

# Graduation plans still up in the air

Harrison Walz

For seniors, this marks the end of their high school experience and a transition into something new. Traditionally, the graduation ceremony is the event that celebrates this transition, but restrictions on in-person events may mean uncertainty for the ceremony.

Normally the graduation ceremony is held indoors at Roy Wilkins Auditorium, but due to complications with COVID-19, last year's graduation plans were altered. Principal Robert Bach sent an invitation out to seniors to help plan the event with the new restrictions. This group is called the Senior Committee.

"Last year, I ended up sending out an invite to all the seniors because we had so many different options to discuss, we really didn't know quite what graduation was going to look like," Bach said.

Last year's graduation ended up taking place online. Though there were some people who were upset by this news, Bach said the majority of feedback was positive.

"I think that people understood that was part of what we had to do last year. Also, last year in addition to the online piece, we also offered a virtual piece where we met with small groups of students and kind of gave them a very personalized ceremony. I think the students and families that chose to participate in that felt very good about that," Bach added.

Although the Senior Committee has not met this year to make official plans, some advisors have an idea of what graduation will look like this year.

"I haven't heard the official decision on it yet, but last I heard they were talking about doing something outdoors, possibly in the stadium, and it would be on the fourth or fifth of June, and they're also going to do the senior parade again, like they did last year," Dusty Dennis, special education teacher and Student Council adviser said.

All of this information definitely points to the graduation



Graphic by Drew Jurek

happening in person this year. However, it will not look the same as it has in previous in-person graduations. This year, there may be a limit on attendees, and COVID-19 could potentially interfere with the event.

"I don't think they're going to do the huge invite. Before you could get six tickets for family and friends, I don't think they'll have quite that many. I think they'll limit guests. And the issue is again for events, or anything going on in school, is if somebody gets COVID or spreads it, you could have seniors that will not be able to go to the graduation ceremony because they would be on quarantine, so that's an issue," Dennis explained.

An online ceremony is still a possibility because COVID-19 restrictions could change. However, the school knows that graduation is an important event for seniors and their families to experience.

"The kids want to have that experience that every kid goes through. For probably over a century, kids get to go

to a graduation ceremony and get that closure on their high school experience. I also think that the community wants it; the parents want that closure. It's kind of a rite of passage as a parent to see your kid walk down the aisle so that you can have closure on their childhood and open the door on adulthood," Dennis said.

Nothing is official yet so a lot of this info is subject to change.

"We have to talk through what parameters are going to be in place. The governor made an announcement today, so this is kind of hot off the press. The governor's announcement talked about capacities at various venues. Once we know exactly what the restrictions are we'll look at what makes sense for us to be able to do and then we'll talk about that with kids to see whether or not that works with some of the other options," Bach explained.

Even though most of the details of the event are still undecided, the school's staff prioritize making this important ceremony a special one.

# Partnership Plan recognizes numerous district teachers with reward and grant

Abby Anderson

Teachers are widely underappreciated for the efforts and care many put into educating. However, the Partnership Plan, a grant giving association, presents a set of awards for teachers who have risen above and beyond the call to duty.

The Partnership Plan was created in 1989 and recognizes and rewards district's most deserving teachers formed almost 32 years ago in 1989. Over that time, they contributed more than \$6 million back to teachers and students. Undoubtedly, the focus of the program is to raise money, to then give back to the schools.

"Our mission is to connect the business community of our area and the students from a monetary standpoint," Executive Director Rick Robbins said.

Additionally, the Partnership Awards are one way the plan gives back to the teachers

and the district as a whole. Each year, since initiated in 2006, two teachers from each elementary, middle, and high school, as well

"You spend so much time working and doing the best you can for these children, but sometimes you don't feel like you're doing enough."

**Laura Davidson**

as two members of the staff or retired teachers, are selected for the award. Thereafter, each winner is awarded a \$1000 grant to put towards the school and their classroom.

"Sometimes, teaching can be a thankless job," Laura Davidson, second-grade Afton-Lakeland teacher and recipient of a 2021 partnership award, said. "You spend so much time working and doing the best you can for these children, but sometimes you don't feel like you're doing enough. And then to hear parents really are proud of what you're doing and support you, it's like, okay, I am doing a good job, and it builds you up."

Typically, The Partnership Plan raises money through fundraising, sponsorships, and more. One of their major annual non-profits is Da Vinci Fest, which not only obtains funds, but also highlights the importance of the arts in the community. The money reinvested in schools predominantly pays for the extras, above what students would normally be able to experience.

Davidson mentioned it costs so much money, as a teacher, to provide different



Photo submitted by Partnership Plan

Math teacher Kathy Meyer stands beside Principal Rob Bach and Executive Director Rick Robbins after being surprised with the news that she has been nominated and won a Partnership Award.

things for the classroom. She has to really think through this decision because the students love the different types of chairs and sensory objects, but it would also be nice to supply some technology.

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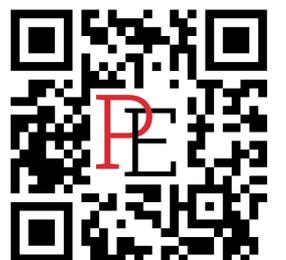


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PHOTO BY NISSA WILCOX

**District recommends new levy during fall 2021**

Nissa Wilcox

In November, Stillwater Area School District taxpayers will be asked to consider and approve new funding to the school district to help address several needs, with the renewal of an expiring operating levy its top priority. The current operating levy generates more than \$11 million in annual funding (approximately \$1,288 per student) and will expire at the end of the 2021-2022 school year. If a new levy is not approved in November, the district will not have the funding from the levy and would face significant budget cuts for the 2022-2023 school year and beyond. "We have to decide if we have the operating levy, and we can go out and ask for it to be renewed, or we can ask for it to be renewed and increased and the levy, when you do a levy, the levy is for learning, and a bond is for building," District Superintendent Malinda Lansfeldt said. The district sent out a survey to over 400 families in the district to provide feedback on possible levies to offer on the ballot in November, being offered three options, operating levy, technology levy, and bond.



PHOTO SUBMITTED BY CHELSEA DODDS

**Peer Helpers still offer support during COVID-19**

Olivia Fear

This year, the Peer Helpers have to do things quite differently due to COVID-19. Peer helpers are available to help other students throughout the school year. They are willing to help students by listening, supporting, and encouraging them in a confidential relationship. Peer helpers began around four to five years ago due to increased mental health issues among teenagers. The helpers were created to help out other students by letting them feel like they can have a safe and confidential conversation with someone their age. "Peer Helpers began because of a community and district-wide mental health initiative after there were a few suicides and rising mental health crises. The district wanted to involve students in the attempt to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health," Peer Helper advisor Chelsea Dodds said.



Graphic by Abby Thibodeau

Starbucks on Neal Avenue North proudly displays its new lobby. The business was closed for a two week period to allow for spring renovations.

# Local businesses make renovations for spring

Sophia Arndt

Two popular businesses in Stillwater, Starbucks and Leo's, shut their doors to the public for spring renovations. Leo's began their planning and renovations in late August, planning to be finished by May. Starbucks has shut its doors for a two-week period, from March 9 to March 20. Both have closed in order to undergo long-overdue renovations, with many employees looking forward to the new results.

Spring marks the start of a new season, with many businesses choosing to remodel their storefronts or update their processes during the fresh season. Starbucks, on 5980 Neal Ave N, closed their doors on March 9, planning on reopening on March 20.

When asked why they are choosing to remodel, senior Zoe Mentz explained, "It's a corporation so the remodel just happens every X amount of years. And so it's just happening in March."

The subject of remodel poses the question, what type of renovations will be made. Many businesses choose to remodel storefronts in the spring, to give their custom-

ers a new and fresh environment to enjoy their services in. Other renovations can include adding or subtracting space for new purposes.

Regarding Leo's, senior Kylie Plaster-Moe said, "There's gonna be a bathroom in the back," in order to give customers and employees more space and to hopefully pull in more business.

Plaster-Moe also explained the other renovations are occurring, most looking forward to the Four Seasons patio being added. There will also be a second floor added to the outside seating.

