

*There's no pandemic playbook(yet). For teachers and students beginning distance learning, we're just at the beginning of this experiment.*



# LEARNING ON A CURVE

We're still adjusting. From the way we learn to the way we live and play, we have had to radically rethink what was once our normal lives. Things may never get back to normal. It may be comforting to know that as we are figuring it out what our new normal is, so is the rest of the world.

**SPECIAL ED CHALLENGES**  
Students and teachers are feeling disconnected from distance learning. In short, it's been difficult to engage.  
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## Campus roundups

### Leanne Haghghi voted Branham's teacher of the year

For her work advising GSA and advocating for underrepresented groups, special education teacher **Leanne Haghghi** was chosen Branham's 2020 teacher of the year at the school's May 1 staff meeting. Principal Cheryl Lawton described Haghghi as a humble advocate for students of all "backgrounds, interests and

academics." Haghghi, in her 11th year at Branham, has worked to raise issues of gender and social equity on campus through Branham's GSA club and through her social cognition class. She said that she hopes to continue that work, and "to continue advocating for what is best for students."

### Superintendent proposes deep service cuts

Even before the economic recession as a seeming result of the coronavirus pandemic, the

district is examining \$8 million in cuts in order to save money. Some areas that may be removed include access to SVCTE courses, counseling and support services and its contract with the San Jose Police Department.

Other changes will include the role of the athletic director and a reduction in the district's budget, staff and events. We will be exploring the impact of the cuts in our end-of-year issue.

### Branham among top 20 in county in U.S. News report

Branham placed first in the district, 20th in Santa Clara County and 1405th out of 24,121 schools in the nation, according to rankings by released U.S. News and World Reports, which bases rankings on several factors such as student diversity, AP participation and performance as well as graduation rates. The U.S. News ranks schools using data from all 50 states as well as the District of Columbia.

—Compiled by Meena Iyer

## LEARNING ON A CURVE | SPECIAL EDUCATION

### Distance learning gaps

A ParentsTogether survey discovered wide learning gaps in low-income families and in families with special needs children. We highlight those below.

### Special education access lacking

The survey also found big gaps reported by families whose children are in special education.

**40%**

say they are not receiving any support at all.

**20%**

report that they are receiving all the services their children are entitled to.

**35%**

report that their children are doing little to no remote learning, compared with 17% of their general education peers.

**40%**

of parents of special needs children are concerned about their children's mental health, compared with 23% of parents of other children.

### Poorer families feel left out from distance learning

**32%**

of lowest-income families (those making less than \$25,000) who say that their students either don't have a device or have to share it with others, such as siblings.

**11%**

said that their schools didn't offer any distance learning materials. By contrast, CUHSD IT specialists have reached out to every student in the district, first through a survey of technology needs, then via phone call, then through house visits, said Branham Vice Principal **Rick Hayashi**.

### Distance learning gets poor grades

parents from low-income homes give remote learning low marks.

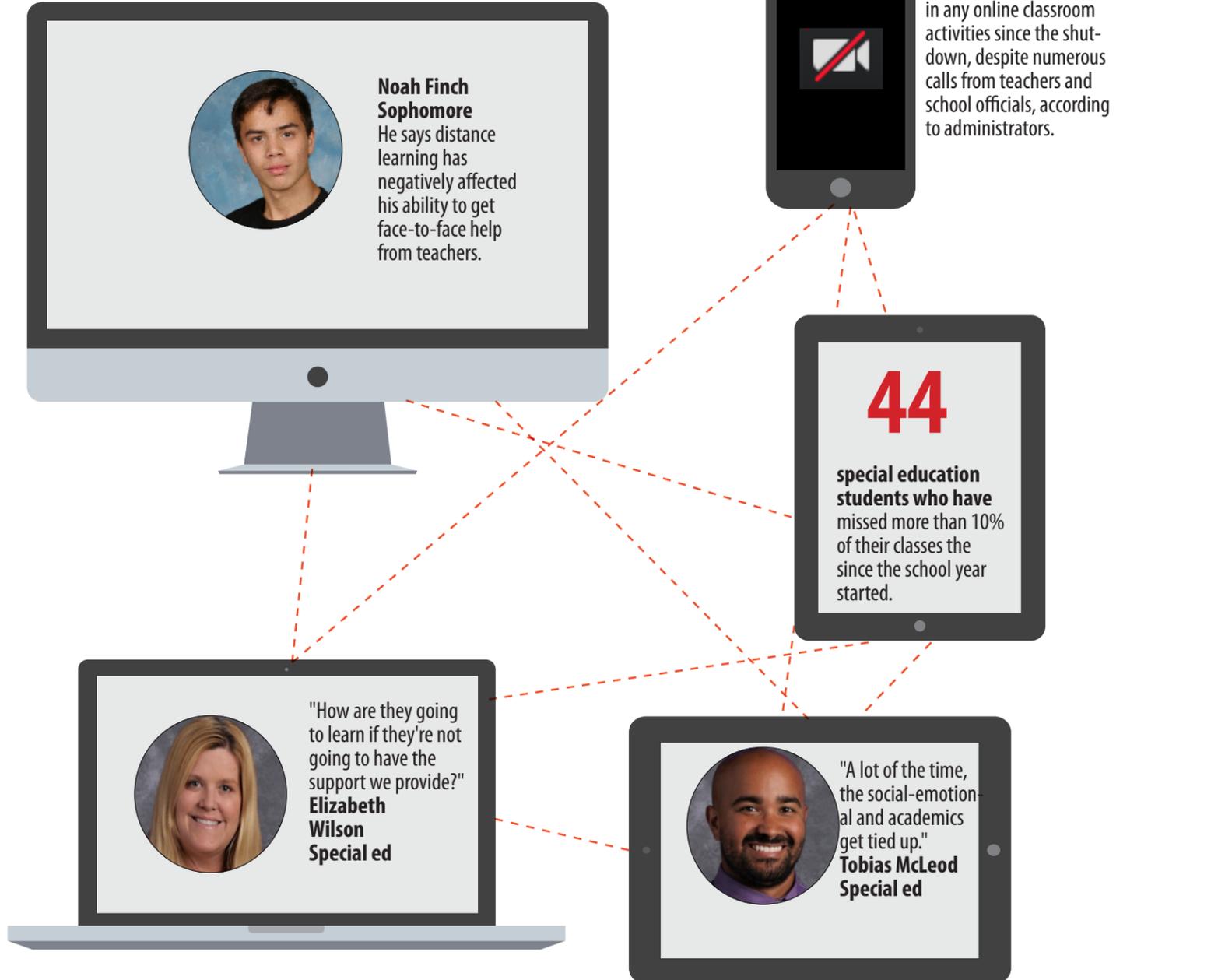
They are twice as likely to say remote learning is going poorly or very poorly (**36% vs. 18%**).

They are much more likely to say their kid's work is mostly or entirely busywork (**35% vs. 19%**).

—Source: ParentsTogether via SurveyMonkey

### A challenge to engage online among special education populations

Teachers and students describe their concerns with providing adequate resources to reach out and engage with their special education students.



# A LEARNING DISCONNECT

Providing tools for special education students a daunting task as they shelter in place

**ELIZABETH POSEY**  
Co-Editor-in-Chief

Sophomore **Noah Finch** is used to getting help and checking with his teachers in person. He has an Individualized Education Plan that gives him accommodations when he has difficulty focusing or needs simplified instructions.

With online school, however, getting clarification isn't as easy as it once was. Classes only last an hour and written instructions, while thorough, may allow room for error or misinterpretation. Students in Zoom meetings are encouraged to "enter" the room with their screens on mute and video turned off, making it awkward to ask for help when no one is.

As teachers and students face the steep learning curve of moving instruction exclusively online, both receive more digital messages, the overwhelming volume of instruction and information can also be increasingly challenging to appropriately respond and read through each.

"It just doesn't bode well for me because I need to be able to have an answer before I go for due dates," Finch said.

He explained that his online classes will sometimes end before he has the chance to ask questions or teachers sometimes do not respond to his messages, making it more difficult for him to absorb the material online.

Getting help from a partner used to be easy for Finch, who would just check in with his elbow buddy. Now, students in the same meeting might as well be from different Zip codes.

"I like socializing," he said. "It's just now that this whole coronavirus thing has happened. I can't like talk to my friends as much or at least physically."

For students with learning disabilities, individualized learning plans and social emotional needs, school is a vital source for support and socialization.

The absence of this regular peer and mentor support has been challenging, according to **Elizabeth Wilson**, who teaches career and English within the specialized academic instruction program (SAI). Wilson typically teaches students who have more needs in the classroom and had seen difficulty in getting student engagement during the supplemental phase.

Upon hearing the news of the school closure, Wilson had several concerns; among these, finding an effective way to support her students.

"How are they going to learn if they're not going to have the support that we provide," said Wilson "because a lot of our students aren't very independent."

Wilson also said she felt sad for students whose primary social interaction comes from their friends at school.

Special education teacher **Tobias McLeod** said he felt similar concerns for his social emotional (SE) needs students.

"It's not just social-emotional (issues)," he said. "I think a lot of the time, the social emotional and academic get tied up."

Being away from peer and faculty support systems at school have added challenges to the transition. Both teachers say that contacting parents has been important in setting up remote education plans.

McLeod, who works with a small group of students on social and emotional skills, made arrangements for

students to have the same resources and opportunities as a physical environment. Therapists who do group and one-on-one sessions will still be available through video conferences as they would be in class. However, some families said this option was not feasible as they live in a small space that would not allow for confidentiality.

"I'm just kind of trying to think of as many creative ways to engage with families and with the students," McLeod said.

Overwhelmingly, the lack of participation seemed to be the most pressing issue for teachers.

McLeod says he has a range of student participation from radio silence to daily contact. Wilson says some of her students struggle to get their school Google accounts set up to utilize the classroom she made.

"I've been a little disappointed in how many people have been signing into the classrooms and coming to the meetings and how much effort it takes to get the kids there," Wilson said "It's actually pretty tiring to have to do phone calls, text messages, emails."

A solution for both has been catering to varying needs of each student by supplying information online as well as printing and sending copies of work packets to each student's home.

While supplemental content for what students learn is adjusting, the social component of school is much more difficult to replace, according to both teachers.

"They miss that constant 'I have to engage with another human being outside of my house,'" said McLeod, as opposed to "Now I'm used to just being engaged with the people in my house and I have no other choice."

LEARNING ON A CURVE | ECONOMIC IMPACT

'Devastating' numbers

60,000

500

\$8 million

20%

The pandemic is on track to create the worst global economic crisis since the Great Depression, from mass unemployment to the increase in Branham families receiving free lunches.

meals served to students in the district since the shutdown began on March 13. School employees such as bus drivers have been utilized to help serve and prepare meals.

meals served per day at Branham. The school has added a Saturday lunch for students, which is usually pizza. This is an increase from 300 meals a day from early April.

the cost savings that the district is considering. These cuts include CASSY counseling for at-risk youth, access to SVCTE courses and the elimination of School Resource Officers on campus.

number of jobs expected to be lost in California due to the pandemic, according to Gov. Gavin Newsom. The state's latest unemployment rate figures will be released on May 22.

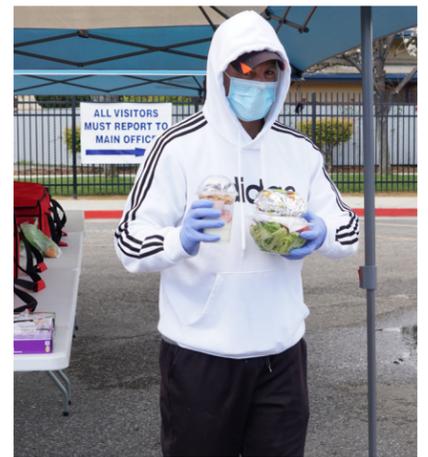
Sources: CUHSD, Rick Hayashi, Employment Development Department

*"We're pretty much screwed."*  
Missy Wiegand, owner Salon 383



Courtesy of Missy Wiegand, Josh McGhie and John Heringer

Salon 383 in Downtown Campbell, 4th Street Pizza Co. in Downtown San Jose and Method 3 Fitness Studio remain empty due to shelter in place orders.



Fitz Vo/Bear Witness

Social science teacher John Salberg regularly volunteers to serve meals at lunch.

Free school meals serve thousands

MEENA IYER  
Staff Writer

Since schools closed in March, the district has served more than 60,000 lunches for families and students, with Branham serving between 200 and 300 a day, Monday through Saturday. The need for resources such as free lunch is only expected to grow, as more businesses close to avoid the spread of infection from COVID-19. In March, the unemployment rate in San Jose jumped 26%, from 2.6% to 3.3%.

According to the California Department of Education, 16.6% of students at Branham qualify for a free or reduced lunch, and the district expects the number to grow from the lockdown.

To mitigate the need, Branham earlier this year teamed up with Second Harvest Food Bank to provide free food and produce, from frozen chicken to pasta at its twice-monthly pop-up pantry.

Sophomore Lily Mintz and her family had planned to bring food to the Snack Shack during her swim season, which, like all activities, was canceled after the shelter-in-place order was issued. They donated all of that food to Branham's pantry for people who needed it.

"There's really nothing else we could do with the food, and there's no point in keeping it ourselves," she said.

The drive-through pantry is run mainly by staff volunteers. According to Branham social worker Kevin Nguyen, the food is distributed quickly and efficiently.

"It was pre-packaged, and we only needed three or four people," he said. "People would roll up in their cars, roll down their windows, and then I got their name and how many people are in their families, and then they drove up a little bit further and then our three volunteers just loaded, one at each station with one box per station."

