

# COVID-19 vaccination prioritizes Teachers

Mikai Tasch

“I have an additional line of defense against COVID, and also the thought of just doing things that I have not done in, you know, over a year like. Like, hug my parents you know when they are able to get the vaccine as well,” history teacher Ryan Miller said.

Because many teachers, students and families want to go back to school, it has been important for teachers to get vaccinated all around the country. Although the roll out of the vaccine has been slow to begin with around early January, it is picking up pace, which leads to the importance of schools reopening for in-person learning.

According to the CDC, the COVID-19 Pfizer vaccine is 95 percent effective after both doses. With many teachers and families getting the vaccine, the transmission of COVID-19 will greatly be lowered. With the transmission of COVID-19 lowered, normal activities can resume, such as in-person learning.

Junior Jana Myers explained how she thinks everyone should get vaccinated at one point so we can get back to normal, hopefully by the late summer or early fall.

Furthermore, the vaccination process has been extremely fast and well thought out for many. Although there is a bit of paperwork to fill out when arriving at the vaccination site, the actual process of receiving the vaccine is fast. Many have been impressed by the efficiency at the vaccination site.

“I would say that I was very impressed by the number of volunteers who were working. I assume they are volunteers, but the number of people that were helping with the vaccine distribution and just how knowledgeable everybody was on where to go at the vaccination site, and how helpful they were and how smooth the whole operation was functioning,” Miller said.

With the first dose of the vaccine, many do not have side effects, and if they do have side effects, they are very subtle. With the second dose, however, some have reported side effects such as swelling, mild fevers, fatigue, and aches. Many of these side effects are symptoms of

## How do Teachers feel after Getting their Vaccine?



“It was such a relief. Even though you still have to wear a mask it feels as though we’re making the first steps to returning to normal.”

Laurie Hansen



“When I went in for my first shot, I was nervous. I was so anxious I had to sit down for a bit after I got it. But after I got over that, it was a feeling of pure joy.”

Mary Ticiu



“...Mentally you can take deep breath. You still have to wear a mask but it’s one last thing to worry about.”

Dusty Dennis

COVID-19, meaning that your body would actually be having a better reaction to the vaccine.

Miller talked about how he felt “a little bit more tired for the first 24 hours.” He was still able to do all the usual physical activities that he does such as running.

For many world language, music, and art teachers, COVID-19 has brought a struggle regarding how to teach a completely different language, various musical techniques, or basic painting and drawing skills remotely on Zoom. The vaccine will help students get back to school so they are able to learn in a normal way again. Many band, orchestra, and choir sectionals are starting to have physically distanced in-person rehearsals already.

“The fact that I teach a class, almost entirely in a different language is crazy. Usually, I am able to do class 99% in Spanish, but now I find myself needing to use more English be-

cause I cannot tell as well on Zoom if they’re understanding,” Spanish teacher Kirsten Carter said. “I am much more able to read that in-person in class. It is also harder to tell their comfort level, and to give them the reassurance and develop that personal connection and the trust.”

“It was definitely a rough experience, especially for my mom and I because we still do not have our taste or smell back.”

Kirsten Carter

Although the various COVID-19 vaccines such as Pfizer and Moderna vaccines can

help lower infection rates of the original COVID-19 type, many variants have emerged since, such as variants from the United Kingdom and South Africa. These variants are known to spread quicker than the original, and the various COVID-19 vaccines do not protect you from these variants as much as the original. Many people’s views of the virus have changed from October to now.

Carter explained how in October, scientists and medical experts were still learning more about treatments and were concerned about the severity of it. Although it still can be severe for some people, it seems like they are able to help more patients more often. Now, the new COVID-19 variants create a new level of concern in a different way.

Finally, the vaccine will help prevent various COVID-19 outbreaks among family members. Throughout the COVID-19 period, it has been known that COVID-19 can strike a family like dominoes falling

over. As in the game dominoes, when one family member gets COVID-19, others do too.

“It was definitely a rough experience, especially for my mom and I because we still do not have our taste or smell back. And it has been, I do not even know, four months,” Myers said.

For many teachers, school has been a struggle, as they have had to reinvent learning. The vaccine can change this by bringing another layer of protection against COVID-19. For the time being, make sure to wear a mask and physically distance from people by staying at least six feet apart.

“I am very used to interacting with all of my kids, every hour, and that was not the same, even in hybrid this year. That is the one thing that weighs most heavily on me, that I am not able to read their body language. I am not able to try and express just that warmth of, you know, being close to each other,” Carter said.



Discover a student whose discovering his passion for Snowboarding  
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# Teachers return to school vaccinated



Photo by Abby Thibodeau

History teacher Ryan Miller displays his CDC issued card certifying that he has received the COVID-19 vaccination. Miller was able to receive the vaccine due to an initiative

Mikai Tasch

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# Counselors provide services in new ways during pandemic

John Piekarski

Since their creation in the late 1800s, school counselors have almost exclusively interacted with students during in-person meetings. Now, for the first time in history, counselors are only able to interact with students and community members virtually. This has created a void of real human interaction and has had a negative impact on the quality of counseling.

Sydney Piras, counselor for the White Pony Center, misses the in-person connection she got from having students in her office.

“It’s not just what you’re saying, it’s your tone of voice,

your body posture, and your facial expression. Without these, I have to make unnecessary judgment calls,” Piras explained.

For many years, a shift in the content of a typical counseling meeting has changed with the seasons. In the spring, the majority of students reaching out to a counselor are inquiring about standardized testing or changing classes, but as the weather gets colder, more and more students begin reaching out with questions about mental health.

“Also because it’s Minnesota, we typically see some more requests and more interactions around mental health in the winter,” Piras explained.

National School Counseling week took place Feb. first through fifth and was a

time for students and community members to celebrate the work counselors do. It may seem like a small gesture to most, but counselors around the country always appreciate it.

“It means a lot to people when you’re recognized for your job. Like we, as a community, appreciate the work that you do,” Piras recalled.

Video conferencing software like Google Meet and Zoom have been utilized more than ever during the pandemic. This new medium has worked well for some, but for new students and counselors, adjusting to this new form of communication has been a challenge.

Piras has had to learn to accept that some things are out of her control during the pandemic. “For example, there are times where I’m having a very deep and challenging conversation with the students and I don’t see their faces at all,” Piras said.

Students have been reaching out to counselors more frequently this year than in the past. One reason for this is the difficulty of creating student



Photo by Cassidy Gilliam

Guidance counselors Becky Hopper and Sandy Weaver work hard in their offices to provide support for students.

teacher relationships during online class. Since accessing teachers is more difficult during online school, students are now more inclined to send an email to their counselor who they have a relationship with.

“There are office hours, but I feel more inclined to go to the counselor just through an email or something like that,” junior Soren

Gabor explained. “Because you don’t have that kind of in class connection with the teachers, you can’t just ask a quick question in class.”

Education about the role of school counselors is more important now than ever. Counselors provide support for both college planning and emotional well being. Being unbiased, neutral and non-judgemental are all parts of the job for a school counselor and they will never complain about more people taking advantage of the support they offer.

Whether students are going through something or not, Piras believes it’s often a good thing to talk to someone unbiased. She hopes that counseling never gets taken away and people always have access to the resources they need.

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# Stillwater's own piece of heaven: alumni keeps dream bakery open during lock-down

Sophie MacDonald

Hannah's Homemade Heavens, located near the corner of Churchill and Fourth St S., has continued to please customers with delicious baked goods amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

Owner Hannah Fazendin opened the bakery at age 19 in October 2015. Hannah's Homemade Heavens was open five days a week, and served decadent cookies, cupcakes, doughnuts and almost any baked good one could think of. However, when 2020 rolled around the bakery was affected by the lockdowns and rising covid cases, it even had to close at one point.

"In the beginning we thought it was just going to pass and we had hope that we could stay open. Eventually the cases just kept climbing and we closed for a couple months to regroup and encourage everyone to stay home and stay safe," Fazendin said.

Currently, the bakery is open Friday and Saturday from 7 a.m. -2 p.m., which was a huge change from the bakery's pre-pandemic hours. Another big change was the store front; customers used to be able to walk into the store and gaze at all the goodies in the display case. Now, there is a walk up window counter top to keep everyone safe.

"The biggest challenge has been to ensure that everything stays clean and sanitized between customers. It used to take a little reminding, but now it has become almost second nature to wear masks, wash hands, and wipe down counter tops after every customer," Fazendin said.

