



**QUILL & SCROLL**

*It's an Honor*

# 2021 Writing, Photo and Multimedia Contest Winners

Quill and Scroll International Honor Society

# Writing Categories


- **Editorial**
- **News**
- **Pandemic Coverage: Single Story**
- **Pandemic Coverage: Series**
- **Feature**
- **Column**
- **Review**
- **In-Depth Reporting/Individual**
- **In-Depth Reporting/Team**
- **Sports Feature Writing**
- **Sports Game Coverage**
- **Profile**
- **Political**
- **Health, Science and Ag**
- **Climate and Environment**



Category 1:  
Editorial Writing

# First Place: Connor Raffa, Trinity Preparatory School, Winter Park, FL “The Electoral College Should be Abolished”

Judge’s Comment: The Lead’s staff took on a national news topic - abolishing the Electoral College - and did so at a near professional level. The piece is well structured, thoroughly reported and clearly written. The accompanying infographics add an additional level of precision and clarity to the team’s nuanced written argument. It’s hard to come away from this article without learning something or forming a strong opinion. The Lead’s staff raised the bar for student journalists with this work and should be proud.



Opinions

December 2020

## WE LEAD THE FED

# THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE

With claims of voter fraud and a slew of lawsuits, the election of 2020 was one for the history books. As ballots were counted—and recounted—the election was decided by a slim margin of only a couple hundred thousand votes in a few key states. Yet, despite this close result and heavy contestations from the opposition, in reality, Joe Biden won the popular vote over Donald Trump by nearly 57 million votes. No lawsuit can change the fact that he was clearly the candidate favored by the American people. That this election was as close as it was in spite of this margin reveals a clear flaw in our democracy: the Electoral College.

The Electoral College, as established in the Constitution, is the formal body that elects the President and Vice President of the United States. Among other reasons, it was created by our Founding Fathers out of fear of mob rule and in an attempt to consolidate power among an elite few. Our founders did not trust the masses to make an informed decision regarding the President and determined that it was best to have the decision to an educated group of electors appointed by the states and given the power to vote independently.

However, this process has become antiquated for several reasons. In the late 1700s, it might be true that many people lacked the information needed to make an informed decision. But the massification of political parties and widespread access to the internet has eliminated the need for electors to make decisions for an uneducated populace. The vast majority of Americans have access to a variety of information at their fingertips or at least have a decent idea about what the candidates stands for, and the thought that they cannot make an educated decision is an insulting one.

Moreover, these electors are no longer independent of the states. Over time, the majority of states have enacted “winner-take-all” policies, in which each elector in a state votes in accordance with the result of their state’s popular vote. In fact, 53 states have passed laws punishing “faithless electors” who do not vote in this popular vote. In the other states, electors are not technically required to act how their state wishes, but still rarely act against it—only 165 people have as of 2016—as these electors are nominated in the first place by whichever party wins the popular vote in a particular state.

The constitutionality of these laws punishing faithless electors was challenged, but they were upheld in a unanimous decision by the Supreme Court last July. Essentially, while the practice of being a “faithless elector” is still legal, the court ruled that states have the right to punish these electors, preventing our flawed system from becoming any worse.

Maine and Nebraska are exceptions to this winner-take-all system. They’ve adopted what is known as the “district method” in which electors vote as potentially be divided among candidates. In these states, two voters are awarded to whoever wins the state’s popular vote, while the other two are given to whoever wins each congressional district (there are two in Maine, and three in Nebraska).

Though it has its merits, the system we have now, in theory, is just a convoluted popular vote: however, history has shown it doesn’t work that way. In 1824, 1876, 1888, 2000 and 2016, a candidate won the Electoral College despite losing the popular vote, proving that this system doesn’t effectively capture the will of the people.

The origin of the Electoral College are also shrouded in racism, which seems to receive very little attention. It was a system created in the midst of widespread slavery and was a further implementation of the infamous Three-Fifths Compromise, which counted African Americans as three-fifths of a person when determining a state’s population.

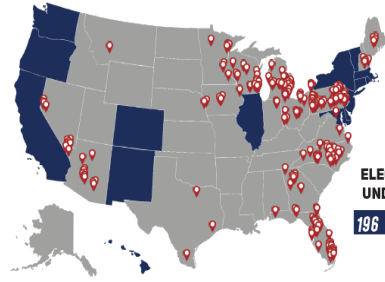
James Madison knew the South would never agree to a direct election or popular vote because, excluding slaves, populations in Southern states were significantly smaller. Thus, with a popular vote, the South feared the North would have a disproportionate influence on politics. So, Madison created the Electoral College in which electors would be awarded by population size, a number, which as a result of the Three-Fifths Compromise, included slaves.

It may seem obvious, but it warrants being said: with all these antiquated reasons for the formation of the Electoral College, why does it still exist? Preserving such a system is illogical, racist and detrimental to our democracy, and its remarkable it has persisted as long as it has.

Those in favor of the Electoral College claim that it protects smaller states and ensures their voices are heard. To a certain extent, this claim is valid. Despite a larger number of electoral votes overall, California receives 1 vote for every 680,000 people whereas Wyoming receives 1 vote for every 190,000 people. Supporters argue that this ensures that smaller states are represented in government and that it prevents candidates from campaigning in only large cities, as they would if the Electoral College was abolished in favor of a national popular vote.

Yet, the way the Electoral College is set up


### 2020 ELECTION: THE BREAKDOWN



**196**

for the NPVIC to take effect

**270** for the NPVIC to take effect



Opinions

December 2020

# SHOULD BE ABOLISHED

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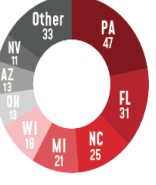
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### GENERAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN EVENTS BY STATE



State	Events
Other	39
PA	47
FL	31
NC	25
MI	21
WI	19
OH	17
AZ	13
NV	11

and Nebraska and Maine, this system is technically not proportional, and with the issue of gerrymandering—the manipulation of congressional district lines for political gain—states have shown this leaves even more margin for error than the current system. Thus, the best solution to our flawed system is simply a national popular vote. Though this may reduce some certainty in the outcome of elections as popular votes can be quite narrow, it’s the only way to guarantee everyone’s voices are heard.

Since the Electoral College is included in the Constitution, changing the system would need a Constitutional amendment, which would require a two-thirds majority vote from both houses of Congress. But, the Electoral College largely favors Republican candidates in close races, and with the partisan deadlock we see today, it’s becoming increasingly unlikely that two-thirds majority could ever be reached.

Luckily, the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact has proposed a workaround to this dilemma. This is an agreement between states that would bind each state’s delegates to whichever candidate wins the national popular vote. While the Constitution is clear that states must appoint electors, it never says how the states have to use them, which is why this could be effective.

Currently, the compact has been signed upon by 15 states and the District of Columbia and encompasses 196 electoral votes. Once it reaches 270 electoral votes, it will take effect, and it will guarantee the presidency to whoever wins the popular vote, a true representation of the will of the people.

If the United States is to remain “the world’s greatest democracy” or finally come anywhere close, the Electoral College needs to be abolished. It’s racist, outdated and restricts the voice of the people. In a true democracy, everyone’s vote should matter, and only through replacing the Electoral College can this ever be achieved.

*The lead editorial expresses the opinion of the Trinity Voice editorial staff. Please send comments to us at [trinity@trinityprep.org](mailto:trinity@trinityprep.org).*

Second Place: Ulaa Kuziez,  
Parkway West HS,  
Ballwin, MO

“Activism is not a performance. Take real actions.”

Judge’s Comment: Through both their own writing and the quotes woven throughout the piece, the Pathfinder staff demonstrated the level of research and expertise that editorial writing requires. The writing is direct yet forceful. Overall, the Pathfinder staff stood out by presenting a clear call to action aimed at their high school audience, developing a solid justification for their argument, and offering a range of tangible tools for action. Well done.

## Activism is not a performance. Take real actions.

[Pathfinder Editorial Board](#) | November 24, 2020



Throughout 2020, we have witnessed several dramatic issues sweep across America. A [virus](#) has decimated communities. [Wildfires](#) have raged through forests, burning everything in their path. Police have continued to murder Black Americans. In response, people took to social media to express their concerns.

One issue that has especially sparked a reaction on social media was the United States’ [wake-up call](#) to centuries-old systemic racism. Spurred by the brutal [murders of George Floyd](#) and [Breonna Taylor](#) at the hands of the police, many Americans became aware that this is not just a problem with a few judgmentally-impaired police officers. Rather, white supremacist violence is fundamental to the [system of policing](#). While varying degrees of understanding exist, more and more of us are realizing that America is an inherently racist country. Our “democracy” was built on the basis of violently stealing land from the Indigenous people of the region and then destroying that land for a profit, using enslaved people’s labor.



[Pathfinder Editorial Board](#)

One example of performative activism occurred on June 2, when millions of Instagram users posted black squares with the hashtag [#blackouttuesday](#). Performative activism, which consists of low risk actions and increases social capital, does little to help further a cause.

Third Place: Rose Kanaley,  
Shawnee Mission East HS,  
Prairie Village, KS  
“Teen Abstinence”

Judge’s Comment: Sex can be a challenging topic for anyone to publicly discuss, and as The Harbinger's staff makes clear, it's often especially fraught for teens trying to communicate with parents, educators and doctors. Rather than shying away from the issue, though, this team tackles the topic with confidence and honesty. Their pointed argument highlights the importance of open communication surrounding teen sex while advocating for important health and education resources. Great work.

# Editorial: Abstinence is an unrealistic method of birth control for teens

By Editorial Board  
Posted March 9, 2020

FOR: 11 AGAINST: 0

The individuals on the editorial board who agree with the viewpoint of the editorial are represented by **for**, and those that disagree with the viewpoint of the editorial are represented by **against**.

## EDITORIAL POLICY

The Harbinger is a student-run publication. Published editorials express the views of the Harbinger staff. Signed columns published in the Harbinger express the writer's personal opinion. The contents and views of the Harbinger do not represent the student body, faculty, administration or Shawnee Mission School District. The Harbinger will not show any unpublished content, but quoted material may be confirmed with sources. The Harbinger encourages letters to the editors, but reserves the right to reject them for reasons including but not limited to lack of space, multiple letters of the same topic and personal attacks contained in the letters. The Harbinger will not edit content though letters may be edited for clarity, length, label or mechanics. Letters should be sent to room 413B or emailed to [smharbinger@gmail.com](mailto:smharbinger@gmail.com)

Editorial Board | The Harbinger Online

You throw the box of granola bars in your basket, hoping it covers up what you *really* came to Target for: the Plan B pill. Once you ensure yourself no one can see the “emergency contraceptive” peeking out, you rush through Target’s self-checkout and pray that your mom’s best friend or your English teacher doesn’t get a peek inside your grocery bag.

Your parents said you couldn’t go on birth control because that would mean you’re having sex. And they don’t like that idea. They’re sure that abstinence is the best form of birth control. But here you are now, throwing the Plan B box in the parking lot trashcan so the evidence can’t be found at home.

The “best” form of birth control that parents and teachers try to prescribe to us is abstinence — it’s unrealistic. While it may come as a shock, *yes*, teens are having sex. And denying them access to safe forms of birth control is only hurting them.

For parents, yes, the idea of their children participating in a *very* adult activity may make them shift in their seat. But inhibiting the use of a product associated with sex doesn’t inhibit the act itself. Sorry mom and dad.

If teens have only ever heard adults preaching abstinence, they won’t know what to use or do to protect against pregnancy and STDs when they have sex for the first time. And **according to Planned Parenthood**, 55% of both males and females have had sex by age 18.



## Category 2: News Writing

# Dependent on Disposables: Disposable vapes are overtaking Juuls in popularity among students

By Kelly Murphy

Posted December 8, 2020

*\*Names changed to protect identity*

Junior Joe Miller\* uploaded a picture of brightly-colored cool mint, pineapple lemon and watermelon Puff Bars with the caption “puffs” to his private Snapchat story. Then he waited.

Within minutes, his notifications were flooded with messages from eager underage customers. Within hours, he was sold out of his disposable vape supply, which may or may not have been legitimate product.

“It was really easy,” Miller said. “I could sell 200 Puff Bars in three days. I had someone buy 60 from me one time.”

Puff Bars are the latest trendy, flavored vaping devices that seem to have replaced Juuls, according to senior Will Johnson\*. Teens like Johnson drive down Mission with a Puff Bar in one hand and the other on the wheel — others prefer passing them around at parties or “ripping” them in secluded school bathrooms.

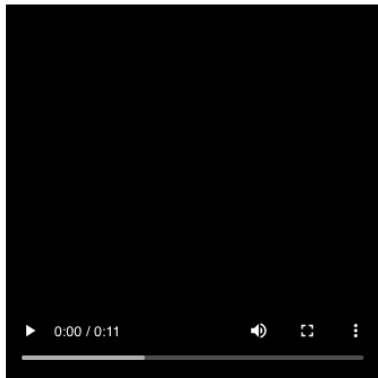
Although he caught 25 students last year, assistant principal Britton Haney didn’t catch anyone vaping on campus during hybrid school. He hopes they’re “making smarter choices” due to restrictions on bathroom usage and social distancing guidelines.

According to *Advent Health Pulmonologist Dr. Mike Nelson*, little is known about the relationship between vaping and COVID-19. However, a team of researchers **recently found** that teens who vape are five times more likely to receive a COVID diagnosis.

First Place: Kelly Murphy,  
Shawnee Mission East HS,  
Prairie Village, KS

[“Dependent on Disposables”](#)

Judge’s Comment: Kelly writes a thorough and engaging story about many aspects of teen vaping. Her story covers a shifting product market. She examines how teachers and administrators deal with the issue. Her story also includes a teen dealer, as well as other ways teens get vaping products. the story provides a health aspect and examines what teen users think. And she looks at disciplinary consequences. Excellent quotes also carry the story.





# An inside look at teaching during a pandemic

[Zoe DeYoung](#), Staff Writer | October 21, 2020



Before we left school March 13 of last school year, we were told to empty our lockers and bring all of our textbooks home.

Some felt this was an overreaction by administration, but many minds were changed after seeing the data behind the decision. [COVID-19](#) took the world by surprise, and usurped the ability to safely leave the house, let alone have school in-person.

Trends in data have shown that COVID-19 is running rampant in the 15-19 year old age group.

“All of the other age groups are starting to trend down and yet the teenagers are trending up. If you just look at what the rate of infection is for [all] people, you’re going to lose that the rate of infection for teens is exceptionally high,” Parkway Director of Health Services Robin Wallin said. “We have to get this under control so that we can come back to school.”

Due to a recent decision made at the emergency Parkway Board of Education meeting on Sept. 29, high schoolers now have the option to return back to school, or remain online. And for high school teachers, the online teaching experience has varied in ease.



[Zoe DeYoung](#)

The senior hallway has been unoccupied by students since March.

Second Place: Zoe DeYoung,  
Parkway West HS,  
Ballwin, MO

“[An inside look at teaching during a pandemic](#)”

Judge’s Comment: Teachers face constantly shifting norms during the pandemic. Zoe's story clearly describes the thought processes and nimble efforts by educators in her community to teach at their best levels -- above all obstacles. The story provides valuable insights into all the challenges for teachers.



Above: LOOKING OUT FOR STUDENTS: Clarke Central High School Assistant Principal Latinda Dean wears again the Ceremonial Entrance of CSSP. Dean has many responsibilities as Assistant Principal such as ensure student's academic success. "It starts with an urgency with attendance, the working with people, the cut school social workers to figure out what's going on going on, the thing to contact the parents to see if we can get that improved," Dean said. Photo by Liana Bacher



Below: WORKING HARD: Clarke Central High School Assistant Principal Dean works at her desk in her office at Clarke. Dean enjoys her job as Clarke assistant principal, and her biggest goal was to "be there when they need you, you learn that you have to be very organized and aware of time management, because you do have so many things on your plate and not any time to waste," Dean said. "And so it's not a quantity where you can procrastinate and wait to do things." Photo by Liana Bacher

will never change. But students also knew that I really cared about them as individuals and as human beings," Dean said. "Being genuine, and having a very caring and positive attitude towards students, in addition to being someone who is well-versed in your content area – I think it takes both, I don't think one works without the other."

Albany High School alumna Ailana Lewis formed a strong bond with Dean as a student, and along with some of her classmates, has continued to keep in touch.

"With me and the people who went to high school with me, I've seen people still communicate with her and people still check in and let her know how they're doing. While she was my teacher, I would stay after class, or I would come to school to talk to her," Lewis said. "We developed a further teacher-student relationship. As I (continued) through high school, I still would go back and visit her and talk to her whenever I was free."

Soon after her transition into this new field, Biggins-Daniels saw the fulfillment it brought her.

"Once she took the teaching job she really saw that it was a need, that she had a passion for it. So I was happy for her in that regard, and I really think that the education field speaks to her and she speaks to education," Biggins-Daniels said.

When Dean interacts with students, she is able to fulfill one of her core tenets, which is a motivation to help and support others.

"One of the most important things for me as a person is to help other people, and in teaching, you're helping students to learn, helping students to grow," Dean said. "If you're really fortunate, you helped to spark their interest in something and help them to begin to think about what they want to do with their life. It has allowed me to fulfill that part of myself that always needs to help somebody. In education, that is the work."

After spending time working with students on a smaller scale, Dean sought leadership positions and began her role as an administrator for the 2019-20 school year.

"Before being an administrator and an instructional coach, I was a classroom

## Third Place: Natalie Schliekelman, Clarke Central HS, Athens, GA

### "Dean's Direction"

Judge's Comment: A great profile helps the reader really know the subject. You come away from Natalie's profile of Latinda Dean with an appreciation of how special this educator is. Ms. Dean's dedication to students, teaching and learning come through in Natalie's writing. This journalist's work shows how greatly her subject cares.



Category 3:  
Pandemic Coverage - Single  
Story

During quarantine, most students made changes in their daily life and found new ways to keep themselves content at home. Read about how students made the best of it and what their experiences were.

### **A is for Art**

Senior and Drawing club president Eva Phillips takes AP Drawing because it helps her increase her art knowledge and create unique projects. She has taken drawing classes throughout high school, and plans on majoring in illustration.

"I think drawing helps [with boredom during COVID-19], because it's something that you can just do for hours and not realize that it's been so long. It's a really good way to pass time and just kind of zone out for a little bit," Phillips said.

Phillips has been learning to draw from real-life references as well as photos.

"I think I've improved a lot. I always saw district art shows with the AP studio students like seniors as an eighth grader and I was like, 'How do you ever get that good?' but now I realize that it's not as hard as I thought," Phillips said.

### **B is for Baking with the Braziers**

Acting as her parents' second-in-command, sophomore Lydia Brazier loves to bake. She loves to help with her mom's baking business and edit baking videos for the family YouTube channel, ['Baking with the Braziers'](#).



Using an X-acto knife to carefully make flower and line cut-outs, senior Eva Phillips spent lots of time to create a unique art piece. (Courtesy of Eva Phillips)

## First Place: Emily Early, Parkway West HS, Ballwin, MO ["ABC's of COVID"](#)

Judge's Comment: The journalists who wrote this article covered the pandemic in a unique way. They used the alphabet from A to Z to highlight several events that occurred as a result of the virus. N was for Netflix, Q was for quarantine and Z was for Zoom. Interesting anecdotal quotes made each event come alive visually for the readers. This style allowed readers to get an idea of several events that occurred as a result of the pandemic.

## Second Place: Keira Beller, Shalhevet HS, Los Angeles, CA “Same breath that carries the music now quiets the choir”

Judge’s Comment: The author of this article did a super job of showing how the virus affected choir students as they tried to carry on class via Zoom. Readers could visualize how difficult it was to keep singers together when they weren’t in the same room.

**Nothing is the same** for the Shalhevet Choirhawks, who are now completely barred from singing together, unable to have even just a little of what they used to as the school’s touring, concertizing, and Chanukah-caroling co-ed Jewish a capella group.

Since the coronavirus outbreak in March, the Firehawk choir has had to abandon the Shalhevet music room and try to sing over Zoom, due to a health prohibition directed specifically at singing because it spreads the virus faster.

This has had the effect of stopping choir almost entirely, because it can’t simply move rehearsals and concerts online. Zoom features a slight audio delay — a seemingly small problem that throws off the choir’s entire sound by preventing people from singing at exactly the same time. Tiny delays destroy the entire performance, turning what should be a sonorous blend into a meaningless cacaphony.

“In choir, everything needs to be exact, exact, exact, and Zoom has a little, tiny delay, so if we all try to sing together on Zoom, it sounds super off,” said the group’s director, Ms. Joelle Keene. “Part of my job is to hold everybody together, and that’s physically impossible on Zoom.”

The root of the problem is microscopic water droplets called “aerosols” that can carry the virus, and that a person emits when projecting their voice.

Dr. Julie Higashi, a public health expert for L.A. County and leader of Shalhevet’s Medical Task Force, said one of the earliest “super-spreader” Covid outbreaks happened at a Seattle-area choir practice last March, when 52 singers out of 61 in attendance caught Covid-19 from just one who was infected. Two died.

“Singing is a well-known activity for producing aerosols extremely efficiently,” wrote Dr. Higashi in an email reply to Boiling Point questions. “The experience in Seattle ... is evidence enough that choir is, unfortunately, an extremely high-risk activity.”

Tuberculosis and pertussis have also been spread by singing, she said.

“When whooping cough spread in Shalhevet, six people in choir got it... Singing, especially in groups, in a secluded area and even outside, spreads viruses way faster than talking because you’re using so much more energy and so much more breath.”

— *Danielle Finn, Choirhawk tenor, 11th grade*

Third Place: Alice Meng,  
Iowa City West HS,  
Iowa City, IA  
[“Zoomed out”](#)

Judge’s Comment: This is a great story about how difficult it is for both teachers and students to learn by Zoom. There are great quotes like the one person who said “It’s sort of defeating, and I don’t know what’s going on behind there. “Readers had no doubt about what was going on behind there after reading this article.

It’s seventh period, but somehow you’re still sprawled in bed. Your head is throbbing and your back aches. A voice drones on from your laptop on the other side of the room. If it wasn’t for the fear that your teacher might call on you, you’d be fast asleep. This is the new reality for many online students experiencing “Zoom fatigue.”

In the first trimester, **44.7% of students enrolled in the online learning program.** Those students have attended synchronous classes over Zoom for half of the school day and completed work asynchronously for the remaining portion. However, the hours spent on Zoom have added up, leaving students feeling drained.


Online student Ida Behnami ’21 has been having trouble staying engaged during Zoom classes.

“When I have my camera off, which is really tempting to do, sometimes I’ll just go off and do my own thing, or I’ll go on my phone,” Behnami said. “It’s kind of hard. The audio will disconnect from the teachers, or they’ll get kicked out [of the Zoom meeting], and so then there’ll be a disruption in the class, and then it just makes me not focus for the rest of class.”

Teachers who have opted to teach from home have noticed this lack of engagement from students. Math teacher Julie Kennebeck has struggled to connect with her students and understand their needs in a virtual setting. Since only a couple of her students turn their cameras on during class, she finds it difficult to adjust her teaching pace as needed.

**YOUR AD  
COULD BE  
HERE**

(CLICK TO LEARN HOW)



Category 4: Pandemic  
Coverage - Series



## Nineteen voices from COVID-19

The K.H.S. Journalism Partnership

### About this project

It was supposed to be a time of celebration. Students and athletes were supposed to dance alongside each other at prom and bring home state championships. Families were supposed to start packing for their summer vacations and sit down at crowded restaurants to honor another completed school year. Businesses were supposed to start stocking up again for the summer rush and open patios for their customers to enjoy the summer air. But on April 9, just two weeks after the Mayor of St. Louis announced a stay-at-home order, Governor Mike Parson released the decision to close all Missouri schools for the rest of the school year. Now, it did not matter what the students and residents of St. Louis were supposed to do, because the COVID-19 pandemic was forcing everyone's lives on hold. But this is where the stories just began. As the worries shifted from prom dresses to promising to stay six feet away from others, and from homework to working from home, TKC and the Pioneer collaborated as one to help tell the story of 19 people during these difficult times. 19 stories to show the impact of COVID-19 in our community. 19 stories of what actually happened, instead of what was supposed to.