In an interview panel with members from the district, Superintendent Robert Bravo said that the district serves 1,000 meals each day, up from several hundred at the start of the closure. The district added the Saturday pizza lunches due to the increased need.

"As each day goes by, it looks like more people are taking advantage of the opportunity, and we have had days where we ran out," he said.

Social science teacher John Salberg is a regular volunteer at the drive-through. He is appreciative of the initiative taken by the district to provide food as well as the administrators who serve it. Salberg describes the experience as "extremely moving."

"I find it extremely rewarding to hear the gratitude that the recipients express to us," he said. "It's beyond touching. Words can't describe it."

RUNNING ON EMPTY

Small businesses in San Jose struggling to stay afloat during pandemic

KATELYN LOWPENSKY  
Arts & Entertainment Editor

Sporting events were considered the "bread and butter" for Josh McGhie's 4th Street Pizza Co. in Downtown San Jose, which would have hosted large groups gathered to watch March Madness play out on the big screen.

But the shelter-in-place orders have banned group gatherings to slow the spread of COVID-19, decimating McGhie's business and forcing him to operate through take-out only.

His story is similar for local businesses across the country. A recent Goldman Sachs survey of 1,500 small business owners said that more than half were worried that they cannot survive a sustained shutdown beyond three months.

McGhie's employees are also facing the consequences of coronavirus, fighting financial struggles of their own.

"Our employees are in limbo," he said. "None of our bartenders are working. It's just a tough time for everybody."

"It's impacted us big-time," he said. "We are basically wiped out money-wise right now."

Missy Wiegand owns Salon 383 in Downtown Campbell, and has seen a sharp decline in business due to COVID-19. With all of her clients quarantined, she cannot keep her stylists, who as independent contractors cannot receive any unemployment benefits.

"We can't apply for disability," she said. "We're pretty much screwed."

Wiegand said she had seen reports that

**4th Street Pizza Co.**  
Offering takeout pizza during shelter in place.

**Method 3 Fitness**  
Customized workout, recipes and lifestyle tips.

**Salon 383**  
Revamping their website and selling products online.

more than 60% of salons will not survive the shutdown, a grim assessment of the financial toll taken on small business owners

"I don't know how many salons will survive this," she said.

Despite the downturn in business, the owners are optimistic that customers will return once they reopen.

Wiegand said she believes her business will be a part of that portion of salons that survive due to good customer relationships and support.

"I do like I feel good about my clients," she said, as well as her landlord "because I have a good relationship with him."

Despite the hardship, McGhie's customers have continued to keep the establishment afloat with take-out orders.

"We're strong enough to make it," he said. "We're successful, and we've been around. We're gonna get through it."

While many businesses have temporarily closed their doors, others are finding ways to adjust to keep their business afloat. To keep their members in self-isolation fit, Method 3 Fitness studio owner John Heringer and other trainers have launched an online format where they host daily workouts and provide

lifestyle tips.

"It's been going well so far," he said.

Like Wiegand, he's appreciative of his customer base.

"Our members are absolutely unbelievable people," he said. "They're hanging with us. They are appreciative of all the efforts that we're taken so far."

The online approach is a 21-day program where participants are emailed a daily quote, a schedule of workouts, healthy recipes, a food journal, and other lifestyle tips. Participants pay a \$5 fee, where half of the proceeds go to paying the trainers and the rest goes toward gift cards from small businesses. Participants can win gift cards through the program. Heringer said they have already raised over \$6,000 from over 100 participants in the span of a few days.

"It's a really cool way for us to bring in some new business, but also really support other businesses like us," he said.

Wiegand's salon closing was also a chance for her to explore online ventures. She said she has been working on her website, adding all products for sale, including hair root touch-up kits.

"It's gonna help give us some kind of generated income, rather than nothing," she said.

To help local businesses, McGhie, the owner of 4th Street Pizza Co., advises Bay Area residents to buy their meals from small restaurants, such as a local burger place instead of McDonald's.

"The little guys, they're gonna have a tough time," he said. "That's my thing: support the local businesses."

## At lunch, schemes and dreams



**JULIANNE ALVARES**  
Co-Editor-in-Chief

I claimed a bench in the quad during my freshman year. It was in the shade and far away from the mingling groups. I sat alone on that bench for the majority of the first semester. I had no one to talk to and actually looked forward to my classes starting so I wouldn't feel so lonely.

Freshman year me, whose voice was hoarse from not speaking, would never have imagined the thing I miss the most from school is lunch time.

I abandoned my bench sophomore year (I made friends but it was time for the bench to retire) and found the group of people I still sit with today. As time passed, people came and left but the feeling remained the same. Principal Cheryl Lawton even gave us a table to sit at after she observed us sitting in the exact same spot every day. Shenanigans ensued once we got one and we constantly moved it to either the shade or sun depending on what the temperature was that day.

This led to the table being chained down outside of our normal spot and being taken over by a group of sophomores. This is just one of the many antics we got up to. Honorable mentions include yelling at students hopping the fence, a short Lady Gaga karaoke session, and Minecraft Legos. Tiny freshmen me wouldn't have believed that I came out of my shell and had such a good group of folks. No matter what type of day I was having I could also count on my bad or sad mood being lifted at lunch.

A few days before the shutdown, we were talking about staging some prank on the last week of school. Suggestions in the running were bringing a tent and staging a campsite or a picnic complete with lawn chairs. It's funny to think that at that moment we were thinking about the end of school when not even two days later school would be suspended the first time.

Then a couple weeks later coming back got pushed out to now when I'll never have lunch at school again.

It's hard to think that I'll never eat lunch in Row N again. Something so simple that I took for granted is something I'll never have again. Of course I'm bummed about prom and graduation, but it's the little things that matter. It's been far too long since I almost choked on my food from laughing. Lunch Zoom calls just aren't the same.

It's funny to think that a day as random as March 12 would be my last day at Branham. Having that Friday off robbed us of an opportunity to say goodbye. We left that Thursday afternoon to what we thought was going to be a four-day weekend that turned into the last time we walked Branham's halls as a student. I wanted to write this as a way to process the idea that my senior year is over and the next time I'll be sitting in a classroom, I'll be a college freshman. Goodbye to all my school lunches. To the rib cracking laughter, scheduled bathroom breaks, and good friends. Goodbye to the end of Row N and all its memories. It's been fun.



# AN UNFINISHED

# YEAR

Branham seniors began their freshman year at a school literally **rebuilding itself**. Three principals in five years. Construction of four new buildings. More than 50% teacher turnover. Eventually, **we got used to it**, and the situation improved. The pandemic struck as we were about to leave, putting to a sudden halt events that we had spent our lives looking forward to: prom, graduation, saying goodbye to friends in person. **It wasn't the ending we imagined.**

## There's no reassurance in false hope



**STACEY YAVORSKI**  
Guest Opinion

As a senior in high school, there are a lot of things that I looked forward to in our second semester. Prom, graduation, the spring musical, and senior awards are just a few of the events that this year's high school seniors will never have a normal version of. When we first found out that we weren't coming to school for a while, we were told that things would end after spring break, and after we'd return to our normal lives.

The prospect of three weeks of staying indoors with our families, losing touch with our friends, and not being able to do the activities we love was daunting, but we knew that eventually, our lives would return to what we were used to. Unfortunately, it didn't turn out that way. When Gov. Gavin Newsom told families that school would likely be closed for the rest of the year, our school district said some things that were very much the opposite.

Every senior got multiple emails that we would still have prom, graduate on time, and have at least a little bit of the year on campus. We were told that we had something to hold onto... even when our governor said otherwise. Then, the date of our return to school got pushed back to May.

Again, this wasn't pleasant news, but our school administration was still saying that we would have our highly anticipated senior events. Schools outside our district had started saying that they weren't returning to campus that semester, and a few of my friends from private schools complained about their lost proms and graduations.

A few weeks later... we got the heart-crushing news that the rest of the year was canceled. While I was trying to process it all, I realized that I would've felt better if the district was more transparent with us: that they didn't know what was going to happen, that they would have to wait and see about all of our school events and our return to campus. If the district had communicated the fact that they couldn't really promise anything, we would have gotten a better sense of closure.

There would have been no false hope, no empty promises of proms that wouldn't happen or graduations that will now be postponed. We would have had time to process and adjust. It's very difficult to blame the district; they were just following orders from what the Santa Clara County health office advised for schools. But being told that everything would happen on time, even when the governor of California was saying that schools were likely to be shut down, resulted in a very conflicting closure for the seniors.

As of right now, we don't know what's going to happen. Principal Cheryl Lawton is promising that she will make sure the seniors have some kind of event before they leave Branham High School for good, and her efforts are greatly appreciated. Even still, it's hard to hope that this confusing new life will soon be over. It's hard to hope to see our peers again when we know there's a real possibility that we have all been separated for good. All we can do now is wait and see.

## Enjoying the journey cut short



**ELIZABETH POSEY**  
Co-Editor-in-Chief

I lived my high school career on a series of short term goals. This project is due Friday; I have a test on Tuesday; newspaper production is all week. And I lived for the notion that "once this next big project or test or milestone is over, I can finally relax and take care of myself."

Being a student on the short-term-procrastinator method used to make so much more sense but now I can't help but think about how my mindset was wasteful. What I always imagined when writing an essay until three in the morning were the sunny end-of-year days terminating my high school career, or a summer

**I spent so much time without AP assignments clouding my enjoyment.**

**Ultimately, fixating on the time I wouldn't be working anymore was my main coping mechanism for the stress of being a student. I told myself my anxiety was temporary when it really persisted constantly. But what I could not understand at the time was just how limiting that viewpoint would be to my outlook on life.**

**Now that the rest of the year, at least in the traditional sense, has been canceled, I realize just how pointless it was to count on this time to make up for the years of stress I felt. I was so myopically fixated on this one destination that I didn't fully comprehend that my strategy for dealing with my short-term woes was rather dysfunctional.**

**The journey is just as important. Whether the class of 2020 experiences the same kind of graduation or senior awards or prom that we envisioned when starting high school, we still have the capacity to reflect on ourselves and our time spent here.**

**I spent so much time worrying and wondering when my next task would be over that I ended up wishing my formative education years away. In reality, there are so many experiences at Branham that brought me joy — things I wish I could have properly expressed gratitude for before I knew I wouldn't see people again.**

**Being at home has made me so appreciative of my teachers and the lengths many of them went to help me. After doing my own reflection, I'd encourage everyone, even non-seniors, to think about how their time is spent at school. So many of us don't realize how much of our lives are centered around school. Only in its absence have I been able to fully appreciate the role of education in my development.**

# THE PARENT-TEACHER TRAP

The pandemic has made being a parent hard. It's made being a teacher hard. **Teachers who are both have it even tougher.** In early April, the Bear Witness checked in with teachers who have school-age children of their own to have them share the struggles and joys of teaching while parenting.



## Homeschooling tips

What teachers are saying parents and students should be doing as they are distance learning.

## Let kids help set the schedule

This can give kids a much-needed sense of control. "Talk to them about what they thought their day should look like, how we need to get outdoor time, how we need to make sure the dog gets walked, how we keep our apartment clean and pick up after ourselves," said **Tobias McLeod**, a special education teacher with three young children.

## Consider a "menu"

Instead of a strict timetable, here's a strategy that English teacher **Kerry Murphy** has adopted. "My kids are rule followers and would focus too much on doing exactly the same thing at the same time," she said, "That just feels way too stressful right now."

The menu gives them choices when they're at a loss for something to do.

## Teach in small bursts

"The rule of thumb is attention spans are between one and two minutes per age of your child," said **Leanne Haghghi**, a special education teacher with two young children.

Mini-lessons help students be as focused as possible for between five and 10 minutes of instruction before they practice. Instruction can be spread out in bite-sized morsels over the day or week.

## Don't overdo it

"If kids are getting frustrated, they're not going to be able to learn," said **Nicole Trapasso**, a former Branham chemistry teacher and parent of two, 8 and 5. "Take a break and return to the activity later."

## Teach what you know

Like life skills, which provide plenty of learning opportunities. "Now is a great time for teaching them your grandma's spaghetti-sauce recipe (and in doing so, math, science, and reading from following a recipe)."

## Don't forget downtime

"Having a schedule is nice, but there has to be balance for kids and adults to breathe. If space for play and downtime is not provided for everyone," said Murphy. "kids will eventually revolt."

## Find a space to decompress

It's easy to get frustrated when families are in a confined environment for extended periods. Make sure to find time to take care of your needs, said Trapasso. Whether it's five minutes, or 15 minutes, "every second counts."

—Compiled by staff



Courtesy of Leanne Haghghi  
Leanne Haghghi with her two children, Desmon, 5, and Eiana, 4.



Courtesy of Kerry Murphy  
Without club soccer, Kerry Murphy's children practice with each other.



Courtesy of Tania Eaton  
Social science teacher Tania Eaton's youngest child, Brooklyn, shows off her chalk art made from tape lines, a popular quarantine hobby.



Courtesy of Amanda Wilson  
Amanda Wilson takes up building Legos with her two children, Skyler and Kayden as the shelter in place.

## ZACHARY MACAPANPAN

Science and Health Editor

Branham teachers with school-age children are pulling double-duty these days as their work and home life have become inseparable, balancing both parenting and remote-teaching responsibilities while sheltering in place.

Consequently, this has forced teachers to come up with ways to teach their students remotely. This new challenge has created difficulties for teachers that are also parents, requiring them to provide instruction for their students while also caring for their own children.