Customers have been very supportive of Hannah's Homemade Heavens, despite the changes. Frequent visitor of the bakery Kari Phillips and her family love to get treats at the bakery, especially on the weekend.

"I like that I can take my kids there and order through

the window. It's an easy, safe, outdoor option! They also have the best and freshest donuts!" Phillips said.

In the future, Hannah hopes that she will be able to allow customers inside again. However, they will only fully open back up if it is safe. Until then, customers will continue to enjoy the fresh baked goods from outside the store



Graphic by Rachel Palmer

# Fitzpatrick brings fresh perspectives to Afton Lakeland

Mason Buck

There are few minority staff members in the Stillwater school district, and Afton-Lakeland Elementary secretary, Foua Fitzpatrick, is one of few Asian-American staff members. After a few years of working in the district, although not at any particular school, Foua saw the job opening for secretary at Afton-Lakeland. She was optimistic about applying and getting the job because of her background. Surprisingly, she got the job and has been working there for the past two years and could not be happier with the work she does.

In the fall of 2019, Fitzpatrick became a new face as the secretary of Afton-Lakeland. As one of few Asian staff members in the district, she has provided diversity for the school, as well as support for every student.

"It's a goal of mine to just share my experience, and if anyone is willing to learn about me as a person, I'm more than willing to share that," Fitzpatrick said.

Fitzpatrick's journey to her current role as secretary at Afton-Lakeland provided her with the background she needed to succeed as a secretary. Her initial experience with the Stillwater school district came with the student support services in 2017.

Fitzpatrick said she feels lucky that she worked her first year with SSS because they were a much smaller program. Therefore, it re-

ally got her feet wet in the school district.

She could not be more satisfied with her role in working with so many great people. She feels honored to take on many tasks because they lead to meeting so many people.

"I get to wear so many hats, and I get to work in the office. I also get to help staff, students and families, as well as working one on one with our principal," Fitzpatrick added.

This has helped her better understand the people she works with as well as build a better connection with the community.

"I have never been treated in any way where I felt uncomfortable or unwelcome. I've been very lucky to have worked with people in our district that have treated me well and treated me as equal."

Fitzpatrick said.

Fitzpatrick has always felt like part of the Afton-Lakeland family. It is clear that her colleagues are welcoming and respectful, which makes her job even better.

Elementary students can learn about diversity, which is important, by simply seeing different faces in



Photo by Mason Buck

Afton-Lakeland Elementary secretary, Foua Fitzpatrick, stands at her desk, in the front office, of Afton-Lakeland Elementary on the morning of Feb. 24. She is the first person that people see when they enter the building. She creates a welcoming atmosphere for all students.

their familiar places. For example, when one walks in the doors of the school, Fitzpatrick is the first person they see, which provides the young kids with that crucial experience.

Fitzpatrick said a simple goal of hers has always been to just have students see someone that is different and to provide them with that important experience early in their life, even if they do not understand exactly what it means.

Fitzpatrick also hopes to be someone that works hard and sets a good example for the kids. This is something that she believes is valued greater than race and ethnicity.

"Being hard working transcends race and ethnicity, and that's something

where, again, with younger kids, they may not even realize that they're learning about that. They could just see that with me in my position," Fitzpatrick explained.

Afton-Lakeland kindergarten teacher Kim Schneider has been working at the school for 24 years, and she can not recall having a minority colleague until Fitzpatrick. The actions that she has taken in her first two years working at the school have inspired Schneider. Furthermore, Schneider is amazed at the tasks that Fitzpatrick has completed, and is excited for the future of having a Fitzpatrick lead the way for Afton-Lakeland.

"Being in the role that she is and being a minori-

ty, I always tell her that she is my superhero because of all the tasks that she does," Schneider said.

"When kids can know that if they go out in the public and they see another Asian face or another Hmong face, they can relate it to me. They can make a connection that someone looks like me, and they have no fear of doing that," Fitzpatrick explained.

Beyond being an outgoing and supporting secretary, Fitzpatrick is a unique and special person that, without knowing, impacts young kids in many ways.

"She could run the school because there are many days when our principal isn't there and she's holding down the floor," Schneider added.

# Carson Arco hits the slopes of Afton

## Senior skateboards, trains over summer months

Jayden Leach

Senior Carson Arco has been practicing and working hard on his snowboard skills at Afton Alps during the winter season, and skateboarding in the summertime. Arco

has learned many new tricks and has created videos that he posts on social media.

When Arco was 11, he and a couple of his cousins took lessons at Afton Alps Resort. Arco rode about once a week until he turned 13, then he started going frequently and getting better. Arco started working at Afton Alps his sophomore year of high school

and started riding about three to four times a week.

Now, Arco rides everyday and said, "I love pushing myself to learn new tricks and spending time with my friends."

Over the years, Arco has enjoyed pushing himself to learn new tricks on the slopes with his friends. His favorite tricks that he can do are a 360 on to a rail, a front flip and a 360 out of a rail, but he couldn't always do those tricks. When Arco was

11, his first trick he learned was jumping on and off the box.

"I just find snowboarding really fun, and I enjoy the feeling of finally hitting the trick that I have been practicing over and over again. It's a great feeling," Arco stated.

During the summertime, Arco spends his time grinding at the skate park rather than on the slopes. He thought skateboarding would

make him better at snowboarding, and be fun at the same time. The first time he started skating, he was 13 in his garage practicing how to stay balanced on the skateboard. When he finally got comfortable, Arco took his rookie talents to the streets.

"I love snowboarding and skateboarding. It has taught me that if you just keep working hard at something, that the hard work will pay off."

-Carson Arco

"I used to play Skate 3 on the Xbox with my friends. I thought the tricks on the game were really cool and I wanted to learn how to do them in real life," Arco explained.

After Arco was comfortable with riding in the streets, he decided to take it to the next level and visit a skate park. Arco visited Ojibway Park in Woodbury and wanted to learn how to do an ollie. An ollie is a skateboarding trick where the rider and the board leap into the air without the use of the riders hands. He tried for multiple days, and still could not hit the trick, but he was de-

termined to succeed no matter how much time it would take him. After two weeks of attempting to hit his first ollie, he finally hit the trick.

"I felt like an absolute boss. It took me so long to hit the trick, but I knew I could do it," Arco explained.

Five years later, Arco has had a lot of time to practice new tricks. Since then he has become better and can do a lot of tricks. His favorite tricks that he can do on a skateboard is a fakie tre flip and a half cab flip. A fakie tre flip is when he snaps a fakie ollie from switch stance, and the board does a 360 shove-it and kickflip.

"It took me three years to finally accomplish this trick. At one point it felt like it was impossible, but I kept trying again and again. Then what seemed impossible, I finally accomplished," Arco added.

Lately, Arco has been broadcasting his snowboarding and skateboarding tricks on social media. He posts these videos to show his progress and to entertain his audience. One of his posts is even laid out to be a whole edited film. Arco saves his videos from his Instagram stories and keeps them displayed on his account so anyone can watch them at any point. Arco can now look back at his old documented videos to see how far he has come.

"One time, Carson and I made an edit at one of our skate sessions. It turned out really good and was very fun to make," junior Logan Tierney said.

Arco this sport when he was young and now he loves it. He continues to push himself to get better everyday.



Graphic by Katie Kangas

## Girls hockey team gears up for strong season as a strong

Ava Fugate

The girls hockey team can be described as resilient and determined. There are many different personalities on the team making for a fun time for the girls, but they all have a great work ethic and work hard on and off the ice. The coaches make sure they stay hard working and only expect 100% effort everyday.

Sophomore Kylie Ligday described the team really coming together and working as a team in one of her favorite moments in the season so far. The team feels very confident that will be their only loss if they put in the work needed.

Due to COVID-19, the sport has changed a little. Masks are required at all times whether players are active or not. Social distancing is required on the benches and

when in a huddle or speaking to the referees. The team has been having a harder time with that especially that they cannot do their warm-ups together and have to get dressed at home alone.

"Challenges we have faced are not being able to be together before games due to COVID and sometimes it causes us to have a slow start and we have had to overcome that," junior captain Sydney Scheel explained.

The team has been doing their very best with the new regulations and circumstances. Even without being able to do as many team bonding things this year the team is still as much of a family as it always has been. The respect and kindness for one another is displayed throughout the team no matter where they are.