Along with the new patio, a second storefront, Gloria's takeout, will be added. It will contain an entirely different menu centered around takeout foods. The name is in reference to the original Leo's wife, whose name was Gloria.

Mentz also explained the Starbucks within the renovations taking place, the space of the store will be changed. "The lobby is getting smaller. So we will have more storage in the back, Thank God, because I mean like... It's not huge if you can think about how big that building is like there was no space so we're

getting, like double the space for storage. So a lobby will be smaller, and some stuff like behind the bar is getting rearranged... And we're getting new espresso machines, one of them's nice, so it shouldn't change much from a customer perspective."

Another contributing factor to remodels is the need for new machines and supplies. Businesses may update their procedures during this period of time or instigate some much-needed change.

"Things were gross, things would break on a weekly basis. Our ovens are old, our espresso machines are old, we're getting new ones for that, so yeah, everyone's pretty excited about it," Mentz said.

One of the new things being added during this time of remodeling is functioning espresso machines, which Mentz explained with great excitement, greatly looking forward to "an espresso machine should pull a shot in like a reasonable amount of time... sometimes it takes forever for a shot to pull, and you press the button and you're sitting there for like 30 seconds for a double shot

and that it's just not supposed to take long, so I'm excited for shots to go faster. And the ovens will cook things faster, too, because some things take the wraps. We have to put in there for like two minutes and it messes up our whole cycle of warming."

Another factor of remodels is they can take a significant amount of time to complete. Some remodels can take two to three weeks while others can take months or years.

For Starbucks, Mentz said Starbucks closed its doors to customers on March 9 and plan on reopening March 20 with renovations complete. Leos, however, has been under renovation since late August and will be complete around May.

The time remodeling is well spent, as employees and customers wait patiently to reap the benefits of these new renovations. Customers look forward to the reopening of a new storefront while employees wait excitedly for the new tools and machines coming. Mentz said, "It's just time... we're all super hyped about it, super excited because everything was gross."

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# Alex Steil announced Journalist of the Year Finalist by JEA

Mairin Torgerson

“An incredibly dedicated and passionate student,” and “destined to be a great journalist,” is how journalism teacher Laurie Hansen describes senior Alex Steil.

But for others, they may bring up his locally-acclaimed recorder account, the fantastic coffee drinks he makes at Starbucks, or his prestigious career as a cellist.

Though he wears many hats, perhaps Hansen was most correct in her statements about his prowess in journalism and student media.

Alex began his journalism and student media career before he was even walking, attending post-production and layout meetings in the “pubs lab” (publications lab), in a bassinet with his mother, Rachel Steil, the Pony Express advisor of more than 20 years. Always curious to learn more, Rachel’s students helped pick him up from elementary school so he could join the after-school meetings with the high schoolers.

In his family, “Every generation has been a writer. My great grandma, grandpa, my mom and now me, so it really is in the genes,” Alex said.

He continues the family line and achievements with his passion and drive for journalism, especially with the recent announcement that he was one of the three finalists selected for the Minnesota Journalist of the Year by JEM (Journalism Education Minnesota). Alex had to create a

digital portfolio of his work that reflected his writing, leadership and multimedia skills, while also weaving in the application of press law and ethics.

Rachel believes it is his attention to detail and the respect he has for the process that can often set him apart from other students. He thinks big and uses it to his advantage. Even when he was about to turn in his submission for the competition, he only let Rachel check over it for grammar and punctuation errors, explicitly telling her she could not change any content.

“He’s got a really clear sense of who he is and what he wants to accomplish and that he wants to be successful,” Hansen added.

Alex is self-motivated and pushes himself to do his best on every thing he does. This past summer, he spent many hours working on cleaning up and changing aspects of the Pony Express website that needed updating. He is the only online-editor in chief, even though there is normally more than one.

To add to his list of accomplishments, Alex has been one of the few juniors who were an editor-in-chief, the fourth in Rachel’s 22 years of being the advisor. When no one assumed the role the summer after his sophomore year, Alex stepped in and became a committed and successful editor for his junior year, encompassing what journalism means to him.

“I want to be a journalist, and writing about the things that matter is really the most important thing to me. In an ideal world, I would be writing about politics,” Alex explained.



Photo by Nila Cooper

Journalism Education Association awards senior Alex Steil Journalist of the Year Finalist. He is an Online Editor-in-Chief for the newspaper. In addition to journalism, his other passion is a love for music and his cello. He plays in the Concert Orchestra and Con Amici.

The topic of politics has always intrigued him, and he is not afraid to go straight to the source for his facts and quotes. Always an overachiever, Alex has called the Stillwater superintendent, the Minnesota attorney general and even Tina Smith (the Minnesota junior United States senator), in an effort to gain the most knowledge and reliable information he can.

Being the humble guy he is, Alex claims he, “doesn’t have a secret, it’s kind of just natural for me to do it as well as I can, because that is where my standards are for myself.”

He has not only a love for student media and journalism, but music as well, when he began playing the cello in the fifth grade and has not stopped since. Alex plans on continuing his music into college, and will most likely be attending a college’s music school to keep learning.

His love of music also kick-started his popular Instagram account, @alex\_plays\_the\_recorder in 2018, where he began with “Hungarian Rhapsody no. 2” by Franz Liszt which according to Alex, “is a bop, quite

frankly.”

People can request songs for him to learn on the recorder and he will perform and post the song on the account. His story about the account was covered on NPR this past summer where Alex discussed why he created the account and why he loves it.

Alex has worked for many years, crafting both his writing and music skills into what they are today, and he hopes to continue with both of his passions after high school.

“He is going to make it happen, because everything

# Riddle graduates early with PSEO, joins Army

Joshua Wallace

Senior Chasia Riddle graduated school early to join basic training for the Army. She leaves for basic training in April and is set to be there until September, which includes a two-week quarantine at the beginning of her training.

Rachel Steil, sophomore English teacher, in particular, had a big impact on her life. Chasia had to do many PSEO classes, which is taking a college class as a high school student, but getting high school and college credits for the class, her junior year to graduate high school early and is now proud to be joining the Army.

Chasia is a driven student who has done many things in her life to succeed, for example when she set her mind on joining the Army she did two full years of PSEO so she could graduate school early. This allowed for her to join the Army before her fellow classmates were out of school.

Many people do not always agree with or choose to not go to a two or four-year college after high school, therefore the decision for kids to go into the military right after high school is a big deal. If kids are willing to serve our country instead of going to college right away that is something that speaks volumes.

“I think, if it is the right decision for them, it doesn’t matter what your future holds, as long

as you’re making that decision. I’m really proud of her for doing that because I know there is sometimes a stigma that’s attached to kids who make alternate choices outside of that traditional college pathway,” Steil said.

“I plan on staying in the Army for 20 plus years to see how high up I can rank, also they pay for my college and your retirement if you stay in for 20 years which is super nice”, Riddle added.

“I know I want to help people, as well as serve and follow my grandparent’s footsteps, therefore I think this is a great opportunity for me.”

**Riddle said.**

“I am really excited because I know it’ll shape me into the person I want to be, and I know it will help me become an adult, but I am also somewhat scared to be away from my people for so long, such as my family and boyfriend,”



Photo submitted by Chasia Riddle

Senior Chasia Riddle gets her first promotion in the Army. She will be leaving for her training in April.

Riddle explained.

Being in the military is one of the few ways to serve the country as a whole, for people to risk their lives to do so means a lot. Only about one percent of the American population is willing to join the military, therefore those who do are well respected. Also, many people who join now do so because their parents or grandparents have done so and they want to show their respect to them as well.

One of the best ways for

high school students to move quickly through high school is to take PSEO classes. Riddle used this to her advantage by doing full-time PSEO during her junior and senior years of high school. Very few kids take full-time PSEO and graduate early, therefore Riddle stands out in our community for doing so.

“I did PSEO my junior and senior year which gave me extra credits in high school because college credits are double the high school credits,

which allowed me to move at a quicker pace,” Riddle explained.

“I know that what she does in the Army, or whatever she does after that, it is just a stepping stone to something else in which she will be very successful,” Steil added.

Riddle worked super hard to get where she is now and she is excited to see what the future holds for her. She is proud to be serving our country.