Special education teacher **Leanne Haghghi** and her husband Darius swap the care for her two children, Eliana, 4, and Desmond, 5.

She said that her children don't quite understand the magnitude of why they are staying at home, instead of going about their normal school routines. As parks and local attractions are closed at least through May 1 to limit the spread of infection.

"They're a little young to grasp what's happening," Haghghi said. "Every day they ask, 'when they can go to school or when they can go somewhere.'"

She also commented that she and her children "have kind of a loose routine" that "can be a little hard to follow sometimes, so we kind of just go with the flow."

Though English teacher **Kerry Murphy**'s children are older, Aine, in kindergarten, Michael, in sixth grade and Vivienne in eighth. Each has mandatory school work to complete on a daily basis. The school agenda in the Murphy home begins at 8 a.m. and continues through the afternoon, which include soccer routines that their coaches provide.

Even with the routines, there has been less emphasis on structure ("The Xbox comes out more than usual," Murphy said.)

The family togetherness has spilled into her ability to work and there is less time to grade than before.

"They're home the whole time, Murphy emphasized, "There have been great things about being together at home, but the balance is very difficult to keep."

She says it's been a challenge for her to find time for planning, preparing, and grading work for her students, while also helping her own children with their distance learning.

"I need to find some time and figure out how to

put that into my schedule now," Murphy said.

Social science teacher **Tania Eaton** feels similar conflicting schedule pressures. Her grade-school daughter's school work begins daily at 9 a.m., with submission deadlines by 3 p.m.

"I feel the pressure to email students during the same time my daughter's school work is due," she said, "I'm supposed to be working so I'll put her on hold to do my work for Branham."

Eaton also expressed how her daughter's school is asking for a lot of work from their students. While she's thankful they're holding their students accountable, it has caused her daughter to feel pressure to get work completed even during times of the day when she wouldn't normally be at school.

"Sometimes it's 7 or 8 at night even on the weekends, and we're still getting her work done" Eaton said.

The switch to digital learning for the teachers has been swift, as they were given a week to provide supplemental learning materials, and two weeks to move their curriculum online. Though phase 2 of distance learning ends in June, there is no decision yet on what the next school year will look like.

## Coronavirus in the county

We break down the most recent numbers, and how the curve may be flattening due to the county's strict shelter in place rules.

### Around Branham

#### 26 total cases

in the 95118 ZIP code, where Branham resides. With a population of 32,560 residents, that is a rate of 80 cases per 100,000 people.

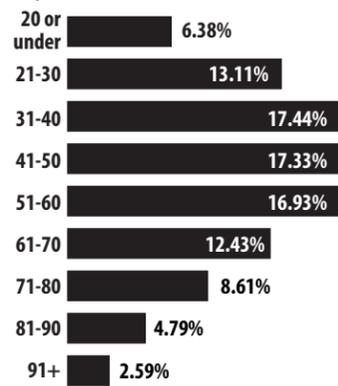
### In Santa Clara

#### 2,731 cases, 141 deaths

As testing increases, the county saw an uptick in cases, with a rate of 3.75% infected. The county

## Cases by age group

Young people under 30 years old are more likely than any age group to contract the virus in Santa Clara, though COVID-19 has the highest mortality among the oldest and the immunocompromised.

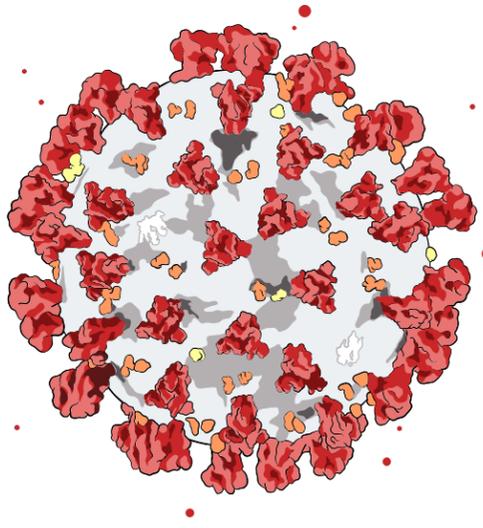


## Cases by ethnicity

Hispanic populations have been hardest hit by the pandemic, with more than

Race/Ethnicity	% of case	# of pop.
African American	2%	2%
Asian	20%	36%
Hispanic	40%	26%
Native Hawaiian & other Pacific islander	1%	0%
Other	5%	4%
Unknown	16%	0%
White	17%	32%

Source: Santa Clara Public Health



# FINDING THE HELPERS

Medical personnel are at the frontlines of any pandemic, but even they need help. Personal protective equipment — masks, face shields — are in short supply, and grassroots efforts are sprouting.



Dr. Misty Montoya helps patients contact their loved ones who cannot visit them in the hospital.

Courtesy of Misty Montoya

## Helping the sick fight loneliness

**NOLAN ZILS**  
Copy Editor

The worst thing about this pandemic for Dr. **Misty Montoya**, a resident physician at Kaiser Hospital in San Francisco, isn't just the disease itself. It's the sudden loss of connection among family and friends of those who are hospitalized.

Because of COVID-19 safety protocols, those hospitalized from terminal illnesses such as cancer and heart disease are suffering alone. Montoya has been the conduit for many communications, often holding the phone as they say goodbye to their children and family via FaceTime.

"Watching them go through this alone and lose this critical time with the people who matter most is agonizing and heart-breaking," she said.

Montoya, who has a sister about to graduate from high school, feels the isolation, as she cannot see her family while caring for the sick.

"That is really tough for me because I'm sheltering in place in San Francisco and my family's in San Jose," she said.

However, it won't be long before the Bay Area is able to flatten the curve, she said, crediting California's quick actions in dealing with the pandemic. Phase 2 will soon be announced, lifting some of the more restrictive measures of sheltering in place. The stress has made life more bearable, as there are hospital beds to accommodate the sick.

"Our work hours aren't as strained now as opposed to some of my colleagues in New York who are in New York, working overtime full time," she said.

Montoya spoke to the Bear Witness in early April to describe her life and her motivations to become a doctor, sharing that, like many high school students, she was uncertain of her career aspirations.

It wasn't until her junior year at San Jose State University when it actually clicked for her, taking her another decade of college to complete her medical degree and doctorate in anesthesiology, which she plans to continue studying at Stanford.

To compete for selective colleges, Montoya said that she had to outdo others in areas that she felt lacking — as a minority student without the financial resources that her peers had.

Her advice to high school students when taking difficult exams, from the SAT, the MCAT (a test for medical school) and the USLME (the medical licensing exam): mimic your testing environment. Give yourself the exact time limits and don't bring any snacks.

Montoya has been working at Kaiser for almost a year and plans to transfer to Stanford to train in anesthesiology soon after the pandemic to continue her medical career.

Her final piece of advice: Wash your hands, and work with those who know more than you do.

"I had no idea that this was the path I was going to end up taking," she said, "and I just sought the advice of people that were older and wiser than me, and more experienced in their fields."



Nurse practitioner Camelot Thompson helps the homeless communities with the San Mateo County Mobile Health Clinic.

Courtesy of Camelot Thompson

## The homeless and vulnerable

**KATELYN LOWPENSKY**  
Arts & Entertainment Editor

Though they may be the healthiest individuals, many teenagers are not taking COVID-19 seriously said **Camelot Thompson**, a nurse practitioner.

Thompson, who works with the homeless population with the San Mateo County Mobile Health Clinic, said that she sees teens overlooking the severity of the pandemic, ignoring guidelines like social distancing to limit the spread of the virus.

"Social distance space is to keep people from sharing germs," she said. "I think that a lot of kids think that they're invincible."

Though only one teen has died in California, the concern from health professionals is that they can easily spread the disease to the more vulnerable populations, such as the elderly and those who are immunocompromised.

The homeless population is especially vulnerable. With little access to health care, they are more at risk when COVID-19 strikes their community.

For those worried about being infected, she offers some advice.

"The big thing for me is trying to tell people to not think it's the end of the world," she said. "Understand that this is a virus, like many viruses that we have."

Thompson's tips to stay healthy, such as thorough hand washing and proper social distancing, are voiced by other healthcare professionals.

In addition to social distancing, Thompson advises the public to wash their hands before and after touching anything, to not share food, and to not fret and start hoarding.

She understands the crucial role standard cleanliness rules play while coronavirus continues to spread.

"(People) don't really have to do much different than they should have been doing before," she said. "It's just now we're really emphasizing it."

Even though people are quarantined and separated from each other due to the virus, Thompson said that she is seeing a sense of humanity has developed through the chaos. Many people are helping their neighbors and calling their families during this time.

"People are making that social distance, but still making that human contact," she said. "When there's a crisis going on, it brings out the good in people."

**"When there's a crisis, going on it brings out the good in people."**



Santani Teng has enlisted a grassroots effort around the Bay Area to make and deliver face shields to medical personnel.

Courtesy of Santani Teng

## Face shields for our protectors

**ELIZABETH POSEY**  
Co-Editor-in-Chief

When he's not sheltering in place, Bay Area scientist **Santani Teng** studies how blind people see and feel the world around them at the selective Smith-Kettlewell Institute in San Francisco.

Since the pandemic began, he's had a more urgent calling that's taken him out of the safety of his home: helping meet the critical global shortage of protective hospital equipment.

Armed with a small team equipped with 3D printers, donations from friends and supplies, the Bay Area scientist has recruited a grassroots group to make and deliver homemade face shields for health care workers on the front line of the coronavirus pandemic.

Teng, who grew up in Milpitas, said he was called into action by his physician friends describing how they are putting themselves at risk by reusing their hospital equipment, including face shields and masks.

"I don't want them to be overwhelmed," he said. "I don't want them to get sick."

He described a text message from a friend saying he had used his face shield for an entire eight hour shift and until "it literally just disintegrated" on him.

The coronavirus pandemic has the potential to overwhelm hospitals across the United States that are struggling to supply their employees with personal protective equipment, which includes vital N95 masks and gloves. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that both manufacturers and distributors of PPE are facing challenges related to increased demand and high volume orders.

Teng is joined by countless scientists and tinkerers like him around the world racing to get PPEs to hospitals and building equipment to meet worker demands.

To make the National Institutes of Health-approved masks, Teng relied on his MIT alumni network, who have already been making such protective equipment for Boston's hospitals.

The current shortage, caused by a strain to the PPE supply chain, is causing major deficits in hospitals that are treating patients with the virus. It frustrates him that

"I'm still surprised that anything we're doing is either necessary or useful," said Teng, "But I'm super gratified."

To build the face shields, he used models that were created and tested by Budmen, a company that designs and manufactures 3D printers. Making the face shields requires a 3D print of the polycarbonate sheet covering the face, elastic bands to secure it.

Since March, Teng has already shipped sourced about 1,000 face shields, but he doesn't have plans to stop.

"It's a personal mission for me," he said, "because for something like coronavirus there is no difference between the personal and the social."

LEARNING ON A CURVE | BRANHAM'S LAST CLOSURE

**A history of virulence**

The COVID-19 pandemic is the latest in the evolving history of outbreaks, some of whom nearly wiped out large swaths of the world's population. We look at the major outbreaks in history.

Scale: .1 inch radius = 100,000 deaths

# THE LAST OUTBREAK

In 2009, Branham was alone in the Bay Area in closing its doors after a student contracted the swine flu, known as H1N1. The district's approach to the closure then was different in nearly every regard — from its communication to its rollout of school resources.

**Swine flu: Easily spread, but not as deadly**

In the spring of 2009, a new version of the H1N1 influenza virus — the virus that caused the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic — emerged and began to spread rapidly. The swine flu killed anywhere from 151,700 to 575,400 people worldwide in its first 12 months, through April 2010, according to estimates from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and may have infected over 1 billion by the end of 2010.

The swine flu spread easily person-to-person, just like COVID-19, and possibly even from people who were presymptomatic.

So why didn't the swine flu overwhelm our health care systems and put so many people out of work? The main difference is that it ended up being a much milder and less deadly infection. There are a range of estimated case fatality rates for swine flu, but even the highest, less than 0.1 percent, are much lower than the current estimates for COVID-19.

Source: Santa Clara Public Health

**Technology and distance learning**

11 years is a long time in terms of advances in technology and access.

**Curriculum delivery:** Primarily overhead projectors, and Microsoft PowerPoint. Now, teachers primarily use the Google Suite of education apps, and utilize apps such as Quizlet, Kahoot!, PollEverywhere and other interactive formats to supplement their teaching.

**Wifi access:** In 2009, smartphones had not yet gained mainstream

penetration, and each class possessed one or two PC for Internet access. Since distance learning began, the district is moving to loan Chromebooks, and has lent out more than 100 mobile hotspots. In total, more than 800 Chromebooks were loaned out to students in the district.

**School communication:** The district has been sending twice-weekly emails updating parents on the rapid COVID-19 changes, and has shared advisories on its website. In 2009, one email was sent out after the student contracted H1N1.

Source: CUHSD

Lone swine flu infection in 2009 a lesson on planning and communication

KATELYN LOWPENSKY

Arts & Entertainment Editor

A global virus. Schools shut down. Wall-to-wall media coverage. Branham has seen this before, but it was 2009, not 2020.

The pandemic, known as swine flu, or H1N1 had spread to the Bay Area in spring 2009. According to news reports, a 16-year-old student, known as Santa Clara County's Patient Zero, contracted the virus after taking a trip to visit family in Southern California.