*In light of this unprecedented public health crisis, The Kirkwood Call and Pioneer Yearbook staffs have worked together under the Kirkwood High School Journalism Partnership to produce this special issue.*

*Special thanks to our KHS Journalism partners and sponsors who helped us fund this project.*

Photography by Natalie Sweesy, Brigid Van Rees and Emma Wright

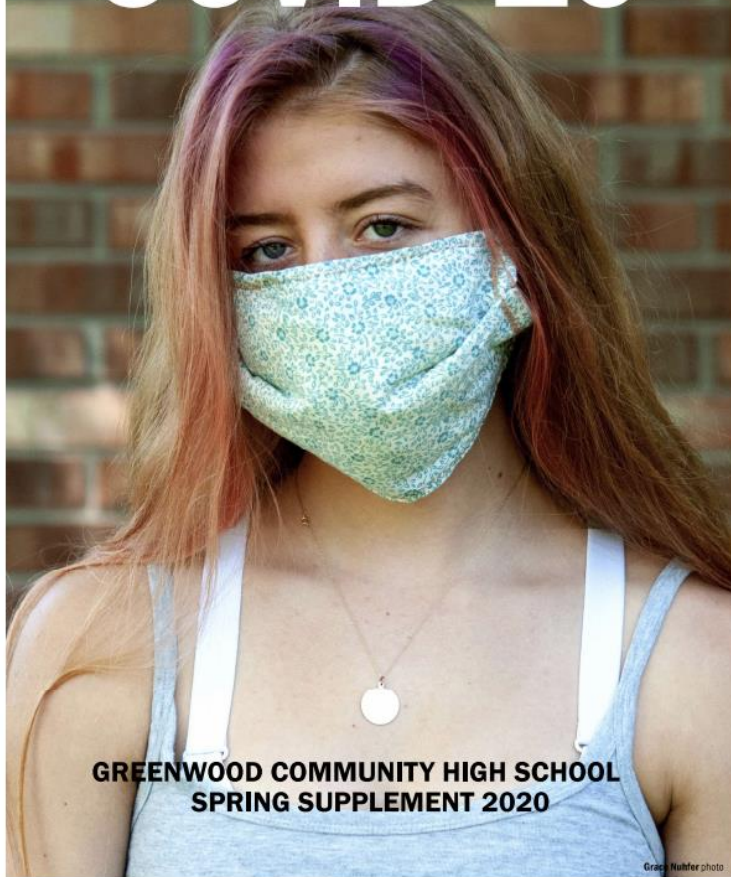
First Place: The KHS Journalism Partnership,  
Kirkwood HS,  
Kirkwood, MO

["Nineteen Voices from COVID-19"](#)

Judge's Comment: The photography and writing were both superb. The user experience was so seamless on both a desktop and mobile device. It's hard to create such a visually stunning and equally easy to navigate web presentation, but this talented team did just that. I was so impressed at the wide variety of people from the community that were featured in this piece. This was a huge undertaking. Even just photographing this many people during a pandemic is a challenge but you wouldn't know it. The final product is something I'd expect to see from a major news outlet.



# COVID-19



**GREENWOOD COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL  
SPRING SUPPLEMENT 2020**

Grace Nuhfer photo

Second Place: Timberlines &  
Woodman Staff,  
Greenwood Community HS,  
Greenwood, IN

[“Quarantine Magazine”](#)

Judge’s Comment: The visuals featured in this special issue were the first thing that caught my eye, but the quality of the writing and reporting blew me away once I really dug into reading this issue. I was impressed by the wide range of topics covered -- from the impact on local businesses to the impact on student's plans. The feature on remote learning may have been the strongest. It covered all the angles: how students coped, how parents felt and how teaches adapted. It was a really in-depth look at once of the most complex issues brought on by the pandemic and I applaud the staff for how well they covered it.

# NORTH | STAR

FRANCIS HOWELL NORTH | ST. CHARLES, MO 63303 | 11.04.20 | VOL 35 ISSUE 01

JAAINUU

## THE STORIES BEHIND THE MASK

THE NORTH STAR TAKES A LOOK AT  
THE STORIES OF THOSE AFFECTED  
BY COVID-19 AND HOW THE  
COMMUNITY RESPONDED TO IT

Third Place: Team at FHN,  
Francis Howell North HS,  
St. Charles, MO

[“Pandemic Coverage”](#)

Judge’s Comment: The visuals featured in this special issue were the first thing that caught my eye, but the quality of the writing and reporting blew me away once I really dug into reading this issue. I was impressed by the wide range of topics covered -- from the impact on local businesses to the impact on student's plans. The feature on remote learning may have been the strongest. It covered all the angles: how students coped, how parents felt and how teaches adapted. It was a really in-depth look at once of the most complex issues brought on by the pandemic and I applaud the staff for how well they covered it.



# Category 5: Feature Writing

# First Place: Madelynn Niles, McCallum HS, Austin, TX

## “A trip down Dar Bowl’s memory lanes”

Judge’s Comment: When a beloved, almost mythical local business closes, there are great options available for reporting, from family connections to group experiences to students feeling something has been lost that can't be found. The combination of reporting depth and terrific writing and organization made this reporting would allow this feature to grace a local magazine or news site just as well as the school media that published it. I wish I could have visited this suddenly closed bowling alley.

Coach Amaro just wanted some enchiladas. He was the new guy on the block in ‘99, and didn’t know anyone in the area. So when a man approached him about his football team at the little old bowling alley, he didn’t think much of it.

*Who was that guy?* He asked one of the workers there.

*Oh, he’s the owner of Dart Bowl.*

Tucked beside McCallum on Grover Avenue, the old school, 32-lane bowling alley had been an Austin icon since it got the ball rolling in 1958, not stopping until two weeks ago. The legacy passed from owner Harry Peterson to his grandson John Donovan, who partnered with Betty Ray and her husband Jerry, the man Amaro had just bumped into at the bowling alley.

“So turns out he wasn’t a recruiter,” Amaro said with a laugh. “He was the *owner* that was also on the Board of Trustees at TCU. From then on, Mr. Ray and I became pretty good friends.”

Amaro began to form more friendships with a collection of characters at the local alley when he brought his bowling classes there — which happened to be every weekday.

“I got to know *a lot* of people there,” he said. “Sometimes I’d go down there when we had Christmas vacation or something like that. I’d go early in the morning, and there was a group of old guys. I called them The Council of Elders.”

According to Amaro, the Council included a World War II veteran who never married, an old fisherman full of stories and a retired postman who knew everybody in Austin.

“I used to tell the coaches at McCallum, you need to come over here and meet the Council of Elders, these guys will tell you about anything you wanna know,” Amaro said. “You got a question? Go to the Council of Elders. How to buy a car? How to invest your money? If you’re in love, what to do? Talk to the Council of Elders.”

More Dart Bowl coverage



Dart Bowl's final frame



After just missing it, Pratt sets personal best in Mac victory



Bowling teams headed to regionals

Second Place: Campbell Wood,  
Shawnee Mission East HS,  
Prairie Village, KS  
“New Way of Nursing”

Judge’s Comment: The way this feature on new challenges for a school nurse managed to take readers into a woman's thinking and preparation, relying on a combination of observation and insightful interviewing, made this a timely and inspirational story with a tight local angle.

## New Way of Nursing: How Nurse Ptacek’s job has changed with COVID-19

By Campbell Wood  
Posted November 23, 2020

*Don’t overreact.*

East nurse Stephanie Ptacek thought to herself as she put on her safety goggles. She crept into room 420 — the isolation room — to check up on the first student who had reported COVID-19 symptoms since **hybrid learning** started. It was only the first day.

She knows they were scared too. She couldn’t freak out.

If she overreacts, students won’t come to her when they feel sick. If she overreacts, she can’t help them. She *has* to stay calm.

“I don’t want it to be like, ‘Oh, you went to the nurse and she berated you for having COVID symptoms,’” Ptacek said. “There’s a stigma with COVID for some reason and people are secretive. I want kids to know that they can report symptoms, that they don’t need to be secretive, and we’ll take care of things.”

Looking out for the health of 2,000 students and staff members isn’t easy. Her school days have gone from kids stopping by to take their medication to sending one to two kids home daily and into a 14-day quarantine.

“It’s just surreal,” Ptacek said. “There’s no better word for it.”

When Ptacek started as a school nurse a year ago, she was anticipating the regular high school nurse job — bloody noses, sore throat, upset stomach, at worst, a broken bone. But nurses have to be prepared for anything these days, Ptacek said.

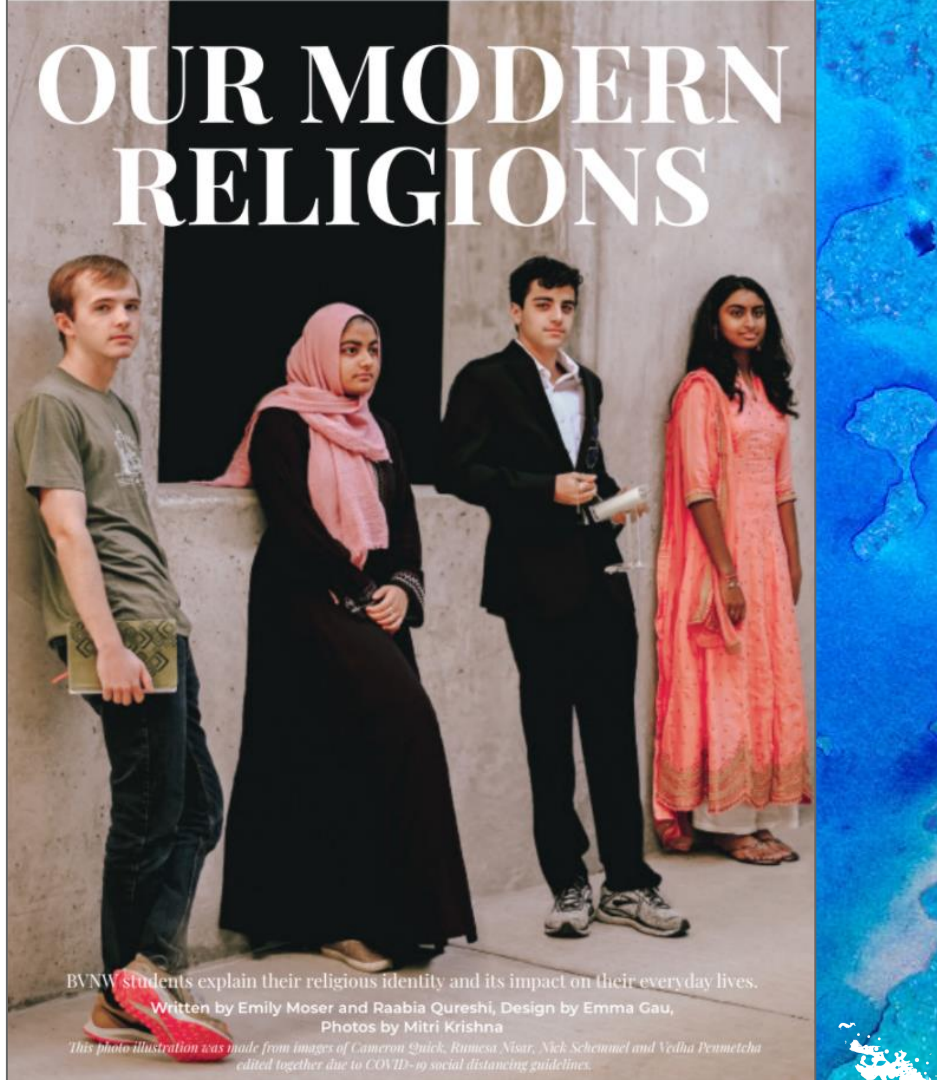


Noelle Griffin | The Harbinger Online  
Nurse Ptacek posts sign outside the isolation room to let others know it’s in use.

“I don’t think any healthcare workers expected to be working during a global pandemic,” Ptacek said. “I’ve had to learn a lot of new things about public health and contact tracing.”

Third Place: Emily Moser,  
Blue Valley Northwest HS,  
Overland Park, KS  
[“Our Modern Religions”](#)

Judge’s Comment: This package of reporting on four different students and their approach to spirituality combined terrific environmental portraits with sensitive and insightful reporting. Religion and spirituality generally is undercovered and not easy to write about in accessible ways. This story handled the pressure well.





# Category 6: Column Writing

# Stop saying that children are resilient

Belle Wilson, Editor-in-Chief

October 12, 2020



These past few months have been tough on everyone. We are all doing the best we can to deal with situations and obstacles we've never faced before. I've noticed changes in my own mental and physical health due to the new circumstances of life.

The most human thing to do is confide in others and try to find reassurance of our feelings. It's a natural instinct that most young people will rely on the adults in their lives to listen to the concerns they have and to give advice in regard to how they should navigate through difficult moments like these. Time and time again, young people seem to receive the same response.

"You'll be okay; children are resilient."

What does that even mean? By definition, it means "doing better than expected for the situation; to withstand or recover quickly."

Basically, my interpretation of that phrase is, as a teenager, I'm going to be expected to bounce back and not let things affect me even if deep down inside they do. It reminds me of the line from the Kelly Clarkson song, "What doesn't kill you makes you stronger." This may be true, but just because it didn't kill you doesn't mean it doesn't make a negative impact on your life.

From the time we are first born, every moment — both good and bad — molds you into the person you will eventually grow up to be. If you think about it, it's actually quite scary how even little moments can affect the adult you'll become one day.

These past several months, children and young adults have not been able to simply be kids. Yes, this may be for our safety, but it doesn't mean we don't have the right to be upset.

First Place: Isabelle Wilson,  
The John Carroll School,  
Bel Air, MD

["Stop saying that children are resilient"](#)

Judge's Comment: In a year full of life-altering events, there were plenty of important stories about the impact on core audiences of scholastic media. Often adult authorities told those stories. This column stands out because it presents another perspective, expressed by students, tackling one of those events - the pandemic and its impact. Exercising leadership, authority and passion, this columnist courageously speaks truth to power in a well-written response from the perspective of her peers, who often possess little agency.





Ellie Kim

A PV student wears an Indian headdress during a football game in the 1963 yearbook. A group of staff writers created a package looking into the history behind PV's mascot and the use of Native American imagery.

Ellie Kim, Editor in Chief  
October 20, 2020



*(Editor's note: This is the first article in a series we are calling "What's in a Name?," which explores the history behind our mascot and the use of Native American imagery and nicknames. This serves as an intro to the package and explains our nearly year-long exploration of our school's mascot, the Indians.)*

What's in a name?

After all, as was once asked by Shakespeare's Juliet, is a rose not a rose, if called by another name?

A bunch of us at our publication were wondering the same thing early last school year, but with a slight twist: What's in a school's nickname?

**WHAT'S IN A NAME?**

Second Place: Ellie Kim,  
Pascack Valley HS,  
Hillsdale, NJ

["What's in a name?"](#)

Judge's Comment: Reflective contemplation of the mascots at this school. Leadership and information are important goals for an effective opinion column. This one admirably achieves those goals.

Allowing students to skip exams in two classes in which they have an 85 would improve grades, equity, mental health



Anna McClellan

Everyone sing it now: "All students want for the holidays is two fewer finals. Two fewer finals. Two fewer finals."

Jessica Montoya Moreno, staff reporter  
November 23, 2020



When students think about finals, we automatically start to worry and stress. As the days we take finals get closer, some students sacrifice their health as they prepare themselves, sleeping less and staying up longer to try to cram in as many pieces of information as they can.

Finals, now combined with COVID-19, are putting more stress on students than ever before. Online learning has made this school year hard for students by being trapped inside, stuck learning on too-bright screens, and managing life in a pandemic worrying about what could happen next. Grades this semester have proven that the transition to online learning has been difficult at best, and impossible at worse. This year would be an excellent time to implement a finals opt-out policy and reduce stress that students have when faced with final exams.

Third Place: Jessica Montoya Moreno,  
McCallum HS,  
Austin, TX

[“A good idea in any year, a finals opt-out policy is an absolute necessity for students, teachers in 2020”](#)

Judge’s Comment: Strong argument in support of a school policy change to address the pandemic's effect on students' mental health. Effective writing and authoritative voice engage readers in what could be a complex topic.



# Category 7: Review Writing

First Place: Emily Davis,  
Starr's Mill HS,  
Fayetteville, GA

“Netflix short captures human spirit  
through heartbreak”

Judge's Comment: This review is thoughtful, powerful and compelling, not unlike the film it reflects. The writer effortlessly captures the emotions that brought this monochromatic, abstract project to life. She succinctly recasts the storyline and then lets the “faceless doodles of black” show the agony of losing a loved one to a school shooting. Vivid descriptions and insightful conclusions contribute to a mature analysis, supported by an enviable command of the language. This review made me cry.

Netflix's "If Anything Happens I Love You" bears a powerful, heart-breaking message that doesn't require but 12 minutes to make the watcher's stomach drop. Truthfully, it only requires a specific 70 seconds.

The film follows two mourning parents whose marriage is falling apart as they deal with the death of their daughter. As they reminisce about their daughter, they are brought together and know that they still have each other, even in the unbelievably hard times. Emphasis on “unbelievable,” because no parents would expect such a fate to be their child's.

“If Anything Happens I Love You” was directed and written by Will McCormack, who helped write “Toy Story 4,” and Michael Govier. One of the main reasons why this short film has had the impact that it does is because of all of the outside sources that contributed to making this ink-animated, silent, and musically-driven piece of art.

Both directors made the decision to meet with the organization Everytown for Gun Safety and with parents of gun violence victims in order to make the film emotionally realistic. One aspect to this grief that I've personally never considered is the effect that the loss of a child can have on the parents' marriage.

Throughout the film the parents and their ink-drawn shadows yell at one another, showing that tragedy can cause lots of misplaced frustration when such an event is out of one's control.

“ One aspect to this grief that I've personally never considered is the effect that the loss of a child can have on the parents' marriage.”

— *Editor-in-Chief Emily Davis*

“ Emphasis on “unbelievable,” because no parents would expect such a fate to be their child's. ”

— *Editor-in-Chief Emily Davis*

Despite the monochrome of the parents' world, there are traces of color left behind by their daughter. In one scene, the mother sits on her child's bed, smelling one of her daughter's shirts, while a soccer ball bumps into a vinyl. The music adds color, while an ink shadow of the daughter is introduced.

This music also catches the father's attention. He enters the room and joins the mother on the bed. While they're both still sad, but provide weak smiles, flashbacks begin as they revisit memories of their daughter.

## Second Place: Campbell Wood, Shawnee Mission East HS, Prairie Village, KS “Reconnecting Face-to-Face”

Judge’s Comment: A courageous, insightful take on moving away from the synthetic nature of 21st-century human interaction, with a hilarious conclusion.

# Reconnecting Face-to-Face: How an 80-year-old book on human interaction is still applicable today

By Campbell Wood  
Posted March 11, 2020

“What’s this supposed to mean?” was my first thought after my dad handed me the book “How to Win Friends and Influence People.” Was he trying to tell me something?

Whether he was implying I needed to make more friends or not, I eventually realized I needed this book — we *all* need it.

Dale Carnegie’s “How to Win Friends and Influence People” is the ultimate self-help book, and — unlike a slew of other options in the genre — does exactly what the title entails. But what makes this book stand out on the self-help shelf isn’t just its principles, but the fact that Carnegie wrote them over 80 years ago and they’re still applicable today.

The purpose of the book is to highlight the benefits personal interaction can have on your life. Almost a century later, and Carnegie’s teachings have found their way to my hands as I work to achieve that more approachable and compassionate personality.

### EXEMPLARY EXCERPTS

*Notable quotes Campbell picked from the novel*

●●  
ANY FOOL CAN CRITICIZE, CONDEMN  
AND COMPLAIN — AND MOST FOOLS  
DO. BUT IT TAKES CHARACTER  
AND SELF-CONTROL TO BE  
UNDERSTANDING AND FORGIVING.

THAT IS WHY DOGS ARE SUCH A HIT.  
THEY ARE SO GLAD TO SEE US THAT  
THEY ALMOST JUMP OUT OF THEIR  
SKINS. SO NATURALLY, WE ARE GLAD  
TO SEE THEM.

YOUR SMILE BRIGHTENS THE LIVES OF  
ALL WHO SEE IT. TO SOMEONE WHO  
HAS SEEN A DOZEN PEOPLE FROWN,  
SCOWL OR TURN THEIR FACES AWAY,  
YOUR SMILE IS LIKE THE SUN BREAKING  
THROUGH THE CLOUDS.

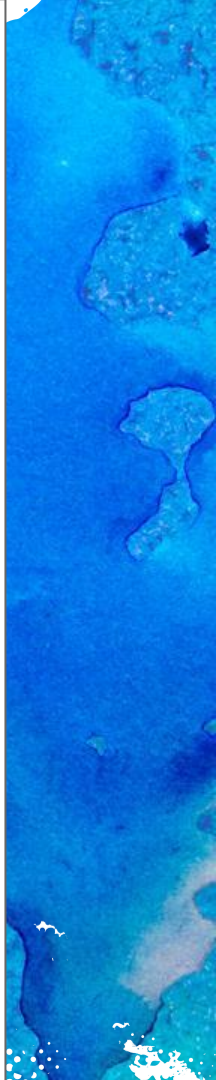
I HAD MADE MORE HEADWAY IN TWO  
HOURS BY BECOMING GENUINELY  
INTERESTED IN HIM AND HIS PROBLEMS.

One thing Carnegie emphasizes is face-to-face interaction — I learned the best way to start a conversation with someone is to ask about *their* interests. And to my experimentation, my English class small talk improved with my newly-found people skills.

His voice-packed writing style and well-rounded knowledge of human interaction makes his preachings more memorable than one would think, especially in a book genre where the climax finds itself in the phrase, “how to be a better you.”

Although today’s interactions are heavily dictated by technology, and Carnegie lived in a time when phones were anything but “smart,” his interpretation of interaction is still applicable today despite the technological advancements since it was published.

Though he had no knowledge of what was to come, Carnegie proves that interaction isn’t commenting on someone’s spring break post or “friending” someone on Snapchat, but rather



Third Place: Hugh Chan,  
Ladue Horton Watkins HS,  
St. Louis, MO

## “How the cookies crumble”

Judge’s Comment: Author backs up his assertions with descriptions that are thorough and nuanced, occasionally treading into TMI territory. Masterful deployment of the semicolon. An especially adroit and spot-on analysis of S’mores.

### HOW THE COOKIES CRUMBLE

HUGH CHAN  
*aka editor*

Hugh reviews and ranks all Girl Scout Cookies sold in Missouri  
*\*Lemonades weren't ranked due to availability issues*

- #### 1. thin mints

Predictable? Perhaps, but Thin Mints remain the epitome of Girl Scout Cookies. The layer of chocolate enveloping the cookie is thick enough to enhance the overall flavor but it doesn't interfere with its crisp texture. The mint is incorporated subtly; at first, only the chocolate is noticeable, but the mint establishes its presence well by the end, leaving a refreshing aftertaste. Thin Mints are by far the most popular Girl Scout Cookie, and after just one bite, it's clear to see why these delightfully crisp cookies remain so popular.


- #### 2. do-si-dos

Do-si-dos came extremely close to ranking ahead of Thin Mints, and my preference between the two ultimately depends on my daily mood. The peanut butter is not thick enough to ruin the delicate harmony established between the various components of the Do-si-dos, but there is enough so that it is the underlying flavor in the cookie sandwich. The delectably crumbly cookies are moistened by the peanut butter, while a slight tinge of salt prevents the cookie from being too sweet, making it one of the most balanced treats in the Girl Scout Cookie lineup.


- #### 3. trefoils

In the words of Albert Einstein, "Everything should be made as simple as possible." This mantra is best exemplified by the deceptively basic Trefoil. While it's the least complex of all Girl Scout Cookies, the clean notes of vanilla and butter are accentuated by the Trefoil's simplicity. The shortbread cookie is crumbly but moist, one-dimensional but immensely satisfying. Trefoils are one of the most adorning treats, and those who shun them for their plain appearance are painfully unappreciative of the Trefoil's true beauty.


- #### 4. samoas

This ranking, which is relatively low when taking popularity into account, may be somewhat controversial, but Samoas are far too sugary to be enjoyable. The components of chocolate, caramel, coconut and shortbread cookie should work well together, yet the coconut and cookie flavors are entirely overwhelmed by the aching sweetness of the caramel and chocolate. After biting into just one Samoa, I could feel my arteries begging for more. The overall Samoa experience was deeply disappointing, and the widespread popularity of these cookies is unfortunate.