# Captains practice kick-starts new boys lacrosse season



Katie Kangas

Boys lacrosse have started their preparations to go back for the season through captain's practices at the Stillwater Rec. Center and have high expectations for this season. They plan on going to state this year and playing the best they can with this new, young team.

This year, the team is receiving a new head coach, Peter Flock, after the last coach resigned. These differences will mean many changes for the team in how it is run and what the expectations are.

Senior and captain of the boy's lacrosse team, Isaac Albers, believed, "Practices are going to look very different and just how the team's conducted and how the boys conduct themselves, on and off the field."

The community of the team will continue to be strong, even with new members of the team who missed out on the last season. They are welcoming new people and any challenges that will come their way.

"We only have a few actual varsity returners, and it's pretty much a new slate, new team," Albers explained.

We "just got to get the

eight and ninth graders into the loop" Alex Corbett, senior and captain of the boy's lacrosse team, added.

The captains of the boy's lacrosse team hold their players to a high standard. They want to be conference champions and go to state this year.

My expectations are to go to state and go win. It's been that every year and all the captains have held us to that standard that I've played under and I'm going to hold these boys too.

Isaac Albers

"My expectations are to go to state and go win. It's been that every year and all the captains have held us to that standard that I've played under and I'm going to hold these boys too," Albers explained.

Mahtomedi is on the top of the list to beat this year for the boy's lacrosse team. Of the last 12 years of Stillwater boys lacrosse, Mahtomedi has beaten them out for state the last seven seasons.

"They always left a bad taste in our mouth, so I think it's time to change this," Albers described.

"Everyone's just got to put it 100 percent every day and as expected on the team...we think we can make it to state," Corbett added.

The state has no restrictions for lacrosse at the moment with COVID and the sport is seen as intermediate risk by the NCAA. This means the team will be allowed to practice without masks on the field and with full contact.

"Lacrosse will have a lot more leniency, especially with the vaccines coming out," Corbett said.

The boy's lacrosse team is starting their season strong with captains' practices and seems to have high expectations for this season. Their season tryouts start April fifth, and their first game is on April 16th against St. Thomas Academy.



Photos by Mairin Togerson

Photos below submitted by Isaac Albers



# COVID-19 impacts upcoming boys tennis season

Elizabeth Harter

Last spring, the boys tennis team was thrown a curve ball when COVID-19 hit. Governor Walz's statewide lockdown caused the team's season to be cancelled impacting many of the boys. The 2021 boys tennis season will begin in the next couple of weeks, but with a few changes.

When the statewide lockdown occurred last spring, it put an end to the boys season. Many of them felt upset that they would not get to play, but it was not very shocking to them.

Senior Austin Fierro said he was, "Obviously pretty mad that I wasn't going to get to play last year since that's a full year of my high school sports experience out the window. However, I wasn't all that surprised."

Because of the cancellation of their season, the boys did not have the same opportunities to practice as they would have if things were normal. It has been challenging to find places to be able to practice, yet many of them are figuring out safe ways to stay in shape and work on their skills during this unique time.

"I practiced by myself last summer, and over the winter I've been getting together with small groups of guys on the team to practice. It's definitely hard



Photo by Cassidy Gilliam

The boys tennis team warms up for their first week of practices of the season. They plan on a strong season despite the challenges brought on by the pandemic.

to find open courts and times that work for everyone, and the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic certainly didn't help, but we've done what we can to prepare for the upcoming season," Fierro said.

Tennis is a social distance sport with players spread out on the court, so many of the safety guidelines will be perfectly fine when the boys do get to play their games. With that being said, their ability to talk on the court along with some conditioning may be a little different due to Tim Walz's mask mandate.

"I believe that masks will get in the way of communication and conditioning," junior Dylan Magistad said. "Just like for everything else, masks make it

more difficult to have clear communication, and they also make it tough to breathe while playing and/or conditioning."

Along with many sports this year, some of the rules have changed due to COVID-19, but

tennis has been holding in there and may not be as heavily affected as other teams.

"I do not think that masks will have any unique impact on our team's dynamic, but I do believe that one change that might be implemented during the season is to give high-fives with our rackets instead of our hands. Other than that I do not believe that COVID should have too big of an impact," Magistad said.

As for the coaches, many of them fear that the time taken off last season may affect the number of boys that show up this next season.

"My biggest fear coming into this season is certainly that some of the players that have had a long time off from tennis may choose not to participate this spring. Whether for reasons of COVID, or reasons that they

may have taken on different interests and priorities, what our numbers are going to be is a bit of an unknown," head coach David Kahl said.

Nevertheless, for coaches, the season will still continue with many of the same hopes and excitement as previous years.

"I am most looking forward to working to have the team really gel together. Each year it's a combination of new parts and personalities, and seeing the squad evolve and the energy that comes from a group working to a common goal is really rewarding. Playing tennis and the spring sunshine are nice perks too," Kahl said.

Although some changes may be implemented during the 2021 boys tennis season such as masks and social distancing, the boys are still in the right mindset going into it.



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# Girls synchronized swimming team prepares for new season

Nila Cooper

Girls synchronized swimming starts this week with almost half of their normal numbers. The swimmers can not wear masks when they swim so this poses questions and new safety precautions during COVID-19.

47 girls were registered last year before the season was cancelled and this year

there are 33. Several seniors graduated, but many did not return because of the risk of exposure to COVID-19.

“There are a lot of girls who didn’t want to risk any exposure to coronavirus, which is completely understandable. So the loss of teammates is a little bit upsetting, but I think every other team in the League has shortened numbers, so it all evens out in

the end,” senior captain Grace Sneden said.

Precautions are being taken to make the pool as safe as possible this season. Swimmers will wear masks while on deck, have limited locker room space, and social distance as much as possible. The CDC has stated that chlorine can “inactivate” COVID-19 and stop its spread if the pools are maintained correctly.

“I do believe the pool is a safe place to be in terms of COVID-19, but of course I’m a little nervous about my swimmers staying healthy all season long. I also hope any school exposures or spring break exposures don’t amount to any illness,” head coach Kathy Henderson said.

In synchronized swimming, there are two competition divisions: figures and routines. Figures are performing one, usually slow, complicated movement like ballet leg or barracuda. Swimmers are scored on a 0.0-10.0 point scale by three to five judges. Routines have the same scoring but with five or more judges. In this division, the girls perform a routine as a solo, duet, trio, or team. There are short, long and extended divisions in which the length of the music varies. These routines get judged on their technique and musical interpretation. After all of the events, the whole team’s score is calculated by combing the points of the short, long, and extended events.

Sneden added that it is great to be part of such a fun and interesting sport.

There are several changes to competitions this season including the elimination of Junior Varsity figures, no spectators, the separation of

teams on the pool deck, and shortened routines.

“Our sections and state championships will likely be very different than in the past, but those details are still being determined,” Henderson said.

Everyone on the team is really looking forward to this season and getting back to the team after missing last year.

“I love hanging out with my friends and working out in a fun environment. I am looking forward to being challenged this year,” senior captain Kya Hodgdon said.

The girls synchronized swimming team has a history dating back to 1953. Synchronized swimming was recognized by the MSHSL in the late ‘70s or early ‘80s. Since then, Stillwater has always done very well and placed either 1st or 2nd in the state. The team has also produced many All-State champions.

Henderson is “honored to be a part of Stillwaters rich tradition and history!”

“We don’t know what this season will hold for us, but we are grateful to be together again,” Henderson added.

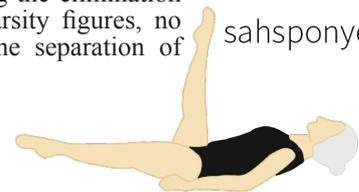
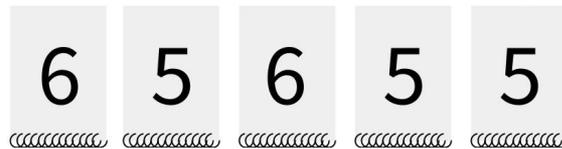


Photo submitted by Nissa Wilcox

Seniors Grace Sneden and Rubie Ballantyne swim with junior Luci Miller as they perform their trio, “Jump”, at the 2019 Synchronized Swimming state competition. “Jump” placed second with a total score of 64.988, final scores are calculated by averaging figure and routine scores.