When the news arrived April 28, it was literally hand-delivered from the Santa Clara Department of Health to **Michael Posey**, who was then Branham's Vice Principal. He happened to be a neighbor of the county health department official, who notified him of the student who contracted the virus.

"The person actually showed up at my doorstep," he said.

With the district office closed for the night, it was on the public information officer at the time to spread the word via email and through the Branham website. There was no universal phone list then, and messaging via texts had yet to be set up. Though there was a system in place to make a mass call to parents in the district, it couldn't be done remotely.

The next day, Posey and other administrators were on campus to redirect parents driving their students to school. All personnel were directed to leave by the end of the day.

No other directives from the Santa Clara Health Department other than for students to not attend class for the week.

"There were no stay-at-home orders," Posey said. "It was just 'stay away from school.'"

Teachers and students who worked at Branham at the time recalled the event as an extended vacation. Due to the sudden closure, there were no assignments given, unlike the supplementary learning and the phase 2 graded work assignments of the current pandemic.

"I don't think many took the swine flu closure seriously," said P.E. teacher **Ron Smare**. "Most considered it a second spring break."

Athletics activities director Landon Jacob recalled that students and staff still congregated with each other, just not at school. The tone is a lot more different with the current pandemic, he said.

"Everyone is taking this much more seriously than the one in 2009," he said. "The majority of people were just happy to have the week off and not have to worry about the responsibility of school work for students, or work for staff."

The low mortality rate of swine flu (.002%) may have contributed to the complacent nature the Branham community had toward the disease, said science teacher Juan Fernandez.

"Ten years ago, most people didn't worry about the swine flu," he said. "The school closed in response to some extremely worried parents."

Compared to the swine flu outbreak, the district's handling of the coronavirus involved weekly conversations among the Santa Clara County school district superintendents and the Health Department, as well as frequent conversations with school administrators.

Distance learning has been made easier with the advent of Google Classroom, Zoom and greater broadband penetration providing the infrastructure necessary. In 2009, using PowerPoint for presentations had just entered the mainstream, and many teachers still used overhead projectors for their instruction.

Branham's closure may have been a blip on the pandemic radar, but for teachers who are currently surviving their second pandemic, it serves a study in contrasts in instructional practice and in tone.

With school indefinitely closed, the community is living in unprecedented times.

"It felt like more of an isolated experience compared to the whole county, state and country imposing school closings," said special educator **Leanne Haghghi**, who was student teaching at the time. "I do not remember it being as somber or anxiety-inducing as COVID-19."

Note: Michael Posey is the father of Elizabeth Posey, the Bear Witness Co-Editor-in-Chief.

**BUBONIC PLAGUE**

1347-1351 | 200 million deaths

The plague originated in rats and spread to humans via infected fleas. It wiped out 30-50% of Europe's population, and took more than 200 years for the continent's population to recover.

**SMALL POX**

1520 | 56 million deaths

Smallpox killed an estimated 90% of American Indians. In Europe during the 1800s, an estimated 400,000 people were killed by smallpox annually.

**SPANISH FLU**

1918-1919 40 million to 50 million deaths

Smallpox killed an estimated 90% of American Indians.

**HIV/AIDS**

1981-present  
25-35 million



**COVID-19**  
ONGOING

350,000 deaths (as of April 14)



**SWINE FLU**  
2009-2010

200,000 deaths

**SARS**

2002-2003 | 770 deaths

**MERS**

2012-present | 850 deaths

**EBOLA**

2014-2016 | 11,300 deaths

## Editorial

The opinion of the  
Bear Witness editors

# School community can thrive in pandemic

SOCIALLY DISTANT TOGETHER

Branham — the physical space — is the glue that holds our school community together. From school to sports, friends to teachers, it was a living hub from dawn to dusk.

Since sheltering in place began and distance learning took place, our fragile community has splintered into 1,800 pieces, with no clear way to bring them together. COVID-19 has tested our school's resolve to build that community, wherever it is.

There have been many successes in meeting students and their families where they are. Hundreds of meals are served to students and their families each day. Administrators are making house visits to ensure students had access to Chromebooks and wifi hotspots.

In the community-building sphere, our Leadership group has taken to social media

in a big way, providing information about the campus closures and grading policy changes to celebrating the quirks of sheltering in place via daily challenges. (The Bear Witness has reported on these, too).

Hundreds have participated in the virtual Battle of the Classes, which has historically seen low participation among a small group of dedicated students. The recent Minecraft Hunger Games event drew in students who normally wouldn't volunteer in the all-class rally games.

Teachers are rising to the occasion, switching from in-person teaching to being experts at Zoom and multimedia, some for the first time in their teaching careers. They have been supportive of students struggling to make the transition to online learning, giving extra time

on classwork and accommodating students with academic struggles.

Visual and performing arts programs such as the band program are hosting virtual concerts to celebrate student achievement.

Despite these gains in rebuilding community virtually, they still do not replace the real campus life that we've grown accustomed to.

We are struggling with changes in routines and expectations. A-level students are suddenly losing motivation to challenge themselves, as there is no difference between their grade and one who earned a 60% in a class.

We are feeling the social distance of our friends whom we used to see without restrictions and masks. Teachers who are parents are playing double duty, trying to keep their children safe, while creating and revising their

lessons to an online environment.

This pandemic has put an economic strain on our society, and is testing the strength of Branham's community to withstand challenges.

But it's not the first time we've faced a crisis of confidence. When Branham reopened after being closed for a decade in the 1990s, teachers operated with an underdog mindset: They would try whatever it took to keep things going. It took years of experimentation and cohesion among staff and students for the results to gel, and Branham has consistently been at the top, or one of the top schools in the district.

The spirit of thoughtfulness in experimentation is in this school's DNA, and it will be the glue that holds this community together, whether we're in person or online.

### BULLETIN BOARD

## A learning curve

With Phase 2 of distance learning in full swing, students share their thoughts on the effectiveness of Zoom classes and adjusting to their new routines.



**Hanson Nguyen**  
Junior

"Distance learning has helped me become more responsible and independent. I've started to use my time more wisely than I did during school. However, distance learning makes it hard to get help, because teachers are not as accessible as they used to be."



**Geo Palacio**  
Freshman

"I'm not a big fan of it, but it's forcing me to be more motivated and get involved."



**Kelsey Migliore**  
Junior

"I really like the schedule of distance learning. I feel like classes are spaced out well and an hour a day is very nice. I definitely have struggled with having motivation to do work at home and setting a schedule for myself. The amount of emails I receive in a day is insane and I miss so much of what the teachers tell us in those emails. Also, I miss the social aspect of school like getting to see my friends or work with others on stuff, so it's really tough to force myself to get stuff done."



**David Sandel**  
Junior

"I feel more comfortable in the classroom because I'm allowed to be in class in the comfort of my own home. I haven't experienced many problems due to distance learning, but my computer crashed one time and that set me back. It is also harder to get questions answered by teachers, but other than that I've had no other problems with distance learning."

## LISTEN TO THE EXPERTS

Scientists, not politicians (or Trump), should be leading coronavirus policy changes



Stella Wong/Special to the Bear Witness

### A short history of Trump vs. science

#### COVID-19: Injecting disinfectants

Early this month, Trump raised the idea of injections of disinfectant to fight the coronavirus, which health officials warned would be dangerous. The president later claimed he was being sarcastic, although the transcript of his remarks suggests otherwise.

#### COVID-19: UV light

Trump also suggested ultraviolet light, even internal light, could be a possible preventative measure, contrary to scientific advice.

#### COVID-19: Malaria drug

As the recorded U.S. death toll passed the 50,000

**NOLAN ZILS**  
Copy Editor

In these troubling and confusing times, one would think that the country would tune in to a knowledgeable health expert professionally handling the health problems associated with this crisis. Instead, we tune in to politicians like President Donald Trump and New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo.

Politicians are trying to take charge in a situation that shouldn't be managed by someone of their particular profession. Instead, the country should listen to the leaders of national health institutes, like Dr. Anthony Fauci.

Fauci has been the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) since 1984. During his term, Fauci witnessed many disease outbreaks, such as the HIV/AIDS outbreak and made many contributions to the understanding of how such immune deficiencies affect the body. Fauci is one of the lead members of the White House Coronavirus Task Force established by Trump in January. He has given professional advice on how to deal with the pandemic, and in late March, argued for the extension of the original 15-day self-isolation guidelines until at least the end of April. Considering all of the things he's dealt with in his professional career, it is more logical for Americans to follow his advice rather than a politician's.

In this life-threatening situation, it's crucial to

mark, the Food and Drug Administration issued an alert about the dangers of using hydroxychloroquine, a malaria drug that Trump has repeatedly promoted for coronavirus patients.

#### Solar eclipse: Staring into the abyss

When a rare solar eclipse happened in 2017, astronomers and eye doctors repeatedly warned people not to stare directly at the sun without protection. Photos show Trump did anyway. He later donned protective glasses, however.

#### Climate change a "hoax"

For decades, scientists have called climate change a pressing issue, pointing to data, physics and chemistry. Trump regularly called it a hoax until recently. He also

respond quickly and make the right decisions to save lives.

We've already witnessed the consequences of the Trump administration failing to take swift action to deal with the virus' spread. Initially, the president ignored health warnings from medical experts when advised to take action early in the phase of COVID-19, instead focusing on economic and electoral considerations of the outbreak. In late February, Trump advised in a daily press briefing for the country to not take the virus seriously.

"When you have 15 people, and the 15 within a couple of days is going to be down to close to zero, that's a pretty good job we've done," he said. A month after this conference, the U.S. case number was not zero. It was 140,000.

The first case of the virus in the United States was reported on Jan. 20 in Washington. By March 1, there were 88,443 global cases, 42 in the United States, and 3,041 deaths worldwide. Despite this, Trump didn't declare a national emergency until March 13, almost two months after the first case.

Many states didn't declare stay-at-home orders until almost two months after the first case in the state, possibly due to concerns of the closures of buildings like schools and businesses. California, for instance, reported its first case of COVID-19 on Jan. 26. Even though our state was one of the first in the country to order a shelter-in-place, by the time it was put into effect on March 19, there were 189 confirmed

claims that noise from wind turbines — which he referred to as windmills — causes cancer, which is not accurate.

#### Redrawing the danger zone

When Trump wanted to defend his warning that Alabama was threatened by Hurricane Dorian last year, he displayed an official weather map that had been altered with a marker to extend the danger areas. Alabama National Weather Service meteorologists were chastised by their agency chief when they issued tweets to reassure worried residents that they were not in the path of the hurricane.

— Compiled by Nolan Zils

cases in the state and 12,022 people who tested positive in the country. Delayed action can have catastrophic consequences when dealing with outbreaks, and the Coronavirus was no exception. Despite individual states acting quickly to slow the pandemic, the federal response has been inconsistent with medical experts, leading to a rapid spread of the virus nationwide.

As of May 5, the U.S.'s 1,208,674 confirmed cases are the most by far in the world. The U.S. also leads the globe in deaths with 69,680 (statistics from the Google News Coronavirus page). The number of daily cases is over the "healthcare capacity," which is how many sick people the national healthcare system can treat properly at once. If we do not listen to medical officials' advice of how to flatten the curve, more people will die.

On the other hand, if politicians listen to medical experts, create strict guidelines and slow the spread of the virus, the daily cases will decrease. Flattening the curve will allow medical professionals the chance to treat everyone and save lives. This strategy will increase the amount of people who will receive treatment.

With the total amount of worldwide cases of the Coronavirus growing exponentially, it's clear that the virus is spreading fast. The best thing we can do is listen to people like Fauci, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the World Health Organization (WHO) to determine the next step forward to stop the spread of COVID-19 and save lives.

LEARNING ON A CURVE | OPINION

## BITE-SIZED Minor solutions, minor problems



**Problem:** Sports is a huge part of my life and it sucks to not have anything to watch. I'm desperate! I need my daily dose of SportsCenter highlights!

**Solution:** Every sports channel should replay memorable games to keep us entertained. That way, I can pretend that I'm seeing Steph Curry play, even if it's a game from three years ago

—Ryan Walters



**Problem:** The lack of toilet paper in stores. I know this problem has been constantly mentioned in social media and the news, but seriously? Why toilet paper? It's the end of the world so why not stock up on medicine or water instead?

**Solution:** Invest in paper towels - has a similar texture to toilet paper and is multipurpose!

—Chandler Roberts



**Problem:** Beware the Quarantine 15. It's difficult being stuck at home surrounded by food, but I'm feeling extremely guilty after eating my way through the day.

**Solution:** Create a national holiday where we are obligated to eat all the food we want to with no guilt.

—Katelyn Lowpensky



**Problem:** With grocery delivery services such as Instacart and Whole Foods backed up, my parents have both had to physically go to the store and search the aisles, which puts them at risk: even with bringing gloves. Grocery stores need to be practical with offering delivery or curbside pickup.

**Solution:** Take to social media to complain and tag the outlets. That'll show them.

—Elizabeth Posey

# Reality TV: Not real, but its lessons are

From the trashy to the transcendent, these shows teach us more about ourselves than about the lives of celebrities

KATELYN LOWPENSKY  
Arts & Entertainment Editor

There's a time and a place to read and absorb the latest news about our pandemic. And then there's time to watch the train wreck of Joe Exotic or the memes of Big Ed.

With the world literally crumbling around us, we are escaping back into reality TV. Since sheltering in place began, shows such as "Tiger King," "Too Hot to Handle" and "Love is Blind" have topped the streaming charts on Netflix. On network television, "The Bachelor" shows have seen their largest audiences since 2016.