- #### 5. lemon-ups

Lemon-Ups are new this year, but their debut is largely underwhelming. Rather than tasting bright and tart, as all lemon-flavored things should, Lemon-Ups taste like stale Fruit Loops. Savannah Sandies, which Lemon-Ups replaced, were vastly superior to these overly dry, wannabe-citrus disks. The cookies aren't necessarily bad, but they're extraordinarily boring and rightfully reside in the lower echelon of Girl Scout Cookies.


- #### 6. tagalongs

The individual flavors of the Tagalong are delightfully pronounced, but the cookie is distinctly nausea-inducing. The revoltingly slimy peanut butter is encapsulated so abundantly within the cookie that each bite is laborious to swallow. Putting aside the sickening mouth-feel of the cookie, the flavors of chocolate and shortbread are actually well pronounced. If the texture of the peanut butter didn't resemble the mucus of someone suffering from the flu, the cookie would probably rank near the top. Nevertheless, the fact remains that each part of the cookie is late threatened to come back up.


- #### 7. s'mores

These disgraces of a cookie smell like sweetened Play-Doh, and they taste like it too. S'mores combine the worst traits of the other Girl Scout Cookies into a catastrophic monstrosity of a treat. The filling has the same vile texture of the Tagalong's peanut butter and manages to be sweeter than a Samoa, while the two cookies above and below the filling are as dry as Lemon-Ups. I almost always offer some redeeming quality in a negative review, but S'mores manage to deftly this expectation by being utterly atrocious. Additionally, these blasphemous cookies cost a dollar more than their far superior counterparts. The very existence of these cookies dishonors the integrity of the Girl Scout tradition, and the image of all other Girl Scout Cookies are tarnished by the dreadful S'mores.



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Category 8:  
In-Depth  
Reporting/Individual

# MY OWN WORST ENEMY

Eating disorders, femininity, modeling, social media, self love: find the phrase that does not belong

ARTICLE, PHOTOS & DESIGN BY ALEXANDRA ROZMARIN

Spanish teacher **Aimée Verapinto** began modeling in the 1990s when she was a junior in high school. She walked runways at high school fashion shows and had a talent agent who worked with her to try and secure a contract with a larger agency.

One day, she went out for a coffee date with her agent and ordered a muffin along with her beverage.

"Do you see all that grease on your finger from that muffin? That's going to go right here," her female agent commented, slapping the side of her own thigh. "We have got to get you down."

Little did Verapinto's agent know, she was speaking to a 16-year-old girl with an eating disorder. The agent never gave Verapinto advice on healthy ways to lose weight, instead encouraging her to lose inches in any way she could.

These degrading comments exacerbated the emotional struggles Verapinto went through being a teenage girl trying to figure out her place in the world, so she began exercising excessively, eating minimally and purging frequently.

At one point, even when she did not actively attempt to purge, her body rejected food, and she could not stand without feeling dizzy. Verapinto believes that even if her agent had known of her illness, she would not have cared.

"She bred a piece of [the illness] herself," Verapinto said. "She was constantly making comments about how I wasn't thin enough and I needed to have this type of body, so I don't think she was really aware of the way her words had an impact on me."

Even through weight loss, Verapinto was never able to break through the doors of a larger agency.

"That lack of success fed this negative message to myself that I wasn't pretty enough or I wasn't skinny enough and I had to try harder," Verapinto said, "and that fed that disease in itself."

The National Eating Disorders Association estimates 20 million women and 10

million men in the United States will experience an eating disorder, like the one Verapinto experienced, at one point in their lives.

Anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, binge eating disorder and orthorexia are all diagnoses that describe various ways of disordered eating.

Body dysmorphia—characterized by a defect in a person's perception of their body shape or weight—can develop on its own or alongside an eating disorder. The International OCD Foundation estimated that one in 50 people worldwide suffer from body dysmorphia.

Although anyone can develop an eating disorder, they are most frequently diagnosed in adolescent females, as stated in a 2012 report by BC Children's Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre. It cites societal pressure as a reason for the disproportionality.

### EATING DISORDERS AND FEMININITY

According to an anonymous survey of 150 UPA students, 78% of females and 51% of males surveyed have felt self-conscious about their weight. English teacher **Kristin Moore** finds this statistic unsurprising.

"I don't think there's a woman alive who, at some time or another, has not either had an eating disorder, or at least a very troubled relationship with food," Moore said.

To her, although eating disorders can affect both males and females, they are very much a feminine issue. "We're taught or indoctrinated from a very early age to control how much we eat, but really at the bottom of it, I think it's about controlling who we are as women," Moore said. "We're told to not take up space in terms of our voices and our opinions, and I think it all converges together around the issues of bodies and food."

Moore struggled with anorexic and bulimic behaviors throughout middle school and high school.

*Continued on next page*



First Place: Alexandra Rozmarin, University Preparatory Academy, San Jose, CA

## "My Own Worst Enemy"

Judge's Comment: "My Own Worst Enemy" digs deep into a serious problem with well told, real life stories that illustrate the links between addictive attention to self-worth and anorexia. People interviewed for the story are well informed and interesting. But, the story goes beyond just anecdotes and delivers with data and additional reporting from experts who can put this problem in context. A lot of reporting and writing are evident in this piece. It is that extra effort to get meaningful information that pushes this story by Alexandra Rozmarin to the top for individual in-depth reporting.



## Learning together: district commits to cultural responsiveness after controversial online learning assignment

Kylie Clifton, Feature Editor | October 2, 2020



It was 9:15 on the morning of September 23rd, and eighth grade Portage North Middle School student Pablo Fraga was ready to return to a new kind of normal with his online history assignment. The content that awaited him, however, was anything but.

“I read the questions through and they disgusted me,” he said.

Many students have been frustrated in the online learning environment, but Pablo’s disgust was unrelated to technological hurdles: he was deeply bothered by what the assignment meant and what it asked him and what it asked 14 year old students like him to do.

The assignment, which was given to all eighth grade students in the district as a part of the Learning Together initiative to continue learning through the end of the school year, featured numerous charts and records of slaves, including their name, age, definition of their forced labor, their monetary “value” in 1848, and their adjusted “value” in modern times.

After students read the table, they were asked to answer a series of questions, such as:

“Looking at the inventory above, which slave definition seems to be worth the most money? Why do you think this is?”

“Mr. Roman had 20 total house slaves, How much money in 1848 did Mr. Roman had wrapped up into his slaves?”

“Looking at the amount that one individual had tied into slavery (just in people, not in profit or anything else), does it make sense why the South was so intent on keeping the plantation

Second Place: Kylie Clifton,  
Portage Northern HS,  
Portage, MI

[“Learning together: district commits to cultural responsiveness after controversial online learning assignment”](#)

Judge’s Comment: A lot of detail, including verbatim emails, show up in this story that would make news far beyond the school. It was a tough story to write because of the controversy and emotion surrounding it but needed to be written. Writer Kylie Clifton’s lead anecdote draws you in and the writing captures the story’s essence, touching the necessary bases when sourcing and exploring multiple angles. Comment from the teacher who made the assignment and pressing school officials further about the wisdom of their stated reason for the assignment could have deepened the story’s appeal. But, 2nd place is a high achievement. Job well done.

# Recommended new school name spurs backlash

[Ava Smith](#)

October 27, 2020



A renaming committee's recommendation of Ida B. Wells as Grady's new name rather than majority-supported Midtown has spurred community backlash.

"I was saddened by the meeting last week," said parent and school governance team member Sharon Bray, who supported the Midtown name and thought the majority input was overlooked. "I was not happy that people weren't representing their constituencies. I felt like when you're appointed as a representative to a committee, your primary job is to represent the group that you were appointed to represent."

Throughout the school's renaming process, which began in the summer, there have been multiple community input opportunities, including surveys and discussion at committee meetings. The committee narrowed a list of more than 50 suggested names to five: Freedom, Thomas E. Adger, Ida B. Wells, Piedmont and Midtown. The committee created a survey to gather input on the short list, asking each participant to self-identify as a student, faculty member or community member and to submit their preferred choice and explain their rationale. The survey did not have a category for alumni.

Grady is the oldest school in Atlanta Public Schools, with a history dating back to 1872, the year the Atlanta City Council created the district. Founded as Boys' High, the school officially became Grady in 1947 when it converted to a coed institution. Henry Grady's name first appeared when the main building on Charles Allen Drive was being constructed in 1922 and the campus housed both Boys' High and Tech High, according to the book "Boys' High Forever: The History of an Extraordinary Atlanta Public High School," which chronicles the school's early history through 1947.

"It's a pretty major thing," said Grady parent Richard Weinstein. "That school has been around [and] that name has been around for decades ... I think it's important that the name change reflects the will and the desire of the constituents in the community."



File Photo

Despite Midtown garnering twice the amount of support as Ida B. Wells, according to a community survey, the Grady Renaming Committee voted to recommend the name of Ida B. Wells to the Board for a final vote. This decision has spurred backlash from some who feel that the committee's decision does not reflect the community.

Third Place: Ava Smith,  
Henry W. Grady HS,  
Atlanta, GA

["Recommended new school name spurs backlash"](#)

Judge's Comment: The writer, Ava Smith, did a good job of untangling a complicated story and giving all of those with a stake in the story a chance to have their say. The lead was good, letting us know the issue right away and setting the stage for the comments to follow. The story had good detail and conveyed the emotion that drove the speakers. Good entry.

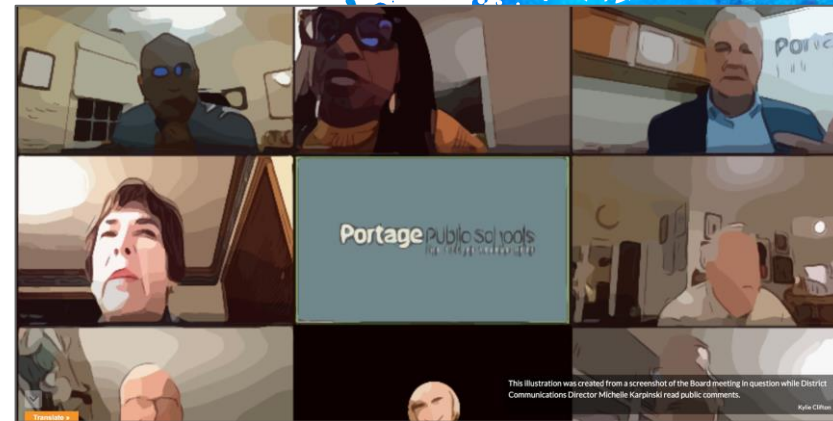


Category 9:  
In-Depth  
Reporting/Team

First Place: Kylie Clifton, Astrid Code, Maya Daniels,  
Sloan Markin, Bryana Quick,  
Portage Northern HS,  
Portage, MI

## “Miscommunication about district move to hybrid causes concerns and confusion among shareholders”

Judge’s Comment: This team has clearly earned the trust of its readers and community, which is evident from the sources they were able to get on the record for this story, about the controversy around a miscommunicated move to hybrid schooling. The writing and structuring of the story is really compelling, which demonstrates keen editing, and the visuals provided valuable information to the reader and supplemented the text well. This story is an exceptional example of student journalists holding institutions accountable while responsibly presenting various perspectives on a difficult issue.



### Miscommunication about district move to hybrid causes concerns and confusion among shareholders

Kylie Clifton, Astrid Code, Maya Daniels, Sloan Markin, and Bryana Quick

October 13, 2020

At 6:30 on the evening of September 28th, community members all across Portage cleared their tabs and readied their screens for the standard bi-monthly Board of Education meeting. The meeting’s first hour passed as might have been expected, with routine updates coming to a close with no objections. The tone changed abruptly during the public comments section of the meeting, when thirty-two letters from teachers, parents, students and community members made it clear that this meeting would be anything *but* normal.

“I’m sorta frustrated with teachers and administration for this rumor wasting an hour and a half of our time and the administration not able to quell this rumor before it got this far,” concluded Board trustee Kurt Droppers after district Communications Director Michelle Karpinski finished reading the comments.

Droppers wasn’t alone in his opinion of the alleged “rumors.” Board trustee Robert Snyder indicated in his closing statements that, “A rumor gets halfway around the world while the truth is still getting pants on.”

This perspective extended even to board leadership, with Board vice president Terri Novaria stating at the close of the meeting, “There is so much time wasted on anxiety for something that isn’t even written down anywhere. I’m not sure where people got their ideas about what was happening and who was leading the charge.”

What the Board didn’t know was that not only was the plan written down, it had already been shared to building principals and teachers. That district administrators were planning to move from virtual to hybrid instruction wasn’t a rumor that spread within the community. It was an established fact.

First Place: Melissa Liu, Bedansh Pandey,  
Northview HS,  
Johns Creek, GA  
[“Restoring the Creek”](#)

Judge’s Comment: Melissa and Bedansh did a phenomenal job of localizing a huge issue (climate change) to their school community. They covered the topic from various angles and interviewed a diverse roster of sources, from a city councilperson to a student who manages a boba tea shop, but kept the story threaded cohesively. This is professional-quality journalism, written well and clearly conceived, edited, and structured thoughtfully.

## *Restoring the Creek*

Local leaders, businesses, and students take steps to protect Johns Creek’s environment and mitigate climate change



Graphic by Melissa Liu, Managing Print & Design Editor

**Bedansh Pandey, News Editor & Melissa Liu, Managing Print & Design Editor**

Nearly 10 years ago, driving down Bell Road to Northview High School was a tranquil journey — the sides of roads were lush with trees and leaves, the crisp, morning smell of dew wafted through the air, and nature was at its prime. But today, there has been an evident change. With new residential areas spawning where forests used to be, and a hint of soot in the air that used to be fresh, residents point out that large-scale urbanization has degraded the environment of the city. This is not a unique trend by any means; many suburban cities like Johns Creek are becoming less green. But through business, policy, and education, the community is taking steps to restore the environment to what it once was and battle the larger enemy of climate change.

First Place: Emma Lingo, Maddie Meyers,  
Malcia Greene, Kiden-Aloyse Smith, Rachel  
Finan, Charlotte Heinrich,  
Kirkwood, HS,  
Kirkwood, MO  
[“The 1619 Project”](#)

Judge’s Comment: This group of students took a massive issue -- the original sin of chattel slavery and all of its heinous consequences and impacts -- and translated it to their school community through a compelling, thoughtful mix of reported and opinion pieces. Through stellar reporting, these student journalists put human faces on the achievement gap, redlining, and more, and pulled in historical context and current day issues to create a narrative of the scars of slavery and the fresh wounds still being inflicted by racism. This package was thoughtfully and maturely conceived and presented.



# 1619

Emma Lingo

“No aspect of the country that would be formed here has been untouched by the years of slavery that followed. On the 400th anniversary of this fateful moment, it is finally time to tell our story truthfully.” – The 1619 Project

## The 1619 Project

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Emma Lingo, Maddie Meyers, Malcia Greene, Kiden-Aloyse Smith, Rachel Finan, and  
Charlotte Heinrich

“**T**he 1619 Project is an ongoing initiative from The New York Times Magazine that began in August 2019, the 400th anniversary of the beginning of American slavery. It aims to reframe the country’s history by placing the consequences of slavery and the contributions of black Americans at the very center of our national narrative.” – *The New York Times*

Six reporters from TKC decided to contribute to this project, finding local stories surrounding racism and the resilience of the African-American community. Below are stories about topics ranging from Kirkwood’s redistricting proposition and redlining to an editorial about slavery and the success story of a dominantly black school overcoming the education gap.



# Category 10: Sports Feature Writing





Everyone only has one brain, and protecting that brain can be a challenge. According to a study published in the journal *Pediatrics*, football is the sport with the highest concussion rates followed by girls soccer and boys ice hockey.

Nathan Bradford '23 has had three concussions from playing football—one each year from seventh grade to ninth grade. After his first two concussions, Bradford took about a week off from playing football before returning to the game he loved.

“I had a lot of people pushing me to [continue playing]. I enjoyed the game a lot, and I was getting better,” Bradford said.

However, after suffering from another concussion the following year, Bradford decided to stop playing football at the end of the season.

“It was a tough decision, but I valued my own brain over the game that I was playing,” Bradford said. “Playing this year would just not be worth the risk.”

A concussion is generally started by a blow to the head or whiplash that creates a bruise in the brain. That leads to swelling, and since the brain is contained within the skull, there is nowhere for the swelling to go, and the resulting pressure affects the brain. Symptoms can include trouble concentrating, feeling off-balance, blurry vision, seeing double, sensitivity to light, neck pain, fatigue, and trouble remembering things.

The Director of Primary Sports Medicine at the University of Iowa, Andrew Peterson, is also the head team physician of the Iowa Hawkeyes. He goes to football games with the Iowa Hawkeyes so that he can be ready to intervene if a player gets a concussion.

The main tool used to identify concussions is the SCAT 5, the fifth version of the Sideline Concussion Assessment Tool. It is included in an international consensus statement on concussion evaluation and management.

“Pretty much everyone uses [the SCAT 5] as their sideline concussion tool,” Peterson said. “It involves the symptom scores, balance test, some memory and concentration tests. You use that to really fully evaluate [if someone has a concussion].”

Concussion diagnosis is largely based on the symptoms of the athlete, and how they act during the testing. In the fall 2019 football session alone, the City High football team had 12 diagnosed concussions. The coaches are very aware of this issue and have measures in place to deal with both the risk of concussions and their treatment.

“It was a tough decision, but I valued my own brain over the game that I was playing. Playing this year would just not be worth the risk.”

— Bradford

## Second Place: Julianne Berry-Stoelzle, Iowa City HS, Iowa City, IA

### “A Heads Up on Concussions”

Judge’s Comment: Berry-Stoelzle does an excellent job breaking down a nationally-debated topic and localizing it. Can easily tell this piece was well-researched. Sources are key to a story, and Berry-Stoelzle picked a great group, from those who've suffered from concussions to experts in the medical field. Story flowed incredibly well and really made readers think, as all quality reporting should.

The nerves were intense as Shiloh Wilson tried to regroup after being bucked off his first horse in the biggest rodeo competition of his short career. A moment before the 7-year-old got on his second horse, his dad thumped him on the chest.

"Son, you got this," Jeff Wilson said. "I told you, you got this. Now get on this horse and ride this horse."

Shiloh stayed on his second horse long enough to be taken off of it by the "pickup man." His smile, his dad said, was priceless.

It is a smile of a third-generation cowboy. A smile that can be donned only by a grandson of a Texas rodeo Hall of Famer. It's a smile Shiloh's dad and grandfather both flashed during their championship rodeo careers.

"I'm leaving a legacy behind me," Shiloh's 87-year-old grandfather Stanley Wilson said. "I'm just all around proud.

"I really enjoy watching Shiloh ride. He's so young, he's just thrilled to death with it."

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Collision and refinishing teacher Jeff Wilson began training Shiloh for rodeos when Shiloh was 3. The passion for rodeoing is three generations in the making for the Wilson family.

Stanley Wilson competed in rodeos for about 22 years. Jeff followed in his footsteps.

Jeff started riding steers when he was around 8 or 9. He then rode bulls until he took a three-year break to focus on college and his teaching career. He put rodeo on the back burner until he ran into a friend who was riding saddle bronc horses.

"I watched him ride that bucking horse and I went with him to a couple more rodeos," Jeff said. "And I went, 'I want to try that.'"

In 1995, Jeff started riding saddle bronc horses. At 26, he won rookie of the year; and at 33, he won a world class championship.

He taught during the week. Then when the bell rang at 3:30 p.m. on Fridays, he traveled to wherever his rodeo was that weekend.

Finally in 2004 at the age of 35, Jeff Wilson was ready to retire. He had fulfilled everything he possibly could in the rodeo world. He couldn't get any better, and it just wasn't as exciting or fun as it used to be.



Stanley Wilson competes on "Quicksand" in bareback bronc riding at the Houston Rodeo in 1966. He was a bareback champ in 1978 and inducted into the Texas Rodeo Hall of Fame in 2005. Now at 87, Wilson cheers for his grandson Shiloh on the rodeo circuit. (Submitted by Jeff Wilson)

## Third Place: Kathleen Ortiz, Kingwood Park HS, Kingwood, TX "Like Father, Like Son"

Judge's Comment: Writing about sports outside the "big three" of baseball, football, basketball can be difficult, but often times that's where some of the best stories come from. Ortiz's story is exactly that -- a great look into a family's passion for rodeo. Ortiz does a great job articulating how much the sport means to the family. There's plenty of passion in each quote and she does an excellent job weaving through the family's past and present. A well-written, fun read.



Category 11:  
Sports Game/Event  
Coverage

First Place: Thomas Melina Raab,  
McCallum HS,  
Austin, TX

[“Riley sets personal record at state cross-country meet”](#)

Judge’s Comment: Thomas tells the story well of a runner’s journey back to the state cross-country meet by taking the reader through his past and how he improved upon previous times. The writing is concise and clear, with the quotes adding depth into the reporting.

At 3:15 on a cool Monday afternoon, the gun went off and the runners scrambled to get good placement for the first mile. Riley went out very fast, finishing his first mile at 4:50, and reaching a personal goal to run a sub 5-minute split. As the race went on, splits got slower and people started to die out, but he was able to push himself and keep a steady pace throughout.

“I’m happy with how I did. It was one of my best times of the year, and I think I did really well. It was a good way to end the season.”

— *junior Chris Riley*

He came through the finish line in 55th place, an underwhelming number until you hear his time, a personal best 16:14.71.

“I’m happy with how I did,” Riley said. “It was one of my best times of the year, and I think I did really well. It was a good way to end the season.”

Riley has many reasons to be proud of his performance at this meet, and so does his Coach.

“Riley is by far the fastest and strongest runner McCallum has had in the last 15 years since I have been coaching,” Coach Ashton said. “He was feeling healthy and

strong heading into the race this year. He was very pleased with his race and finish.”

Riley had a great race, but it’s just a milestone not a crowning achievement. Track season starts in the spring, and from there he expects bigger and better things when cross-country starts again in the fall of 2021.

It’s more than likely that he will run again at the end of the year at this same course, and chances are just as high that he could be one of those runners leading the way at the front of the pack.

After all, three is the magic number.

# Valley conquered by Ramapo in season opener

Raiders come out on top in 2019 championship rematch



Second Place: Spencer Goldstein,  
Pascack Valley HS,  
Hillsdale, NJ  
[“Valley conquered by Ramapo in season opener”](#)

Judge’s Comment: Spencer's recap featured a strong storyline of the changes in the team from the previous year and why they lost the way they did. The writing featured a good balance between specific plays and led in well to game and season statistics.

## Third Place: Abigail Carter, Starr's Mill HS, Fayetteville, GA "It's a new day"

Judge's Comment: Abigail's writing in this story was incredible, and she painted a good picture of the action during the game. The lede really pushed the narrative that there was a shot at redemption and the team fulfilled that goal with commanding performances.

Ever since the region realignment in 2016, Starr's Mill and Whitewater have competed for the region championship, with Whitewater winning the last two years. When the two teams competed earlier in the season Starr's Mill struggled to field the ball. Whitewater won commandingly 13-0 and 7-2.

"We just had to play our game, and it was just a new day, just reset and start over," junior Sydney Blair said.

Thanks to the pitching of [junior Lilli Backes](#), and the hitting and base running at the top of the Lady Panther batting order, redemption was at hand as Starr's Mill traveled to Whitewater for the Region 2-AAAAA championship series.

In the first game, Backes faced 24 batters in seven innings, striking out 14 batters, and only giving up two hits. The only run Whitewater scored was on a passed ball in the third. Senior Jolie Lester went 3-for-4 with two singles, a triple, and two RBIs. Junior Julia Cliff went 2-for-3 with two singles, and a stolen base.

"I think the girls feed off of [Backes], and how she's feeling and how she starts the game," head coach Mark Williamson said.



Junior Lilli Backes delivers a pitch. In her last three games, Backes has struck out 34 opposing batters. Just two weeks ago the team was toward the bottom in region standings. They have now won seven of their last nine games heading into the state playoffs. ([Annika Pepper](#))


“ We just had to play our game, and it was just a new day...”