Ligday said this about her upperclassmen teammates, "I

look up to the upperclassmen. They are all very good friends to me and I respect them on and off the ice. I have been friends with juniors Syd Scheel and Syd Shuster for many years and respect them as people."

The girls hockey team has had a successful year with 6-1. Their dedication is shown throughout their games most weekends and some weekdays while having practice almost every day for up to 2 hours. The team of young girls is filled with positive energy and determination to win.

"One of my favorite moments from this season was playing Gentry. They were our toughest opponents and we beat them in overtime," Ligday said. After they won 5-4 they all met in the middle of the ice for a huge group hug she described as "the best feeling."



Photo by Kiera Rivers

Girls hockey plays against the Roseville Raiders on Feb. 20 at Roseville Skating Rank.

Up until their game in the beginning of February against Roseville, the girls team were undefeated.

"I believe the loss against Roseville will be our only loss because all of us players

and coaches reflected on the game and pinpointed where we need to do better and we are going to apply that moving forward," junior Betsy described about coming back from the loss.

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# Girls varsity basketball team improves during modified season

Nila Cooper

The girls varsity basketball team is improving despite the challenges they are working with right now during the COVID-19 pandemic. Not having spectators or family present at the games can be physically and mentally difficult for the players. The captains and the coach are working especially hard to make the season fun and successful, which it has been.

The biggest difference this season is that the players have to wear masks during practice and at games. They take other safety measures such as sanitizing and social distancing.

"We sanitize every time we go to get water in practice and come out of games," junior captain Amber Scalia said.

The good thing is that the girls are feeling more comfortable playing with masks and are learning how to train in them.

It was a struggle at the beginning with the masks, however, Scalia has "definitely gotten used to it".

Another substantial change this season is not being able to play non-conference games. With COVID-19 rules, the

goal is to limit exposure to many different groups of people, in different conferences.

"Those games usually give us more competition and if we were to make it to state... it would have given us an opportunity to know what those better teams would be like," Scalia added.

It is also difficult to not have many or even a few spectators at the games, but they are making the best of the situation.

"There would always be packed stands with kids from the high school cheering us on. It is a big difference without having all the fans in my opinion, but it's better than none," Scalia explained.

Despite this, the players are playing quite well including senior captain Alexis Pratt who said that even if her parents did not come, it did not really bother her because she knows she needs to keep playing her games even when they are not there.

Although there are many challenges this year, there are some positives. The players are very grateful to get a season, even if it looks different.

"I mean the good thing is we are playing basketball. I



Photo by Mairin Torgerson

Varsity basketball player Amber Scalia at Irondale game Feb. 17, final game score was Stillwater 90 and Irondale 26.

know a lot of places that are not playing anymore or have stopped. Another thing that is good is that I get to play with my team again for one last year," Pratt explained.

This is especially positive for the seniors who have had such a crazy season. Despite the challenges being faced, the team is so far undefeated

this season, going into sections with a 13-0 record.

The team is doing exceptionally well and this is due to several things; their ability to communicate during games and their speed has improved.

They are 13-0 and recently won a home game against East Ridge 82-55. They are first in Section 4 AAAA and

fourth in the Minnesota Division AAAA leagues, with section finals soon approaching.

"I think our chemistry on and off the floor is a big reason for our success. Many of us have played together since 5th/6th grade and I think it's a huge piece of the game that has made us successful," Scalia added.

The team gets together before or after games and goes out to eat, as a way to still do team bonding activities.

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

MARCH 18	SECTION 4AAAA BASKETBALL QUARTER-FINALS
MARCH 23	SECTION 4AAAA BASKETBALL SEMI-FINALS
MARCH 26	SECTION 4AAAA BASKETBALL FINAL
MARCH 30	STATE TOURNAMENT QUARTERFINALS DAY 1
MARCH 31	STATE TOURNAMENT QUARTERFINALS DAY 2

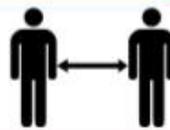
Graphics by Nissa Wilcox

## CHANGES TO THE GAME

Must wear a mask at games and practices



Athletes must keep a distance of six feet



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# Jack Wells Bounces Back From Major Leg Injury

Grant Miller

Anything can be dangerous. Junior Jack Wells realized this after breaking his leg playing a pickup game of football at Woodbury High School. Wells fractured his fibula, tibia, tore his PCL, tore his medial meniscus, lateral meniscus, tore his IT band, and tore three more ligaments in a piteous corner. All of this happened from jumping up for a football and colliding trying to intercept it. This all happened late fall right after football season and just before Wells' junior hockey season.

Wells had to undergo a three and a half hour surgery for this gruesome injury. The surgeons had to cut into four different spots in his leg around the knee. They had to repair plenty of ligaments including his PCL and several other smaller ligaments which he tore.

Wells must keep a tight compression sock around his cuts to improve blood flow and circulation to his leg. Wells also has to hook up several different machines to his leg for muscle stimulation and compression to make sure his leg stays in good shape while his leg heals and he is unable to use or walk on it.

"I've gotten used to the process of the stuff I do everyday to keep my leg in shape," Wells said.

Wells had nearly a month long period from when the leg was injured until his surgery. This surgery was the start of the recovery process for him and everything after he learned, but he has a promising recovery.

Wells explained the doctors told him, "10-12 weeks after surgery I get the brace off. I am obviously not going to be able to get right back into sports but it's definitely a step forward".

Many leg injuries usually take around six to eight weeks to heal completely, but this was not the case for Wells. Wells injury was considered a major leg injury and was much more than a broken bone.

"The doctors even said they usually only see leg injuries this bad in car crashes," Wells explained.

Wells broke both his tibia and fibula but the ligaments that were torn result in an even longer recovery. Wells was not happy to hear this news as he wanted to play sports, especially hockey.

The injury occurred right before Wells' junior year hockey season. "I was super bummed out to hear how long I was going to be out for. They think I can maybe get back for next hockey season which is just over a year's recovery," Wells said.

Many guys miss having Wells on the team this year. Senior team manager Isaac

Albers said "he brought some great energy to the locker room and is a guy many of the boys miss having in the locker room."

Wells plans on getting back into skates hopefully later in the summer. His goal is to get back onto the ice for his senior season which if everything goes as planned looks promising.

Many people feel for Wells and have supported him throughout this journey, "I've had plenty of friends give me some gifts and parents and former coaches reach out to me. It makes me feel really good knowing they are right there with me."

Wells joined the hockey team and as many activities as he could attend. The team saved him a spot on the roster this year so he would still have the opportunity to come to any of the games and feel part of the team.

Wells is looking forward to recovering and bouncing back. He hopes to come back better than before and will not take anything for granted. He plans to surprise everyone and come out stronger, bigger and faster. He is excited for what the future holds and is hoping to have a successful turn around.

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# Removal of Marjorie Taylor Greene from committees causes uncertainty

Drew Jurek

At the top of her campaign website, Marjorie Taylor Greene described herself as a “conservative wife, mother, and businesswoman who 100% stands with Trump and against the left-wing socialists who want to wreck this country.” It’s rhetoric that has become common, not just for Greene, but for the whole of the Republican party.

The second tab in the menu is a large red button emblazoned with “Impeach Joe Biden.” Further to the top is her campaign logo and with it, the slogan: “Stop Socialism, Save America.” On the homepage of the website, a video is displayed in which Greene decries Communists including Reps. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Ilhan Omar, and Rashida Talib for trying to destroy the country in their ignorance. When she describes herself on the next page, she paints herself first and foremost as a businesswoman with a lot of experience, the same experience she touts when trying to convince others to vote for her.

Her website offers a glimpse of a woman who has become one of the most controversial politicians of the post-Trump period, especially after Congress voted to remove her from her positions on the Committee for Labor and Education and the Committee for the Budget Feb. 4. The move, though supported by 11 Republican representatives, has shaken a nation already reeling from one of its most unstable periods.

At the center of it all is Greene, the newly elected representative for Georgia’s 14th district. After beating the more moderate candidate John Cowan, she ran a campaign that was plagued with discoveries of Greene’s past. Despite this, Greene won her seat, running unopposed after the democratic candidate stepped down. Already a controversial figure, Greene’s defense of the insurrection on January 6th led to many democrats voting to kick her from her committee assignments.

The Republican party has been unsure of exactly how to react to Greene since she became their candidate. Many have decried her as a dangerous radical, while others in-

cluding former president Donald Trump, have called her the face of a new party. The split did not stop the majority of Republicans to oppose Marjorie Taylor Greene’s removal, and the Democrat’s success in pushing it through regardless has left many angry.