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[sahsponyexpress.com](http://sahsponyexpress.com)



# Girls track and field gear up for season

Michelle Cruz

This year, spring sports are back in session and girl track and field will look different with the pandemic. New teammates are going to be joining the team, current freshmen and sophomores have not had the opportunity to join the team yet because last year the season was cancelled. The girls track team is still looking forward to making this year the best.

Girls track and field are back this spring, with new teammates for the season. Last year’s freshman did not have a season due to pandemic, but this year they get to compete with some COVID-19 restrictions. Seniors are delighted that they can connect with the new teammates.

“We did not really have a season last year due to COVID-19, and this year we have a lot of restrictions, we have to be masked unless we are running in an event, and stay spaced out. There are no try-outs this year either,” sophomore Eva Stafne said.

This year’s freshmen look forward to getting better at different skills and timing from events. The girls are thrilled to meet coaches, teammates and receive advice to improve their skills.

“I expect that I’ll be able to improve my own skills in each of my events form/technique and time-wise, as well

as get more experience with more skilled competitions. I’m really excited to learn from new coaches and older players who are much more skilled than I am and hear what tips they have,” freshman Cayman Pagel said.

Juniors on the team are looking forward to having an incredible season, although it will look different. The season will be shorter and not as many athletes will be present at meets, with these precautions athletes hope to make it through the whole season without any issues.

“I expect that I’ll be able to improve my own skills in each of my events form/technique and time-wise, as well as get more experience with more skilled competitions.”

**Cayman Pagel**

Junior Abby Hansen is happy she is going to have the last season with her senior friends before they leave. Senior Heather Wiehe also hopes that they make the sea-

son without interference from COVID-19 issues or setbacks.

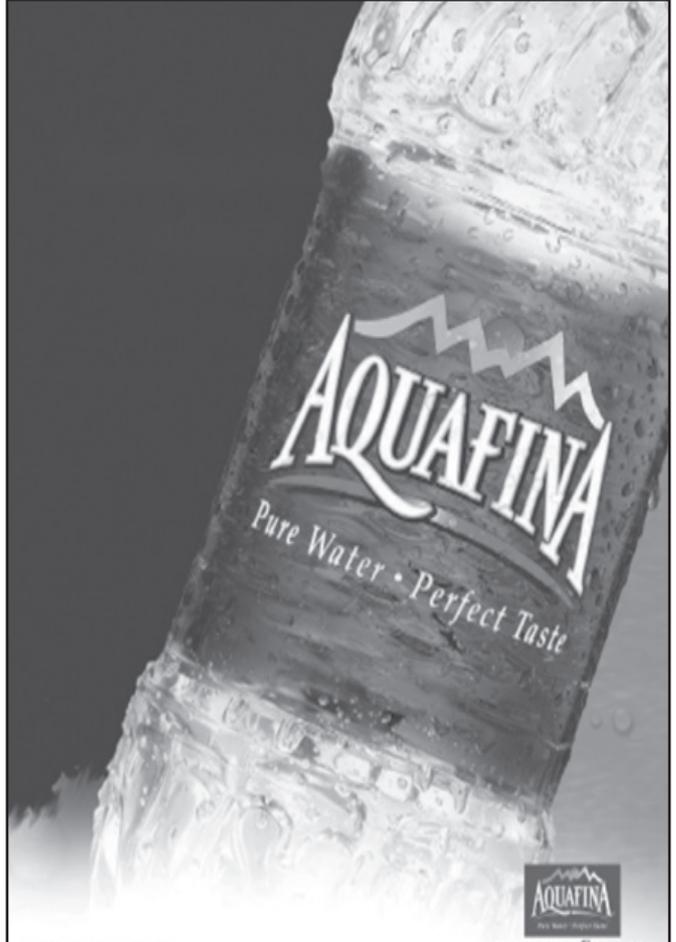
The girls are confident having new teammates who are astonishing runners will benefit the team. Athletes are also setting personal goals for themselves, looking to improve past records, and are looking forward to meeting sprinters and other runners.

“I feel good about the season. Our long-distance runners are very good, most of them do cross-country in the fall, and we have a lot of great sprinters,” Stafne said. “I’m setting a new personal record for the 100, and attempting to break 12.8 seconds.”

“Be on the lookout for the Stillwater Girls Track & Field team this year! We are ready to dominate,” Wiehe said.



Graphics by Nissa Wilcox



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# Springing Forward



PHOTO BY ELAINA MANKOWSKI



PHOTO SUBMITTED BY ADAM DEWOSKIN

Warmer weather and loosening COVID-19 restrictions has more people reuniting with friends and family. Many people have gotten to become social again, a major piece lacking during this pandemic

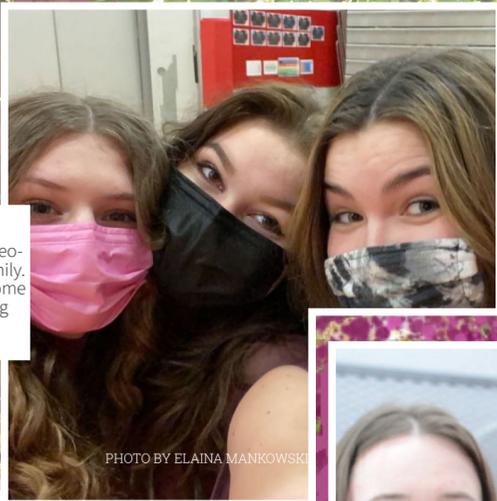


PHOTO BY ELAINA MANKOWSKI



PHOTO BY KIERA RIVERS



PHOTO BY ELAINA MANKOWSKI



PHOTO SUBMITTED BY OLIVIA LIND



PHOTO BY KIERA RIVERS

## During quarantine, people adapted, picked up new hobbies

Tucker Wyland

COVID-19 is a pandemic with far-reaching effects that have not been observed in nearly a century. But as vaccines begin to roll out and restrictions have begun to roll back, some people are feeling more comfortable leaving home and resuming normal activities. During quarantine, many people adapted and quickly picked up new hobbies. Different people engaged in multiple activities depending on if they spent more time at home versus those who were out. Some people played video games such as Call of Duty and FIFA as reported by The OdysseyOnline. Many also reported taking up other hobbies, such as cooking. For those who ventured outdoors during quarantine, some picked up biking. Because of this, retailers have been unable to keep up with the demand for bicycles, as people began using them for both exercise and transportation.

"I would say I was home, but wasn't inside, I was out for a lot of runs and played tennis," junior tennis player Alexis Witter said. "I live with my grandparents and they both have risk and it just made me think, wow, I could, like kill my grandparents with this virus if I got it, so I had to be really careful and keep my mask on."

People who opted to remain inside during the lockdowns and pandemic opted more so to engage with virtual meetings

with friends and coworkers. As well as meetings, Netflix had noted an uptick upwards of 13 percent in viewership and subscriptions as noted by both the BBC and CBS News.

"I really haven't been hanging out with friends...it's just been school," sophomore Madison Bauer said. "Sometimes we go to the mall but that is all." One of the positive aspects of lockdown is that people will better themselves by learning new skills in order to help people get through the mundane and boring pandemic life. People had to learn self-discipline such as time management and be driven in order to complete either schoolwork or office work.

"I have been baking a lot more, I guess I would say I'm good at it, but I still can't master flat cookies or cupcakes that actually look correct. So I've picked up baking but haven't improved," Witter explained.

During the course of lockdown people began new projects, such as redoing their basements or other projects. With Netflix's uptick in viewership and subscriptions, they steadily release new shows and

movies to keep people engaged and entertained during the pandemic, such as Tiger King and Outer Banks which became the most popular shows at the time of their release.

"During the summertime we usually go out on the river when we did hang out or we'd

their vaccines, so I feel like after they get the second dose I'll be able to fully get back to how it was hopefully, obviously still be careful like no big get-togethers, but almost the same as it was," Witter added. The vast majority of states within the United States have

"I would say I was home, but wasn't inside, I was out for a lot of runs and played tennis. I live with my grandparents and they both have risk and it just made me think, wow, I could, like kill my grandparents with this virus," got it, so I had to be really careful and keep my mask on."

