies a sport that systematically uses and disposes of young athletes

STORY ISABELLA XU  
PHOTOS CNN

"It's going to be a Russian sweep. And Kamila Valieva—the newest phenom—is only competing against herself," said *CBC's* "That Figure Skating Show's" resident co-host Asher Hill, just two months before the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics. "The only one who can take her out is herself."

Heading into the Beijing Olympics, Valieva, on paper, had the perfect senior debut season. By the time she stepped on Olympic soil, she had broken nine world records and emerged with a gold medal from every competition she entered during the season.

The secret to Valieva's success? A brutal but effective jumping technique, popularized by her coach Eteri Tutberidze. But while skaters may obtain one season of success, Tutberidze's influence has created a skater turnover rate that reinforces a pattern of athlete disposability in elite sports.

Tutberidze, along with her team at Sambo-70 skating club, has schooled nine of the 12 ladies who have landed ratified quadruple jumps in competition. Her technique entails twisting the upper body before leaving the ice, essentially allowing for nearly a full rotation while the skater remains grounded. Utilizing Tutberidze's technique, otherwise known as "pre-rotation," athletes may execute what is functionally a triple jump with the bonus points of a quad.

Pre-rotation is more than a cheap hack to acquire more points, though. Combine twisting one's back nearly 90 degrees with the force required to rotate and remain airborne, and excessive pre-rotation becomes a guaranteed weekly trip to the physical therapist with complaints of back strain.

In Valieva, this pre-rotation has been exacerbated with her manipulation of "rippons," a term used to describe jumps where skaters throw their arms up above their heads. At Sambo-70, the rippon has become a dangerous tool. By twisting their raised arms along with the rest of their upper

bodies, the rippon allows skaters to perform pre-rotation to a more extreme degree.

As Tutberidze's skaters utilize momentum instead of muscle, the technique relies on a low body weight only feasible in pre-pubescent girls or unhealthily thin teens.

There is no sustainability in this strategy, but for coaches like Tutberidze, there doesn't need to be. Figure skating in the last decade has seen senior careers that have headlined and retired all within the span of two to three years, only to be overtaken by a new group of junior skaters, and the immense popularity of the sport in Russia means that there is always a new crop of elementary schoolers with the potential to become Olympians—at Sambo-70, athletes become disposable.

For an example of youth's dominance in the sport, look no further than Pyeongchang 2018 Olympics's headlining rivalry, Russia's Evgenia Medvedeva and Alina Zagitova, both of whom trained under Tutberidze. Medvedeva was 18 and the two-time reigning world champion going into the games, but ultimately lost Olympic gold to her younger teammate, who was 15 at the time. Zagitova's younger age meant that she was able to maintain a lower, prepubescent body weight, and could better utilize her coach's technique.

Medvedeva officially announced retirement in 2021 after nearly two years away from competition, due to a chronic back injury fostered by years of Tutberidze's dangerous technique.

"My back doesn't turn in one direction," Medvedeva said in an interview on a Russian Youtube channel. "I really love these jumps, but... maybe the age limit will be raised to 25 and I will be able to go out and dig deeper."

Or take Tutberidze's first breakout skater, Yulia Lipnitskaya, who withdrew from competition just two years after she enamored the world in her 2014 "Schindler's List" free program. She shared her struggle with anorexia under Tutberidze's hawkish gaze, explaining that she was put on a powder diet during her entire stay in the Olympic village. Lipnitskaya retired in 2017, checking into an Israeli eating disorder clinic in January of that year.

Having trained the likes of Valieva, Medvedeva, and Lipnitskaya, Sambo-70 hosts the most elite group



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of the Russian ladies figure skating national champions since 2016 have been Eteri Tutberidze's students.

17 yrs

has been dubbed the "ETERI EXPIRATION DATE" after Lipnitskaya, Medvedeva, and Zagitova suffered performance issues at 17.

of skaters. Yet it also fosters an immense fear of being overtaken, which can only be offset by more back-breaking, eating disorder inducing training. This toxic environment is furthered by the media: treating young athletes as phenoms with no concern for their abusive training settings allows coaches to continue subjecting children to unethical training methods under the guise of it all being natural talent.

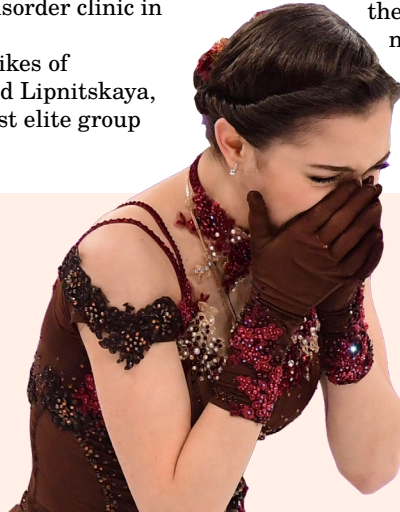
When Valieva tested positive for trimetazidine, a

substance banned in sports competition for increasing endurance, the *CBS* anchor's words rang true. The "only one who [could] take [Valieva] out [was] herself," as she struggled to maintain a pre-pubescent body that could withstand figure skating's increasingly onerous win-condition. While, as of Apr. 8, investigations into Valieva's doping are ongoing, these Olympics have made one thing clear: figure skating is no longer a sport for grown women. But with its dominant culture of abuse, is skating really fit for the youth, either?



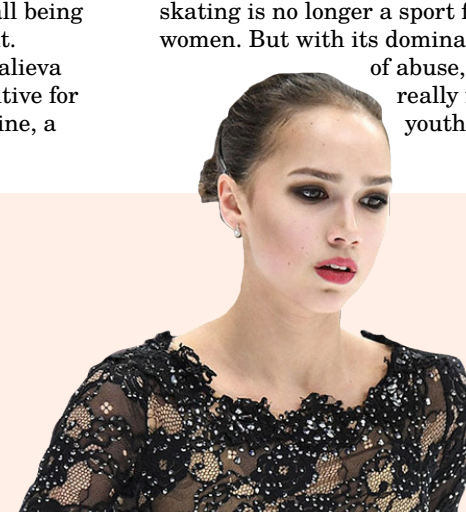
### YULIA LIPNITSKAYA

pulled out of competition and checked into an eating disorder clinic just two years after her breakout "Schindler's List" program at the Sochi Olympic games.



### EVGENIA MEDVEDEVA

skated on a broken foot at the 2018 Pyeongchang Olympics. A month later, she withdrew from the World Championships after doctors found her medical state to have worsened.



### ALINA ZAGITOVA

Transitioned to a role as a television presenter at age 19 after winning the 2018 Winter Olympics, 2019 Worlds, 2018 European Championships, and 2018 Grand Prix Final.