“I think it is stifling the conservative voices,” senior Abby Cronk said. “Those who voted for her wanted to see her go to Congress and push the ideals that she told them she stood for and now she is not able to do that.”

Junior Flora Iris Montcho disagreed, saying that Greene was dangerous to the American people and her remarks were “just not right.” Democrat’s claims of the

“I think it is stifling the conservative voices. Those who voted for her wanted to see her go to Congress and push the ideals that she told them she stood for and now she is not able to do that.”

Abby Cronk

danger Greene poses are not unfounded, in fact, they are rooted in a long history of violent rhetoric and questionable beliefs. Greene is a former moderator of the “Family America Project” Facebook group, which has included members posting threats against prominent Democrats, including Speaker Nancy Pelosi. She has also been found in videos wherein she supported the disproven QAnon, frazzlegate, and pizzagate conspiracy theories. It was these theories that have fueled both shootings and the insurrection that Greene later supported.

“I agree with her removal,” Montcho explained, “what she said and done was unacceptable. It should have even been in question if she should have been removed.” However, Greene has long tried to distance herself both from violent words and conspiracy theories. During a hearing of House Republicans on her removal, despite refusing to apologize, Greene said that she had been “Led to believe things that were not true”, and that she regretted that having happened.

For Senior Lucas Polucha, that shows that maybe she should be given another chance.

“She is a Freshman representative and she doesn’t have a real track record of misdeeds in Congress,” Polucha said. “Especially compared to other, more senior politicians who have a noted history of misdeeds.”

What is worrisome to many is the precedent being set. Traditionally parties have often removed members from committee assignments, usually in order to bully them away from unorthodox positions or to punish them for a crime. But Greene’s removal marks the first time that the majority party has taken control of the committee assignments of the minority party. In an already tense political position, it is a controversial decision that many worries could have long-lasting effects.

Sophomore Iris Montcho said that she “definitely” thought that Republicans might use this as an excuse to remove opponents if returned to power.

If this prediction proves true, it might become a major issue for Minnesotans. Among the proposals offered by Republicans, it was reported that there was talk of starting a case against Minnesota’s Representative Ilhan Omar, one of Greene’s “Communists”. Like Greene, Omar has faced a backlash from the Jewish community for anti-Semitic remarks. She has been marred by allegations of mismanagement of funds and corruption. Despite this, Omar has become a rising star of the Democratic Party. If Republicans moved forward with a removal, they would not only cause a political uproar among their opposition but would also deprive one of Minnesota’s largest districts of its voice on committees.

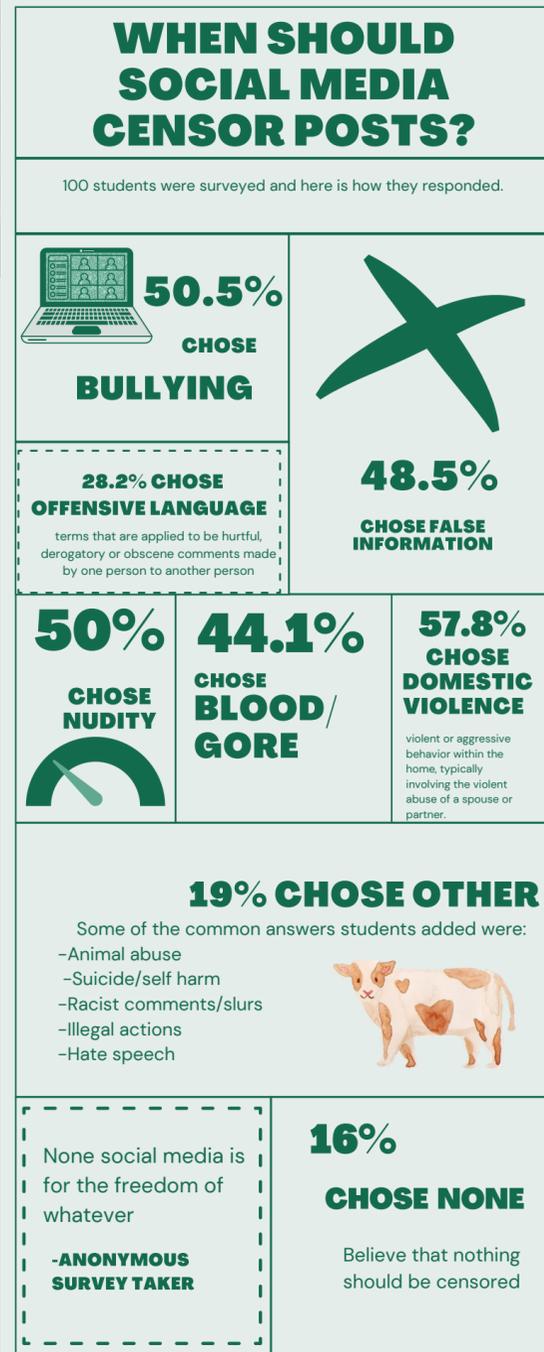
Greene’s case does not offer any comfort. In its search to try to bring peace to a country reeling from a pandemic and political polarization, it has only succeeded in bringing uncertainty for the future. All that can be assured is that the American people will need to be vigilant and watch closely in the days to come.

“Going forward, we have to watch out for the tyranny of the majority,” Polucha said, “but I’m also concerned about the Republican Party, especially its inability to regulate its members.



CREATIVE COMMONS IMAGE THROUGH WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

# HOW FAR IS TOO FAR?



GRAPHIC BY SOPHIA MCDONALD

# Cancel culture and censorship over social media

Maci Swanson

As social media has grown, there has also been growth of withdrawing support for significant public figures, and private citizens over statements they negative or say on social media. This is also known as cancel culture. It has many definitions and interpretations with both negative and positive outcomes.

The term “cancel culture” has become more popular and grown as social media grows. Within cancel culture, it is often large groups of people who target those who committed some sort of violation on the internet.

Cancel culture is known for being the main reason for the downfall of public figures or popular internet influencers. This so called downfall is mainly due to any sexism, racism, or any other type of abuse or harmful wrongdoing to others that they could have done through social media.

“If they’re being like racist, I guess it’s fair that they can get cancelled. But I don’t know if sometimes the severity of it is probably not fair,” junior Connor Parker said.

The First Amendment states that since social media platforms are private companies, which they censor what people post on their websites if what is posted violated their terms and conditions. The First Amendment also protects false statements of fact and protects individuals from government censorship.

Popular social media apps such as Twitter, Instagram and Facebook are some of the main sources where one may find cancel culture. Over these popular apps, people are able to voice their opinions. Many celebrities are based on, and create their reputation and brand over the use of social media and the internet.

“It’s probably really easy to dig up there for famous people, because of all the stuff they do and it’s easier to like to make stuff up and then just like stir the pot I guess. It’s easier to get a position on

other people,” Parker said. The most powerful motive for constructing cancel culture is social status. It has created new opportunities for people to move up by taking others down. By showing the bad behavior of others, one person may lose their social rank, which means at the same time another person will gain it.

“I think they kind of put themselves in that position because they know that and since they are kind of famous, then they should know that things would get blown up if they did something in the wrong. But at the same time, you don’t know if they are already getting punished. But then again it puts out awareness too,” junior Alexis Witter said.

Additionally, people are slow to give praise for a good act and quick to assign blame for a bad one. The relative difficulty of doing something good and the prolonged waiting period to receive credit for it is why cancel culture has grown so quickly. Many people prefer getting immediate rewards rather than waiting and having a risk of failure.

In other words, it’s easier to gain by bringing others down than getting credit for a good act, mainly because there is a long wait to receive credit for these acts of good.

“It’s more specifically targeted towards like one person. People need to be able to have independence, a lot of people like coming for people who they don’t know and getting in other people’s business,” Witter said.

Cancel culture is a way for people to relate to each other and agree on the same things. It has been able to unite people around a common purpose which offers status and social solidarity with little risk of hurting their own social status.

“It brings light to issues that might have not been known, but at the same time it takes apart a lot of people’s lives,” Witter added.

Cancel culture has become a highly politicized term with both positive and negative connotations in recent months.

# Biden's proposed minimum wage simply not enough

Olivia Bystrom

From fast food service to grocery store employees and every odd job in between, minimum wage workers are the backbone of this country. As radical as that statement may seem, Americans' comfortable and convenient everyday lives depend on the services offered by minimum wage professions. Without these essential services and the people who perform them, our economy would collapse, and yet there still exists a stigma that these jobs hold little value to society. In fact, society holds minimum wage labor in such a low regard that their employees live below the poverty line.