Alexis Witter

stay inside and watch movies. But we didn't really hang out during the winter," Bauer said.

Over the course of the last few months, COVID-19 vaccine rollout has been steadily increasing and the number of recipients of the vaccine has been increasing daily. As a result people are beginning to relax a little bit because there are more people that have been vaccinated causing relief, especially amongst the older populations. "My grandparents just got

as such, it has become a very personal experience for many. The skills people gained were not all uniform, while some may have learned to cook, others may have ventured outdoors and learned something else. The experience itself is not uniform and as such we cannot treat it as such. While vaccines may be rolling out and COVID-19 cases fall, some may continue to opt for a familiar safety or maybe they will take advantage of the new opportunities that arise from rolling back restrictions.

## COVID-19's lasting affects

Mikai Tasch

Throughout this year, many aspects of life have been different in regards to going out to eat, entertainment, and traveling for everyone across the country. Some want to travel around the country and others want to stay at home. While some are fine with going out to eat at a full capacity restaurant, others do not want to go out to eat at all. These differing perspectives are a result of various underlying health conditions regarding COVID-19.

Junior Sophie Moller explained how both of her parents are at high risk, especially her mom. Her mom "had breast cancer twice and many lymph nodes removed," meaning that she had to wear one, if not two, masks when around her mom.

Many restaurants have struggled throughout this year because they have been forced to do take out. Because some restaurants strive off in-person dining, they have been forced to temporarily shut their doors because they were not able to get enough business through take-out, or there were other barriers in their way. Union Rooftop Bar and Grill owner Lauren Burrs explained how because of the "construction and less people downtown overall," owners are not getting a rea-

sonable amount of sales. Moreover, a variety of people are enjoying going to restaurants once again because it gives them a sense of community that has not been apparent for a while. Throughout this year, many have been forced to stay at home. With restaurants opening back up, people are able to once again indulge in activities with their friends. Burrs wants to give her customers a sense of normalcy while following COV-

"I am a very social person and I really miss all my friends. I have had a very small circle through all this, just seeing specific family members and certain friends and my boyfriend,"

Erin Lurie

ID-19 guidelines, as it is important for people to go out and enjoy good food with their friends. Burrs also stated that it was nice to see people enjoying their time at Union. Furthermore, traveling on airplanes has been a concern for many throughout the entirety of the pandemic. This

has been hard because many previously did not comply with the mask mandate. Since early February, masks have been required in all federal spaces.

"It is not only a Sun Country policy, it is the law now. Most people have abided by that, and have been pretty good. There are fines and there are precautions, or penalties that you can have taken onto you," Sun Country flight attendant Erin Lurie said.

The debate over travel has arisen throughout the past few months because a variety of people are missing out on opportunities that were previously available to them. Because many flight attendants have been traveling for the entirety of the pandemic, they feel safe doing the same on their own. Lurie talked about how traveling is something that relieves her stress and is a natural, calming break. For many teenagers, this past year has been a struggle because they have not been able to hang out with friends in a normal way. Going to the Mall of America, Olive Garden, Marcus Theaters, the Xcel Energy Center, and other public spaces/music venues is not the same. "I am not comfortable with doing that [going to a mall]," Moller said. "Just because of how unpredictable it can be and you do not know if some-

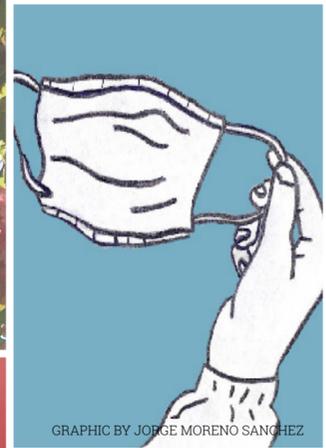
one is going to fight to not wear a mask or something."

It has been helpful going back to school for many because they are now able to interact with people and get help from teachers. This has been more important than ever before because people have not been in school, fully in-person, for a year, and students need the help and support.

Moller explained how she is a big extrovert. She "started failing classes and everything" because she did not feel confident in her study skills and work ethic at home.

This past year has been a struggle for people in every way possible. COVID-19 can spread throughout the family, restaurants have been forced into a bitter struggle, flight attendants have had to deal with people not complying with the mask mandate, politicians have struggled with getting their word out and everyone is trying to adjust to the new normal throughout every country and state. How soon the world will return to the old normal is determinant on how often people follow basic precautions such as wearing a mask, social distancing, and washing their hands. If people follow these precautions, the new normal should be the old normal within a year.

"I am a very social person and I really miss all my friends. I have had a very small circle through all this, just seeing specific family members and certain friends and my boyfriend," Lurie said.



GRAPHIC BY JORGE MORENO SANCHEZ

# Harry and Meghan's interview struck a cord with viewers

Annika Citsay

On March 7, an interview grasped the public's attention. The Royals were put on blast. During the interview between Meghan, Harry and Oprah, the couple revealed some unknown information. This interview showed that being seen through such seniority from everyone has its highs and lows. The community around those individuals is not a true life. They are living the life everyone would want to live, but at the same time no one wants to live. Meghan and Harry speaking out on such a topic is quite brave and the public deserves to know all that was released.

Meghan met Harry in London of 2016, through mutual friends. Before meeting, Meghan did not have much context on who he was. Just a couple weeks after meeting, Harry asked Meghan on a trip to Africa with him. On Oct. 31, 2016, leaked information was out that they were dating.

There was a lot of abuse and negative comments from the media towards Meghan at that time. Fast forward to their engagement on Nov. 27, 2017, and then May 6, 2019 when they welcomed their newborn Archie Harrison Mountbatten-Windsor home. But on March 7, 2021, their interview changed the public's thoughts.

When Meghan first met Harry, she knew almost nothing about him. The Royal family is a big part of the British tradition, and people are stating that Meghan was having the issues she did with the family, because she was not aware what it was all

about. Meghan grew up in the states, while Harry grew up in the Royal family.

"The part that surprised me the most, though, was that Meghan did little research on the Royal Family before marrying into it, so part of me feels like her feeling of surprise during various situations was due to a lack of being prepared when entering the monarchy," junior Ava Karlstad said.

In an effort to become independent, Buckingham Palace confirmed and finalized Meghan and Harry split from the Royal Britain's family. They will not return as working members of the Royal family. The Duchess officially gave up their royal titles.

"For me, I think that they know what is best for their family."

Jana Myers

Myers believes and feels that although this action did occur, what they chose for their family is best. Being a royal is a big job, especially for individuals who do not feel it is right for them. It is not believed to have meant any harm or negativity, they are just choosing what is right for not only them, but their family.

Throughout Meghan's pregnancy, she kept quiet. But during the interview she revealed that she had suicidal thoughts and had asked the officials for help, but was not given any. Those officials felt

it would ruin the reputation of not only Meghan, but the palace and the family.

She revealed, "I was ashamed to have to admit it to Harry. I knew that if I didn't say it, I would do it. I just didn't want to be alive anymore".

"Mental health is such a serious matter that it is very disappointing to hear of situations when someone is considering suicide and people are unwilling to offer help because they want to preserve the 'perfect image' of the family," Karlstad said.

Not only is mental health a serious thing, but being pushed down for having those feelings can be really deteriorating. The Royals are people, and should be treated as that. One can do as much as they can to help their mental health, but it's not something that can always be easily treated. It seems as though the officials really took a chance. If Meghan would have taken her life, the reputation and image would have been made worse than just saying she needed help.

The couple revealed that they got married three days before the ceremony at St. George's Chapel on Windsor Castle, on May 19, 2018. The Archbishop of Canterbury performed a ceremony just for the couple, prior to the Royal Wedding. In their backyard, vows were exchanged.

Myers feels the "the main reason they said their vows three days before was so that it was more private."