Others, such as "90 Day Fiance" or the "The Bachelor" and "The Bachelor: Listen to Your Heart" provide broad appeal. In a survey of 1,000 people on Flixed, a website dedicated to streaming television, aside from dramas and comedy shows, reality TV beat out animated shows, rom-coms and superhero offerings.

Even as we're bingeing on these empty calorie offerings, there are lessons to be learned from an anthropological perspective, from the ugly side of relationships in the limelight to the damage of money and fame.

Anthropologist and author of "Culturematic" Grant McCracken writes that behaviors reality TV stars display makes it easy for us to look at what's on TV and think "I wouldn't have done that." How these stars handle modest fame and fortune may help us figure out our own selves.

Reality mainstays such as "Keeping Up with the Kardashians" let us into the lavish lifestyles of famous families. The stars of each show are paid immense amounts of money, some reportedly over \$500,000 per episode. Despite their shallow traits, they have shown savvy and entrepreneurship, making themselves among the most successful families in reality TV.

Drama from the reality TV world makes people skeptical of ever stepping foot into it.

We learn diplomacy when people onscreen degrade each other and say things they can't take back. When dance teacher Abby Lee Miller, star of "Dance Moms," she tells teen dancer Hadley Walters that she looked like "roadkill" after a performance, we wonder, would we demean a child like that on camera?

McCracken uses reality TV as a tool to observe and analyze the culture of humanity. He feels television reveals a lot about society by providing viewers with a clear view of behavior. "It's like having a glass-bottom boat," he said. "If you're in a glass-bottom boat, you can see right down into the water. Reality TV is a caricature of itself often but it's still useful as a source of anthropological data."

The unrealistic elements of the reality TV world do not melt the brains of viewers. Instead, it allows us to understand that life in the spotlight has a price.

It's a different world onscreen. According to McCracken: "It's a chance to reflect on someone's reality and ask yourself whether it's a reality."

### Reality TV shows that we can't put down during quarantine



'Love is Blind' | Netflix

A social experiment where single men and women look for love and get engaged, all before meeting in person. This series is a breath of fresh air in the world of reality TV, as viewers get to watch couples really struggle with falling in love with someone.



'Keeping Up with the Kardashians' | E!, Hulu

In its 13th year, the Kardashian empire is built right before your eyes. The richer the family gets, the more dramatic the series becomes. The fights, the scandals are all played out right on the screen for you to enjoy.



'RuPaul's Drag Race' | VH1, Hulu

"Drag Race" has brought the world of drag into the mainstream. If you love makeup, singing, performance, or comedy, then you'll find something to enjoy in this series. The show also created some of the most popular memes on social media in recent years.



'Celebrity Watch Party' | Fox, Hulu

You're not going to see A-list celebrities on here, but the show is another example of rich people thinking that "they're just like us." Still, it's entertaining to see Rob Lowe and his kids recoil at watching "Dr. Pimple Popper" on Hulu, though.



'Wipeout' | ABC

This is the perfect show to escape from reality, where contestants compete in the "world's largest obstacle course." People falling off comically large structures (safely, of course) will never get old.



'90-day Fiance' | TLC, Hulu

The show has gained a cult following since it debuted in 2014. The premise: Is 90 days, the time required for a couple to marry under the fiancé visa, enough time to decide the rest of your life? What follows is often awkward, funny and dramatic.



'Next in Fashion' | Netflix

Among the competitive reality TV shows, this one stands out, with hosts Alexa Chung and Tan France providing a needed update to the Project Runway/Catwalk mold. These designers know what they're doing, but it still makes for some tense, binge-y moments.



'Be Our Chef' | Disney+

In the mood to see cookie-cutter families, um, making cookies (and delicious meals) together? It's a relaxing half hour (23 minutes, really), that demonstrate whether a family that flambés together, stays together.



'The Bachelor: Listen to Your Heart' | ABC

What makes this special is, aside from the amazing singing duets, is that the contestants on the show seem like regular people and more relatable than the average reality show folk.

—Compiled by staff

# Biden can fill leadership void in pandemic

CARA MCCLURE  
News Editor

In the current presidential cycle, candidates have tirelessly debated their policy ideas such as lowering the cost of housing, raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour nationwide and making health care options affordable. Now, they've been thrown a curveball: the COVID-19 pandemic.

Their leadership in handling this unprecedented crisis will affect Americans for years beyond this news cycle, and the lack of leadership in our current president has opened up the floodgates for other leaders to step in.

Since the beginning of the outbreak President Donald Trump has consistently been a few steps behind the curve, from calling COVID-19 the "Chinese Virus," insisting that the virus will be contained quickly, promoting untested drugs, to criticizing federal lockdown efforts that have

helped other countries contain the spread of the disease.

No wonder Americans are skeptical of our response. More than half of Americans are critical of the administration's handling of this crisis, according to a recent Gallup Poll.

The United States needs an empathetic, realistic human, not the xenophobic person we have today.

In New York, where coronavirus is hardest hit, NYC Mayor Bill DeBlasio has said that Trump has "minimized the danger and refused to use available federal action."

Not only is Trump slowing the dire need of medical supplies, but he is promoting xenophobic acts towards Asian people by re-naming COVID-19, bringing violence and hate to an already difficult situation.

"I call it the Chinese Virus because it is not a racist statement." Trump recently told an NBC

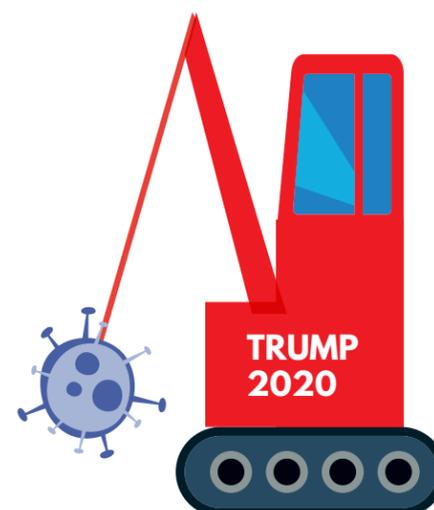
reporter.

By contrast, Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden's COVID-19 response emphasizes science, testing and preventative measures that has so far taken over 30,000 lives.

Of course, it's still talk right now since Biden is not designing policy, but the fact that he released an emergency response plan highlights the lack of vision that the country needs.

Biden's free testing and treatment plan will ensure that Americans will have a baseline measure so that a responsible, measured opening can take place. Trump's haphazard, cherry-picking policies leave testing up to each state, leaving room for the president to criticize measures that he disagrees with.

America needs a realist who will look out for the people's health, while helping the industry out of a recession by producing necessary equipment.



Jessica Berton/Special to the Bear Witness

# COUNTING SLEEP

The equation adds up: Fewer classes and more free time mean increased sleep. However, coronavirus-related anxieties and increased screen demands complicate our sleep formula.



**JULIANNE ALVARES**  
Co-Editor-in-Chief

Students have historically lacked the required amount of sleep, often getting much less than the recommended eight to 10 hours of sleep each night. Teens in a 2014 National Institutes of Health study reported getting between 6.5 to 7 hours of sleep.

However, since the beginning of the quarantine, with shorter school days and more down time, they seem to be getting more sleep — some reporting nearly 11 hours.

And yet they're still tired.

Due to the lack of routine and stress brought on by the quarantine, the pandemic and the suspension of the school year, many students are reporting trouble sleeping.

According to a study by SleepStandards, 78.5% of Americans have had their sleep affected due to the stress brought on by the COVID-19 shutdowns, from the record layoffs to the Of those, 23% reported having a "generally inconsistent sleeping schedule" as a result of the current sit-

uation.

The lack of routine quarantine life has also contributed to unstable sleeping patterns like sleeping too much or too little according to radio station KQED. Without the diligence of a school day routine, keeping consistent sleeping habits is difficult.

"School kept me on a pretty consistent schedule that worked well for me," senior **Alexa Mitchell** said. "It's hard to try and maintain that with so much free time."

Students have found themselves getting more sleep but at odd hours. Sophomore **Lipitha Tummala** used to get to sleep by 10 p.m. and wake up at 5 a.m., but now finds her sleeping schedule moved to midnight to noon.

Despite getting more sleep, Tummala finds herself waking up more tired.

"I'm less motivated to do anything," she said. "And I've been procrastinating on a lot of things I wanted to do."

In the SleepStandards study, 32% of participants reported becoming more active during quarantine. According to John Hopkins Medi-

## The importance of sleep in a pandemic

When confronting the COVID-19 pandemic, though, sleep becomes even more essential because of its wide-ranging benefits for physical and mental health, according to Sleep Foundation.

**Sleep empowers an effective immune system.** Solid nightly rest strengthens our body's defenses, and studies have even found that lack of sleep can make some vaccines less effective.

**Sleep heightens brain function.** Our mind works better when we get good sleep, contributing to complex thinking, learning, memory, and decision-making.

**Sleep enhances mood.** Lack of sleep can make a person irritable, drag down their energy level, and cause or worsen feelings of depression.

**Sleep improves mental health.** Besides depression, studies have found that a lack of sleep is linked with mental health conditions like anxiety disorder, bipolar disorder, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

## Sleeping Well

In spite of the daunting challenges, there are a handful of steps that can promote better sleep during the coronavirus pandemic.

If these efforts don't pay off immediately, don't give up. It can take time to stabilize your sleep, and you may find that you need to adapt these suggestions to best fit your specific situation.

**Set your schedule and routine.** Establishing a routine can facilitate a sense of normalcy even in abnormal times.

Sleep-specific aspects of your daily schedule should include:

**Wake-up time:** Set your alarm, bypass the snooze button, and have a fixed time to get every day started.

**Wind-down time:** It can involve things like light reading, stretching, and meditating along with preparations for bed like putting on pajamas and brushing your teeth. Given the stress of the coronavirus pandemic, it's wise to give yourself extra wind-down time each night.

**Bedtime:** Pick a consistent time to actually turn out the lights and try to fall asleep.

Compiled by staff. Source: Sleep Foundation

Chantal Wang/Special to the Bear Witness

## Screen time up sharply

Scientists say that it's inevitable, but screen limits OK

**ANDELINA MILLER**  
Opinion Editor

The perfect storm of less schooling, sheltering-in-place and distance learning has meant one thing: more screen time for everyone.

In just a few weeks, screen use has increased by more than 500%, according to a Parents-Together survey of 3,000 parents. It's an unavoidable reality that many families are facing.

Sophomore **Ashawnty Simms** said that she has long tried to avoid using screens during the week, as she has stayed busy with her extracurriculars.

Due to sheltering in place, she said that she sees a wide open schedule, one that involves her phone and her laptop more frequently.

Similarly, junior **Sofia Nonga** has seen a dramatic uptick in her phone use.

Nonga's daily screen time would range from 6-8 hours but has since increased to 14 hours.

Branham's closure for the rest of the school year has also forced the cancellation of many extracurriculars, making it difficult for teens to avoid increased screen time and get work done.

"It's been really tough to organize everything that needs to get done, and without a set schedule, it's been harder for me to manage my time," said junior **Quinn Ruiz**.

The increased screen time isn't necessarily bad news, though historically the term has been viewed as a pejorative: more screen time means less sleep and less engagement, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics last year.

The coronavirus has modified that thinking. The group this month released some guidance stating that, yes, there should still be limits on watching and consuming media. However, it said limits should not come at the expense of one's mental health.

It suggests that dinner time should be phone-free, and that constructive ways to use the phone, such as FaceTiming loved ones, should take precedence.

Families are urged to make time for offline experiences, which can help them "connect emotionally, process difficult experiences, and heal," the guidance states.

Although an increase in screen time is not ideal, many, including Branham students, are using technology as a way to connect while on lockdown.

Ruiz uses social media to stay in touch with her friends. To her, social distance makes the heart grow fonder.

"Not seeing the people that I normally see on a daily basis made me realize how much I appreciate them," she said.

## LEARNING ON A CURVE | ESSENTIAL EMPLOYEES



With dining out still a luxury as we shelter in place for the time being, we highlight some local cuisines near school that could use your business.

#### How to safely order takeout

##### Leave delivery instructions

Apps such as DoorDash and GrubHub let you decide how you want your meals to be delivered. Some suggestions include letting them leave food at the door, or providing a photo where it should be placed.

**Wash hands after food is delivered**  
Though there is no evidence of COVID-19 being transmitted through

food, it can live on in instruments that people touch, including utensils.

#### Leave a good tip

Food delivery drivers are typically either paid by the job (through DoorDash) or by the hour (at other restaurants). They don't have a work-from-home option if they want to earn money. The safest way to provide a tip is through the app itself.

**American Blue Rock BBQ, 3001 Meridian Ave**  
This Southern barbecue-inspired restaurant serves all types of barbecue

favorites from pulled pork to chicken. Customers can choose from a list of sides including hush puppies, mac and cheese, fruit salad and more.

#### Mexican Jalisco, 525 E. Campbell Ave.

Jalisco offers authentic Mexican food at a reasonable price. The menu is extensive, meaning there is something for everyone. The dishes come in very large portions with sides of rice and beans. Customers rave about the salsa and the customer service.

**Mediterranean Yiassoo, 2180 S Bascom Ave.**  
With a menu that includes greek

dishes such as gyros, chicken souvlaki, and falafel. Customers can also order sides like Greek salad and french fries. Customers on Yelp call Yiassoo their "go-to" place for Greek food because of its flavorful and fresh dishes.

#### Colombian Milohas, 4662 Meridian Ave.

This Colombian bakery is most commonly known for its empanadas. They also serve sweet pastries, juices, salads, and more. Customers describe the empanada crust as "flaky and buttery."