President Joe Biden is seeking to change that, but even his plans to raise minimum wage are not progressive enough. The federal minimum wage has not been raised since 2009, when it rose from \$6.55 to the \$7.25 Americans still have today. In the span of the last 12 years, costs of living have risen 20% alongside drastic increases in costs for housing and healthcare. In Minnesota, an individual would have to make \$20.53 an hour to afford a two bedroom apartment, according to a 2020 report from the NLIHC.

At \$7.25 an hour, one would have to work multiple jobs to stay afloat, which is a lifestyle that is not only physically but mentally demanding, senior Isaac Reiner explained.

"I've known people who work two full time jobs and I have a lot of respect for those people of course, but it's not healthy. Work can't be your entire life. It takes a huge toll



Minimum wage employees go on strike for a \$15 minimum wage in Dinkytown, 2015. President Joe Biden has made promises to meet this demand by 2025.

Photo by Olivia Bystrom

on your mental health and it's destructive to your social life. It's just not reasonable to say that people should be devoting their entire lives to working when we could raise the minimum wage," Reiner added.

However, Biden's proposal to raise the minimum wage has also met its fair share of criticism and opposition. Many of those who argue against raising the minimum wage claim that it will only stand to raise the cost of living. Economics teacher Mike Weiss was able to better put this claim into perspective.

"In some areas like Seat-

tle, San Francisco and New York the wage increase to \$15 an hour actually could be an economic boost because the wages in these areas of the country are very high and the consumers do not mind or don't notice as much the increase in prices for goods and services. However, a universal minimum wage of \$15 an hour can be disastrous for places where income levels are low across the board; Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, West Virginia and many rural areas of the country," Weiss explained.

Despite this, the cost of living continues to rise regard-

less of the 12 stagnant years without a raise to the minimum wage. Who is responsible for it, the minimum wage workers who need a few more dollars to get by, or large corporations who refuse to pay their employees higher wages without increasing the price of their products? In American society, the people have been conditioned to put the responsibility for these issues on the shoulders of the average citizen. In reality, it is the multi-billion dollar companies who should be taking the blame.

"They're paying as little as they can for the sake of max-

imizing profit, and I think as reasonable as that sounds from the perspective of the CEO and the perspective of the administration- It's not healthy for the economy as a whole and it's not morally justifiable," Reiner explained.

The reality is that closing the wage gap is a lot more nuanced than simply raising the minimum wage. In fact, raising the minimum wage is only one step towards a

**Read more online**  
sahsponyexpress.com

## Super Bowl reflects America's priorities amidst pandemic

Lubnag Xiong

The Super Bowl is the notorious championship game of the National Football League, and every year tens of thousands of fans occupy the selected stadium to watch the game live. It serves as the final game of each NFL season, as millions of people tune in from their homes, eager to watch what they had been waiting for all season. COVID-19, however, brought obstacles that affected the decisions and games of many professional sports—one being the 2021 Super Bowl. One would think hosting such an event in the middle of a pandemic is not the best idea, but the United States continues to show the world otherwise.

On Feb. 7, the Tampa Bay Buccaneers beat the Kansas City Chiefs in the 2021 Super Bowl, earning them their second Super Bowl championship title. Even though the NFL limited the amount of people allowed to attend, about 25,000 fans still occupied the stadium. That is an absurd amount of people in one place during a pandemic. In contrast, many events like graduations were completely cancelled due to the risk of spreading the virus, but the Super Bowl continued to

hold thousands of people as if COVID-19 never existed. It was an irresponsible decision. The league should not have allowed that many people to attend, if any at all.

"I think they did what they could to allow thousands to enter, yet I feel decisions made is

all about money."

**Erin Nickleby**

It is no surprise the United States has had the most COVID-19 cases when there are people who are not following CDC guidelines. Even with the appropriate precautions and spacing, according to NFL columnist Jarrett Bell, many fans at the Super Bowl went around without masks despite the mandate instituted by Tampa mayor Jane Castor. In a stadium filled with thousands of people, it is essential that everyone wears a mask and keeps a distance from one another.

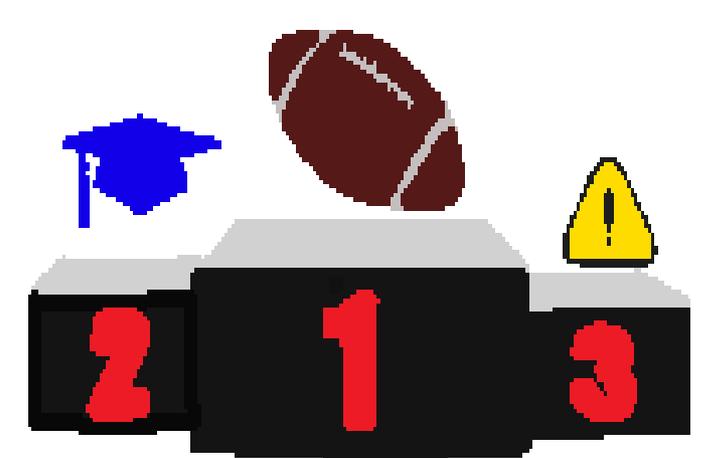
High school graduate Lin-

da Herr explained that the reason why the United States' number of cases has skyrocketed compared to other countries is the initial lack of understanding of how contagious and serious this virus is. No one really followed safety precautions, whereas other countries prioritized masks and quarantine.

Events with significantly less people were completely cancelled during the pandemic. High schoolers across the country were not able to celebrate the end of their high school education, but thousands of fans were able to collectively watch a football game.

"Although I do not know much about sports, I do know that the stadium can fill up with thousands and thousands of people, all sitting side by side and comparing that to a graduation ceremony, I could see how it made a lot of people frustrated with massive sports events being prioritized over graduation ceremonies," Herr said.

One of the most difficult things about this pandemic is the lack of social interaction among students and staff. School and education rely heavily on the interactions that take place in a classroom, and without that, making and maintaining connections and



Graphic by Kady Peltier

bonds is difficult. Many students have not been able to physically go to school and interact with their peers. It is not hard to understand the frustration of students and teachers when they cannot even be in a classroom, as tens of thousands of people are able to gather in one place to watch a football game.

Nickleby said she misses seeing students, and "having small one-on-one conversations" with them is something she also greatly misses.

Some would argue the 2021 Super Bowl held a much smaller audience than they ever had and that it made a big difference, but 25,000 people is still 25,000 people.

It is not safe for that many individuals to gather, with or without the correct safety precautions. It does not matter if it was a smaller group, because at the end of the day, too many people were exposed to each other.

It is understandable people are eager for life to go back to normal. However, that will not happen if people continue to push the limits of COVID-19. With the United States approaching 500,000 deaths, watching a football game is not worth increasing that number. It takes one person to spread this virus like wildfire, so if people continue to be reckless with their decisions in public, life will not be normal for a while.

## EIC COLUMN



PHOTO SUBMITTED BY MAIRIN TORGERSON

### Pony Clapback

Mairin Torgerson

With millions of students across the globe becoming well-accustomed to attending school from the safety of their home, it seems online school is the new normal. Though some schools have returned to in-person or a hybrid model, almost all students from elementary through college have had some type of online version of school.

For college students though, the situation is more than just learning from home. Online school means missing out on an actual "college experience." But yet, students are still paying regular tuition, even though it is not what they are paying for. College students shouldn't pay full tuition for online courses because they lose out on professor interaction and support, social interaction and events that their money is going towards, and they do not have the same resources available to them.

From a survey of 13,606 college students in the United States done by study guide platform OneClass, over 93% of students said that if classes are held fully online, tuition should be lowered. The study also found that about 75% of students were unhappy with the quality of the classes, and the concerns have been mutual across the country.

"It is frustrating, I am not getting the same amount of help and instruction as I would normally get, but I am paying the same amount," junior at the University of Minnesota Grace Collmann explained.

Her professors have short office hours and tend to take a while to respond to emails, with some not even having a daily online lesson like a Zoom call.

While a few student activity buildings at the college are open for students to use, most are difficult to get access to and tend to have shortened hours as well. Not being able to contact professors efficiently or use student resources that normally would be available are just some of the drawbacks of online class.