Although it might not have been right to do it behind everyone's backs, they deserve to have at least some

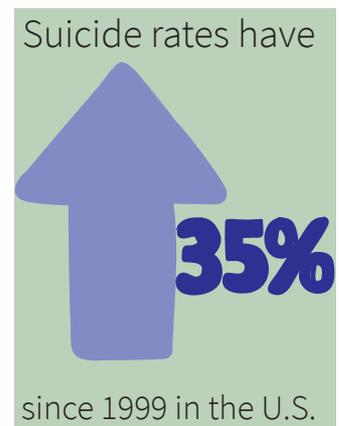
sort of privacy. The ceremony they had in their backyard, was private and only for the couple. Anyone in such high regards, should still have those moments of love, and not just press.

The family is held in high regard, and joining that without knowing what it is all about, would be difficult for most people. They are trying to create the perfect image, and not show anything

besides that. That is why this interview was such a big moment for the Royal Family in history.

Meghan, Harry, and the family as a whole decided to do what was best for them. Focusing on this information, and moving forward with it is what they want. Instead of coming at it in a harmful way, we can appreciate the truth that was told to the world.

## Suicide rates in U.S.



# Transgender athletes should not be criminalized for joining the sports team they identify with

Elaina Mankowski

Minnesota should not pass the new bill criminalizing transgender student-athletes for playing on the sports team of the gender they identify with. It enforces discriminatory and transphobic values and allows our society to take a massive step back. It is unconstitutional and directly attacks transgender students.

On Feb. 25, State Rep. Eric Lucero proposed a bill stating that students who identify as female, but were genetically born a male, are not allowed to participate in women's sports. In President Joe Biden's first month in office he signed an executive order banning discrimination surrounding gender identity and sexual orientation, and on Feb. 25 the House passed the Equality Act, which allows transgender females in women's sports.

In response to this, many states have been presenting their own bills to bar these athletes from participating in women's sports. In Minnesota, the penalty proposed would be up to \$300 in fines and up to \$1,000 in fines for using women's changing facilities and bathrooms if they are genetically not females.

It has already been declared unconstitutional to ban transgender students from using bathrooms that fit their gender identity, making these proposals counterproductive.

"It's just really despicable that politicians would play games with children's lives like this,"

Jess Braverman

Teenagers are already going through a lot in high school trying to find themselves. Transgender students are going through this, as well as having to defend their gender identity. The least that can be done is to provide athletics for these students and allow them to join the team they identify with. Politicians who are nearly 40 years older than teenagers should not make decisions that directly discriminates against transgender teens.

Junior Brendon Rich identifies as transgender non-binary, but leans towards masculinity. "The endless support I have and am currently receiving has made my transition smoother than I had ever expected," Rich said. "My body dysmorphia has greatly decreased now that I'm over a year on testosterone, but public spaces and interactions are still tough... there are a lot of things I need to pay attention to that most cisgender individuals don't need to."

Playing high school sports is a rite of passage for students. A student should not be criminalized just for playing sports on the team they identify with. Just by joining a team, a transgender student could face fines or receive a misdemeanor; this is highly unnecessary and directly opposes the idea of equality in our country.

Rich feels this proposed bill identifying transgender women playing in sports as a criminal activity is "incredulous" and makes them "feel sick." He says it is "transphobia" and an attempt to "further scandalize an already at-risk population."

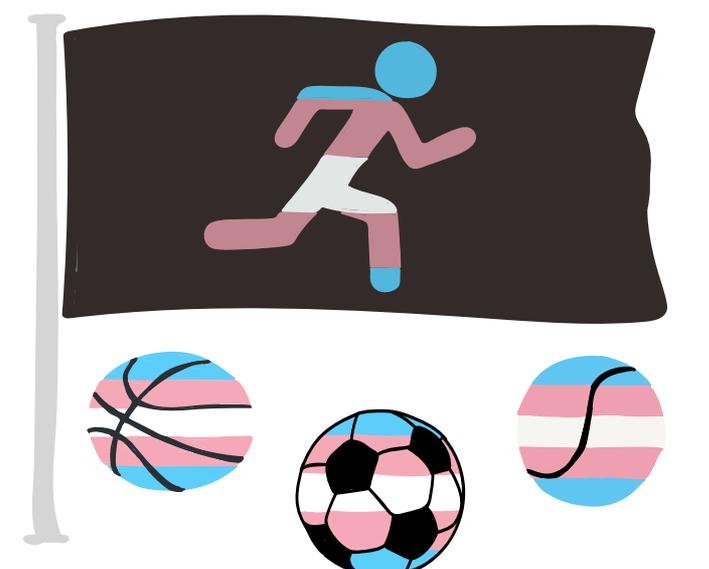
The reasoning behind this bill many politicians have made argues that having a

woman on a women's sports teams who genetically was born male, would create an unfair advantage against other teams. The proposed rationale attempts to obviously cover up their blatant transphobia.

"I'm a strong believer in science and, because I share the concerns of parents for their daughters' safety, I introduced HF 1657 seeking to prohibit those with an XY chromosome-pair from participating on a female-only sports team and also prohibit those with an XY chromo-

some-pair from using female restrooms, locker rooms, showers, dressing rooms, etc," State Rep. Lucero said in a released statement to 5 Eyewitness News.

Although this bill was proposed in Minnesota, the bill will likely not pass due to Minnesota's democratic majority in the House. However, even introducing this idea into Congress encourages discriminatory values and will lead to many more attempts by politicians to control the lives of transgender people.



Graphic by Kady Peltier

## EIC COLUMN



PHOTO SUBMITTED BY  
EMMA WAGNER

### Pony Clapback

After the shocking events in Minneapolis on May 25, 2020, tensions between citizens and law enforcement tightened, especially in the relationship between minorities and police officers. It was not the first time a police officer abused their power against minorities. Americans have come to know the names of Breonna Taylor and Stephen Clark just as well as they would recognize popular public figures such as Justin Bieber or Ozzy Osbourne. Now, 10 months later, a trial begins in order to give justice to George Floyd, a name that is not only familiar to Minnesotans, but to all Americans.

Derek Chauvin is now facing charges of manslaughter, second-degree murder and third-degree murder in his involvement with the death of George Floyd. Floyd died after Chauvin pressed his knee against his neck for almost nine minutes. Floyd stopped breathing approximately two minutes before Chauvin released him. During his struggle underneath Chauvin, Floyd begged to be freed, crying out, "I can't breathe." After a video surfaced of the encounter, the whole country erupted, starting protests over police brutality in America.

"George Floyd's death was basically broadcasted for the whole country to see. It was brought to the forefront of societal issues and there is finally no ignoring the fact that there is discrimination, social injustice and racial injustice going on within the law system," senior Missa Lunzer said.

Ten months later Chauvin is now on trial for his involvement in Floyd's death. However, Chauvin was not the only officer present during this confrontation. Officers J. Alexander Kueng and Thomas Lane assisted Chauvin in restraining Floyd, while another officer, Tou Thao, prevented bystanders from interfering with the arrest and intervening as events unfolded.

"Personally, I think that all officers who were involved should be individually charged for being active participants in murder," Hannah Robles, a 2016 graduate from Stillwater Area High School and an active member in the protests for George Floyd, said.

Many people believe Chauvin should face a harsher punishment for his involvement in the death of Floyd. Despite the family accepting the \$27 million from Minneapolis as a fair settlement, more needs to be done to reform the police department and prevent situations like this from happening in the future.

# Another virus comes to America: anti-Asian hate

Lubnag Xiong

Following a year of xenophobic rhetoric and racially charged attacks, the Asian American community has faced a terrifying increase in violence. Stop AAPI Hate is a coalition dedicated to tracking reports of racism and discrimination against Asian Americans amidst the pandemic, and they received at least 3,795 reports of anti-Asian hate incidents since March last year. That number underestimates the actual number of racially charged incidents, as many cases are not reported. Indeed, the United States has witnessed an alarming spike in Asian hate crimes ever since the pandemic, but COVID-19 is not the sole reason for these attacks. Asian Americans have endured a broad and underlying history of anti-Asian sentiment in this country—one that traces farther back than Trump and the pandemic.

The conspiracy theories about China and referring

to COVID-19 as the "China Virus" or "Kung Flu" might seem innocent, harmless and maybe even funny, but that could not be farther from the truth. When we warned that this would incite violence against us, we were told to "take a joke."