— Katelyn Lowpensky

# WORKING TOWARD SAFETY

With school hours offering more flexibility during the day, some students in customer service are working longer hours, potentially putting themselves at risk. How are they coping with

JAZZY NGUYEN and RYAN WALTERS  
Staff Writers

Junior **Mike Long** and senior **Sarah Huh** are both essential employees. Long is a Safeway courtesy clerk, and Huh helps her parents with their sushi restaurant.

Since the shutdown, they both have worked extra hours at their jobs, which are adapting to include social distancing measures.

As a courtesy clerk on the Safeway on Union Avenue, Long said that the increased hours as well as the corralling of the initial crowds of customers have taken a toll. In the first weeks, he's been witness to uncontrolled hoarding of items such as toilet paper and sanitizer. The panic has since died down, but he said he's still as busy as ever.

"It's more stressful," Long said. "It's even worse than Christmas shopping now."

Long said he is bothered by the scores of customers unhappy about the social distancing rules at the checkout lines, sometimes ignoring the

Long's workplace has an enforced social distancing rule by using tape on the floor by the checkout stands to keep people at least 6 feet away from each other for a safer shopping run.

To ensure social distancing, the workers are required to wash their hands every 30 minutes.

He initially was not as panicked about the pandemic, but said he is now seeing the importance of wearing masks, which, along with social distancing, is the Centers for Disease and Control and Prevention's recommended method to slow the spread of the virus.

Local restaurants are also under greater pressure to change their order of operation, as they risk getting shut down for not being COVID-19 compliant.

Huh, whose parents own and operate Sushi Heaven in Saratoga, says that they've physically blocked off customers from employees, who must maintain a six foot distance from each other.

The restaurant, like most that are operating, are on a take-out or delivery basis.

In order to minimize the risk, they have also cut down on the number of employees that work within the restaurant.

"We've told around 60%-80% of the workers to just like stay home," Huh says. "We usually have five [service] people, but now it's one server, only at dinner time."

Her family has even changed how the pickup system works in order to allow employees the least amount of contact and the most safety.

Huh says that they are only allowing one customer to enter the restaurant at a time, and that they enter and leave the establishment through different doors, as to keep customers from interacting.

The danger is real for students and families who must go out to buy essential items or to support their local businesses. Branham school nurse **Debra Phalen** recommends families to take extra precaution in their daily routines.

"Wipe down that cart," Phalen said. "When you put your groceries in your basket, make sure you're not touching your hands or your face."

In order to prevent the virus from traveling into homes on groceries, Phalen also recommends that families sort groceries into two piles in their garage; perishables and non-perishables. The non-perishables should be left untouched for three days in order for any present virus to die.

For the perishable goods, Phalen encourages families to take measures to sanitize those as well.

"Set your groceries up there (on the dirty



Courtesy of Odelia Hui

Senior **Odelia Hui's** parents **Myeongjin** (preparing a meal) and **Miyoung Huh** own and operate Sushi Heaven in Saratoga. The restaurant has had to cut back on the number of employees from five to one dinner time server, both as an economic measure and as a safety precaution.

side). You get sanitizing wipes and you wipe every package, every box, and then you set it on the clean side."

Of course, this is more easily said than done. The bottom line, for Phalen, is to wash hands after any outdoor interaction

Like most health experts, Phalen also recommends that people wear masks when going outside there they could potentially be exposed to the virus.

"Wearing it won't prevent you from contracting COVID-19, but it would help stop people from spreading the virus days before the symptoms occur," she said.

She added that wearing masks also serves as a reminder to avoid touching your face, which is one of the easiest ways to encourage infection.

Similarly, Long encourages others to follow social distancing rules in place and to have patience and kindness with others.

"(The customers) need to realize that the rules are for our safety and their safety," said Long, who has been employed since October. "The panic is no reason to be rude to those who cater to them at grocery stores and other businesses."



Courtesy of Mike Long

Junior **Mike Long** has been working as a courtesy clerk at Safeway for more than six months.

LEARNING ON A CURVE | STUDENT LIFE

UP & DOWN SIDE  
THE MONTH IN REVIEW



**Clubs remain active during shutdown**  
There's no school, but clubs around Branham have been making sure that students remain active while we're sheltering in place and making creative use of Zoom calls. Best Buddies has been hosting weekly meetings with its members to work on arts and crafts and to play games like Hangman and Pictionary. The newly formed Read Club has held weekly read-alongs, as well as informational sessions on essay writing. The SPARE Club has taken to social media to educate its followers on eco-friendly practices at home. Bruin 2 Bruin has also offered free tutoring via Zoom as well.



**Teachers, admin try to lift our moods**  
The downside: School is canceled (in its physical form). The upside: Sheltering in place has brought our community together. A group of teachers, led by drama teach Jennifer Sorkin recorded snippets of Justin Timberlake's hit "Can't Stop the Feeling," with awkward dancing (in a good way) and out-of-tune singing (also in a good way). Similarly, Principal Cheryl Lawton has shared words of hope in her weekly emails. While "we're all in this together" brings a feeling of camaraderie, it can't shake the feeling that we're in this for the long haul.



**Feeling socially distant**  
Though attendance has been high (97% attendance as of April 7), online learning cannot compete with in-person schooling. Teachers are adapting to the medium with asynchronous lessons such as pre-recorded lectures and group projects, but engagement has been low in our once-a-week classes. Students have been told to turn off their videos and mute their mics due to privacy concerns. Often, we sit at a blank screen for our one-hour Zoom classes, then sign off without a word.

— Compiled by Lily Middleton

# Minecraft event a fitting end to BOTC

ASB adapts swiftly to engage teens online

JAYDEN KIM  
Staff Writer

The annual Battle of the Classes ended in an epic match — not through carefully choreographed dance moves in the school gym, but online in a glitchy, entertaining Minecraft "Hunger Games" style fight to the finish.

It was a fitting end to this year's festivities, adjusted and reimagined to target a different crowd online.

Taking place on Google Classroom and through social media from March to April, this year's BOTC involved a new challenge each day, from students sharing photos of their pets, up-cycled items for a recent Earth Day challenge, to writing teacher thank-yous. Students are encouraged to upload their contributions to their Instagram stories and tagging the school account, @seewhatsbruin.

This online form of BOTC brought in more than 400 participants, including senior Paige Knudsen, who participated in nearly every challenge. She said she joined because the activities, such as there Couchella, where students share songs that describe their current lives, are easy and accessible.

"My favorite thing about online BOTC is that it reaches a different audience than BOTC at school would," Knudsen said.

Previous BOTC events drew on choreographed dance routines and elaborate class decorations to award each class points, with several dozen students participating.

"I would not have participated in the one at school," Knudsen continued. "It is bringing in new people rather than the same crowd who always participates."

With the high engagement of this year's BOTC — both the @seewhatsbruin and @branhamhs pages have added more than 200 followers in the last month — many feel that it is helping the Bruin community find community during social isolation.

"My favorite thing about BOTC is how students are able to stay connected and stay a part of the school even when we're all apart," said sophomore Isha Chander, a Leadership student. "People are really getting excited just to show what they've been working on and really spreading kindness within their communities and within their homes, and just doing the best they can to make the most out of this situation."

Providing a sense of community was the reason why Activities Director Christina Hillman proposed the online BOTC format.

"I wanted to do something to keep students engaged and connected during this time of uncertainty," Hillman said. "Since we missed out on having an at school BOTC, I thought this could be a cool way to connect the classes, too."

For Chander, the popularity of the event (freshmen handily won, by the way), helps students reach beyond the isolation of their rooms and share parts of their lives with others online.

"People are still willing to share things with each other and work on things with each other," she said. "They're a part of that collective effort to do good within our little bubbles right now."

# FASHION FORWARD

For Branham's clothing designers, finding their niche takes patience, practice



Junior Dylan Armato, in his favorite outfit, designs clothing that sits at the intersection between casual and futuristic. He has sold sweatshirts and shoes, such as those on the left, for hundreds of dollars. He's among several aspiring fashion designers at Branham, including seniors Summer Van Tassell and Courtney Martinez.

Courtesy of Dylan Armato



KATELYN LOWPENSKY  
Arts & Entertainment Editor

Junior Dylan Armato was called "gay" for wearing nail polish to school. He tried to brush it off.

"People were bullying me because of it," he said. "I didn't really let me affect me too hard, but I did get mad."

Armato stands out among his peers, since he's among a handful of students who makes his own clothing, following the footsteps of designers who started their careers as teenagers such as Marc Jacobs and Coco Chanel by preparing for careers in fashion.

He uses his classmates' homophobic slurs and taunts as ammunition to fuel his passion, but with his work comes compliments.

"People have liked what I've worn," Armato said. "When you get that kind of confidence it feels pretty good."

Armato first took interest in the opportunities fashion has to offer in eighth grade when he made an account on grailed.com, a quality second-hand menswear site, and began selling clothes. Now, he is advancing his skills while taking the SVCTE Fashion Design class, where he is learning to sew.

"The machine is pretty scary at first. It's a powerful machine," Armato said. "You feel like sometimes your hand will slip and we'll sew your fingers together."

The SVCTE class also helped senior Summer Van Tassell, who took the class last year and grew as an artist throughout the rigorous course.

"It was very intense. But it was one of the best things that I've ever done for fashion," Van Tassell said.

Van Tassell said that she draws her inspiration from her surroundings, which she has done since

she was young. She said she was fascinated by Vogue magazines that she would see in stores as a kid. She still uses inspiration from her youth to create new looks.

"I'm super into the '70s right now so I'll look up the '70s aesthetic on Pinterest and even find old Vogue magazines from the early '70s," she said.

For any project, the most lengthy part is the planning process. The SVCTE class taught her the importance of sketches that need to be perfectly planned out. She learned over time as a designer that practice is necessary in order to carry out a design.

"I have pages where I'm just trying to design the same or trying to draw the same skirt," she said. "It's OK to start slow."

Senior Courtney Martinez took the DIY route, creating unique outfits by painting over them. This skill was not learned through SVCTE, but from her lifelong love for art and fashion. Her designs come out of a niche need.

"I wanted to buy a shirt for a concert but I couldn't afford it," Martinez said, "I was like 'I'm just gonna paint myself a shirt.' And it came out really well."

Martinez first took an interest in fashion freshman year when she noticed how she didn't feel comfortable in the usual, trending clothes.

She said enjoys putting together outfits that wouldn't be considered normal; she takes inspiration from TV shows such as "Friends" and "That '70s Show." She's said she's seen unapproving looks from classmates, but she understands not everyone has the same opinions.

"Sometimes I feel like I'm being judged sometimes and it's kind of hard but I just think about it like I'm expressing myself through clothing," Martinez said. "They have different types of expression."

Van Tassell's confidence came after she was able

to gain experience and overcome beginner's struggles.

"You're coming into it kind of blind, especially if you don't have inspiration," Van Tassell said.

During the quarantine caused by the COVID-19 virus, Bay Area residents are stuck at home and are only able to leave their homes for necessary outings. The shelter-in-place has an upside and a downside for Armato.

"The quarantine has given me time to focus on fashion, but sadly I'm not making any clothes," Armato said. "I was not able to get any of my fabrics or materials before the quarantine."

Martinez has benefited from the time the quarantine has to offer because it presented her with an opportunity. Her hobby of painting clothes developed into a talent that did not go unnoticed. She approached the owner of a local brand, asking for advice on how to start her own brand. Shortly after, she was asked to design shirts for an upcoming project that showcased their similar style interests.

"His brand has always been 'edgy' so we both collaborated on designs that would fit his brand," Martinez said.