"What you are paying for is the expectation of high quality and in-person classes from an institution that will give you a high level of education, but if it is online, you are not getting that same quality of education, so it is not worth the same amount of money," senior Charles Maloney said.

Maloney plans on attending a 4-year university this fall as a freshman, unless it is going to be all online, in which case he might explore other options. to a less expensive community college where he can take his

# Staff Ed: Sports teams called to make change when it comes to team names

Joshua Wallace

With people across the world being more aware of inequality and what they can do to make an impact, professional sports teams have started changing their team names and/or team traditions. Many teams have names that could be offensive to specific cultures or ethnicities, therefore it is time to take action on this issue.

Former team Washington Redskins ended up changing their name to The Washington Football Team, along with the Cleveland Indians in the process of changing their name. Many teams like the Atlanta Braves, Chicago Blackhawks and Kansas City Chiefs are keeping their team names as of now, but putting rules into place for their fans and community. Many people are not in favor of keeping names that have to do with Native Americans.

Everyone is trying to figure this out and what teams should be doing about their names and mascots, but a lot is uncertain. The best way to figure it out is to understand what indigenous people think and get their opinion, because many of them have different views on the names and what the team should do to fix it. For example, if they compare the Indians and Redskins to the Braves and



GRAPHIC BY ELAINA MANKOWSKI

In July of 2020 the previously known "Washington Redskins" football team changed their name to the "Washington Football Team" after being pressured to change their name. Many other teams have recently been facing backlash for not changing their names yet.

Chiefs they may have very different opinions on what to do based on the mascot and background of those names.

Sports teams should not be the ones who are saying if it is right or wrong, because most likely, they are not the ones with their tribal rituals being used, instead team owners need to see what the Natives themselves think instead of just assuming. Depending on the Native group, they will have different answers therefore different teams may be able to keep names,

unlike some other teams.

Many teams are now facing pressure from Native American activists and other worldwide equality movements. Over a dozen teams in the last 50 years changed their team mascot and name due to the pressure. The activists argue that there has never been a place for names like that in sports and there never will be.

With many protests this past summer and how much it has changed general society, many teams may be feeling that pressure again whether

it is directed at them or not. People have been changing their views on topics when it comes to different races and cultures and have been put in their place if they are taking advantage of another culture or race, therefore it will be interesting to see how things impact team names over the next few years.

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The Editorial Board reserves the right to publish and edit letters: correction will be made in order to correct content, spelling, grammar and length. Letters and comments may be submitted to rooms D220.

The staff editorial is written by the Pony Express staff and headed by Editors-in-Chief. The Pony Express is a member of the High School Press Syndicate, the Columbia High School Press Association, International Quill and Scroll, National Scholastic Press Association and the Minnesota High School Press Association.

The Pony Express print and online newspapers strive to provide a form of media that embodies the strongest professional standards while working to present current and relevant stories about the community, inside and outside our building's wall. The goal is to adhere to all legal and ethical standards of best journalistic practices, while informing, enlightening, and entertaining our publication's readers.

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PHOTO BY MACI SWANSON

## Concert choir attends MMEA conference

Jacob Carlson

The concert choir is a highly regarded choir in the nation, they have won multiple awards and have recently been nominated to the MMEA competition for their singing.

The Minnesota Music Educators Association is a highly regarded group that does multiple different types of clinics and competitions. They recently held a large event that Stillwater choir students participated in. This event consisted of multiple different choirs around Minnesota and only the top performer were able to get a spot.

"I am excited for the MMEA competition, but it won't be the same as other competitions have been in the past, because of COVID and doing these online instead of in person. Being in person is a part of the experience. I am excited for the MMEA competition, but it won't be the same as others have been in the past. We are lucky to be able to compete but it takes a huge part of the fun of competitions out of it." junior Maggie Nelson said.

"I am very excited for the MMEA competition, it is always fun to do these types of competitions and this one is no different," junior Drew Johnson added.

Choir recently held their concerts and events online due to COVID-19. This has put a restriction on in-person learning and rehearsals.

"The main challenge in choir this year was finding a way for us to put all of our parts together and 'perform' them," Nelson described of rehearsals.

Another challenge for the choir this year was that choir students did not have their peers around to help them out and tell them what they need to improve. A big part of choir is being able to listen to the different parts and try and mesh with everyone. Online causes a problem because it is hard to get that in-person experience. The importance of hearing the other parts in choir is immeasurable.

"I say the main challenge was trying to work on singing every day without the help of fellow choir members around me," Johnson said.

According to <https://sah-schoir.weebly.com/> the choirs at Stillwater have collected 5 ACDA (American Choral Directors Association) Choral Arts Finale concerts, 1 National Kodaly convention, 2 North Central ACDA conventions, 2 MMEA (Minnesota Music Educators Association) midwinter clinic conventions, and 1 Minnesota ACDA convention.

"We are very lucky to be able to compete this year. It is one of the fun parts about choir," Nelson said.

# Theatre department wins second place in One Act sectionals

Briah Azure

In December, the high school theatre department put on *Kodachrome*, a play by Adam Szymkowitz about a photographer named Suzanne, who takes the audience into the lives of people living in a small town called Colchester. The play deals with the topics of love and saying goodbye. The cast also performed this show for the One Act competition, a yearly competition for schools throughout Minnesota. Stillwater tied for first in sectionals, but was awarded second.

Like many events this year, theatre adapted to COVID-19. That meant coming up with creative ideas and putting safety measures in place: the actors performed in front of a green screen and it was live streamed so viewers could watch online.

For the One Act competition, schools could not perform live. Instead, they submitted tapes. Participants had two options: in-person format and videoconference format, for the in-person, schools can film their play in one take, with no editing. For the second option, schools performed their plays on platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet, etc. Stillwater decided to do in-person filming.

"We had to film the one act with one camera in one position, but it could zoom in which was different. We also had no audience to play off of so sometimes it was difficult to tell if we were having an effect or not," senior Olivia Henson said.

They ran into another problem, however, because the play could not be more than 35 minutes. The original performance was a little over two hours.

"We took six of the original



PHOTO SUBMITTED BY BRIAN MCTIER

The cast of *Kodachrome* on stage with the set. Due to COVID-19, this year's One Act had no live audiences and the performances were filmed for a virtual competition.

characters: the photographer, hardware store owner, librarian, gravedigger, florist and young man and created a completely different show around them," Henson explained. "What I mean is, we found just those six characters conveyed a different story from the one in the fall and it was beautiful."

The judges had to take into consideration certain factors that were different this year than others.

"They have a rubric that they use for the Minnesota State School League, they look at physical characterizations... concept and style of the production... All the elements of makeup and sound," Sadow explained about what the judges look for.

"I was looking for a competi-

tive piece that would showcase the students. As I was reading through scripts last year, when I got to *Kodachrome*, it was really well written and it just had everything in it that makes it a good one act to produce," Sadow said about why *Kodachrome* was selected.

*Kodachrome* author Adam Szymkowitz agreed, "Yes. I hoped it would be. I've had plays in the past that I was surprised high schools have done but this one makes sense for that."

"I have written more than 50 plays over the last 20-something years and I have to say, this one is my favorite," Szymkowitz said. "There's a moment in the monologue the Photographer gives at the end of what

used to be the act break (before it starts raining) that always sends a shiver down my spine."

Stillwater tied for first in sectionals and won second place overall, but the cast was happy to be "performing" again, no matter what place or awards they won.

"I am so proud of the team and the message we were able to portray and the hard work we put in. It was most definitely worth it for that. We tied for first and I couldn't be more proud," Henson added.

"I learned that art continues. Students will rise to the occasion that's given to them, they persevered and created amazing art and didn't let the environment or the state of the country right now get in their way," Sadow concluded.

## Function of Beauty now in Target

Macy Gonnion

As a fun new way to make hair healthy, Target carries a brand called Function of Beauty, a customizable shampoo and conditioner that is made to fit anyone's hair needs. With the shampoo and conditioner ranging from straight to curly hair types, and tons of different types of add-ins such as shine, strengthen and many more.

Function of Beauty carries more than just hair care, they also have skin and body care. For now, Target only sells shampoo, conditioner and add-ins. This brand came to Target in the middle of Dec., 2020. As this hair company reaches popularity through social media influencers and now Target, people are trying really hard to get their hands on some of these products. In stores the stock is limited and products seem to be going fast.

Although many people have heard of this brand through Target, it originally was an all online company. Function of Beauty would sponsor female creators on social media such as Caroline Manning, Sadie Robertson and many more social media influencers.