— *junior Sydney Blair*

The Lady Panthers started off strong in the top of the first. Flanders led off with a double, then stole third base while junior Sydney Blair was at bat. Lester's single brought in Flanders, giving Starr's Mill a quick 1-0 lead.

The top of the second saw [junior Kalin Blinstrub](#) hitting a single, then advancing to second on a throwing error. Cliff bunted, sending Blinstrub to 3rd. In the next at bat, junior Sarah Latham's hit scored Blinstrub. The Lady Panthers took a 2-0 lead into the bottom of the second, where Backes notched two more strikeouts.

In the bottom of the third Whitewater started getting a footing with junior Dylan Bronkhorst's single. Senior Kyna Cheney's groundout allowed Bronkhorst to advance to second. Bronkhorst then stole third, and scored the only Whitewater run on a passed ball. The inning ended with Starr's Mill leading 2-1.



# Category 12: Profile Writing

Dave Geeting had a way with words. When he entered a party, he'd let everyone know he had arrived. He was convinced that his Tame Impala songs were superior to his daughters' love of Taylor Swift and Selena Gomez. And he could write a **hell of a review** for The Riverfront Times in his spare time.

Without Dave, no one knew what to say.

"When it happened to me, me and all my friends weren't even in 8th grade yet," Allison Geeting, junior and Dave's eldest daughter, said. "It's hard for [my friends] because they don't know what to say."

***"Experiencing such a hard, traumatic event in my life has definitely made me have to grow up a lot quicker than most people especially because now we only have one parent so if my mom's not around I have to step up and be a co-parent in our house."***

Allison and her two younger sisters, Caroline, freshman, and Jane, 6th grader at North Kirkwood Middle School (NKMS), lost their dad July 23, 2016. Dave committed suicide after a lifelong struggle with chronic depression.



Pictured left to right: Allison, Dave and Caroline Geeting. Photo courtesy of the Geeting family.

"We found out after a family friend trip to Lake St. Louis," Caroline said. "It was shocking. When you're that young you never picture someone so close to you dying."

Dave was born and raised in Kirkwood. He traveled from Keysor Elementary to NKMS to KHS, where he wrote for The Call, played on the basketball team and even had a license plate with his nickname, "Geeter." He then went to the University of Missouri, where he met his future wife, Julie Jones.

"Since he did go to Kirkwood, it's hard because I know there are teachers who he had and classes that he took that I want to ask him about, but obviously I can't," Allison said. "There [have been] a couple [of] times an older substitute teacher who retired will come and they'll see Geeting and they'll say 'Oh, I had some of your relatives.' They'll say, 'Which Geeting are you from, who's your parent?' and sometimes they don't know he passed away."

First Place: Charlotte Heinrich,  
Kirkwood HS,  
Kirkwood, MO

"[Dave and his daughters](#)"

Judge's Comment: Emotion. Emotion made this the strongest profile of the lot. It hurt, it made me smile, it gave me hope. This was what good profiling should be--an experience that leaves the reader feeling. Thank you for the heart and maturity.



"I would remind all students that what gets posted online tends to exist for a long time," Boehringer said. "A student engaging in a protest-speech action in a public venue is likely to be photographed and even named, online. This could lead to associations, positive or negative, for that student far down the road in their future if a future college, employer, date or other party were to search for information about them online."

A few members of the Talonettes have expressed their support for Rubio's peaceful protest.

"It's her right to do it. The real people at fault are the people that commented or direct messaged her hateful stuff on Instagram and did downright disgusting things," freshman Talonette Kalila Beak said. "Prosper should be showing positivity and supporting each other."

As with any controversial statement, Rubio received backlash from her peers on multiple social media platforms.

"I knew that I go to a predominantly white school with ideals are predominantly conservative, so I knew I was going to face some backlash," Rubio said. "I wasn't expecting it to be as bad as it was. It made me very anxious knowing that there are people that feel this strongly against me. I was terrified that they would come and hurt me in person. It was eye-awakening and very scary."

Despite the backlash, Rubio does not plan to stop.



who ever the anthem is a just kneeled during the piece of get the off the field and go back to the hole you belong in

In a screenshot of a student's Snapchat story, Karolina Rubio kneels during the National Anthem. Rubio received backlash on Snapchat stories. "It made me very anxious knowing that there are people that feel this strongly against me," Rubio said. "I was terrified that they would come and hurt me in person."

Second Place: Morgan Reese,  
Prosper HS,  
Prosper, TX

"Talonette takes a knee to 'take a stand' in National Anthem"

Judge's Comment: This profile gave a face to a movement and utilized a variety of multimedia to enhance the story. Not only was Reese's profile thoughtful and eloquent, it showed purpose and drive that student publications often miss. This topic is also absolutely difficult to cover and you did it with finesse. One piece that stood out was the use of a comment, which could have been done without care, but something so simple added so much to your story and it showed the maturity of your writing.



*Clarke Central High School senior Cameron Stokes (middle) smiles with his mother Latrena Artist (right) and his brother CCHS freshman Jeremy Stokes (left) in front of the New Gym on Jan. 28. Artist believes that education is key for her children's success. "I have stressed (education). I finished as a nontraditional student at UGA, so I had to take on student loans. So I've stressed to both (my sons) how important it is to excel academically. We're hoping that they get an athletic scholarship, but it will be even greater if they could get an academic scholarship," Artist said. Photo by Gerardo Navarro*


"The church I (currently) go to is Miracle House in Bogart, Georgia. It impacted me a lot because there were a lot of male role models that I looked up to. I didn't really have my dad, so they took me in and gave me little tips and things about what to do and what not to do. They just led me down the right road," Cameron said.

Seeing his mother work hard to support his family inspired Cameron to work harder on his own. He applied this inspiration by working hard while playing his two favorite sports: basketball and baseball.

"I've always liked basketball. I think I started when I was about five or six. I started (playing) at a church called Beech Haven. Ever since then, I just fell in love with it," Cameron said.

Third Place: Andrew Robinson,  
Clarke Central HS,  
Athens, GA  
["Grand Slam Cam"](#)

Judge's Comment: The beauty of this profile is in the whole package that was created. Not only was a picture of Cam painted eloquently, the visual dynamics added to the strength of the piece. I left the story with a feel-good sense of community and the reality of the person that is Cam Stokes.



# Category 13: Political Writing

First Place: Ella West,  
St. John's School,  
Houston, TX

“Congressional campaign pits Mavericks  
Fletcher, Hunt”

Judge's Comment: This story is a great example of original reporting about politics more likely to affect people's lives -- on the local level. Moreover, the story has a great angle for student, faculty and general public readers because it is about opposing political candidates from the school the newspaper covers. Good quotes, with a blend of the serious when it comes to policies and curious when it comes to be alums of the same school. Great job.

“When you are in a position like that, you have to be very cautious and judicious with what you do because your life and other people's lives are on the line. That experience is similar to what running for office is like.”

— Wesley Hunt, ('00)

Hunt ('00) is a newcomer to politics who won the Republican primary outright in March. A West Point graduate, he spent eight years in the Army as an Aviation Branch Officer. He touts his military experience as preparation for seeking elected office.

“I have been engaged by the enemy, and I have had to engage the enemy with lethal force as well,” Hunt said in a phone interview. “When you are in a position like that, you have to be very cautious and judicious with what you do because your life and other people's lives are on the line. That experience is similar to what running for office is like.”

Fletcher has campaigned against other SJS alums before. She won the 2018 Democratic primary against a crowded field that included Alex Triantaphyllis ('02) in the first round and Laura Moser ('95) in the runoff.

“The number of St. John's students involved in politics really speaks to the engagement of the students and the emphasis on service that was such an important part of our time at St. John's,” Fletcher said.

Hunt agrees that having two alums running in the same district is a reflection on St. John's.

“It just goes to show that [St. John's] is a very special place because you have two people running for Congress from the same high school that come from very different backgrounds. Yet here we are, from the same high school, running for the same seat, but from different parties,” Hunt said. “St. John's [teaches you] how to think, not what to think.”

Including Fletcher, three members of her Washington D.C. team are SJS alums: Chief of Staff Sarah Kaplan Feinmann ('07) and Senior Legislative Assistant Cameron Hull ('14).

“We have the 1990s, 2000s and 2010s covered,” Fletcher said. “I'm really proud of what our team has done during my first term in office.”

## Second Place: George Lekowicz, Henry W. Grady HS, Atlanta, GA

### “State politics through the eyes of Georgia’s reporters”

Judge’s Comment: The strength of those placing in the top three of this contest has been original reporting. This entry delivered with an interesting twist: revealing how local, professional journalists dealt with Georgia’s attention-grabbing 2020 elections. It was a good angle and was covered well, with a variety of sources and interesting anecdotes about covering a regular local beat amid a swoop of national media.

When Greg Bluestein answered the phone for an interview on Dec. 3, he was speeding to Savannah.

Continuously interrupted by trucker horns and turn signals on his five-hour voyage to cover Vice President Mike Pence stump for Republicans, Bluestein, the Atlanta Journal Constitution’s (AJC) senior political reporter, described 2020 Georgia election coverage with one word: non-stop.



Pictured Above: AJC Political Reporter Greg Bluestein files alongside other journalists at a Trump Rally in Valdosta on Dec. 5, 2020. Bluestein is one of many local journalists cast into the national spotlight due to Georgia’s high-profile runoff elections, which will decide the balance of power in the Senate. (Courtesy of Elijah Nouvelle)

“It’s fast and furious, and you’ve got to be nimble,” Bluestein said. “There is always something happening right now.”

During the 2020 presidential election, Georgia captured the nation’s attention as a historically red state turned blue, casting its 16 electoral votes for President-Elect Biden. But for Georgia’s political press core, the presidential race was only half the story.

Georgia is in the media’s spotlight again as the state’s two U.S. Senate seats head to run-off elections on Jan. 5. These two races, a special election between appointed Republican Senator Kelly Loeffler and Democrat Reverend Raphael Warnock, along with a regularly scheduled election between first-term Republican Senator David Perdue and Democrat Jon Ossoff will decide the balance of power in Washington.

The combination of these events transformed the Peach State from a political afterthought into the center of the political universe, creating a political journalist’s perfect storm. And while Georgia’s sudden place in the political limelight changes the state’s political landscape, it doesn’t change how local reporters do their job.

“With our team at the AJC, we are kind of doing what we always do,” Bluestein said. “We are covering hearings, we are writing about what’s happening, we are doing a daily newsletter, we are keeping the blog full of juicy developments. It’s always what we have done as reporters; it’s just now a broader audience outside of Georgia is scrutinizing it because there is so much at stake with these elections.”

Third Place: Ananya Kulkarni,  
Conestoga HS,  
Berwyn, PA  
“Biden Wins Presidency”

Judge’s Comment: The real story here is defined by the subhead: "Polarization sweeps through 'Stoga student body." This story does a good job of showing how political polarization nationally plays out at the local school. The story has good, original reporting with solid sourcing that gives attention to multiple voices. Thoughtful localization of a national trend. Well done.

# BIDEN WINS PRESIDENCY

*Polarization sweeps the nation and 'Stoga student body*



**Celebration in Philadelphia:** Hundreds of masked Biden/Harris supporters march to celebrate the projected victory of president-elect Joe Biden on the morning of Nov. 7. Dozens of other social and political groups gathered to demonstrate, speak and celebrate in response to the projections by multiple major news outlets that morning.

By **Ananya Kulkarni**  
and **Umar Samdani**  
Co-Editor-in-Chief  
and Co-T/E Life  
Editor

As votes were tallied over the course of the election

week, threats of unrest and Supreme Court litigation had the nation anxiously awaiting a result. When the long and tumultuous counting process finally came to a projected result Nov. 7, President-elect Joe Biden claimed victory in an acceptance speech that he delivered two nights later. And while half of the nation breathed a sigh of relief, the

other half lamented former President Donald Trump's failed re-election bid, with some — including the president himself — outright refusing to accept the result. So, who really won Election Night in 2020? The answer remains unclear because America lost to the polarization that engulfed the nation all the way

down to Chester County. In the 2020 election, 57% of the county voted for Biden with 40% voting for Trump. The result came down to a difference of just over 33,000 votes with Biden holding a lead allowing the county to go blue. This election marks the widest ideological divide Chester County has seen since 2008.


#### *In a school setting*

The effects of this trend have a tangible impact at the highest levels of government, via gridlock in Congress, which is accompanied by difficult consequences, such as the government shutdowns the nation saw in the last four years. On a local level, students such as senior Sophia Serbu also noted a

lack of separation between politics and personal relationships at 'Stoga in the midst of the 2020 election, which she found to be disheartening. "I have seen tensions between some people's friends over political views, which I personally think is unfair. Politics shouldn't get between friendships, and people should be allowed to support which candidate they want

to support without facing backlash from others," Serbu said. The increased polarization in the area has implications in the classroom as well. Junior Linc Zdanowicz, the vice president of Young Republicans Club, notes that he wishes students spent more time explaining their positions rather than "canceling" each other.

*Continued on page 3.*



Category 14: Health,  
Science & Agriculture  
Writing

The day before, Kate was playing soccer in front of more than 100 college coaches in South Carolina. She scored two goals during her team's three games at a national showcase event from Dec. 6-8 and flew back to Houston late Sunday night.



Kate Tiedtke runs to win a ball during the 2019 regional semifinal game against Port Neches-Groves during her freshman year. Jayme Wilkey

Kate got home around 2 a.m. on Dec. 9. That same day she went through her regular school day, including soccer practice until 4 p.m. That's when she noticed her heart was beating fast.

She wasn't concerned. She was almost amused that it felt as though her heart were beating out of her chest. It became less of a novelty when it happened a few more times soon after.

Kate's mom Laura Tiedtke called her pediatrician. Considering the circumstances – three soccer games, a plane flight and little sleep over the weekend – the doctor said Kate was probably just dehydrated. She

suggested Gatorade and food.

After picking up Culver's and some Gatorade, Kate mentioned how tired she was to her mom as she headed to her room to start homework.

Kate was still working on Algebra 2 when Laura went into her room and dropped off a pile of clothes. At that moment, Kate placed her homework down and then began to seize.

The 15-year-old was in cardiac arrest.

Kate's body went stiff. Her skin turned gray. Her eyes were half closed. She wasn't responding to her mom.

## First Place: Kathleen Ortiz, Kingwood Park HS, Kingwood, TX ["In a Heartbeat"](#)

Judge's Comment: Kathleen delivers a riveting story of a high-achieving student-athlete's survival after a sudden cardiac event. I was hooked from the opening paragraphs - short, emotion-packed sentences that told so much yet made me want to read more. Excellent decision to tell this story chronologically and sourced by her family. I felt like I was living this event with them.



# Future of Farming

In light of World Agriculture Day on Tuesday, students in agriculture stress importance of maintaining industry

LEAH TAN STORY    SONNWA HUNGEL CALVAHIE, RAY MO PHOTOS

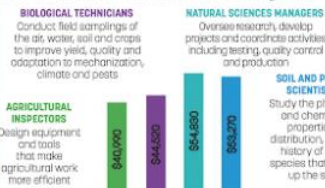
Although Indiana is a state commonly known for its agricultural industry, Carmel tends to stray far from representing that stereotype. However, for junior Drew Sanchez, agriculture is a topic of interest, so much so that he wishes to pursue a career in it.

"Most people think when I want to pursue an agricultural related career, that I want to become a farmer; however, agriculture is about a lot more than farming," Sanchez said. "Although farmers make a portion of it, there are hundreds of other jobs in all domains of science and policy that go into the holistic industry in America, and agricultural economic policy particularly interests me."

Sanchez attributes his passion to the resources offered at the school. He specifically found his passion through his AP Human Geography class. Each year, every AP Human Geography student submits a paper

## farming fates

Take a look at the median salaries of careers in the field of agriculture



SLS SOURCE  
SOPHIA HIRSHKIN, UMA KANDALLU GRAPHIC

for the World Food Prize (WFP) Global Youth Institute in which they have the opportunity to be rewarded for their research on a critical aspect of an agricultural issue. For Sanchez, this was the turning point.

"The WFP is pretty much the agricultural equivalent of the Nobel Prize. It is awarded once a year to an outstanding individual in any domain of agriculture," Sanchez said. "I participated in the WFP Global Youth Institute where I wrote a paper about an issue faced by a country, or specifically infrastructure in Ethiopia. Through the entire process, I learned about how multi-faceted the actual industry is and quickly grew a strong interest in it."

Unfortunately, Sanchez's level of passion is one that is not commonly shared among others. According to social studies teacher John Cairns, there has been a lack of interest in agriculture among the student body.

by the numbers  
**56,649**

farming operations in Indiana

\$31.2 BILLION

in the contribution by agriculture to Indiana's economy

96%

of farms in Indiana are family owned or operated  
NEWS SOURCE

"We used to offer more resources like the Future Farmers Association at the school; however, the lack of demand among the student demographics ultimately made (the resources) go away," Cairns said.

This trend of disinterest is not only a local issue. According to the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service, the number of young people entering the field of agriculture fails to keep up with the pace of which others age out of the field. In fact, the average age of all producers increased from 56.3 to 57.5 years from 2012 to 2017.

The stigma has caused significant damage to the industry: the USDA has estimated that more than 20,000 agriculture jobs go unfilled each year.

Even more pressing is how important the agricultural industry is for the U.S. economy as well as how much more relevant the agricultural industry has become.

According to the USDA, agriculture contributed \$1.855 trillion to U.S. gross domestic product (GDP) in 2017, a 5.4% share. Furthermore, in 2018, 11% of total U.S. employment was in the agricultural industry, and employment in agriculture industries supported another 15.4 million jobs.

"Especially with the Trump trade deal with soybeans in China, it's crucial that we maintain a self-sufficient industry," Cairns said.

Cairns said he believes the issue lies within the misconceptions associated with the agricultural industry. "People are discouraged as they still believe that you can't get paid well in the industry or that you have to farm and do manual labor, but there are many different jobs and careers that stem from agriculture,"



Scan this to read about 4-H, an agricultural organization

"There's a lot more to nature," Chang said. "Being so close to it and having the ability to cultivate it really makes you more appreciative. Agriculture itself is hard and complicated, but the benefits are unique."

Sanchez said he also finds his view on the agricultural industry changed for the better.

"People underestimate agriculture in a lot of ways, but it's important to realize the far-reaching impact as well, so this is always an industry that will always be crucial," Sanchez said. "I hope people don't side it out when deciding career paths and take the time to seriously consider going into the industry."

Even more so, Sanchez said that the process helped him learn a valuable life lesson.

Sanchez said, "I learned about my passion for agriculture through the school and that made me realize that you are (going to) find opportunities where you least expect it sometimes, and make sure to take them seriously. You never know what kind of doors that might open."

**YOU HEAR WHAT YOU SOW!**  
COPHS junior Max Chang moves the grain along the test plots on his farm, Miller Gardens. Chang said the maintenance of 4-H requires many responsibilities including this one. (COPHS) Junior Drew Sanchez practices his presentation for the World Food Prize on stage. (Sanchez) Presentations included details on agriculture and how global warming will affect agriculture.



Second Place: Leiah Tan, Carmel HS, Carmel, IN  
"Future of Farming"

Judge's Comment: Great job localizing a global event, World Agriculture Day, with a story sourced by students and a teacher well-versed in ag. I appreciate the statistics from USDA, a reputable source.

A limited number of Austin ISD teachers and staff began their spring semester with a COVID-19 vaccine shot in the arm. The first round of vaccine distributions for the district's teachers came about through a partnership between AISD and Ascension Seton.

Dr. Jason Reichenberg, the president of Ascension Medical Group at Ascension Texas, told *The Shield* in an exclusive interview that after receiving both Moderna and Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine doses from the State of Texas, Ascension Seton first vaccinated their frontline caregivers, such as ICU doctors, nurses and certified nursing assistants.

"Ascension Seton took extra steps to ensure these frontline staff had access to the vaccine, and worked to eliminate social and economic barriers to ensure that our staff who are most at risk could receive the vaccine as a prioritized group," Reichenberg said.

Alongside the vaccination of their frontline workers, Ascension Seton began a partnership with Austin ISD and Round Rock ISD to begin the vaccination of teachers who qualify under phase 1B of the Texas Health and Human Services COVID-19 vaccine distribution plan. Phase 1B includes persons over 65 and those with underlying medical conditions.

"Ascension Seton has a longstanding partnership with Austin ISD in which Ascension Seton nurses and health-care staff have provided health services in Austin ISD schools for more than 24 years," Reichenberg said.

“Ascension Seton nurses and health-care staff have provided health services in Austin ISD schools for more than 24 years.”

— *Dr. Jason Reichenberg,*  
*president of Ascension Medical Group*

Third Place: Alysa Spiro,  
McCallum HS,  
Austin, TX

[“At-risk teachers get New Year’s shot in the arm”](#)

Judge’s Comment: The Covid-19 pandemic is an obvious health issue to cover, and this story on the first vaccinations of at-risk teachers taught me a lot about how one school district handled a process that is confusing and inconsistent nationwide.



# Category 15: Climate & Environment Writing

## First Place: Julianne Berry-Stoelzle, Iowa City HS, Iowa City, IA “The Depths of Water Pollution”

Judge’s Comment: An unflinching look at the impact of human pollution on our watershed. Authors found the perfect protagonist in Professor Secchi, and their interviews with fellow students also enlighten. Ultimately, the solution lies at the policy level, a conclusion the story arrives at with persuasive power.

High levels of nutrients in the water can alter the pH levels, killing off the fish population, as well as enabling algae blooms to form.

“To be honest, I really don’t know if anything is being done. I mean, I’m not saying that nothing is, I’m just not made aware of it, necessarily,” Emma Nugent ‘21 said.

Nugent realizes this unawareness may be a problem.

“I mean the lack of awareness can make it worse because then it’s no one’s doing anything. You’re not worrying about it, but that doesn’t mean like the problem itself isn’t getting worse,” Nugent said.

Both Secchi and Nugent agree that the pollution in Iowa’s waterways should be discussed more than it currently is.

“The first step is to admit that the problem is there,” Secchi said. “I think the most important aspect of my work actually is to make sure that we’re all aware that there is a problem because if you don’t think that there is a problem, you don’t think that we need to solve it.”

According to Secchi, this winter had an abnormally high amount of nutrients in Iowa’s waterways, which is worrisome because generally, the great flow of nutrients happens in the spring. The nutrients in the water enable algae blooms to grow.

“The problems with algae blooms is not just that they mess up the water,” Secchi said. “They affect fish populations, and they can generate bacteria that are poisonous to humans and pets. So then the water really becomes a hazard.”

Through her work, Secchi has noticed that changing weather patterns related to climate change intensify the issue of pollution. The warmer weather along with the excess nutrients creates the ideal environment for algae growth while rising sea levels increase the potential damage of a flood.

“The first step is to admit that the problem is there. If you don’t think that there is a problem, you don’t think that we need to solve it.”

— *Secchi*



# Second Place: Archit Kalra, Carmel HS, Carmel, IN "Climate Conundrum"

Judge's Comment: This story deftly explores the complicated intersection of COVID and the climate crisis. A focus on youth agency makes this story dramatically relevant not only to student readers, but to teachers, parents and policy makers as well. This excellent read is aided by graphics that underscore the themes.

FEATURE FIRST OF NOVEMBER 2020

## CLIMATE CONUNDRUM

Student activists, science teacher continue conservation efforts amid pandemic

ARCHIT KALRA STORY EWAN STODOL SUBMITTED PHOTOS

**F**OR MANYA RAJESH, GREEN Action Club president and junior environmental conservation has never been more important, even during the current COVID-19 pandemic.

"The pandemic hasn't really made that much of a difference, if anything, it's accelerated everything that's happening because industries are needing to work harder to meet employing people and get their output back up," she said. "Emissions are only going higher and higher right now."

Rajesh isn't alone in her view. A poll conducted by the Pew Research Center in October found that 70% of people in 14 countries said climate change was a major threat, while 69% said the spread of infectious diseases was a major threat, indicating that almost the same amount of people prioritize climate change equally with pandemic-level viruses.

According to Beandy Tosi, IB Environmental Systems and Societies teacher, the pandemic demonstrated the massive impact humans have on the environment.