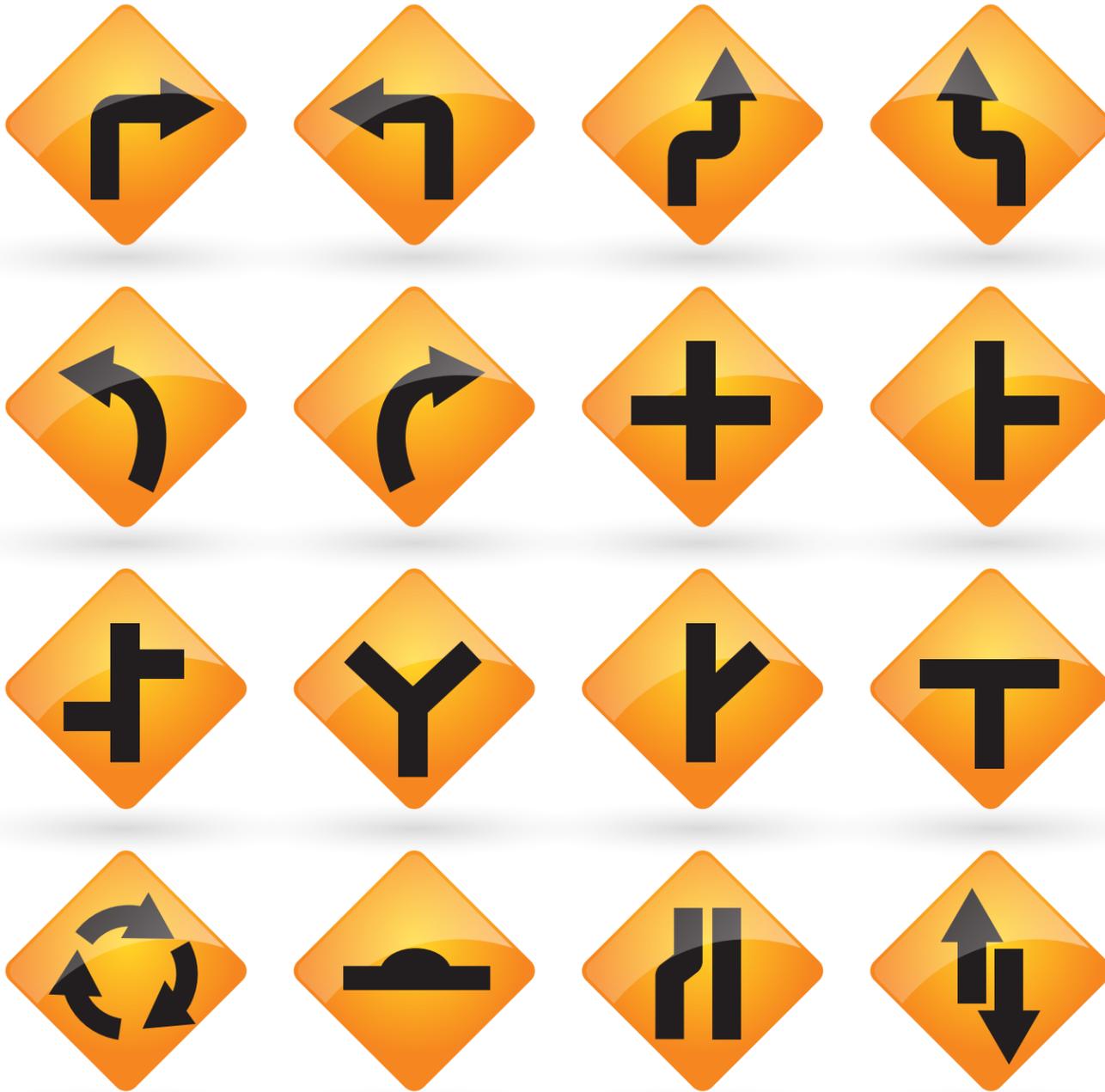
Van Tassell is also maximizing her time and working her hardest to begin a long scale project.

"Recently, the hardest part is trying to find a pattern I like but I'm going to work on a skirt or a dress," she said.

All three student designers have grown through their fashion experiences and use it as a creative outlet to show their true colors. Martinez feels that it can truly help people with their own mindsets like it helped her.

"I was insecure my freshman and sophomore year trying to fit in with everyone else," she said. "I encourage other people as well to get involved in fashion because it's a really good outlet for people."

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LEARNING ON A CURVE | A SEASON-ENDER

**Recognizing seniors from spring sports**

The season was over shortly after it began. With senior nights out of the question (as well as any spring banquet), the Bear Witness would like to recognize the following seniors:

- Badminton**  
 Macy Fu  
 Emma Le  
 Kaitlyn Lee  
 Jessie Lin  
 Brittany Pangaliman  
 Danielle Phan  
 Eric Sheng  
 Justin Teng  
 Madison Vu  
 Alan Vu

- Baseball**  
 Sammy Aguirre  
 Ryan Brennan  
 Noah Contreras  
 Jake Herington  
 Carter Jones  
 Connor McElroy  
 Ethan Norris  
 Brenden Passamani  
 Cameron Rynhard  
 Jack Sparagna

- Competitive sport cheer**  
 Anna MacPherson  
 Deshna Quincy

- Golf**  
 Nathan Kim  
 Krishna Sharma  
 Twisha Sharma

- Softball**  
 Ashley Donaldson  
 Kiyomi Nguyen  
 Carissa Rivera

- Swim and Dive**  
 Atticus Ahearn  
 Cassidy Chang  
 Bailey Donaldson  
 Maria Malafei  
 Melissa Music  
 Caroline Ralston  
 Izzy Thiara  
 Carolyn Yglesias  
 Rebecca Young  
 Ben Aronson  
 Ray Chavez  
 Shlok Gore  
 Anderson Lenguyen  
 Mitchell MacAulay  
 Quinten Moshy  
 Matthew Nguyen  
 Oliver Polaha  
 Max Sharp  
 Tam Truong  
 Jalen Wong

- Boys tennis**  
 Rohan Joshi  
 Ian Mckibben  
 Ethan Nguyen  
 Mayank Sood

- Track and field**  
 Evan Franco  
 Diego Hammana  
 Bretteric Hicks  
 Conner Kendall  
 Frank Poso  
 Pati Wolfgramm  
 Julianne Alvares  
 Tilde Arbman  
 Nadia Delgeba  
 Lindsey Gigliello  
 Sarah Huh  
 Phoebe Roach

- Boys volleyball**  
 Jessy Gonzalez  
 Gabriel Miller  
 Joel Silva  
 Aiden Velasquez



**Junior Zac Tzou faces off against an Albany rival during a state semifinal match in March. The soccer team was the last Branham team to play a playoff match for the rest of the year.**  
 Rich Ruiz/Special to the Bear Witness

# THE LOST SEASON

Senior spring athletes mourn being robbed of their last hurrah as a Bruin

**CIANNA HOLLINGER**  
*Staff Writer*

Senior **Bailey Donaldson**, didn't know that her first swim meet of the season was going to be her last.

At the March 12 meet, the first at the newly renovated Aquatic Center, Branham's swim teams (girls and boys JV and varsity teams) swept Silver Creek. It was an easy victory, but Donaldson described the uncertainty in the air. Cases were rising in the state, and in Santa Clara County, more than 50 cases were announced that day. With talks about a closure imminent, athletes and coaches prepared their goodbyes.

"We hugged and laughed and enjoyed each other's company," she said. "We cheered for each other as loud as we could."

Still, the announcement via email and social media came swiftly. School was out.

"I didn't want to believe it because I didn't want it to end so fast," she said. "I've waited four years to swim in the

brand new pool we got, and I was only able to swim for one meet."

Swim coach **Dave Mackey** was resigned to the season ending soon. He had been talking about the team's plans with his captains, and wished he had been able to plan ahead, especially for the graduating seniors.

"It's unfortunate, but it seems the necessary decision at this time," he said. "I feel bad for the seniors."

However she believed that despite her sport's cancellation, she felt it brought her teammates closer together.

"It kinda brought everyone's spirit down knowing that winter and fall athletes got to finish their season and we didn't," she said. "I think it brought us together though because we are all going through it together."

To cope with their loss, the swim team has turned to social media to celebrate its athletes, especially the seniors. For each post, senior **Matt Nguyen**, the team's Instagram manager, posts a stat box for each senior and their fondest memories.

"It's a way for us to get through this season, and look forward to the next," he said.

Spring athletes and teams have suffered from immediate changes due to COVID-19, and it's unclear what, if anything, can be done to make up for lost time.

Seniors on their teams feel the most cheated out of their season.

"The cancellation added to the loss of a full senior year," said senior **Jessie Lin**, who plays for the badminton team. "I enjoy playing and being on the team."

Some senior athletes also believe their potential for college recruitments was being denied. Colleges have stopped in-person recruiting but have not stopped recruitment as a whole, according to the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA).

Instead, phone calls, digital communication, and extended eligibility for spring athletes will be in place for recruitment. The NCAA also reports that on-site recruitment will not begin until May 31.

Even with this new information, senior

**Evan Franco** described how COVID-19 could affect his future track and field career in college.

The senior, who has committed to the University of Arizona, was recently named the CCS Scholar Athlete of the Year. After setting numerous school records, including running a mile in 4:19, he had been planning to run cross country and track in the fall.

However, without a proper recruitment system, he said, he felt that he was put at a disadvantage against some athletes who were able to record their official times before the shutdown.

"Not having this season hurt college recruitment for me and it never gave me a chance to prove myself," Franco said.

Even with the inability to practice and participate in track events, he still holds hope for possible future where there's a return to normalcy and athletes can compete together again.

"I've had obstacles before and I don't think this will slow me down," Franco said.

## PEP TALKS | Branham coaches share advice on how to learn and grow during quarantine



**Heather Cooper**  
*Boys volleyball*

"It takes everyone on the team to work together to succeed, and that if someone has made a mistake or is having a bad day, it is up to the whole team to work together. That is what we all need to do right now. It isn't about one person, it is about all of us working together."



**Josh Donaldson**  
*Boys tennis*

"Our athletes should take away better health awareness. Germs spread and that's one of the first steps to poor health."



**Steve Hawkins**  
*Golf*

"Sheltering in place has given me the opportunity to reach out to people that I haven't talked to in quite a while and to find out how they are doing. To reconnect with people (virtually, of course), but to lay new foundations to have new relationships with friends and family from the past."



**Hanson Nguyen**  
*Junior*

"Take this opportunity to improve an aspect of your life that you would like to. Maybe playing an instrument, learning a new language, or simply the art of carrying on a conversation. We (hopefully) will never have this kind of time again to do these things."



**Michele Correll**  
*Competitive Stunt Cheer*

"The bonds that you created with your team and the experiences that you did have with your team are greater than this situation. I am extremely thankful for the two amazing wins I had with my CSC STUNT team. Be thankful for your health and the opportunities you did have, as well as the ones you're sure to have in the future. Also remember to not sweat the small stuff."



**Neeraja Nambula**  
*Badminton*

"We should use this extra time as an opportunity to be productive and better ourselves. Try to find motivating factors to encourage you to do as much as you can in quarantine, and remember that this difficult time will pass, and better opportunities in the future await us."



**Dave Mackey**  
*Swim and Dive*

"The one thing we can learn from this is selflessness. Remember what you are doing is not only affecting yourself, but so many people around you."



**Larry Loeffler**  
*Varsity boys basketball*

"Just like anything else in our lives we are learning how to be more responsible under stressful times. How we conduct ourselves during these tough times will define us later in life."



**Torie Raineri**  
*Team cheer*

"Since college, I have used running/working out as an outlet during times of stress and anxiety. I know running is not for everyone, but in these uncertain and challenging times, I recommend that athletes find hobbies and outlets that are healthy and safe."



**Chris Jensen**  
*Cross country*

"As an athlete, play and practice each day like it is the last time you may play. As we have now seen that at any given moment it can be gone."



**Danny Kadah**  
*Varsity boys soccer*

"There are a lot of things that the pandemic has taken away from our daily lives, but not all of them are equally important. Think about what you miss the most and why and what you don't miss as much. Going forward try to steer your life more to the former and less to the latter."

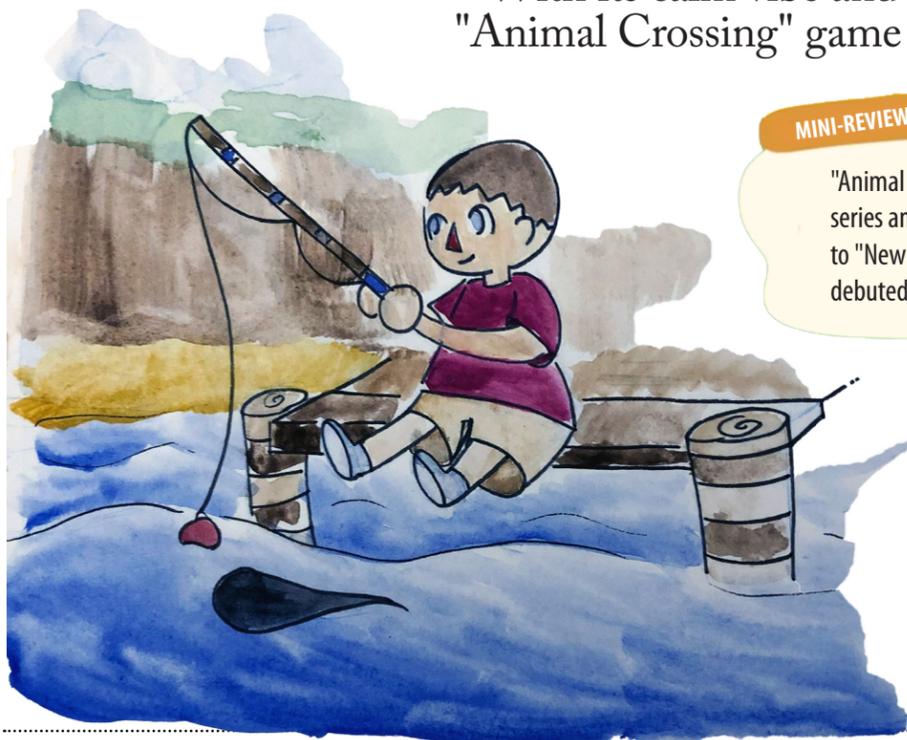


**Tina Parrot**  
*Varsity field hockey*

"Awards and trophies won't last forever, but how we treat others and how we respond in both good and bad times will last. This is one of those times that we can see who we really are and take the time to make ourselves better."

# GAMES AND HOBBIES

With its calm vibe and addictive gameplay, the latest "Animal Crossing" game provides the escapism we need



MINI-REVIEW

Review and illustrations by Jessica Berton

"Animal Crossing: New Horizons" is the newest addition to the series and its most refreshing. The "Animal Crossing" games up to "New Leaf" were practically unchanged since 2001, when it debuted on the GameCube.

I have been playing this game for three days straight, and it gives me the only social interaction I have outside of my family.

There are many reasons to enjoy it, but customization tops the list. "New Horizons" offers more customization than previous games, and lets you choose where to live so islanders don't crush that hybrid flower garden you spend months working on.

The raccoon dog Tom Nook becomes an even larger-than-life entrepreneur, letting you borrow more and more money from him to pay for traveling and other quality of life costs.

With school no longer being a major structure to base my life around, the daily tasks and paying off my loans give me something to do.