A religious blogger, Sadie Robertson, said she chose Function of Beauty to hydrate, nourish and strengthen her hair. All the influencers posting about Function of Beauty,

each has their own promotion code giving their followers money off to try the products.

On their online website, people who are interested can take a quiz on their hair type and Function of Beau-

Target, Brandi said, "I love that I could try a smaller, cheaper bottle from Target and still be able to customize it."

Featured in the quiz are questions asking about hair type, hair structure and scalp



PHOTO BY MAIRIN TORGERSON

Function of Beauty started out as an online brand but recently their haircare is being sold in Target. They are a unique brand that creates shampoo and conditioner catered to individuals hair needs.

ty will send a shampoo to fit the needs. Now that it is in stores, they made add-ins for people to pick from. People can add up to three add-ins, which adds a personalized touch to a hair routine.

In a shampoo review from

moisture. Then people can pick their fragrance and color they would like the bottle to be. People can even add their name to the bottle.

When Function of Beauty was an online-only store it gained most of its popularity

through YouTube. Now that it is in stores, Tik Tok creators have been reviewing their products. Giving really and honest opinions to their fans, all good things have been said.

Tik Tok creator Ysabelle Wallace gives a before and after of the products from Function of Beauty. She said her favorite part about the shampoo and conditioner is the way it smells. She rates this product a ten out of ten and recommends it to all her followers.

Even from the people who have never tried it, there are still very good things being said about the products. As they have heard of it through the media and seen it in stores.

"For about two years I have been paying closer attention to the ingredients in beauty products. That is where I first heard about Function of Beauty," health and AVID teacher Erin Nickleby said.

Target marketed this product very well, as it has its own section in the hair care part of the store. They have made picking products up very easy and accessible.

"Best shampoo and conditioner!" Target customer Maddie said, as she rates the product a five out of five.

On the Function of Beauty website, over 50 thousand people have voted five stars for the shampoo and conditioner. Overall this product has helped many people's hair and will continue to grow popular throughout the time it is sold at Target.

# Blind Havoc's growing audience seeks positivity and community

Brynn Winter

In a generation consumed by social media, a vital part of growing up during the teenage years is the way one expresses themselves. Walking down the school hallway or scrolling through Instagram, it is evident that Generation Z has created its own sense of style. Recently, a brand on the uprise, Blind Havoc, is gaining the attention of students. Starting as just a dream, Blind Havoc became a reality for Jayton Metcalf. After the global pandemic hit Jayton saw a need to bring back positivity, as the world around us was uncertain. The name Blind Havoc was inspired by Jayton's focus on ignoring the chaos/havoc and spreading positivity.

Blind Havoc is a fashion retailer that started in March 2020. Mostly known for their streetwear look, Blind Havoc sells hoodies, sweatpants, t-shirts, and more.

Owner Jayton Metcalf feels "very blessed to have accomplished one of my biggest goals/dreams - getting Blind Havoc into the Mall of America 'Third Degree Heat.'"

The meaning behind the name Blind Havoc is partly influenced by COVID-19. The message behind "Blind Havoc" is to ignore what is negative and seek out the positive.



Photo by Abby Anderson  
Jayton Metcalf, Founder of Blind Havoc, prepares clothes for shipping in his home. A Sophomore at Augsburg University, Metcalf knew he wanted his brand to stand for positivity. From this he coined the slogan of the brand: ignore what's negative.

"My inspiration behind Blind Havoc is to spread as much positivity as possible. I started Blind Havoc a couple of weeks after COVID-19 began with hopes to bring positivity to as many people as possible," Jayton said.

The hardest part of starting a brand from scratch is letting the world know. In addition, marketing and promoting is a vital

way for businesses to thrive, as well as meeting new people and creating connections.

Jayton said networking might be the most important part of running a business. You never know the connections a stranger you meet for the first time could have.

Starting out as an entrepreneur and creating a name

for himself in the world does not come easy. Although, with major support from friends and family it is not always easy to look at the bright side.

"When you're starting out and people tell you it's not going to work out or say, 'I can't see you doing that', just remember Oprah was told she didn't have what it takes to be

on TV. Believe in yourself," Metcalf explained.

With streetwear on-trend, it is now more than ever versatile. Dress it up or dress it down, pair it with statement piece sneakers or layer it for more dimension, Blind Havoc can be worn either way.

"Personally, I would wear Blind Havoc clothes because I love the streetwear style and I'm always in comfortable clothing," junior Lydia Knutson said.

Creating a clothing brand from the bottom up takes time, effort and lots of research. Everything is a process and learning how to operate a business involves many steps like developing a business plan, creating designs, researching a manufacturer, as well as marketing towards your targeted audience.

"There were definitely times where I would second guess myself when I would compare my brand to other brands that have been established for years. It was difficult in the beginning but I was able to push through," Metcalf explained.

Starting out with a new business or career can be intimidating, and often times many fall into the hole of comparing themselves to others. Ignore the havoc and remember, "Don't compare yourself to anyone, be the best you," Jayton added.

# Senior-only prom brings mixed reactions

Kiera Rivers

A lot of anticipation surrounds a high school room: a rite of passage, the final dance of high school years and an overall good time. But for this year's junior class, prom is simply a dream. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, juniors will not be dancing this year as the school announced that prom has been officially canceled for them.

COVID-19 has already taken so much away from high school students over the past year, like seeing friends every day, casual hallway small-talk amongst peers, and many other necessary social interactions needed in order to have meaningful relationships.

Even so, the reaction from juniors who were asked how they felt about prom being cancelled was understandable. Many said that it was unfortunate, but also that they understand the predicament that the school faced. With the junior and senior classes being so large at Stillwater, it would simply be too difficult to find a venue that would be large enough to allow for COVID-19 safety measures, like social distancing.

"Obviously we are a little sad, but with Covid we also understand," junior Veda Roeske said.

Veda's opinion is largely shared amongst the rest of the junior class. Many juniors believe prom is a rite of passage that only happens twice in a lifetime, but acknowledge that a global pandemic is a once-in-a-century phenomenon.

For those juniors who are asking why they are not getting a prom this year, Jackie Kulzer said, "Some of my best friends are juniors, and not having them at the one and only prom I get to go to is really sad."

**Jackie Kulzer**

Getting a prom while the seniors do, the answer is really simple. For seniors, this is their last chance to have a prom. Juniors will still have one more year to go. There simply are not any venues that are large enough to accommodate both while creating enough social distance to keep people safe.

"Between juniors and

seniors, you are talking 1,000-plus people," Prom Committee advisor Dusty Dennis explained. "Where exactly is that supposed to happen? Junior's will get their day, but let's prioritize those students who did not get a senior dance or even a single school dance the entire year."

Although seniors are happy they will get a prom this year, it is not without a heavy heart for their friends who are juniors.

"Some of my best friends are juniors, and not having them at the one and only prom I get to go to is really sad," senior Jacki Kulzer said. "For years we have been talking about going to Prom together, so it's pretty disappointing it can't happen this year."

There are some juniors who are more upset than others, and they argue that with the crisis over the past year and a half, both of the upper classes deserve a prom. But when it comes to public safety, the prom committee had few options but to limit the number of people at the dance this year.

For the most part the junior class understands that safety needs to take precedence over having a fun night at the prom.



Students understand that it just is not going to happen this year. While juniors may be sad now, they will have their chance next year.

"We are doing our darndest

to get the best opportunity to pull this thing off. This is why the limitations in numbers. My hope is at the least to give our Seniors a last chance to have a send-off," Dennis said.



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# 'Drivers License' rises to top of charts

Kenzie Chang

"This definitely seems like something their managers set up, but I guess you never know," junior Amaal Abdullahi said. Olivia Rodrigo, Joshua Bassett and Sabrina Carpenter's new songs have come into the spotlight as the drama between this love triangle heats up. Although no one knows whether all this drama is real or not.

Olivia Rodrigo's song "Drivers License" recently hit No. 1 in one week, and is said to be like Generation z's "You Belong With Me" by Taylor Swift like it was to millennials. Rodrigo released this song as a shout out to her ex and co-star, Joshua Bassett.

"The meaning behind Olivia's song was about the fact Joshua taught her how to drive, and he told her he would wait for her to turn 18 so they could be together since he is 20 and Olivia is 17, but he went on to dating Sabrina Carpenter," freshman Maria Hemingway said.