"I see what is happening with climate change as being very obvious and



something that—pandemic or no pandemic—we should not be taking lightly," she said. "When the world did stop for a month, we did see improvements in carbon emissions, which shows how drastically humans are affecting carbon emissions just from driving."

Rajesh said the agreed. "There were a lot of stories that came out earlier this year saying that the lockdown has really helped the environment, air quality has improved and the beaches are cleaner. But really, once the lockdown ended, all those emissions just went back to normal," Rajesh said. "It doesn't really make a difference to be living our lives just

### DID YOU KNOW?

It is estimated that climate change will cause an additional 250,000 deaths per year between 2030 and 2050 due to malaria, diarrhea and heat stress.

PHOTO SOURCE

the way we were pre-pandemic. Now it really needs to be our priority to try to get our emissions down, regardless of whether there is or just a pandemic. The issue is still there."

Genelia Chinnai, the president of SWENets (a women's engineering club) and sophomore, said she hopes her club will participate along with others at CHS clubs in a new planning project in downtown Carmel with ThePurdish, a sustainable environmental conservation organization, in the spring.

Chinnai said she hopes the project will help emphasize the teamwork aspect of conservation.

"Because we will be working with as many other clubs, I think this sends the message that we do have to work together in order for us to be able to help the environment, we can't go on our own ways and expect that we will be able to have as positive of an impact as we would if we worked together," Chinnai said.

"I just hope to bring the community together to work towards a big goal and to help the environment because it is struggling so much," she added. "CHS, being a school with over 5,000 kids, definitely has a significant impact on the environment, so I hope that we can lessen that. (Conservation) is still important during the pandemic because Earth is having an ecological crisis."

Although efforts like tree planting have become popular in attempting to balance consumption with conservation, Not pointed out that some of the

most efficacious efforts to stop climate change can be through public policy.

"I would love to see changes in policy really moving towards renewable energy—an electric car today is still coming from coal," she said. "If we can make that switch, even that would really benefit the environment."

"With a lot of regulations we had, we were seeing improvement and we were on track to meet our goals. But this plays a huge role in this, and the current administration rolled back a lot of the regulations, which put us behind from our expected progress."

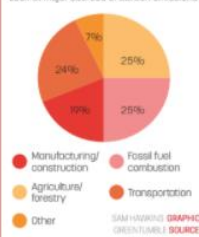
Rajesh said the Green Action Club has been working with local governments to help write a policy that may be drafted by the end of the year.

"We're working with the City Council and the Mayor on a climate action plan-kind of like the Green New Deal, but a little less aggressive," she said. "Our draft will be done in December, and we're going to try to implement that next year. That'll basically set a bunch of goals for Carmel."

Rajesh said she hopes steps such as the climate action plan will continue to motivate students to push for conservation, despite the limitations imposed by the pandemic.

### THE OFFENDERS

Look at major sources of carbon emissions



SAM HANCOCK GRAPHIC GREENPULSE SOURCE

### FOR THE RECORD:

Students recently took the Indiana stretch of the Global Climate Strike at the Indiana Statehouse in September 2019. Manyra Rajesh, Green Action Club president and senior, started the activism, many of whom were CHS students, marched in support of climate policy reform and science education of the global south.

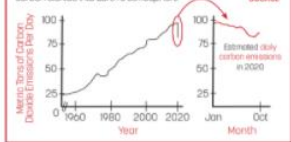
"There are some positives, but getting people to turn out to our events, or having motivation for students to our club to continue pushing their projects, has been a little hard. We're getting a lot of nice right now, because the focus are on the pandemic, and we really got that. We're trying to navigate around this whole situation," she said. "We're still able to work on the climate action plan, which is still in the stage of drafting it and writing it. We're just trying to really get past this stage."

Not said, "I do think there is hope for change. There is a lot of activists here, and I think they're doing a lot of good things. There are a lot of different organizations that have really stepped up. I use Carmel as being on the forefront."

"Carmel Mayor (James) Rainey and has been on board with making a lot of changes and being on board with environmental changes," Not added, "and he understands the importance of that and how it can benefit our community. I think what he has done with sustainability has been brilliant. As a community, we are definitely ahead of the ball game." The story was originally published on [news on Nov. 16, 2020](#).

### RIISING STAKES

Take a look at the rising emissions of carbon dioxide into Earth's atmosphere



### BY THE NUMBERS

**1°C** average global total temperature increase since pre-industrial era  
**47%** increase in US power from CO<sub>2</sub> concentration since 1950  
NASA SOURCE



Third Place: Emily Rutledge,

Bryant HS,

Bryant, AR

## “Raging Fires Persist in Australia”

Judge’s Comment: This hard-hitting story impresses for numerous reasons. Despite Arkansas being so distant from Australia, the author brings immediacy to the issue. Interviews with experts deepen our understanding of fire’s impacts on animals and habitats. The author also gets the local take, interviewing fellow classmates, plus providing opportunities to donate to the cause.

**A**s the southern areas of Australia continue to burn, an estimated one billion animals and their habitats have perished.

It may be considered normal for bushfires to be seen in Australia; however, the fires present in recent months display a far greater extent of damage as the raging fires have killed off fauna, destroyed habitats and razed feral animals and predators, all with no end in sight. Current fires are considered some of the worst since the 2009 “Black Saturday” fires in Victoria, Australia.

Ecologist and Charles Darwin University professor Sam Banks resides in Darwin, Australia, where he studies Molecular Ecology and Conservation Biology. Prior to joining the university, Banks worked in Canberra at the Australian National University and researched forest management and fire and their impacts on Australia’s biodiversity. His research has shown the primary causes of the great number in fauna deaths aside from the fires themselves.

“Based on previous fires, we know that a lot of animals can be killed by the fire event itself,” Banks said in an interview with Prospective. “But it is often the post-fire environment, where food is scarce and the lack of shelter makes animals susceptible to predators, that is particularly challenging for animals in fire-affected environments.”

Already endangered species, including the long-footed potoroo, brush-tailed rock-wallaby and Kangaroo Island dunnart are steadily decreasing in numbers and face problems of predators and loss of habitats.

“[They] have all, or nearly all, of their habitat within the area of these recent fires,” Banks said. “These fires probably won’t cause their extinction, but they will be more susceptible to introduced predators like cats and foxes after the fires. High-quality habitat for the long-footed potoroo and other animals that prefer old growth forest as their habitat will become rarer if this kind of fire event becomes more common, which is what is predicted under climate change and what we are beginning to see.”

Specializing in Zoology, Evolutionary Biology and Physiological Ecology, California State University researcher Anna Doty understands the significant impact on Australia’s wildlife. While all animals are at risk, some face greater threats than others.

# Visuals/Photo Categories

- **News Feature**
- **Sports Action**
- **Sports Reaction**
- **Photo Illustration**
- **Photo Slideshow**
- **Profile Portrait**



Category 16:  
News Feature  
Photography



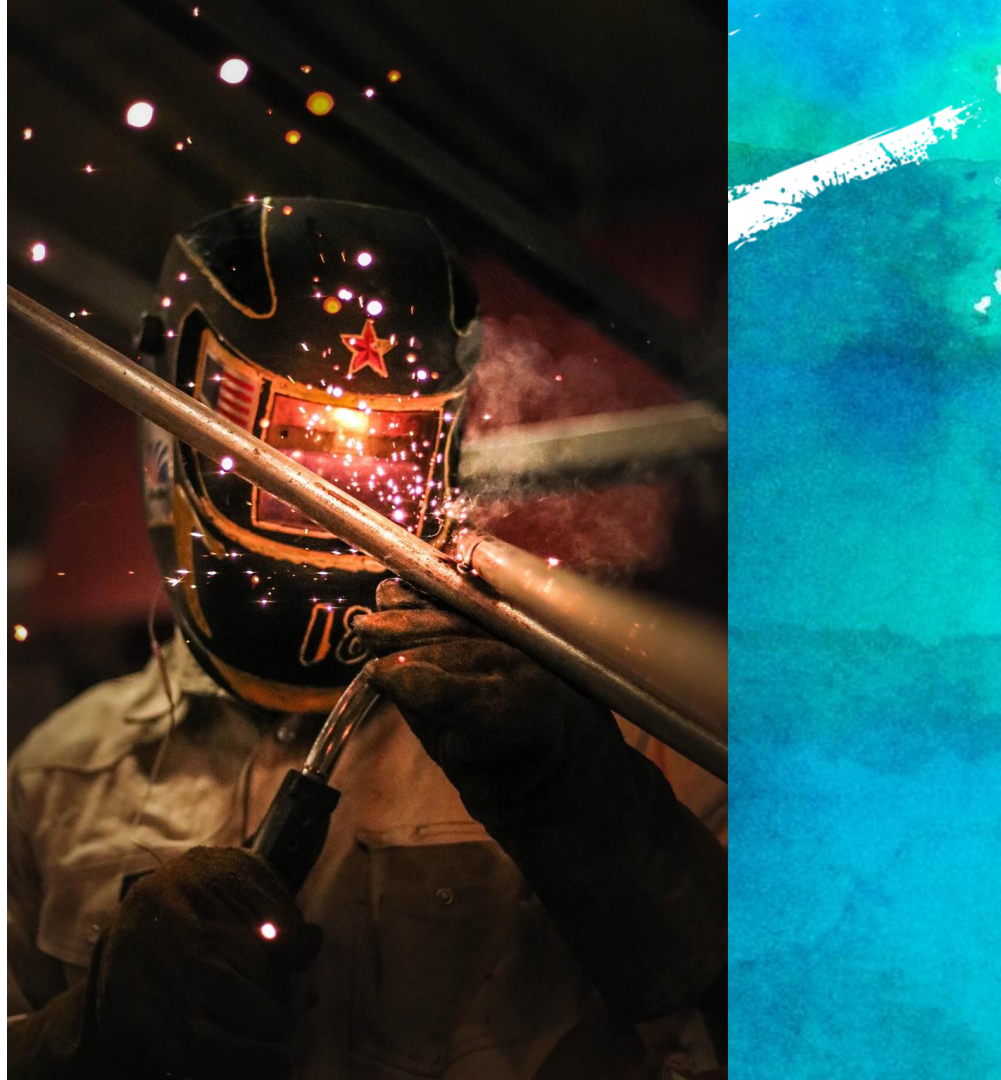
First Place: Alex Melton,  
Bryant HS,  
Bryant, AR  
“Joy on His Face”

Judge’s Comment: Alex captured a great moment in this photo - I can feel the energy and keep coming back to this one. It happened in a split-second, and the photographer was in the right place and ready to go. A thorough caption adds to the understanding of the image. While a tighter crop and shallower depth of field would have been preferred, the difficulty in capturing this photo elevated it to first place.



Second Place: Abigail Weihe,  
Bryant HS,  
Bryant, AR  
“Between Metal Bars”

Judge’s Comment: Abigail's image shows an understanding of exposure and framing with nice use of leading lines. Seeing the student's eyes through the mask is an important element. Try a slower shutter speed to blur the sparks.



Third Place: Alex Melton,  
Bryant HS,  
Bryant, AR  
“Crowd Surfing”

Judge’s Comment: This is fantastic -  
captures a great moment and I can feel  
the energy. Good crop on the layout.



The background is a vibrant, abstract composition of purple and red splatters and brushstrokes on a white background. The colors are layered and textured, creating a sense of movement and energy. The purple is a deep, rich shade, while the red is a bright, almost magenta hue. The splatters are of various sizes and shapes, some appearing as fine dots and others as larger, more defined shapes. The overall effect is dynamic and artistic.

# Category 17: Sports Action Photography



First Place: Bella Russo,  
McCallum HS,  
Austin, TX  
“Gella, Yes!”

Judge’s Comment: Great action shot. This picture has so much working for it. It is sharp, exposed perfectly, and one of the better volleyball action shots I have seen. I would be extremely happy with this picture so you should be too. A definite keeper. I also like that the main subject is clearly wearing their face mask, which really shows how sports have adapted to the world we are in today.



Second Place: Caleb Melville,  
McCallum HS,  
Austin, TX

“Junior Wyatt Cunningham guards a  
Mustang receiver”

Judge’s Comment: Right place at the right time. Just like the winning picture, I would be extremely happy with this picture so you should be too. My only issue with this picture is that it is really dark. I tend to like pictures on the darker side, but this may be too dark. I understand the lighting conditions at high school stadiums may not be the best, but you can always increase your ISO to ensure that you are able to capture the action or try brightening the image in Photoshop.



Third Place: Mia Paladino,  
Nixa HS,  
Nixa, MO  
“Swim under water”

Judge’s Comment: Here, the photographer took the time to set up an underwater remote camera to give the viewer a different look of a usually mundane event. The picture is really good, but a few things work against it in this case. Not to take away from the amount of work that went into the set up, but I wish a few more things came together to make a better composed image. Overall the image was still quite impressive.



# Category 18: Sports Reaction Photography



First Place: Jennifer Xia,  
Northview HS,  
Johns Creek, GA  
“Volleyball “Advances”

Judge’s Comment: A lot of emotion going on here, which I really like. A definite keeper. The photographer was in the right place at the right time to get the entire team celebrating on the court. The viewer can tell just by looking at this picture what is going on and that is an important part of our jobs--to tell the story. The photographer also executed the photo nearly perfectly. My only piece of advice is that I wish the photographer was a bit to one side to clean the image up a bit more in the background, which may have been out of the photographer's control due to the allowed access. Backgrounds are always important, and we need to keep that in mind.



Second Place: Caleb Melville,  
McCallum HS,  
Austin, TX  
“Leaps and downs”

Judge’s Comment: Great moment and something different. I like the fact that the player is celebrating with the coach, which is something we don’t always see. I think it is great to see that the players have such a strong relationship with their coaches/mentors. I just wish the photo was a bit cleaner. There is a lot going on in this image, which I like, but some of the players in the background are a bit too distracting. Sometimes things go your way, sometimes they don’t. I also wish the photo was a bit brighter.



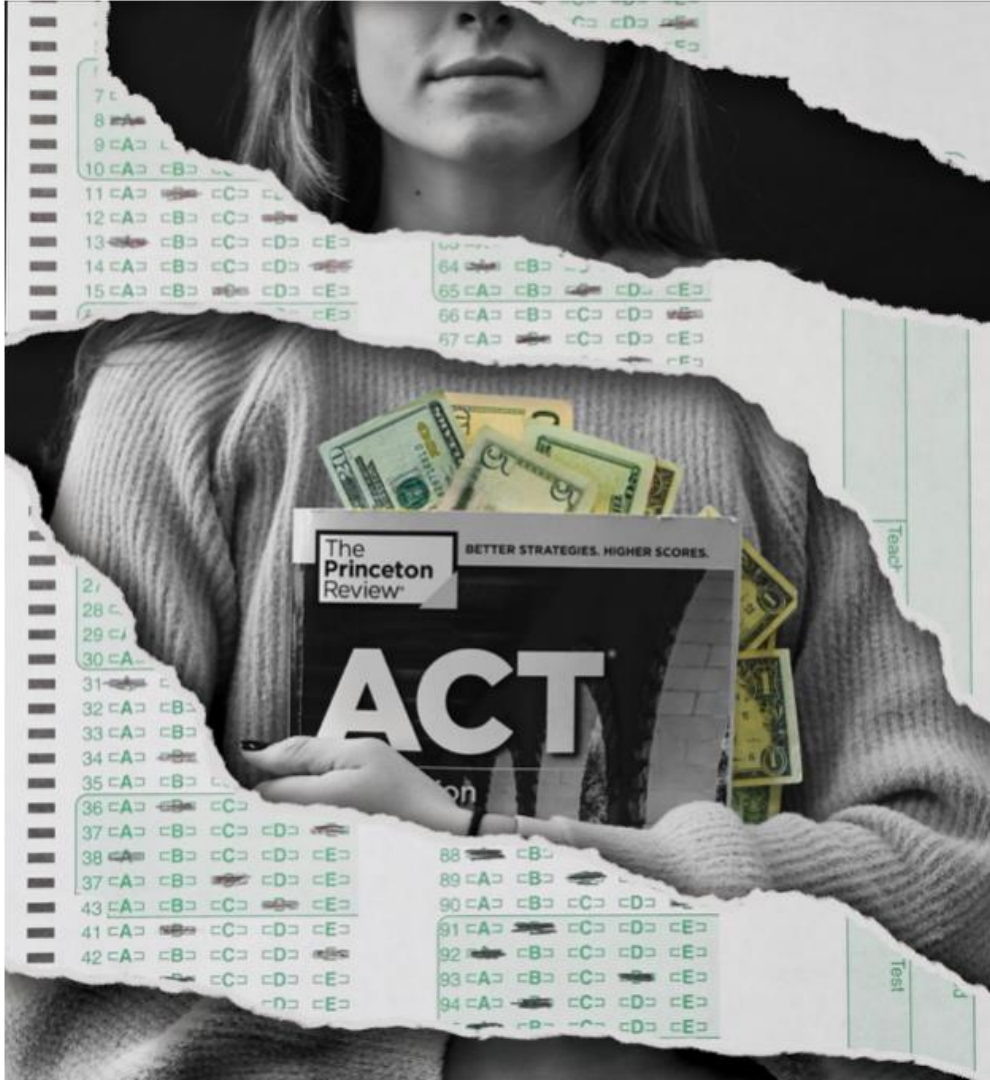
Second Place: Rachel Sarff,  
Blue Valley Northwest HS,  
Overland Park, KS  
“Hands-off”

Judge’s Comment: I like this photo because it is different, and the photographer followed the player and came up with something interesting, which is always part of the goal. Here I am guessing the photographer followed this particular player and made a mundane photo more interesting by staying with them through the play. Sometimes these nuances and differences make what could be a boring photo become something more interesting. Well done.



The background is an abstract watercolor splash in shades of purple, magenta, and red, centered on a white background. The splash has a textured, grainy appearance with various tones and some darker spots. The text is centered over this splash.

# Category 19: Photo Illustration



First Place: Sarah Golder,  
Shawnee Mission East HS,  
Overland Park, KS

## “The Faults of Standardized Testing”

Judge’s Comment: Sarah's image shows both creative conceptualization of the story as well as skill in image manipulation, and this entry is the best representation of an editorial photo illustration among the group. The theme - financial stress related to standardized testing - is immediately clear, without being overly complicated. The use of grayscale and monochromatic green work well to draw attention to key areas of the photo.



Second Place: Nora Husic,  
North Kansas City HS,  
North Kansas City, KS  
“The Photo Story of My Summer”

Judge's Comment: Nora's illustration is a creative approach to a tricky topic to visualize. The student put thought into the layout of the items, including the use of the cords as a visual frame. It is at once universal and unique to the artist's experience.



Third Place: Mitri Krishna,  
Blue Valley Northwest HS,  
Overland Park, KS  
“Our Modern Religions”

Judge’s Comment: With the challenges of covid and social distancing, this was a creative way to approach a group portrait. When building a multiple exposure, consider matching the opacity of all subjects - this feels focused on the Jewish student and minimizes the others.

An abstract background featuring a large, textured splash of purple and red watercolor paint. The splash is centered and has a soft, irregular edge, with smaller droplets and splatters radiating outwards. The colors transition from a deep purple in the center to a bright red at the edges. The overall effect is artistic and vibrant.

# Category 20: Photo Slideshow



First Place: **Nayeli Brewster, Ria Pandey, Kyla Ulug, Haylie Yee and Tyler Yuen,**  
University Preparatory Academy,  
San Jose, CA

[“We are very connected at heart’: Reporters document quarantine through photos”](#)

Judge’s Comment: The black and white treatment of the images helped this presentation stand apart from others with similar themes. The editing of the show was skillfully tight which helped take the viewer through a wide range of emotions many people experienced in the Covid-19 pandemic - from isolated but happy family gatherings, quiet moments of reflection and lonely landscapes. Even though the selection of images was small, that made the presentation more powerful. The images are technically sound, well-exposed and sharp. There were unusual angles and compositions. A strong group of photos.



Second Place: **Paulina Solorzano**,  
Whitney HS,  
Rocklin, CA

[“Preparing for ‘High School Musical’ opening night, students rehearse during Tech Week”](#)

Judge’s Comment: In such an unusual year, it was comforting to see scenes from regular high school life even if they were captured from a theater production. The photographer did a wonderful job of finding emotional expressions given by the actors, interesting compositions, and beautifully-lit stage sets. Everything is well exposed and the focus is sharp on all images. The editing of the images is tight and the amount of photos included in the slideshow was just right for the subject. Well done!



Third Place: **McCallum Staff,**  
McCallum HS,  
Austin, TX

“Stay-home order creates chances to bond”

Judge’s Comment: The staff of photographers did a great job of pulling together their experiences during Covid-19 pandemic quarantines and sharing them with the world. So many interesting events and perspectives were captured - from socially-distanced gatherings, closeups of empty calendars and board games, and action-filled family interactions. The broad range of emotions many people experienced in 2020 were well represented. There were just a few images that weren't quite to the technical standards of some of the others in the presentation (some out of focus, compositions with tilted horizons or cropping that could have been tighter) that could have perhaps been cut or edited more. However, this was a very enjoyable show with many well-captured images.





# Category 21: Profile Portrait



First Place: Sydney Laput,  
Huntley HS,  
Huntley, IL  
“Behind the Scenes of Cosplay”

Judge’s Comment: The portrait was fun, well-composed with a clean background to highlight the costumes and pose. Both subjects had appropriate and engaging expressions.

"The sweat, tears, and hours I put into the sport were all worth it in the end because I achieved the goal I had dreamed about every day up until it became a reality."

*Reese Hunkins*



Second Place: Sydney Laput,  
Huntley HS,  
Huntley, IL  
"Hunkins Softball Portrait"

Judge's Comment: A nice expression on a cleanly composed portrait of an athlete. The subject's face is engaging to the viewer.



Third Place: Soomin Chung,  
Prosper HS,  
Prosper, TX


“Club Spotlight: Schools unite to  
celebrate, induct artists in honor  
society”

Judge’s Comment: A nice moment from  
an event that provided a glimpse of the  
subject's personality by capturing a  
strong expression in a nice composition.