The game promotes playing with people online so you can get different fruits, or just to check on their cool islands. It's fun to talk to the characters, and if you don't like them, harass them endlessly until they leave.



K.K. Slider, the town troubadour, plays live soothing concerts for your townsfolk once it gains a level of notoriety.



TAE YUN (ERICA) KANG  
Staff Writer

Nintendo's latest "Animal Crossing" game came out barely a week after Branham and most schools in the state shut down. With sheltering in place in full effect and hours of free time to dedicate to the popular game, the timing couldn't have been better.

"Animal Crossing: New Horizons" for the Nintendo Switch is the fifth series title since its inception in 2001, when it was originally released for the GameCube (Nintendo 64 in Japan). Each iteration has taken a life of its own, with a community of millions of players discovering fossils, catching and categorizing insects and sharing custom designs for others online.

The premise for each game is basically the same: a villager inhabits a village/island of cute animals and slowly develops it into a thriving town. It has caught on at Branham, as well.

Freshman Josh Menard has been a fan of the

games since his elementary school days playing "New Leaf" on his Nintendo Wii, and was among the first to purchase "New Horizons" when it came out.

"I've been waiting for a new game for years, so it was really exciting to see it come to the Switch," he said.

The life simulation game has so far sold 5 million digital copies, and 13.4 million copies in total. Online, reviewers said that the game, with its cute graphics and bright music, provides the perfect form of escape for stay-at-home orders.

As distance learning continues, with two one-hour classes a day, sophomore Abbey Felker has seen a lot more play-time with the game.

"I played Animal Crossing for maybe an hour a day before lockdown, because I usually always played it," said sophomore Abbey Felker. "But since the lockdown, I've played it maybe like six hours a day."

The level of customization, from finding and recruiting visitors, crafting items, timed holiday events (the game plays out in real time) to terrafor-

ming the island have inspired thousands of online players to create their own hideaways. One user, acknowledging the closure of Disneyland, recreated the amusement park on his island, from the signature rides like the Haunted Mansion down to the souvenir stores.

For Abbey Felker, the main draw is the character and interactivity of the game.

"I think the cute characters are really cool with the game," said Felker. "And all the different personalities each villager has and decorating houses and collecting stuff in the game is super fun."

With lockdown in full effect for the time being, Menard said that the game helps in stay "better connected with my friends." If they share Switch codes, they will be able to visit each other's islands.

Because of its popularity, those interested in jumping on the "Animal Crossing" bandwagon might have to wait. Retailer stock has been empty for the past month for the Nintendo Switch, largely due to families staying at home due to COVID-19.

Mini Reviews  
Bite-sized opinions

BOOK  
Trials of Apollo Book 4: The Tyrant's Tomb

Written by Rick Riordan  
**What it is:** The latest novel by the renowned author who wrote the "Percy Jackson and The Olympians" series follows the (mis) adventures of the once glorious and now mortal Greek God Apollo, now named Lester, as he embarks on a quest with his friends to stop psychotic Roman rulers that have conveniently come back from the dead and want to destroy the world.

**Liked:** Like every Rick Riordan book, "The Tyrant's Tomb" was not in short supply of humor.

**Disliked:** This book was the penultimate book of the series, with the last one, "The Tower of Nero" due to release this September, which means this fantastic series will be over after one more book. I'm not ready for that

—Nolan Zils

SINGLE  
No Time to Die

Performed by by Billie Eilish and Finneas O'Connell

**What it is:** For the 25th upcoming James Bond movie, Billie Eilish and her brother Finneas have



Interscope

released the film's theme song, "No Time to Die," which also shares the same name as the upcoming but delayed film. This song was written and recorded at Billie's tour bus

at Texas all within three days.

**Liked:** The melody is haunting and really sticks with the listener

**Disliked:** The movie was pushed back far from the release of the song

—Jayden Kim

THEATER  
Black Friday

Produced by Starkid, a theater company

**What it is:** "Black Friday" is a horror-comedy about an evil doll that makes everyone around it go crazy. It's part of a trilogy of musicals about a little fictional town where weird happenings are the norm

**Liked:** The writing is incredible, it's funny but serious when it has to be. It has a good commentary on consumerism, but it is still a goofy fun time if you don't care about those issues. Also, unlike most musicals, the entire show is online with a professional recording.

**Disliked:** Its abrupt ending. Not that I wish it went on longer. I just think that the ending came out of nowhere.

—Chandler Roberts

## Students find creative outlet while staying in

From podcasting to making music, teens are making themselves heard during pandemic

LILY MIDDLETON  
Student Life Editor

Crisis breeds creativity, and with more time on their hands due to sheltering in place, Branham students are turning to their old passions and finding new ones as well.

In a snap online poll of 150 students, many reported dabbling in painting, stepping up their exercise regimen, or developing their music skills to cope with this crisis.

Two seniors, Cassidy Chang and Julianne Alvares, the Bear Witness editor-in-chief, have started a podcast, three episodes and counting since the closures began. Their episodes range from 16 to 20 minutes long, and discuss their struggles of being seniors, such as never stepping foot on campus again, to news that's been forgotten since the pandemic began.

Although the idea originated in January, Chang and Alvares decided the shutdown made for the ideal time to record the series, titled "We May Have Started the Fire."

"We're teenagers," Chang said. "We're unqualified to talk about anything, but we're gonna do it anyway."

The podcast has received dozens of listeners including several Branham alumni. With each episode, the production values have increased, such as the introduction

of theme music.

The two seniors realize that although the pandemic has changed how they are able to go about things as they used to, Chang sees the show continuing after the shelter-in-place orders have lifted.

"It's not solely about the coronavirus; it's about multiple different things and honestly it has just been really fun to have a place to share my ideas and thoughts," Chang said. "It would be awesome if it grew with viewers and subscribers but personally for me, I'm just using this as an opportunity to do something fun like this while I'm still in high school."

Taking up artistic hobbies have also been a common thread among student activities. Junior Kimberly Coke has been a longtime artist, and since the shutdown began, she has ventured into other artistic mediums, including embroidery. Without any prior knowledge as to how to go about embroidering, she felt comfortable with watching a couple of YouTube tutorials and has begun projects where she embellishes clothes by adding little pieces of art to pre-owned clothing such as jeans or denim jackets.

"I was at the store before the shelter in place happened, and I saw needles, and I was like I'm gonna learn how to embroider," Coke said. "I feel like it's almost as if you're coloring something in but with thread."

Other forms of art are an outlet for students like sophomore Daniel Almaraz, who is using his 5 years of band experience to write sheet music. One of Almaraz's songs was performed last December by the Branham wind ensemble.

"I've actually been writing for like a while," Almaraz said. "Nowadays with no classes or anything, I have been doing a bit more often and been more passionate about it."

Almaraz has especially used this time to perfect his craft and experiment with sound. He ventured out from writing specifically notes in sheet music to writing lyrics. His technique is to begin with a chord progression or a title and to build up from there, adding other parts for lyrics or other instruments as he writes.

"I tend to incorporate some chords that are out of key in a lot of songs," he said. "I feel like doing so can keep an audience more engaged."

Because he is no longer able to share his music through school performances, he started a YouTube channel where he posts his music. One of his songs, "Nostalgia", was dedicated to all of the seniors who graduated last year. But now, its message is more relevant than ever.

"Although we won't be able to experience these moments again, we should smile upon the great memories we've shared with those who are important to us instead of dwelling over the fact that it's over," he said.

TOP HOBBIES DURING QUARANTINE

The Bear Witness surveyed 150 students about the hobbies they've taken up during quarantine. Here were the most popular responses.

**Streaming TV:** The average American is streaming 3.2 hours of TV a day during sheltering in place, compared to 2 hours in 2019, according to TV Insider.

**Painting:** The popular activity has seen a resurgence, leading several art studios to host tutorial sessions to help your inner Picasso.

**Social media:** Along with streaming television, more teens are visiting Tik Tok, Instagram and Snapchat to see that their friends are also doing the same.

—Compiled by staff

# THE NEW QUARANTINE ROUTINE

The loss of our sense of our school routine is making us feel, well, lost.

Chandler Roberts  
and Ziv Galpaz



Chantal Wang/Special to the Bear Witness



**ESTABLISHING A ROUTINE**

When so much is uncertain, it can be reassuring to have a consistent schedule to stick to. Here are some tips for staying in a routine and how to add habits or activities to it!

**Mimic your regular school routine**

If you haven't already, create a daily structure similar to if you were still on campus — getting dressed in the morning, going to Zoom classes or watching recorded lectures at the same time, and doing homework when you would have on campus (i.e. after sports, in the evenings, etc.)

**Distinguish between when you're working and when you're not**

Put a copy of your schedule on your door so your family knows when you are in class or doin schoolwork.

**Construct your own deadlines**

If your teacher has pushed back deadlines for major projects, assignments, or exams, set your own mini-deadlines to break up the work or studying so you don't leave it until the last minute.

**Stack habits**

If you're trying to implement new activities or tasks into your routine, try habit stacking: Instead of trying to implement a new habit at a new time and location in your day, add a portion of that habit to something you already do consistently.

According to Kevin Kruse, a self-help expert, habit stacking greatly increases the likelihood that you will stick to an added activity or behavior. The more you do something, the stronger the neural networks for that activity becomes, increasing the likelihood that you will get it done and with ease. By linking new tasks to habits you're already committed to, the likelier you are to maintain the new habit.

**Here's an example: Before/After CURRENT HABIT, I will NEW HABIT**

For example: "After I watch my lecture, I will spend 10 minutes doing work for the same class" "Before I turn off the light for bed, I will read for 5 minutes."

**Start small**

Another way to implement new activities into your life is to start small and gradually build from there.

For example, if you want to journal every day, first start with 1 minute before bed for a week, then 5 minutes the next week, and continue to build on until you reach your goal.

**Be patient**

Life happens! Especially when many things are uncertain, something out of your control may throw off your schedule. That's okay! If you've been trying to stick to a routine but just haven't been able to, try adjusting the routine to maximize your success. Everyone is different and different things work for different people.

— Ziv Galpaz

Sources: Healthline.com. UNICEF

**CLASS PRE-QUARANTINE**



As long as you're up before your ride to school, you'll be fine. Before school ended, teachers voted to adopt a new schedule, which moved first periods to 7:30 a.m. and eliminated 0 period, which starts at 7 a.m. Either way, you're groggy from a lack of sleep.



First class of school. It's still quite early, so you focus on keeping your eyes open and on the board. The class is usually quiet, but every once in a while, someone asks a question, which perks you up a bit.



It's tutorial. Time to finish the science notebook due at the end of the week. You might not be in the mood to work, so you make up an excuse to get a pass to the teacher who doesn't care about having phones out.



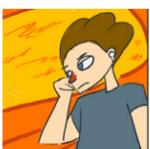
Brunch was too short, and you were only able to quickly check in with your friends. Snacks were fine. The class is a bit more chatty now, a bit too much, since you can't hear the teacher talk.



It's lunch, the best time to socialize. You meet at your usual spot to joke, complain about your homework, and not think about class. Even at 33 minutes, it's over too soon.



You stare endlessly at the clock waiting for the day to end and be able to talk to your friends. Who can stand 100 minutes of any class? You sneak a text to your friends. Can't wait to see them at practice.



You go to practice, do some drills and cool down. At home, procrastination sets in, but not too long. You check your School Loop to see whether your teachers entered your last assignment. It's hard to do work, but whatever you do, it somehow gets done.



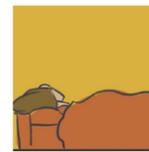
You stay up late to finish work. It's a bit hard, so you wait until tomorrow to check in with your friend about it. You are dreading having to wake up early, but that's how it's always been right?

**CLASS DURING QUARANTINE**



**Wake-up**

It's 9:30 a.m. Time to get up. You spent the last night watching a few too many Netflix dramas. You grab a snack in the kitchen and check your Google Classroom for the class ID.



**First class of the day**

Time to get onto Zoom. It's five minutes past 10 a.m., and still the teacher is waiting for people to log on. The clock is ticking - there's only 55 minutes of this left. Everyone's on mute with their video turned off. You send a private message to your friend: "This isn't fun."



**Tutorial**

You're the only person checking in your tutorial. It's not required anymore, so it's just you and your teacher, who seems to be desperate for conversation. You didn't really have a question to ask, so you sign off after a few minutes.



**Second class of the day**

The second and last class of the day. Sixty minutes seems to be the ideal time to listen to this lecture. No one seems to have viewed the pre-class work, so the teacher is repeating the instructions again. Oh, bother.



**Lunch**

There are two hours for lunch — which seems excessive. It's tempting to go outside. Some are heading to school to pick up free lunch — Principal Cheryl Lawton says that the line gets longer every day. The pandemic is hitting many people hard.



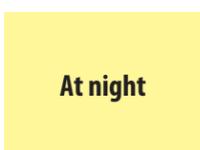
**Last class of the day**

If you were a good student, you would be using the free hours to get some work done. But since the transition has been made to a pass-fail system, it's hard to try anymore. Tests are open note, and the projects aren't exactly taxing your time.



**After school**

Refresh your social media. Scroll. Refresh. Your mom wants you to go on another walk. This is the third time today. An Instacart delivers your groceries — a real human picked all of these items. Later your DoorDash arrives. Time to eat.



**At night**

Netflix and you are fast becoming best friends. But you've been watching for too long and it's almost dawn. You're not alone, since most of your peers are sleeping in, but they're also sleeping late. Time to unplug and repeat this again.



Illustrations by Jessica Berton