However, there has been a lot of controversy around not just the release of Rodrigo's song, but also the new releases of Sabrina's song "Skin" and Joshua's song "Lie Lie Lie". Everyone is wondering if all their songs were aimed at each other or if it was just one big publicity stunt.

Abdullahi said this definitely seems like something their managers might have set up. It's kind of hard to believe that Sabrina and Josh both wrote a song in under 2 weeks that are extremely similar to Olivia's.

Sabrina released a statement expressing that her song was not intended to be a comeback to Rodrigo's song. How-

ever, some of the lyrics in her song "Skin" just seem too specific not to be.

"I think she changed some of her lyrics to make it appear that she was. For example the lyric "maybe you didn't mean it maybe blonde was the only rhyme" looked like it was a comeback to Olivia's lyrics that said, "you're probably with that blonde girl," Hemingway said. Abdullahi said this definitely seems like something their managers might have set up. It's kind of hard to believe that Sabrina and Josh both wrote a song in under 2 weeks that are extremely similar to Olivia's.

Sabrina released a statement expressing that her song was not intended to be a comeback to Rodrigo's song. However, some of the lyrics in her song "Skin" just seem too specific not to be.

"I think she changed some of her lyrics to make it appear that she was. For example the lyric "maybe you didn't mean it maybe blonde was the only rhyme" looked like it was a comeback to Olivia's lyrics that said, "you're probably with that blonde girl," Hemingway said.

You could definitely tell how hurt she was and that she really meant everything she wrote," In addition, to Sabrina's statement, Joshua Bassett also released a statement telling fans that his song was not about Rodrigo. Even though Joshua and Sabrina both released statements about their songs, Rodrigo never did. Fans are certain Rodrigo's song is about Joshua and Sabrina

Sophomore Sam Johnson believes, "Drivers license is about her and Joshua Bassett, since there's a lot of stuff in the song that just points to it. Like

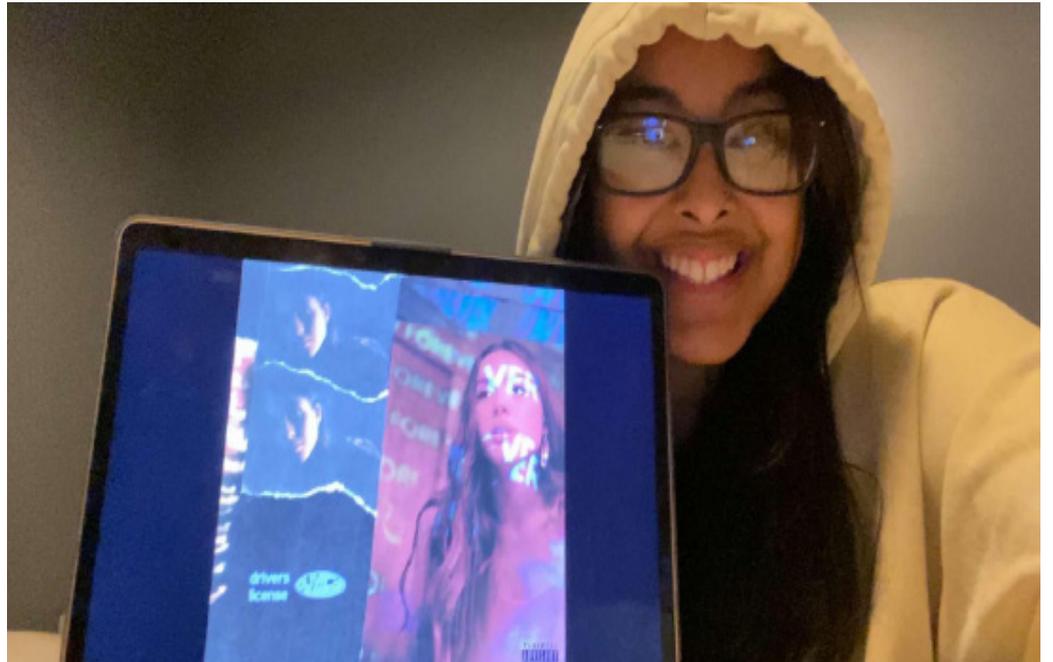


Photo by Kenzie Chang

Junior Amaal Abdullahi listens to Olivia Rodrigo's hit single "Drivers License". Abdullahi listened to all three artists, but Rodrigo's was her favorite.

"probably with that blonde girl" and Josh started seeing Sabrina Carpenter who is blonde" and how it just makes sense. Fans did not just figure out all this by listening to their songs, but also through their music videos. Such as Rodrigo's video where she wore a jacket that looked exactly like the one Joshua wore in the Disney+ series "High School Musical the Series", and in Sabrina's video she sat on top of a car that looks a lot like the one in Rodrigo's video.

Abdullahi said there were also a lot of indirects about Rodrigo in Josh's music video and Sabrina's song which was really weird to her.

Putting aside all of the drama, Rodrigo did accomplish something amazing. Her song "Drivers License" broke the



record for the most Spotify listens in a day, with over 15 million streams. Even at 17 years old, she is inspiring people all over the world. of a car that looks a lot like the one in Rodrigo's video.

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# Netflix releases 'To All the Boys: Always and Forever'

Bella Godfrey

The "To All the Boys I've Loved Before" series had its third and final instalment released Feb. 12, on Netflix. The three movies are based on the books by Jenny Han. Many people have been following the main character Peter Kavinsky (Noah Centineo) and Lara Jean Covey (Lana Condor) from the first movie, which was released in 2018.

In the first movie, Peter and Lara Jean started "fake dating" due to Lara Jean's little sister, Kitty Covey (Anna Cathcart), sending out love letters Lara Jean had written. The movie concluded with Peter and Lara Jean becoming a real couple when the two realized they had feelings for one another.

In the second, "o All the Boys I've Loved Before: P.S. I Still Love You", their relationship was threatened then strengthened. The name of the third movie is To All the Boys I've Loved Before: Always and Forever, which was a wholesome end to the series.

"To All the Boys I've Loved Before: Always and Forever" begins by re-introducing the two main characters, Peter Kavinsky and Lara Jean Covey. The conflict is introduced early, which is that Peter had gotten into Stanford University, but Lara Jean had been rejected. The movie goes

on to show how the couple goes about piloting the problem and how they come to a resolution that benefits both of them. The "To All the Boys I've Loved Before" series is a very wholesome, feel-good story. The teen romance displays problems on screen that are dealt with in a healthy way after the real relationship had started, resulting in a typical happy ending.

"When I look for each watch, usually I look for funny movies and romantic comedies are one of my favorites because you get a little bit of romance and a little bit of comedy. I love that," junior Tori Riehle said. "I feel like the series really shows that, because there's funny aspects to it and there is always a cute little ending."

The movies are portrayed in a light-hearted fashion but the romantic relationships do not exactly key up with reality. Nevertheless, the science behind romance movies allows people to confront feelings and connect with what is happening on screen.

Ava Weiss's favorite element of the To All The Boys I've Loved Before series is how the relationships are romanticized. Even though it is not like that in real life, Weiss enjoys it in movies.

The work contains unexpected plot twists as well, and including these elements

deepens the story. These give viewers a chance to take a side in the movie. Viewers a chance to take a side in the movie.

"At the beginning like the first movie, Peter, he had nothing to do with Lara Jean. And then, her sister sent out the letters and so now he's kind of intrigued. They end up falling for each other and they are a super cute couple," Riehle explained. "In the second movie when Lara Jean gets another letter from John Ambrose (Jordan Fisher) it creates a love triangle. Ultimately in the end she chooses Peter."

All three movies have a relevant lesson they teach, which would be honesty is the best policy. Majority of the conflicts that come about in the story are due to the characters not being straightforward and honest with one another.

"I think you can learn about something from everything around you," social studies teacher Kris McCarthy said. "You can learn from the people you are watching."

One thing viewers do not see throughout the movies is the perspective of Peter. The movies are from the perspective of Lara Jean, and her thoughts cloud the work. Viewers never get to see Peter's side of things during conflicts between the two.

Riehle thought that hearing from Peter "could have improved the story. I want to hear

from his side, and I want to hear him explaining things."

The final instalment of the series, To All the Boys I've Loved Before: Always and Forever, was a wholesome end to the story. The movie combined all the important aspects of the previous two into one. To those who have been following the story of Peter Kavinsky and Lara Jean Covey from the beginning, this conclusion will not disappoint.