# Visuals/Design Categories

- **Editorial Cartoon**
- **Informational Graphic**
- **News Magazine Front Page Design**
- **Newspaper Front Page Design**
- **Feature Page Design**
- **Sports Page Design**
- **Editorial Page Design**



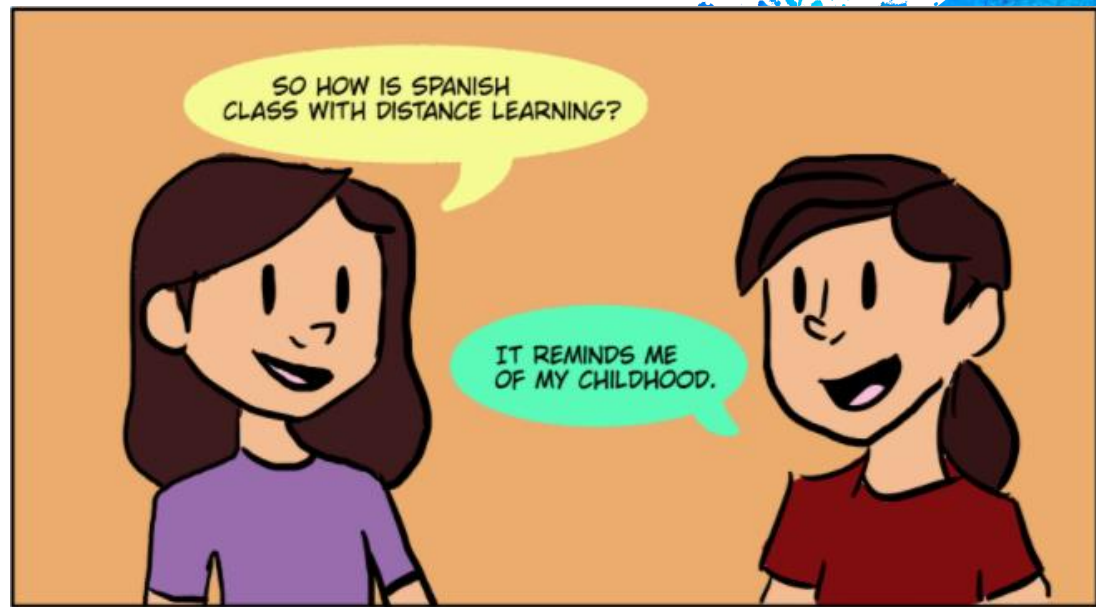


# Category 22: Editorial Cartoon

First Place: Malia Miguel,  
Redlands East Valley HS,  
Redlands, CA

“Comics: Distance Learning  
Spanish Class”

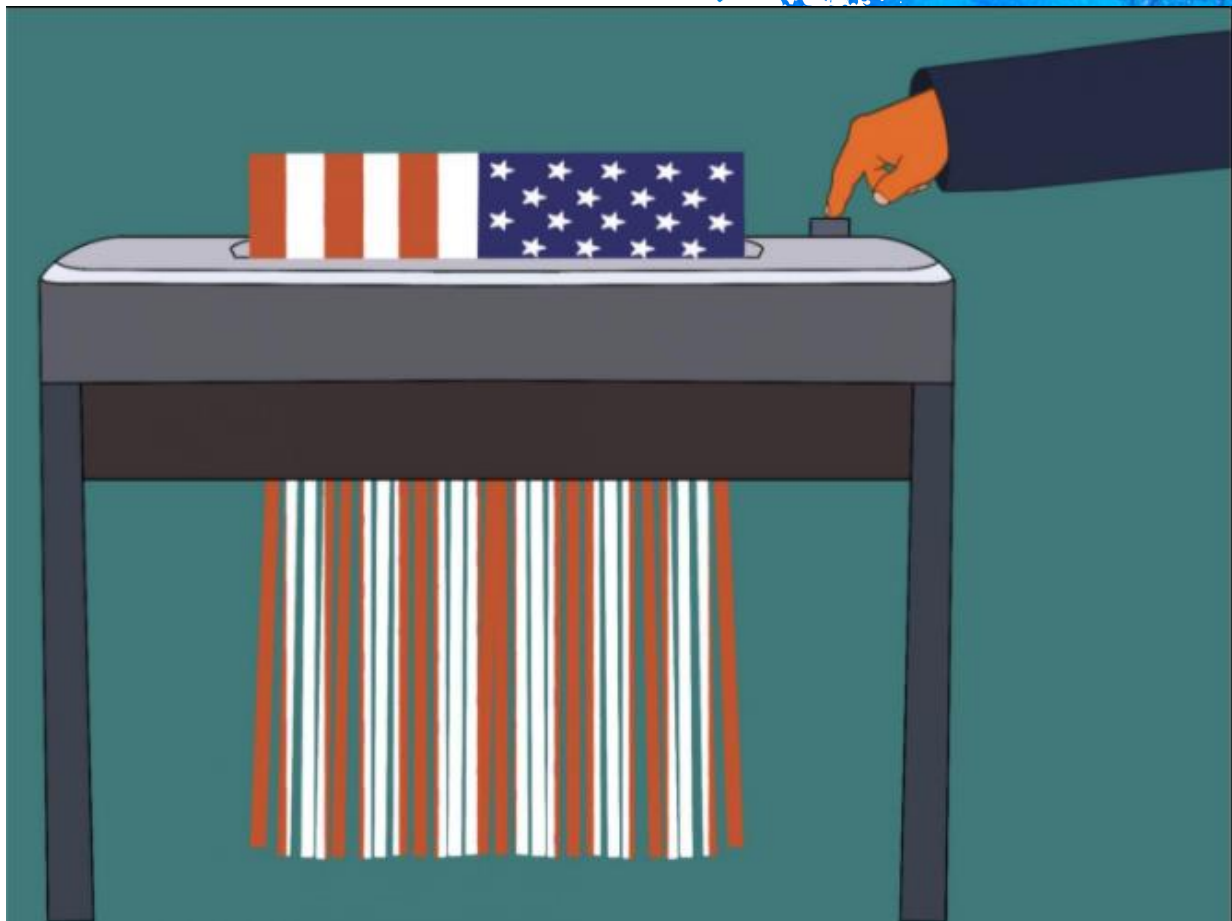
Judge’s Comment: This one nearly made me fall out of my chair laughing. It’s a great -- and accurate -- commentary on one of the biggest drawbacks to virtual learning. I had to call my wife over to look at this one (she’s a teacher). A brilliant observation.



Second Place: Anna Rachwalski,  
Henry W. Grady HS,  
Atlanta, GA

“Trump administration seeks to  
rewrite history with ‘1776  
Commission’”

Judge’s Comment: While most  
students stuck with local topics, a  
few ventured into national politics.  
Of those entries, this was by far the  
best. I'd be proud to run this  
cartoon in any professional  
newspaper. Well conceived and well  
drawn.



Third Place: Erin Liebig,  
Iowa City HS,  
Iowa City, IA  
“Around the World with  
Covid”

Judge’s Comment: A very  
clever metaphor for the covid  
pandemic of this past year.  
And beautifully drawn, as  
well. Great work!





# Category 23: Informational Graphic

# Student Politics, Visualized

By Ishan Madan and Alexandra Rozmarin

Students' affiliations and positions on today's political issues, across demographics

To better understand the political distribution of UPA's student body, Aquila surveyed 172 students in October and November 2020 about their affiliations and positions on certain political issues. *Note: A Google Form survey was sent to the entire student body through Schoology, UPA's online learning platform, as well as email. Respondents were not a demographically balanced sample of the population.*

First Place: Ishan Madan,  
University Preparatory Academy,  
San Jose, CA

["Student Politics, Visualized"](#)

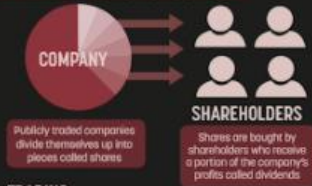
Judge's Comment: Without a doubt, this is some of the most amazing high school work I've ever seen. These students have found a way to break down the entire student population and their political beliefs and stances - and done it in an interactive way. A lot of professionals could learn from this work ... myself included. This would place well in professional contests. Seriously.

# STOCK MARKET 101

With recent economic instability due to COVID-19, learn basics of stock market, how to invest responsibly

OSAY MARTINEZ, EDWARD DONG, OSAMUHI MACHIMOTO, INVESTORS, PERSONAL FINANCE, VIRTUAL CAPITALIST ADVICE, TAKE MY STOCK, SOURCES

## THE BASICS OF STOCKS



## HISTORY OF THE MARKET

Graph of Dow Jones Industrial average from 1915-2020, not adjusted for inflation



**5 GREAT RECESSION**  
Unreliable mortgages led to lenders and banks crashing in 2008 and having to be bailed out  
2008

**6 GREAT SHUTDOWN**  
In 2020, the global economy abruptly crashed due to the COVID-19 pandemic  
2020

**4 90s BOOM**  
After the slow '70s and '80s, the stock market had a period of sustained growth during the '90s  
1990

## STOCK INDEXES

Indexes are simply benchmarks for market performance\*

WHAT COMPANIES ARE KEY INDEXES MADE UP OF?



## INVESTMENT TYPES

**STOCKS**  
A share of a company and earnings  
✓ Higher returns  
✗ More risky

**BOND**  
A loan to the government or company  
✓ Safer than stocks  
✗ Lower return

**MUTUAL FUND**  
Pooled funds from many investors managed by a professional  
✓ Less work  
✗ Must pay a fee

## SPEAK UPS

What would you say to aspiring investors?



"Investing isn't worth the time; trading is a much better alternative. With higher risk comes higher reward, but that's the beauty of gambling!"  
Junior and stock trader  
Brian Tsan



"Trade only what you can afford to lose. Lowest is what you know or what you want to learn about. There is a difference between trading and investing."  
Junior and stock trader  
Logan Tullai

BRIAN TSAN, LOGAN TULLAI, SUBMITTED PHOTOS

## KEY TERMS

Here are some key terms used in investing

**INITIAL PUBLIC OFFERING**  
The first sale of stock by a company, which occurs when a company decides to open investment to the public.



**BLUE CHIP STOCK**  
Stocks for large, industry-leading companies. Generally considered as safer investments with high dividends.



**DIVIDEND**  
The portion of a company's earnings that is paid out to stockholders. Not all stocks pay dividends.



**ARBITRAGE**  
Buying and selling the same security in different markets to make a profit.



Second Place: Edward Dong, Carmel HS, Carmel, IN  
"Stock Market 101"

Judge's Comment: An amazingly well-conceived piece on a complex topic that baffles so many folks. It's easy to read and the design work -- especially the color choices here -- are perfect. Great work!







Category 24: News  
Magazine Front Page  
Design

# THE TIGER PRINT

blue valley high school | vol. 51 | issue 1 | september 2020 | bvtigernews.com | overland park, kansas



Blue Valley students speak out against maltreatment.  
Read on to **page 9** for the full story.

First Place: Charlie Trent,  
Blue Valley HS,  
Overland Park, KS  
“Prejudice is Personal”

Judge’s Comment: This is a beautiful, clean design that makes an impact. I appreciate that the background graphics are muted, the headline and the main graphic are clear, and the teasers have their place. There were several entries with illustrations on the front, but many left me wondering what it was about. This one is well executed and not busy. The designer let the image set the tone. Great work.



Second Place: Grace Hu,  
Ladue Horton Watkins HS,  
St. Louis, MO  
“The Music Issue”

Judge’s Comment: I love the feeling I  
get with this design. It’s the music  
issue, and the graphics feel funky, like  
an album cover. Great mix of photos  
and graphics, and the use of the  
grayscale photos is a nice touch.

## 196 words on our future

*based on responses from the Senior Class*

Be a symphony musician 🎻 See a show on Broadway 🎭 Learn how to fly a plane ✈️ Skydive 🪂 Pet a goose 🦢 Run a half marathon in Disney 🏃 Bungee jump. Learn how to cook well 🍳 Go cow tipping 🐄 Throw a drink in someone's face 🍹 Learn to drive a stick shift 🚗 Get a tattoo. Learn how to make good macarons 🍪 Drink hot chocolate at a cafe in Paris ☕ 🇫🇷 Zip line in Costa Rica 🌴 Adopt a dog 🐕 Track my family's cemetery in Europe. Buy a penguin 🐧 Go on a summer float trip with the boys 🏖️ Fly in a wingsuit. Witness a Bengals Superbowl appearance 🏈 Ride a motorcycle 🏍️ Learn to sail 🛥️ Have sex in a car. Travel to all 50 states. Honeymoon in Greece 🇬🇷 See the Northern Lights 🌌 Swim in the Maldives 🏖️ Go to a Beyonce concert 🎤 Travel to South Africa. Attend Coachella. Swim with sharks 🦈 Vacation in Fiji. Learn how to cartwheel 🤸 Revamp a van into a room. Get acrylic nails 💅 Get my dual citizenship 🇺🇸 Own a thrift store. Have a career I love 💖💖 Go backpacking in Nepal 🏔️



Third Place: Kavya Jain,  
Marquette HS,  
Chesterfield, MO  
“Senior Magazine”

Judge's Comment: The use of color and the composition set this page apart. Looking at the design makes me remember what it's like to be a senior and feel that freedom. Excellent use of a photo and graphics together.



# Category 25: Newspaper Front Page Design

10

1

First Place: Kathleen Zhang,  
Troy HS,  
Fullerton, CA  
“ASBS Elections: Virtual Editions”

Judge’s Comment: I keep going back to this page because the elements are so interesting. The colors and the mix of graphics and photos, along with the clear headline and flow, really set this page apart. You can tell some thought went in to the layout. Nice job!

# ORACLE

2200 E. DOROTHY LANE, FULLERTON, CA 92831

## ASB ELECTIONS: Virtual Edition

ASB hosted its first virtual elections for the 2020-21 school year to accommodate to the quarantine regulation enforced throughout the nation.

Compiled by Kathleen Zhang, NEWS EDITOR, article by Kachyn Kwon, STAFF WRITER, graphics by Cassidy Chang and Phoebe Um, GRAPHIC EDITORS

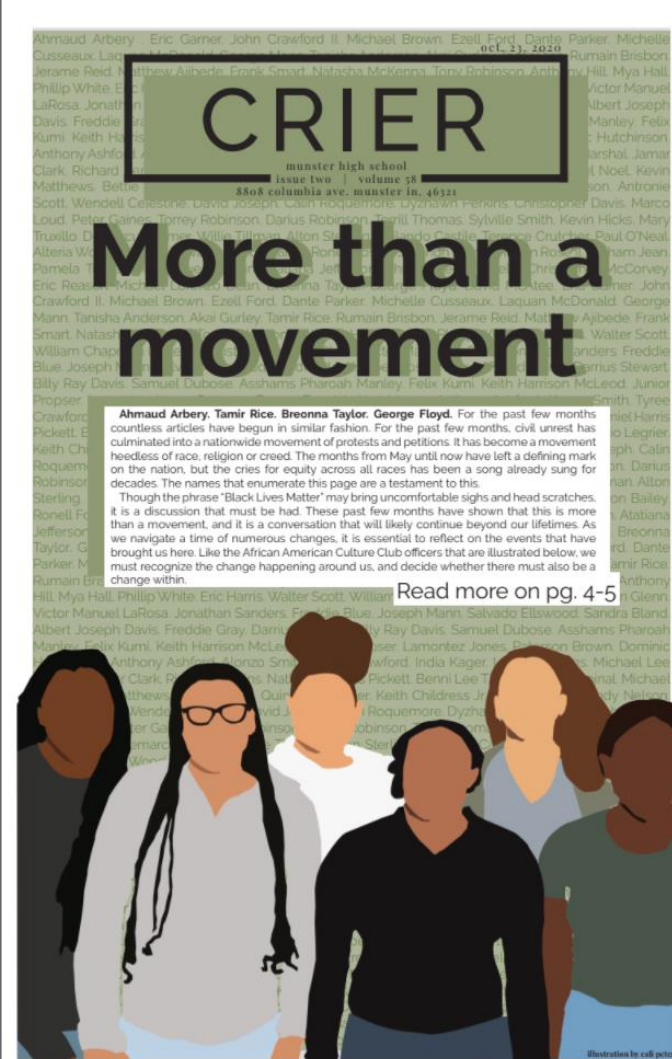


**ASB AND CLASS PRESIDENTS**

Adapting to the limitations posed by quarantine, Associated Student Body (ASB) held a virtual election for the 2020-21 school year April 17. During campaign week April 13-16, candidates utilized various social media platforms to advertise their initiative for the virtual election. In an effort to display their communication skills, candidates posted promotional videos and direct messages to the student body. Students submitted their votes through an enabled Google Forms link. With aims to exemplify their leadership skills, candidates produced digital posters that detailed their names and slogans, and uploaded videos that explained their plans. In contrast to on-campus elections, students had the opportunity to register as a candidate through an application via email. During previous elections, approved candidates hung up posters around campus and conversed with other students in-person. Coordinated to clarify specific segments of their campaign, candidates held brief live streams to promote themselves and acknowledge any of the Warrior questions, 2020-21 Sophomore President Abha Jones said. “A lot of candidates would [have students ask] them questions about their campaign,” Jones said. “[Candidates also] used polls and had students write down what they wanted, [which] was engaging.” According to 2020-21 ASB President Alyssa Wong, communication was more difficult because interaction was limited between the campaigners and voters. Candidates were unable to fully express their spirit, Wong said. “There is always a virtual aspect [in elections], but you lose the interpersonal aspect of elections,” Wong said. “Every candidate showed a lot of what they had to offer, but usually [their intent] is expressed even more.” Regardless of the circumstances, the elected students aim to provide the Warrior population with an exciting year of activities, Wong said. “[Virtual elections] are not going to really affect activities for next year, unless this quarantine continues,” Wong said. “I believe that the people who were elected are still extremely qualified and passionate about the school.”

Second Place: Cali Peterson,  
Munster HS,  
Munster, IN  
“More than a movement”

Judge’s Comment: This is a really powerful front page. I read every name to see that they weren't repeated, there's just enough text to grab attention, and each element works together to invoke a feeling. There are a lot of elements, but they all come together for a cohesive package.



# Third Place: Louisa Stuhec, Washtenaw International HS, Ypsilanti, MI “Volume 3, No. 1”

Judge’s Comment: There's a nice hierarchy to this page. The colorful main photo captures the reader and the teasers are consistent and interesting. This is a great example of how you don't need a lot of color to have a nice design.



**NEW TEACHERS WELCOMED VIRTUALLY TO WIHI COMMUNITY: GEORGE, GRIFFIN, HAMILTON, JANSSEN, NOWAKOWSKI, SONG**

PAGE 11 | TEACHER SPOTLIGHT



**NEW TECHNOLOGY MAKING LIFE EASIER AMID VIRTUAL LEARNING**

PAGE 9 | ARTS/LEISURE



**LET'S MAKE A DIFFERENCE, ONE LETTER AT A TIME**

PAGE 9 | ARTS/LEISURE



**REMEMBERING RBG BY THE MANY QUALITIES THAT SHE EMBODIED**

PAGE 6 | OPINIONS



**THE BEST AND THE WORST OF THE PANDEMIC**

PAGE 10 | OPINIONS

# The WIHI Opal

THE OFFICIAL STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF WASHTENAW INTERNATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, EST. 2018

Vol. III, No. 1

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2020

105 N Mansfield St, Ypsilanti, MI 48197

## Fall Rewind: Wildfires in the West

By JOSHUA LIANG '22

Fires can destroy things. This is a simple yet very frightening fact, especially when considering the rate at which wildfires relentlessly ravaged throughout the American West between August and November of this year. In many major Western cities, the flames overtook the air quality. Not only that, they also incinerated land and opened the gates for landslides. By September, three-million California estates were scorched from this year's flames alone.

Known as the greatest fire ever tracked, the August Complex Fire was a series of 37 total fires, only 24% of which were in control during its activity. Initiated this year by several touchdowns of lightning, the fire increased to the approximate size of Los Angeles with over 755,600 estates ruined.

Another destructive fire was the Bobcat Fire, having burnt 99,428 estates and only 15% of the fire within control 14 days after it first began. Due to windy weather conditions, the 1,600 firefighters also only had a tight time frame to extinguish all the flames. The Mount Wilson Observatory, a site with unique history dating back 100 years, was also in danger of this fire. The firefighters had to work hard to

Continued on Page 8,  
National News



PHOTO COURTESY OF KIERSTEN SJØRGEN  
Kiersten Sjørgen '21 dribbles the ball in a Chelsea field hockey match.

## Student Leaders Discuss The Changes Experienced Within Extracurriculars

### The Best and the Worst of the Pandemic

By OWEN MCALISTER-LÓPEZ '21

The COVID-19 pandemic has, without a doubt, uprooted countless aspects of our lives that we were once so familiar with. Vacations, gatherings, school, loss... all of us have felt the disruption and we will all likely have our own stories to tell about our experiences ten years from now.

For me, a postponed SAT and a new virtual-college-visit-reality were among the changes to my life, but I know I am not alone. There is a whole group of students nation-wide who are forced to accept these changes as well, many of which have gone through much more harrowing encounters with the virus.

Now that we've gotten further into the 2020-2021 school year, however, almost all of us have found ourselves with an even greater irregularity to our lives. To uncover some of the more specific details of the WIHI student body's contact with COVID-19, I investigated one of the most influential elements of our daily lives as WIHI students: our extracurriculars.

When thinking of extracurriculars, school clubs come to mind first. At first glance, the only real change — which is

disruptive enough in and of itself — is the fact that clubs can no longer meet in person. Instead, all meetings have occurred through Zoom, which has had various effects on different clubs throughout the school. For some, it has led to greater problems within the club.

In the monumental Spirit Committee, it has prevented much of the previous liveliness in the meetings that the club was once famous for. A student leader in the club, Camila Quintero Diaz '21, stated that Spirit, "is really based on making connections (.) and collaborating with others. It's really hard to have those special moments of getting to know someone or hearing their ideas when it's over the screen." She took it further by adding that there is usually a lack of members who turn their cameras on in meetings. "We don't see how people are reacting to our comments, it's like guessing if the student is happy with the idea or upset."

Similar experiences were reported by WIHI's Student Government (StuGo), which is usually responsible for planning many of the famous school events. *Continued on Page 3, School News*





# Category 26: Feature Page Design

10

5



# RAP THE ROUTE

Senior Kobe Jones pursues career in music with over 11,000 Spotify listeners

Illustration by SOPHIA LIU



## OLMIA HU

**B**efore senior Kobe Jones started producing music, his daily schedule followed a rather bland routine. Wake up, go to school, hang out with friends and finally sleep. But after a year filled with inspiring opportunities, things took a bit different. One day at school, Jones had a moment in the hallway and spent his days developing his music by working with his producer to create new music for his listeners.

Compared to other artists, Jones's sudden growth makes his music career unique. As a high school student, Jones has always been intrigued by music, from listening to artists he admired or even freestyling with his friends. Despite his interest in music, he wasn't confident in his creation abilities until last year when Jones met his producer, Ian Rose, at a mutual friend's party.

"At first, I was thinking I would have to rely on the electronic aspect of producing, like the way my vocals sound on the equipment [I'm using]," Jones said. "But now I've met my producer, Ian, so I feel comfortable actually making music."

Since then, more people have discovered his music, with his Spotify account, @Fines, accumulating over 11,000 monthly listeners. Even though Rose and Jones have only known each other for a year, their music has spread all over America, amazing listeners in major cities.

"We'll just be riding on the streets and you can hear somebody play our song; that's like the best feeling ever," Rose said. "You can tell how he's developed over time. It's crazy because we really haven't been taking music seriously for not even a full year."

Not only is his quick rise to fame unique, but Jones's ability to create music while balancing school shows his dedication to creating the best product for his fans. Though virtual learning has prompted him to alter his schedule, his music continues to be a top priority.

"I would just be in class with my headphones on and [Rose] would send me a beat," Jones said. "Once I got out of class, I just listen to it and think about what I'm going to write to it. There was a point in time where I was writing about five or six bits [songs] a day."

"I gotta be in the mood [when] I make a beat depending on how I feel, it's really a mental process more than

a physical [process]," Rose said. "When I'm making a beat, I use these things called plug-ins where there are different chords and keyboards. I just put the drums together [and] mix it, and then the beat kind of flows better together."

So far, Jones has released four singles, with two being released in the past months. Currently, his songs are on his SoundCloud, @Fines, though he has been featured in the songs of other artists too.

"I made a song called 'OFF WHITE' featuring two of my friends, a song called 'Wanna' [and] a song called 'Right Way' and then I just dropped a song called 'SLIMES,'" Jones said. "For the album, I have a lot of songs that I have to go back and re-record or piece together perfectly."

Anthony Smith, one of Jones's close friends and another aspiring music artist, has known Jones since the beginning stages of his career. Smith is even featured in Jones's song, "OFF WHITE." After frequently spending time together and collaborating on several songs, Smith continues to be impressed with Jones's work ethic and unwavering commitment to producing music of quality.

"It's amazing since it's like he doesn't sleep," Smith said. "As soon as it gets dark outside, wherever we are, he just puts in his headphones and listens to beats. Once we go in sleep, he would still be up, writing music to whatever beat he likes."

To expand his network in pursuit of his music career, Jones is preparing a move to Los Angeles. Even though moving was a significant decision that took months of consideration, Jones seized the chance, hoping to take advantage of the opportunities that could transform his music career.

"On living with my friend out there and [his] gut was to there, you, Jones said. "It's the city of dreams. You could literally meet someone down there and they could take you down a great path."

"On living with my friend began writing music as a hobby. Now, he's moving to Los Angeles, has a producer and has met countless supporters along the way. Despite the challenges of managing school and moving during a pandemic, Jones continues to approach his music with a burning passion.

"I'm proud of [seeing how much] I've changed and how much I can do now. I listen to old music [and] I'm like, 'Wow,'" Jones said. "You have to personalize it to yourself so it's part of what you want to do rather than anyone else."

“You just have to find a beat and then go from there, your mind just turns from.”  
KOBÉ JONES | SENIOR

First Place: Sophia Liu, Ladue Horton Watkins HS, St. Louis, MO

## “Rap the route”

Judge's Comment: Sophia has created a feature layout that immediately demands viewers' attention. The harmonious two-color scheme is bold and thoughtfully balanced. Multiple digital design skills are deployed, creating layers, color applications, color translucence, and image and line elements. The triple lined, gold color diagonal element behind the subject's head guides viewers' eyes from the title on page 30 to the body text on the following page. The principle of repetition is appealingly shown in both the use of outline and circle.

the Talon & Antler 1996-2020

1996

The yearbooks of this era had color covers and a few color photos but were mostly black-and-white. Newspapers were entirely black-and-white.