Xiaojie Tan, Vicha Ratanapakdee, Pak Ho and so many more are now dead. These attacks sent a wave of advocacy and awareness to social media, people sharing the same few posts to their Instagram stories or trending hashtags on Twitter. However, sharing the faces of hate crime victims and advocating for change is one thing, but truly understanding the reason behind these attacks is another. It is difficult to describe anti-Asian racism when a large portion of society lacks a coherent understanding of Asian American history.

The shooting in Atlanta on March 16 is a prime example of why the fetishization of Asian women is dangerous. It leads to violence and death. This

man's uncontrollable sexual desires, what a sheriff deemed as a "bad day," resulted in eight people's last day. There is this disgusting preconceived notion that all Asian women are submissive and weak, and they have been sexualized since the founding of our nation when Chinese women were branded as prostitutes and treated as subhuman.

These docile tropes relate back to the model minority myth—the idea that every Asian possesses a high socioeconomic status and education and, therefore, is more "successful" in this country than other ethnic minorities due to inherent intellect and a compliant, law-abiding nature. Despite being debunked, white America continues to use this fallacy as a way to avoid responsibility for addressing racism and its consequences. Asian Americans are put on a pedestal to justify the belief that there is no systemic racism in this country. Moreover, it creates a wedge between people of color, as the ten-

sion between the Black and Asian community remains high. What we forget is we share a common enemy: white supremacy.

"Many people, including other BIPOC, believe that Asians are 'basically white' because some of them are more successful than their white coworkers, but this myth isn't true at all. This myth is extremely harmful because it throws the Asian community against other BIPOC. We should be working together, not playing the Oppression Olympics," junior Jay Lohr explained.

Many people who talk about this issue on social media mention how racism is normalized, specifically towards Asians. However, when it is said like that, it is almost as if we are comparing our oppression to other races, which is the very last thing we would want to do. This is not something to debate about. It is not one group against another. It is all of us against the common issue that is racism.

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# 'Lion King' original cast holds reunion

## 23 years after debut, 'Lion King' cast meets virtually



GRAPHICS BY ELAINA MANKOWSKI

'The Lion King' is one of the longest running Broadway shows of all time. During its 23 year run time, the cast is constantly changing. None of the original cast members are still performing the show, but they are still the most well known. They held a virtual reunion due to the fact they have not seen each other in a very long time. Fans were ecstatic to see the beloved cast back together.

Ella Metcalf

Disney's *The Lion King* on Broadway is one of the longest-running Broadway shows still going, and for good reason. This show offers viewers a unique experience into the plains of Africa through music, wardrobe, puppets, and great acting. Since the show has been going for over two decades, the original cast has all moved forward in their careers, losing contact with each other. This was true until they were reunited for a special *Lion King* reunion held on March 10 for the Hennepin theatre.

The cast was happy to be reunited since they haven't seen each other in so long. Especially due to COVID-19, people have been feeling lonely so a reunion is a perfect way to lift spirits.

"It's nice to see people experiencing joyful moments when it's been a lot of challenging moments," the host of the event, Lee Lessack said.

Global superstar and Grammy winner, Heather Headly was one of the headliners for the event. Lessack was unsure if he could get Headly to come to the event.

"I would be excited about this you know like if we could get Heather Headly, but that's never gonna happen, I thought. So I tracked down her manager, and she said yes, and so that was just a thrill," Lessack explained.

The *Lion King* on Broadway has been running for around

23 years, with a whole different cast than when it started.

"The *Lion King* has been around for so long, they've had so many casts," Lessack said.

The show itself is known as a masterpiece, with something to offer for anyone coming to watch.

"The plot and everything and then there's also music, and the plots are easy to fall along with, and then the music and the acting is really well done," said junior Kendra Stanton who watched the show a few years ago.

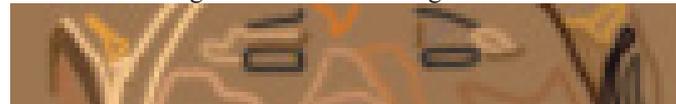
Something the show is especially known for is the incredible puppetry, and how they utilize the puppets as a unique medium to bring the animals to life.

"I think what they created with all the puppetry is the best part of the show. That opening moment was groundbreaking. I don't think anything Broadway had seen anything like that before," Lessack explained.

Another great quality of the show is how family-friendly it is. The story is easy to follow along with and the performances are spectacular, making this a musical great for adults and kids alike.

"I recommend it too also because it is a children's show, so it's good for all ages," Stanton said.

Overall this show was so fun to watch and rarely presented a dull moment. Not only were the visuals stunning, but the music was incredible. This show gets a 4.5 out of 5 stars.



## Trading card market explodes during pandemic

John Piekarski

Over the past year, many forms of trading cards have seen gigantic increases in sales and value. One example of this increased popularity is Ebay, whose sales of soccer and basketball cards have gone up 1586% and 373% respectively.

Justin Broadwater, owner of A Rising Star trading card store, was unable to move soccer cards off his shelf in 2017.

"Last year a customer told me to get a soccer product, this year it exploded and I've tried to ride the wave," Broadwater explained.

In the trading card game *Pokemon*, card value used to be based on how strong or weak a given card was in competition. Now, a card can inflate to prices past seven digits based on popularity or rarity alone.

Junior Alex Gardner recently got back into card collecting and found the market much different than he left it. Prices used to be based on basically how competitive a card was but because there's no playing tournaments being held, the market blew up around collectors.

Purchasing a card worth millions of dollars is not without its own unique set of

risks. Physically, cards are very fragile and need to be stored in air tight containers to protect their condition, however this is not the only risk to their value.

"As far as modern cards go, they're way bigger risks because they can reprint stuff," Gardner explained. "They wait three years, the value might still be super high, but then they decide to reprint it."

With prices as high

"As far as modern cards go, they're way bigger risks because they can reprint stuff. They wait three years, the value might still be super high, but then they decide to reprint it."

Alex Gardner

as they have ever been, the intended market for trading cards (ages 13+) have struggled to get in on the action. Store shelves can be cleared within hours of being restocked, making it hard for the casual collector.

"Unfortunately the market is pricing out kids right now. I've seen grandparents and kids up-

set because you can't simply buy a \$5 pack of cards on the shelf anymore," Broadwater explained.

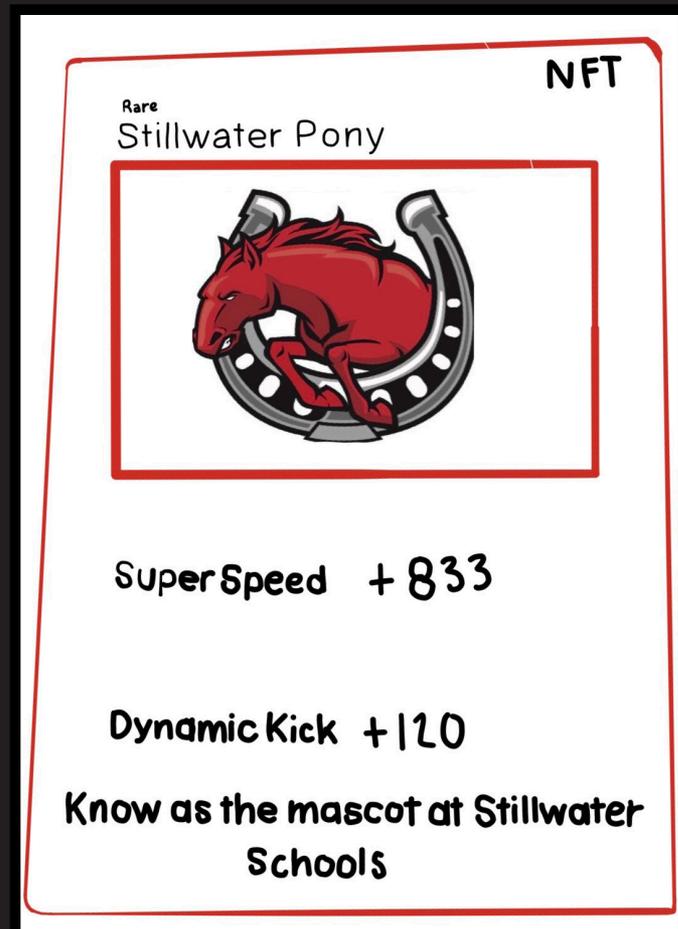
COVID-19 has also played a role in the recent trading card market boom. People looking for a side hustle or who are just plain bored have taken up card reselling as a quick way to make money during the pandemic.