Antler 2004, Rated Red, is the first full-color yearbook.

2000



The first color Talon appeared in 2009.

2005



Antler 2013 marked M.A.'s 100th year: Yesterday, Today & Forever.

2015



Antler 2018 responded to the August 2017 explosion...and then life changed.

2020

With coronavirus closing schools around the world, the Talon staff produces a newspaper (this one) for the first time, from their homes, without ever meeting in person.

# 100 years of student journalism

## Part 4 of 4: Into the 21st Century

BY ANNKA JOHNSON  
Staff Writer

2020 marks the 100th year of a student newspaper at Minnehaha, and the 2020 Antler yearbook will be the 94th volume. Since their beginnings, these publications have given students a public forum to make their voices heard. They have been a central hub for sharing school news and opinions, and for recording the school's history in words and images.

This was the first fully digital era with new classes in digital photography, computerized layout using Adobe Photoshop and InDesign. It also saw the start of an online presence for school media including the start of Redhawkonline, social media accounts, videos and podcasts. During this time, students found new ways to innovate and share their stories with the school and the layout and photography process became streamlined and efficient.

A major goal for student journalism is to document and address the important issues of the day. Looking back at our school media is like looking into the values, events and people of Minnehaha's past.



Antler 2013, which recognized Minnehaha's 100th anniversary, displayed a group of old yearbook covers, including the 1921 debut with a stag's head logo and a string binding.



This era saw many new beginnings for both the school and student publications.



### Website, social media, podcasts take off

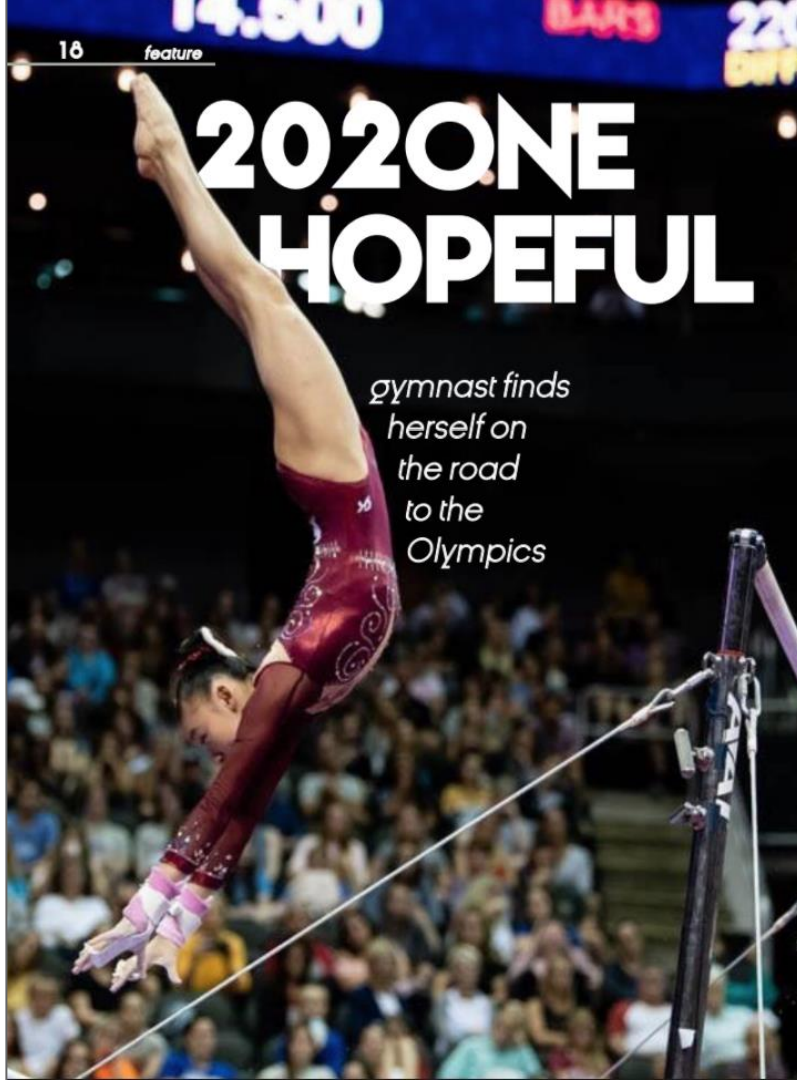


(Left) Photos in 360-degrees were posted on Facebook after the 2017 explosion. (Right) The website, Redhawkonline.com, debuts in 2010, Twitter in 2011, Instagram in 2015, podcasting in 2016. In 2018, Emma Meiling's August 2 Stories podcast was judged the top U.S. student podcast.



Second Place: Annika Johnson, Minnehaha Academy, Minneapolis, MN  
“100 Years of Student Journalism, Part 4 of 4”

Judge's Comment: Annika has carefully and creatively placed an extraordinary amount of information for TALON readers to appreciate. Typography style and color was effectively used to define the different informational spaces. Viewers get a sense of change and see the contrast of styles in the school's publications through the years. For additional interest, a timeline is inserted indicating when color was introduced to the publication.



18

feature

# 2020 ONE HOPEFUL

*gymnast finds  
herself on  
the road  
to the  
Olympics*

Third Place: Mia Rice,  
Blue Valley HS,  
Overland Park, KS  
“2020One Hopeful”

Judge’s Comment: Mia has boldly utilized a photograph of the subject performing. It is effective in attracting readers' attention. Digital layout skills are applied by creatively layering in the main title and subheading along the contour of the subject's body. On page 19, the outline of a gymnast performing the different stages of a cartwheel is theme related, fills space, and guides readers' attention to the body text. Lastly, an additional theme related image is placed at the bottom of page 19 to balance out text elements and negative space.



# Category 27: Sports Page Design

10

9

# First Place: Domenic Fenoglio, Ladue Horton Watkins HS, St. Louis, MO “Disorder on the court”

Judge’s Comment: Very well done on all levels (design, photography, illustration, typography, writing), plus an unusual subject. Congratulations!

## DISORDER ON THE COURT

Ladue students compete with friends in community basketball league

**DOMENIC FENOGLIO**  
sports editor

**T**he FOBs came dressed in faded, white tank tops with their numbers and logo spray painted on their backs. As at the Jewish Community Center in Creve Coeur. They warmed up to the sound of the Latin Beat from “Star Wars” played by the other team’s speaker. Fans for both teams gathered in two sets of metal bleachers adjoining the court while children played on the other half of the gym, oblivious to the game about to begin. While the game lacked the decorum of a school-sanctioned sport, it retained all of the energy and spirit of one.

The JCC Youth Basketball League serves as an alternative source of exercise and competition for those who do not play organized high school basketball. The FOBs are one of the many teams from different grades with players from Ladue in the JCC Youth Basketball League. The teams consist of class-knit friends who seem to care more

about the joy of basketball than competition or the accolades. “It’s not as serious, or you can have fun while playing,” senior Nahom Tadesse said. “There’s no pressure, and you’re with friends. Nobody cares if you play poorly.”

During the game, players did not argue, yell or belittle each other after a miss or turnover. Instead, the FOBs chose to emotionally gasp to Tadesse until he finally made a three-pointer from the corner of the court, his first of the season. An all-out riot followed it, as fans roared onto the court as if he had just made the game-winning shot.

“My entire life, I wanted to go to the NBA, so I decided to start off small. Being a secret might come with a game,” senior Isaac “Jaska” Melina joked. “I heard the Kentucky coach might stop by.”

Amidst the joking and celebrations, the FOBs lost the game 95-63. Instead of sulking, they came away with their heads high, laughing. “When you lose fun, you just can’t lose,” senior Eytch Tewelde said. “That’s why we’re undefeated.”

The team cannot help but joke around, on and off the court. This light-hearted nature is a common theme of the JCC Youth Basketball League, as shown by the FOBs’ opponents, who instead of lost stares on the back of their jerseys, wore nicknames like “Bulls” and “Rudy.” The FOBs have no hesitation to poke fun at themselves.

“My entire life, I wanted to go to the NBA, so I decided to start off small. Being a secret might come with a game,” senior Isaac “Jaska” Melina joked. “I heard the Kentucky coach might stop by.”

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### Team Superlatives

the League

**Eytch Tewelde**  
Best Handles

“My friends are not like me. I’m an anomaly. I’m wild, I’m raw.”



**Nahom Tadesse**  
Best Teammate

“Whenever I shoot, I shout, ‘Kobe.’ After his death it’s not going to be the same.”

“We just care about having fun. It’s great to get to play basketball together.”

**Ennot Loitman**  
Best 3-point shooter



**FOB LEADS** Fans on bleachers cheer a player off the court during a game. (Clockwise from top left) The FOBs do not have a set schedule, but they play on Saturdays, Sundays, and Wednesdays. (Clockwise from top right) Nahom Tadesse, senior Isaac Melina, and Eytch Tewelde are members of the FOBs. (Clockwise from bottom left) Nahom Tadesse, senior Isaac Melina, and Eytch Tewelde are members of the FOBs. (Clockwise from bottom right) Nahom Tadesse, senior Isaac Melina, and Eytch Tewelde are members of the FOBs.

Second Place: Zoey Guo,  
Iowa City West HS,  
Iowa City, IA  
"New Name Same Game"

Judge's Comment: Exciting  
layout and strong type choices.  
Good writing but two bad  
hyphenations.



# NEW NAME SAME GAME

Following decades of state championships for girls sports teams under the Women of Troy nickname, all West High sports teams will now share the same name regardless of gender: the Trojans.

BY CAROLINE CHANDLER  
PHOTOS BY OWEN ANNESTAD & ALYSEA SIALA  
DESIGN BY ZOZY GUO

**F** exhilarating wins and devastating losses are engraved in the culture of sports, and West High is no stranger to these experiences. For years, Trojan athletes have dominated in numerous spheres of athletics with girls sports teams competing under the nickname Women of Troy and the boys as Trojans. Going forward, they will all compete under a common name. In an email from Athletic Director Craig Huegel Oct. 17, the media was informed that West High would be retiring the Women of Troy nickname. All teams will now be referred to as the Iowa City West Trojans.

Since the founding of West in 1968, sports teams have been referred to as the Trojans, with the Women of Troy nickname coming along later. In recent meetings with the coaching staff, the name change had been brought up. The first reason was to avoid gender stereotypes regardless of the sport.

Phoebe Burt '21 sees the name switch as a symbol of change.

"The name change to me is just a sign that times are moving forward," Burt said. "I'm excited to see the new name and my fellow female athletes wearing it with pride and kicking butt in their sports seasons."

Burt participates in football and track and field. Prior to the change, she played under the name Trojans during the fall sports season and Women of Troy throughout the spring sports season. Although Burt recognizes the reasons for the change, she wishes athletes were able to have a voice in the decision.

For Kathy Bresnahan, a former teacher and the Women of Troy volleyball coach from 1987 to 1999 and again from 2005 to 2013, the Women of Troy nickname holds many special memories. One sentimental coaching memory came from the 2011 volleyball season, when the team was still mourning the loss of Caroline Found, their star setter.

"That was a life-changing journey for our team. I still feel a tremendous sense of loss and sadness over Caroline's death," Bresnahan said. "I had admiration for [the team's] strength and determination."

The team's perseverance throughout the emotional 2011 season made Bresnahan proud to coach under the Women of Troy nickname.

"I always felt pride to be associated with West High. It is a school that represents inclusion, greatness and tremendous athletic, academic and musical programs," she said. "It is truly one of the finest schools in the nation."

Amidst efforts to become more inclusive, the shift from the Women of Troy nickname to the Trojans has been in the works for several years.

"This has been something that has been in the planning stages since I've arrived here," Huegel said. "We wanted to make sure that media out-

school would have at least sent out a poll or something about the name change."

Although athletes will no longer compete under the Women of Troy nickname, Burt believes its emotional aspect won't fade away.

"The Women of Troy nickname always brings me back to track season and the memories from past seasons," Burt said. "That always makes me smile."

While sophomore Hana Abou Alawa doesn't participate in athletics at West, she is an avid fan of the girls volleyball team. For Abou Alawa, the Women of Troy nickname has a special meaning.

"It seemed very powerful and courageous, and it fits the girls who played sports very well," Abou Alawa said. "The name change lost that special meaning to me."

Emma Ingersoll-Weng '22 sees the Women of Troy nickname as a symbol of her basketball team's persistent mentality.

"To me, the name means keep fighting and don't give up no matter what people say," Ingersoll-Weng said. "It's not over until the [game] clock hits zero."

However, Ingersoll-Weng is excited for the upcoming season, regardless of what name she's playing under.

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**"I'M EXCITED TO SEE THE NEW NAME AND MY FELLOW FEMALE ATHLETES WEARING IT WITH PRIDE AND KICKING BUTT IN THEIR SPORTS SEASONS."**

-PHOEBE BURT '21

**"I THINK ANYONE WHO GETS INVOLVED WITH ATHLETICS GETS INVOLVED FOR THE MEMORIES, THE VALUES AND THE SUCCESS THAT THEY GET TO EXPERIENCE."**

-CRAIG HUEGEL,  
ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

lets and our state organizations referred to us as the Trojans.

With the name change being a topic of discussion in coaching staff meetings, there wasn't a specific timeline to the change.

"It's something we've mentioned in meetings before, but I didn't necessarily give them a direct timeline of what that was going to happen. I felt like with the start of a new athletic and academic school year, this was probably the time to do it," Huegel said. "We decided in an external sense that we would retire the Women of Troy [nickname]. We're the Trojans, whether that's our girls basketball team [or the football team]."

Although the nickname shift has surprised a few, Huegel notes the change has been well-received by many.

"I think there was maybe some shock amongst some members of our coaching staff. I think with everything else going on this year, when you put this into the grand scheme of this, it's not earth-shattering," Huegel said. "I just want our athletes to be known as Trojans for the great things that they do."

Since the Women of Troy nickname represents fond memories for some athletes, Huegel hopes that former and current Trojans focus more on their experiences rather than the name they played under.

"I've had, in just my five years here, some really amazing opportunities. But those are things that I hope they remember, maybe not so much that we were called the Women of Troy," Huegel said.

"I think anyone who gets involved with athletics gets involved for the memories, the values and the success that they get to experience."

## GO FIGURE (SKATE)

Q&A with junior Claire Qu regarding her passion to ice skate during pandemic

AUSTIN GUO Q & A LUKE MILLER PHOTOS ANIKET BISWAL, NATHAN HUANG GRAPHIC

This Q&A was originally published online on Dec. 7, 2020

### When and how did you start figure skating?

I went to a birthday party at the Ice Skadium when I was seven or eight, and I loved the experience. Since then, I've always just wanted to go back and skate.

### How do you train for ice skating?

When I am off the ice, I do a lot of training such as conditioning, which is mostly weight lifting. Finally, I work on rotations off ice. When I'm on ice, I go through my movements, spins, jumps and my program.

### What events do you compete in and how do they work?

I compete in the Indiana State Championship, the Eastern Great Lakes Regional Competition and the Battle of the Lakes. At each event, there are several programs, but the main ones are the short and long programs. The total of these two scores gives your total score for the contest.

### TUCK AND SPIN: Junior Claire Qu

practices one of her moves by spinning down low on the ice. She said one of her favorite parts of ice skating is the ability for her to express her emotions and release pent-up tension. With that, she added ice skating has taught her a few lessons in life, including persevering through difficult times and respecting others who share the ice with her during practice.

### How long do you train both off ice and on ice?

Each week, I'd say I skate around 10 hours on ice and then do my off ice training for around two to three hours.

### How has skating impacted your daily life?

Figure skating is a great exercise, and it keeps me healthy and energetic. Also, skating is something I look forward to everyday since I devote a large part of my time to it.

### How has the pandemic affected ice skating?

At the ice rink, we have to wear masks when we are out in the lobby area, but the masks are optional when we are skating. Most of my competitions have been canceled too, so I haven't competed in several months.

### What is your favorite and most difficult part of skating?

My favorite part of ice skating is that I can express my emotions through my movements, such as when I am stressful. The most difficult part would be the consistency and precision. Even if one part of my body is tilted, I may fall down.

### What lessons have ice skating taught you?

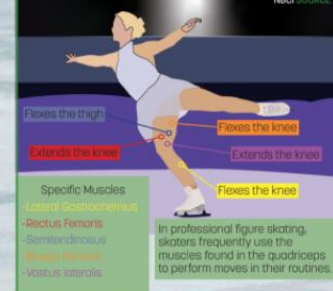
One important lesson it has taught me is to get up every time I fall. Even though falling down may discourage me sometimes, I just have that motivation and perseverance to get up every time. Another lesson I've learned is how to be respectful. Even though I compete with many people, I understand they are working towards the same goals I am, so I need to be courteous of them as well.

**LONG GLIDER:** Junior Claire Qu glides on one leg during her practice at the ice rink. She said one of the hardest parts of ice skating is being consistent and being able to balance every part of her body the correct way so she does not fall down.

### SCIENCE OF SKATING

Check out the variety of muscles used in figure skating

NBC SOURCE



Third Place: Aniket Biswal,  
Carmel HS,  
Carmel, IN  
“Go Figure (Skate)”

Judge’s Comment: Nice  
design, photos and topic, but  
color choice could have been  
better for stronger header  
and muscle name readability.





# Category 28: Editorial Page Design

11

3

Counting a vote is not equivalent to marriage. You're not looking for a long-term partner, where you can afford to have the highest standards when receiving their basic beliefs, their accomplishments and even their hair. In our political system, you must choose only your biggest, brightest priorities and vote accordingly. This year, unlike any other year in history, there should only be one priority: keeping the American people alive. The only candidate that will accomplish that is former Vice President Joseph Biden, Jr.

First and foremost, the easy "why." With the United States approaching 7 million cases and 200,000 deaths from COVID-19, we need a leader who has a clear cut plan on how to quell the virus as soon as possible, just like many other nations in the world were able to do months ago. For example, New Zealand was under national lockdown of various levels for only 101 days. The country has a running total of around 1,800 cases. In stark contrast, the U.S. has been dealing with COVID-19 for 193 days, with little to no strict lockdown, and we have 4.85 million cases. However, instead of comparing ourselves to well-locked countries like New Zealand, we should settle for a leader who has a plan at all.

Biden's website has a detailed description of how he aims to take down the virus. These policies

include widespread and regular testing, guaranteed for every returning employee; distribution and increased prioritization for Personal Protective Equipment, especially in resource-poor areas; and

**"THIS YEAR, THERE SHOULD ONLY BE ONE PRIORITY: KEEPING THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ALIVE."**

extensive aid to workers and small businesses. Biden sees this differently. While Trump has watched America burn from above, Biden plans to push money, resources and aid everywhere on fire. Biden wants to reopen schools. He wants to open businesses. But he doesn't want to do that until all the fires are out.

But what about the economy? His supporters—his subjects—never hesitate to bring up the financial

side of things, where they see Trump "betting American jobs first by throwing up the open sign. We have to reopen the economy, right? Wrong, for two reasons. First, no economy can function if the people participating are dead—this is how Trump's plan is going. Second, Trump's economy is not our economy—even well-off Kirkwood suburbs isn't on the same plane as Trump's 0% world. When he talks about the economy, he means the CEOs sitting in his lap. He doesn't mean the citizens of Kirkwood, or St. Louis or even Missouri. The only world he knows is his world.

Biden sees this differently. While Trump has watched America burn from above, Biden plans to push money, resources and aid everywhere on fire. Biden wants to reopen schools. He wants to open businesses. But he doesn't want to do that until all the fires are out.

This is supposed to be a pro-Biden piece—not a tangential rant on our president. However, that's exactly what makes Biden the obvious choice: He is not Donald Trump. The President has had four years to prove himself, and seven months to prevent his people from dying. He has done neither, and now we have a good guess on what not to do when... This is why TKC firmly endorses Joseph Biden Jr. as President of the United States this November. [#86](#)

A representative democracy only works when the republic's citizens actively participate in their government. The most vital way American citizens do this is through voting for a presidential candidate every four years, selecting the next person to lead this great nation. When observing the current American ballot, it's clear who will lead our nation to exceptional heights, providing the opportunity to succeed for all that wish to acquire success. This man is, of course, the incumbent president of the United States: President Donald J. Trump.

To put it plainly, President Trump has been phenomenal for the economy. Since his election in late 2016, the United States economy has gained nearly 7 million jobs nationwide. He created more jobs in 2019 alone than was predicted by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) for all of his first three years. Along with job growth,

**"AVERAGE WORKER EARNINGS INCREASED 3.4% IN JUST ONE YEAR OF TRUMP'S PRESIDENCY."**



the U.S. economy is increasing at an unprecedented rate. The flourishing economy is clearly President Trump's work, with the GDP growth rate surpassing both the CBO prediction and the rate of the Obama Administration. With average worker earnings increasing 3.4% in just one year of Trump's presidency, he is the only option to drive our country to economic success.

When COVID-19 entered the U.S., President Trump enacted a travel restriction to China and parts of Europe. Joe Biden criticized him, calling the President "historically semaphoric" in his actions. However, Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary, Alex Azar, agreed with President Trump's decision, stating the ban was in accordance with all HHS recommendations.

In terms of COVID-19 response, Biden seems to forget medical work is extremely expensive, leaving his plan largely ineffective. His entire strategy to fight COVID-19 is based around the testing, treatment and vaccination of patients, all for free. He will do this by amending several national policies, primarily the Public Health Service Act and Social Security. Healthcare providers will have to cover the cost of COVID-19, subsidized by the national government. But where does that money come from? The pockets of hard-working Americans—higher taxes. Biden wishes to tax the American people more, hurting every citizen, even those who haven't contracted the virus. While President Trump's COVID-19 plan prioritizes the safety of the vulnerable and allowing the economy to function, Biden's would force people to pay for another's medical bill, something not in line with the capitalist values that our country succeeds upon.

Most importantly, President Trump and his administration stand for the idea of opportunity in America. He wishes for American citizens to succeed on their own accord, to make progress in the world under their own power. As president, he approved the First Step Act in 2018. This law provides criminals that display good behavior in

Story by: TKC STAFF  
Art by: MERRY SCHLARMAN, art director

# CALL ED: OPPORTUNITY TRUMPS DEPENDENCY

Due to the content discussed in this issue, TKC has decided to include the dissenting staff opinion to give all students a voice.

**"PRESIDENT TRUMP AND HIS ADMINISTRATION STAND FOR THE IDEA OF OPPORTUNITY IN AMERICA."**

Biden believes the government should be largely responsible for the success of Americans, something shown through his policies that require millions of national spending for new programs. Based on the morals set in stone by our founding fathers, the American dream is to prosper through hard work and determination. However, by allowing a portion of the population to become complacent with receiving handouts, they lose the dedication required to truly want something, lowering their motivation to advance in society.

We have two options come November. The strong businessman who has proven he can support the American people and economy, President Donald J. Trump, or a man who seems to have lost his touch with reality and the American people, Joe Biden. Biden has shown he is unfit for this responsibility. It is imperative to allow President Trump to continue creating a legacy of opportunity and success with four more years in office. The majority faction of TKC proudly and strongly endorses the President Incumbent, Donald J. Trump. [#86](#)

# CALL ED: JOE KNOWS

With the global COVID-19 pandemic looming above the November election, the candidates' solutions to quell the virus seem to be the most important factor for voters. Of TKC staff, 86% (56/65) would vote for former Vice President Joseph Biden for president.



Story by: TKC STAFF  
Art by: AUDREY BLAINE, art editor

First Place: TKC Staff, Kirkwood HS, Kirkwood, MO  
"Call Ed: Joe Knows and Opportunity Trumps Dependency"  
Judge's Comment: This is a fantastic design. The graphics and colors help tell the story, everything is nicely organized and readable. I love how they are back-to-back on the pages and the two pages have a similar layout and feel. A great way to show two sides.

# BOILING POINT

Academic culture is based on individual excellence, which kills the core values of education.



BY EVELYN HESSION  
Managing Editor

Quantifying students with benchmarks such as class rank and GPA is the ultimate downfall of our education system.

This approach reduces a student's value to a number and compares them to their peers, which inevitably puts students in a vicious cycle of degrading themselves. This inhibits them from pursuing their passions.

Intense pressure to get good grades and have the highest class rank is detrimental to a student's education. These goals discourage genuine interest in curriculum and instead promotes a disingenuous motive to memorize content to get ahead on the ranking scale.

GPA is an arbitrary system that supposedly calculates a student's academic worth but has little to do with the student's actual measure of knowledge and intelligence. Ultimately, GPA is only a measure of how competent a student is at navigating and beating the system.

It also compromises the content of teachings given to students and is sometimes so strong that it kills the core academic component of school altogether.

According to the Educational Testing Service and Ad Council Campaign to Discourage Academic Cheating, cheating among high school students has risen dramatically during the past 50 years.

"73% of all test takers, including prospective graduate students and teachers, agree that most students do cheat at some point. 86% of high school students agreed (as well). Instead of being educated students are being trained. Students should not study out of fear of a bad grade or a low GPA, but out of passion and earnestly. The current focus on grades makes

the way high schools calculate class rank and GPA, but there is an inherent flaw with how students are ranked. Schools apply different weights to classes of varying difficulty perception, but this is subjective.

Why rank students when only the top students benefit and the majority of other students are disadvantaged?

*Teachers should teach students how to learn and study effectively, think critically and how to innovate, not how to memorize information and pass tests.*

students scared of failing, when failing is the only way to truly learn.

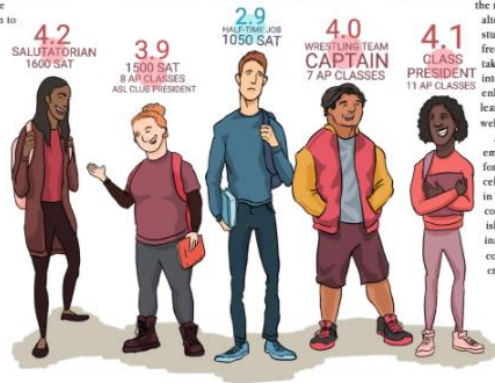
Teachers should teach students how to learn and study effectively, think critically and how to innovate, not how to memorize information and pass tests.

College and university admission officers recognize the differences in student populations at different high schools and the differences in

the ranking system, making them difficult to change. We, as students, need strong leadership from educators that are willing to challenge this antiquated view. This calls for a shift in mindset about what learning and teaching means, but it's necessary for the sake of future generations and students' well being.

In addition to this, doing away with the ranking system altogether may allow students to have the freedom and relief of taking classes they are interested in which will enhance the student's learning abilities as well as their happiness.

Above all, an emphasis on passion for learning and celebrating differences in learning styles in contrast to being punished based on one's inability to memorize content for an exam is crucial.



Above: NOT GOOD ENOUGH: A cartoon of five students with their grade point average and other academic achievements displayed above their heads is shown. Ranking students through GPA is detrimental to students' mental health, self-esteem, and compromises the academic content of teachings. Illustration by Lili Sims

Second Place: Maya Cornish,  
Clarke Central HS,  
Athens, GA  
"Boiling Point"

Judge's Comment: This page is a perfect mix of graphics and text. The graphics tell a story as well and have a very useful purpose. The placement of the pull-out quote breaks up the text nicely.



"Together, Yef Apart!" by Brynne Barnard-Bahn

## EDITORIAL: Follow social distancing guidelines, it's the only way to get out of this pandemic

With the school year starting online, many students and parents are wondering when grades 6-12 will be able to return to campus.

A waiver filed by the school, which was approved, will now allow grades 6-8 to attend school in person.

The pre-kindergarten started school on campus on Sept. 1 and the lower school planned to open on Sept. 22 but has been delayed.

At this time, there isn't a waiver for middle school or high school to be open. However, returning to campus will require the number of COVID-19 cases to go down. In order for that to happen, people need to start taking the pandemic seriously.

California has had a total of 742,943 cases, and 14,415 deaths so far, according to the California Department of Public Health, as of Sept. 17. Sacramento has had 20,463 cases and 344 deaths, as reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

We are slowly approaching the time when the whole school will be allowed back, and to continue moving forward, we need to keep taking the necessary precautions.

Staying in quarantine without seeing your friends and family for six months is exhausting. However, the sooner people start following the proper procedures the sooner we can safely return to campus.

If you're still not sure what you should be doing, here are some necessary precautions, according to the CDC:

- Always wear a mask when you leave your house.
- Stay six feet away from people.
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Don't touch your face.
- Stay home as much as possible.
- Don't hold or attend large gatherings.

The first non-travel related COVID-19 case in the U.S. was reported on Feb. 24, in a California residence. The CDC reported, cases in the U.S. and California have been rising in general.

So, why aren't people taking it as se-

riously now, as they did when the lockdown first started?

Part of the problem is that wearing a mask became politicized, and has become part of the ever-growing political divide in our country. As businesses opened up and turned away customers without masks, many anti-mask protests were organized.

Our president, Donald Trump, has mocked the idea of wearing a mask, and has held large indoor gatherings and political rallies, where many of his supporters weren't wearing masks or social distancing.

If our president can't follow basic precautions, what else is to be expected from the rest of the country?

On top of that, influencers are having parties left and right — usually without wearing masks. This encourages other people to do the same. Celebrities need to set a good example.

Wearing a mask, however, is a necessary precaution to take — if not the most important one — until the country has a COVID-19 vaccine.

The reason masks are so essential in slowing the spread of the virus is because they provide a barrier to stop respiratory droplets from hovering into the air, according to the CDC. For example, when someone talks, coughs, sneezes or sings, the virus is spread through these respiratory droplets.

A lot of people may have the mind-set that since they're young, it won't affect them as much. If you're not worried about your own safety, think about those around you.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2019, 14.8% of California's population are people age 65 and older.

Many of these people are high-risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

On top of that people with underlying medical conditions are also at high-risk, including those with cancer, chronic kidney disease, weak immune systems, obesity, serious heart conditions and more.

People with these conditions might also be at risk: asthma, cardiovascular disease, cystic fibrosis, hypertension, high blood pressure, neurologic conditions,

pregnancy and more.

Data from a 950,884 cases showed that 23.3% of cases occurred in those ages 18-29 and 20.8% in those ages 50-64, according to the CDC. These were the highest percentages, the lowest being ages 0-4 with 1.8%.

While ages 84+ were only 3.3% of cases, they were 31.7% of 141,663 deaths; this shows how the virus especially impacts the elderly.

When you leave your home without a mask or don't socially distance, you're putting these people at risk. If not yourself, symptoms of the coronavirus include fever, cough, fatigue, shortness of breath, body aches, headaches, sore throat, congestion and nausea. If you experience any of these symptoms and want to get tested, call your healthcare provider first, as recommended by the CDC. Those with mild symptoms can recover at home without any professional medical care.

If you do need to meet with someone, do it safely. Make sure you socially distance and wear masks. Make sure that the person you're meeting is also socially safe. You could also only meet with friends and family in a "bubble," where everyone has only been interacting with each other.

If you do contract the virus, stay home and try to quarantine away from others in your house. If you have trouble breathing, pain in the chest, feel confused, are unable to wake up or stay awake or your face and lips are bluish, these can be warning signs of COVID-19 pneumonia. The CDC reports,

if you experience these symptoms, immediately call 911.

In case someone you've met recently contracts the virus, you also should also quarantine yourself for 14 days to be safe.

The point is, the pandemic is to be taken seriously. Please follow social distancing guidelines so we can all actually do it again. Wear a mask. Stay inside your homes. Every bit helps.

We've already seen the effect the pandemic has had on our society and our everyday lives. If you don't start taking it seriously now, who knows when our lives will return back to normal.



### We needed quarantine

Being stuck at home for six months can drive you crazy. Personally, I really liked staying home. You might think I'm insane to say we needed quarantine. However, quarantine is a funny thing. Even though it has stressed virtually everyone — pun intended — we needed it.

Working out, cutting your own hair (don't try that one), binge Netflix, baking and hundreds of other things could all be done during quarantine.

For me, ballet journaling, an artistic form of planning, finishing a math course, binge "Avatar: The Last Airbender" (I had that a week and studying another language are some things I would never have done without six months of quarantine).

Of course, I did have days where I missed I was going to school instead of being stuck inside 24/7. School was in lockdown class before COVID-19. I've realized how much I miss being in an actual classroom, even if I am enjoying quarantine.

I had a very relaxed and content summer. I would get up, make some Dalgona coffee, watch "Pekkonen: Journeys" with my sister and give my leg a massage until the fall starts.

On some nights, my family and I would get together and play cards or watch a new movie. We would all have a great time, even if playing cards got extremely competitive.

My 10-year-old sister, Sophia, and I have a stronger relationship now. We would often go walk our dog together or ride our bikes to get some fresh air in Lodi's parks.

We're always around each other now, even if we don't talk every day.

Spending time with family was a big part of quarantine for me, and I don't think I will ever have the opportunity to do that again.

Plus, there's a lot of entertainment content. "Mulan" was recently released on Disney Plus, "Avatar: The Last Airbender" broke Netflix's longest streak record on the Top 10 list at 61 weeks, according to Forbes.com.

Additionally, an abundance of music and shows were released by my favorite artists: BTS, Conan Gray, Twice and Stray Kids. It was honestly a blessing to have so many things to listen to, so I wouldn't have myself to death. Some songs I recommend to listen to are, "Milkshake" by Ciara, Gray, "Double Knot" by Stray Kids, "Converse High" and "13589" by BTS and "Tancy" by Twice.

Staying at home does something to you in a sense that being blanketed in a calming environment can show how simple life can be, even in the midst of a pandemic.

Being at home has made me appreciate the moments I now have and all of the things I've done to keep myself occupied during quarantine, instead of taking them for granted. That's why we've all needed some time to relax and appreciate the moments we have in quarantine.

Third Place: Sanjana Anand, Sacramento Country Day School, Sacramento, CA  
 “EDITORIAL: Follow social distancing guidelines, it's the only way to get out of this pandemic”

Judge's Comment: I really like how this page is organized and the use of white space. I like the treatment of the speak out photos and the simple layout.

A BIG THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS FOR KEEPING US IN THE BLACK!

Anand family, Claire family, Cook family, Kumar family, Gulati family, Monasa family, Trivedi family, Zhu family

# Multimedia Categories

- **Video News Package**
- **Video Sports Package**
- **Video Feature Package**
- **Documentary**
- **Audio Podcast: Single Episode**
- **News Show**

11

7



# Category 29: Video News Package

11

8

First Place: Roberto Galicia,  
Shawnee Mission East HS,  
Prairie Village, KS  
“The Harmon Skate Park Final  
Planning”

Judge’s Comment: The piece ties together the elements of a good news story (a timely topic, good sourcing, and a coherent story arc), and it employs solid camera work and technical execution to create an engaging package that informs viewers.



Second Place: Nina Castro Alves,  
Gulliver Preparatory School,  
Miami, FL

“Pollution Wreaks Havoc in  
Biscayne Bay”

Judge’s Comment: The piece exposes  
the audience to a pressing matter  
beyond the walls of the school. The  
focus on sourcing and solid  
storytelling make it stand out.





Third Place: Matthew Cullen,  
Walker Watson,  
Mira Costa HS,  
Manhattan Beach, CA  
"The Cost of Paper"

Judge's Comment: A well-done take on an important, yet everyday topic that most people probably don't think much about. It does an excellent job helping the audience learn and understand.





# Category 30: Video Sports Package

12

2



First Place: Tosh Klever,  
Iowa City West HS,  
Iowa City, IA

["Recruiting Trail: Aurora Roghair '21"](#)

Judge's Comment: This was a really nice format to watch, an interesting story, which was compellingly told. The "walk and talk" type interview made for a dynamic interview situation. I really liked the variety of soundbites. Great job!

The image shows a curved screen or stage backdrop with a light blue and green color scheme. The text "EAGLE NATION NEWS" is displayed in a large, bold, white, 3D-style font with a blue outline. The screen is set against a dark background, possibly a stage or studio setting.

# EAGLE NATION NEWS

Second Place: Emily Baldwin,  
Prosper, HS,  
Prosper, TX  
“[Girls Soccer](#)”

Judge’s Comment: Great mix of narration and sounbites. One thing that really impressed me here was the delivery of the narration. Many audio/visual reporters start out talking too fast or not speaking clearly. You did both. Keep focusing on that, and on finding good stories to tell, and you'll continue to do well.



Third Place: Josh Briscoe,  
St. Joseph Catholic School,  
Madison, MS

[“St. Joe Bruin Basketball”](#)

Judge’s Comment: This story was presented really nicely. The reporter was easy to listen to, which is one of the biggest challenges for beginning on-camera reporters. One thing to keep working on is the technical quality of the sound.



# Category 31: Video Features Package

12

6

First Place: Lawder DeSantis,  
Shawnee Mission East HS,  
Prairie Village, KS  
[“Hell on Wheel: The Unicycle Gang  
of Shawnee Mission East”](#)

Judge’s Comment: This is exactly what a video feature package should be. The piece explores a human-interest topic most would find intriguing, and the creators do so in a way that piques the viewer's interest. The storytelling is stellar, the interviews in-depth, and the camera work ties everything together to tell a coherent story.



Second Place: Lucas Figueroa,  
Gulliver Preparatory School,  
Miami, FL

[“People at the Prep: Joao Carvalho”](#)

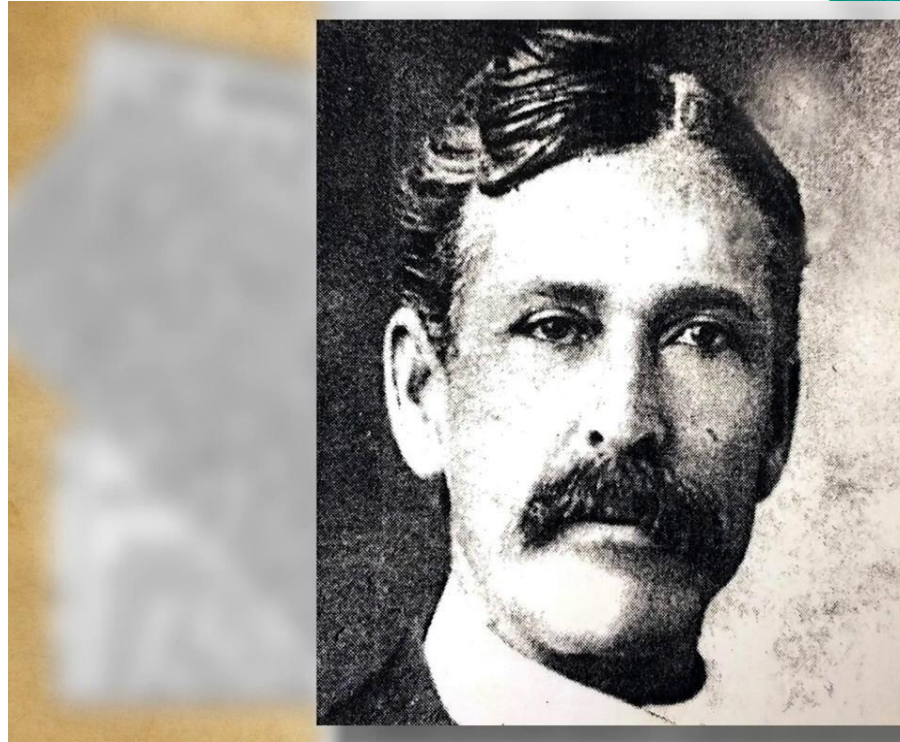
Judge’s Comment: This is a terrific profile piece. The story arc helps the viewer understand the essence of the subject, and the camera work and technical execution create an engaging aesthetic.





Third Place: Tara Woodard,  
Dos Pueblos HS,  
Goleta, CA  
[“Winchesters Secret”](#)

Judge’s Comment: The piece creatively  
explores part of the town's history in an  
engaging way.

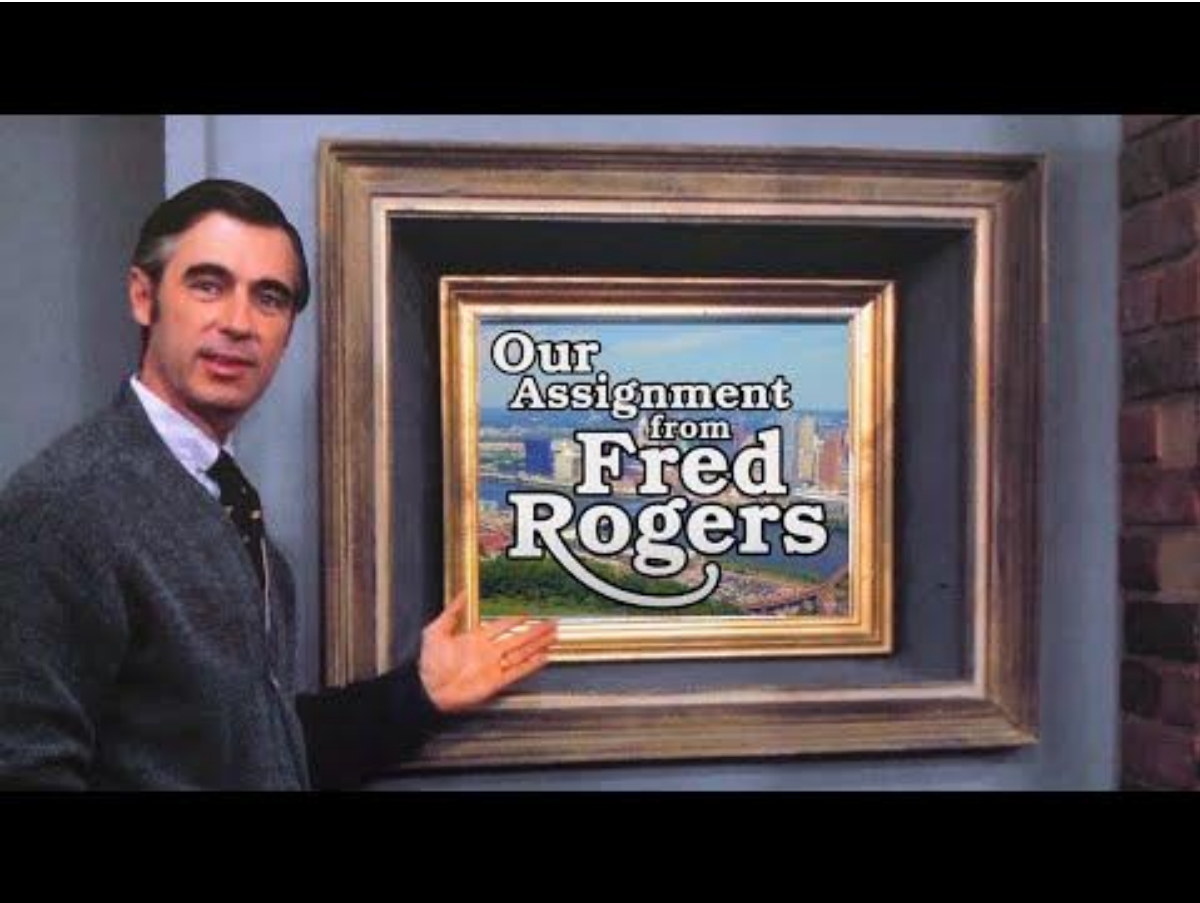




# Category 32: Documentary

13

0



First Place: Lance Wilhelm,  
Fox Chapel Area HS,  
Pittsburgh, PA

[“Our Assignment from Fred Rogers”](#)

Judge’s Comment: This was a very well done piece with many great resources and great training for interviewing set-up. The students of this crew and production were very fortunate to have access to this interview subject, this historical footage, and complete support for the Fred Rogers Museum, it seems. I hope they learned a lot on this journey and go on to further their journalistic careers. It also looks like it was well researched and written to craft the story and script. Overall, well done and a great opportunity for these students.

Second Place: Liu Yumeng,  
Pegasus California School,  
Qingdao, China  
"Taste of Home"



Judge's Comment: Nice sequencing and close-up shots. So nice to see all of that action right away in the beginning. I would have liked to hear more natural sound to mix with the music. I like her as a character, and I am rooting for her to succeed. She was gonna open a wonton shop, and it was gonna be the best. This was a great, simple story with nice visuals. The character had down times in her life, saw a problem/opportunity, made a change, and began her journey. There are some editing blips, flash frames, and the audio could mix better, but there are so many other good things in this piece that I see the potential. It is also not easy to cut a natural sound piece composed of no narration track and made of nothing but soundbites. Great shot variety.

Second Place: Hu Tianze, Wu Yifan,  
Suzhou HS,  
Jiangsu Province, China  
“One-yuan Teahouse”



Judge's Comment: I like the closer shots that started this video. It seems a fair amount of research went into this video and the history of the shop, the way the owner kept the shop going, and what it has meant to the community. From a story structure standpoint for video storytelling, the writing matches the visuals, which is great. Close-ups, I love those because they show detail and emotion. It would be best if you hid the edits with more b-roll. That is something I can't do. Tea house and haircuts, that's a great combo. I actually got caught up in the story because the teahouse became a character.



Category 33: Audio  
Podcast: Single Episode

13

4

First Place: Elena Hubert, Ava Smith, Kamryn Harty, Henry W. Grady HS, Atlanta, GA

[“Parents, students rally for face-to-face option”](#)

Judge’s Comment: Good use of NATS to start with, and a cool music bed enhances the narrated portions of the podcast. Good audio quality for interviews at a protest, which is always challenging in such a loud and unpredictable setting. Compelling webpage photos augment the audio. A first-rate effort at covering “breaking news.”

## Parents, students rally for face-to-face option



[Dana Richie](#)

Parents of younger students emphasized that virtual learning doesn’t provide the same level of education as in person. Therefore, they urge a face to face option.

Second Place: Tyler Kinzy,  
Parkway West HS,  
Ballwin, MO

“Covid-19 and Americas teacher  
crisis”

Judge’s Comment: Good use of NATS to start with, and a cool music bed enhances the narrated portions of the podcast. Good audio quality for interviews at a protest, which is always challenging in such a loud and unpredictable setting. Compelling webpage photos augment the audio. A first-rate effort at covering “breaking news.”

## Podcast: COVID-19 and America’s teacher crisis

[Tyler Kinzy](#), Managing Editor-in-Chief | July 29, 2020



[Antonio Perez / Chicago Tribune](#)

Teacher Andrew Van Herik protests outside Chicago Public Schools headquarters July 22.



Third Place: Duy Lam,  
North Kansas City HS,  
North Kansas City, MO  
“New Age for Video Games?”

Judge’s Comment: Love the short NATS in the intro segment, and the background music. The overall production value is a standout – and this happens to be the 23rd entry I’ve listened to. Audio quality varies a bit (volume changes), but it’s minor and expected when interviews are being done virtually. A very lively discussion, and a good wrap-up. I’m not a gamer, but I learned something and enjoyed it.





# Category 34: News Show

13

8



First Place: Eagle Nation News,  
Prosper HS,  
Prosper, TX

[“Season 8, Episode 16”](#)

Judge’s Comment: Good headlines and variety of camera shots on the news set. Good pace. Lots of useful information for viewers, particularly the anti-hacker story feature. Competently reported combination of stories that required digging and research. Visuals supported storytelling throughout. Held attention and well produced. Clearly the most professional looking student newscast among this year's selections!



Second Place: Bruin News Now Staff,

St. Joseph Catholic School,  
Madison, MS

["Season 6 Episode 19"](#)

Judge's Comment: Good opening teases with students, created interest in the program. Great state government package (with standup) reported with lawmaker interviews. Good anchoring supported by over-shoulder graphics. I'm very impressed with the content and quality of this newscast.



**MUSTANG MORNING NEWS**

**12-9-20**

**Starts as 10:15 AM PST**

Second Place: Tolou Shams,  
Mira Costa HS,  
Manhattan Beach, CA

[“Mustang Morning News 12/9/2020”](#)

Judge’s Comment: Good opening announcement by news director. Sincerely stated philosophy on camera with addresses to contact. Impactful animated opening, and upbeat pace. Quiz clever, invites response thus engaging with audience. Nicely produced and edited with good video and graphic support throughout. Well-paced program, mostly feature stories and not much news of the day. Reporter pieces highly visual and edited for fast pace, although I would have liked to see some differently placed stories for variety. Music generally added to the story themes. QR codes were well placed but needed to be left up longer.