Broadwater believes Covid-19 has been the biggest factor in the trading card market boom.

"Fan's are not buying the season tickets and aren't going to these games so where are they supposed to go to get their fan rush in? Some turned to cards and that has exploded," Broadwater clarified.

Because the trading card market is currently in a bubble, many collectors have been pushed out of the hobby. Unless demand continues to increase, prices are sure to come down eventually but the exact date is anyone's guess.

"The bubbles are going to pop, when? Who knows. I just don't foresee the prices, sustaining themselves, especially when you know when the vaccinations start coming in for COVID. People will go back to the daily grind and begin to forget about trading cards again," Broadwater explained.



GRAPHIC BY SOPHIE MACDONALD

A new way to enjoy sports has blown up due to the pandemic. Trading cards for sports teams, specifically soccer and basketball have been selling on Ebay for people to purchase and trade.

# Unseen car community in Stillwater works on old cars

Tucker Wyland

While COVID-19 raged across the United States and the world, people began to learn new skills and talents while stuck in quarantine. One of those skills created a new community of people in the Stillwater Area. This group of people has spent the quarantine tinkering and modding their vehicles with cosmetic changes and performance modifications to create vehicles that are uniquely them.

There is a likelihood some may not have even noticed this community at school or in the area and that is because the community itself is actually quite small but even in that small group there is great diversity in the builds. One enthusiast named Junior Brady Turnquist had this to say when I asked him what the most common first mods are, “Most people’s first mod is to make their car louder”.

When attending car meets there was one main way of making the vehicle louder, straight pipes. The way a straight pipe works is that you remove the current exhaust and the mufflers then replace it with a straight pipe system, this makes the vehicle louder because there are no mufflers to quiet down the sound of the engine. Straight pipes also



Photo by Tucker Wyland

Cars belonging to juniors Brady Turnquist, Parker Gilchrist and Tucker Wyland wait in the school parking lot before a meet. Meets usually occur on Fridays and weekends.

add horsepower and help the engine run better as there is less pressure on the engine from the exhaust gases.

The majority of people can find meets in a variety of places, these include but are not limited to, sponsored events by clubs and through word of mouth and those

tend to be less organized. Some are put on by clubs and information on those can be found online at ExploreMinnesota.com, those meets and drives usually are low key and follow the historic landmarks. Other meets are put on by students and younger enthusiasts,

information on these meets can be found on social media and are usually small events at different places in the twin cities areas.

When asked about how these enthusiasts find out about these meets and how they organize them, Mr. Turnquist simply respond-

ed. “Me and a couple enthusiasts from school created a group chat with anyone we knew that had an interest in meeting...it started a domino effect.” These unofficial meets usually occur on Fridays and on the weekends usually taking place in places such as Targets and scenic lookouts such as the boom site.

Junior Adam Dewoskin is another enthusiast with a different story, his project is a classic 1972 Dodge Charger. When asked about what he had done with the vehicle he states, I mostly have redone the interior along with fixing up the exhaust and the jets inside the carburetor. I fixed the muffler by replacing it after the old one had rusted through. For the jets, I had to replace them because they weren’t the right ones for the engine size.

When pressed about why he had decided to work on this vehicle he replied, “I just wanted the car to be in good shape. We want to sell the car eventually and the better it is then the more we can sell it for.”

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# Student band prepares to release first extended play

Stella Bertsch

The band Saguaro formed in the fall of 2018. Band members include seniors Levi Hutton on drums, Hannah Doyle on vocals, Isaac Reiner on bass and Leah Cosgrove on guitar. Throughout the past few years, they have always played covers, but recently they have decided to expand to writing original music.

Doyle starts by writing the songs, then presents them to the rest of the band members. The rest of the band then works to write their own parts according to what instrument they play. They each bring their own ideas to create the final product.

“I write songs, pretty regularly, whenever I get a strong feeling about something or if I’m stuck on something, I’ll just go write a song about it, because it helps me figure out what I’m actually thinking. Sometimes, I can write a song in 20 minutes, sometimes it takes me a week to finish a song. Then I’ll send it to everybody individually, they kind of get a grasp of what it is. Then we come back to the practice and kind of like put it together and that’s really what it changes, most of my songs start out really slow, and like,

melodic, and then after I bring it to the man and everybody’s playing together, it ends up being pretty fast-paced in rock. So it really changes, but it’s cool because all the songs are honestly pretty different from each other,” Doyle said.

The band eventually came up with a total of five different songs, Good Morning, Puzzle Pieces, Wait in Gold, 90 seconds, and Painting Stars. After perfecting each one the band decided to work on sending out an EP. An EP, or extended play, is best described as a mini-album. It’s essentially a collection of a few songs that artists make before committing to a whole album. The band Saguaro found connections to a record label and is now working on sending out their first EP.

“A friend I work with actually worked with some record labels that worked with, Nirvana and the Pixies, and a bunch of just kind of punk rock bands, and he said that if we sent him demos, he would send it to those people, and then sending it all out it’s really all about connections and it’s taken us up until now, to be able to find those connections so it takes a while,” Doyle explained.



Photo submitted by Hannah Doyle

The band Saguaro plays their original song, Puzzle Pieces, a song about breakup and not getting what they are giving in a relationship. They practice in senior Isaac Reiner’s living room.

Saguaro has worked extremely hard to get to where they are today. They have all put in hours of practice and sacrifice a lot of their time. Although sending out their EP is a huge accomplishment they still have big goals.

“We definitely want to write more and get more local gigs. Obviously, the main

goal is to like, you know, make it number one on the radio or whatever, but I mean, I would be very happy with just playing in Minneapolis and St. Paul. But just being a local band and getting our music out there,” Hutton said.

The band went through a lot to get here. It takes a lot of time to write, edit and record

all five songs.

“Even if you’re stuck in a rut or if you’re getting bored with what you’re doing. You just have to stick with it. When you feel lazy and bored, just commit the time that you can’t get out of what you’re doing, and you’ll eventually get out,” Hutton said.



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# ‘Coming 2 America’ provides warm, nostalgic feeling

Cali Dierkhising

*Coming to America* gained the attention of many as the reboot released on March 4. It has been a family favorite for decades, and with increased downtime during quarantine, teens and parents get to enjoy this nostalgic film once again. The reboot follows Eddie Murphy’s character, Prince Akeem, as he travels to America to find his lost son. The second film is better than the original film of *Coming to America*. However, students and parents share their genuine reviews, informing us if *Coming to America*, along with *Coming to America 2* is worth the watch, or not.

The Rom-Com fairy tale, *Coming to America 2*, was planned to hit theaters last year but was sold due to the pandemic by Paramount Pictures. With the movie now available on Amazon Prime, it is far more accessible, leading to a larger viewing audience.

“I would say if people saw the first one and enjoyed it, it’s the same type of humor and they would possibly enjoy the second one too. I didn’t find it to be very humorous myself

or entertaining. I found myself kind of drifting off here and there because of the boredom I was feeling so I wasn’t very enthusiastic about the plot,” parent Ann Ludwig said.

There are positive aspects of the film, but, this movie is seen to not be a favorite for everyone.

The reboot was shot 33 years after the first original movie, making this nostalgic for those who were around to watch the first film. The directors made sure to have the main actors return for the reboot in order to continue the film accurately. Past generations are thought to connect deeper than those of the present generation because of their familiarity with the plot and characters.

Junior Kiki Krize believed, since the first movie was made around 30 years ago, it connects deeper to those who saw the first movie and then went to watch the second one.

It provides a nostalgic feeling to their childhood, compared to the teens who are just now discovering and enjoying the films. However, this comedy would both be found funny, not only the older gen-

eration but also the younger generation. Although those of the past generations may feel more connected to the film, this reboot can still be enjoyed by all.

With how the reboot ended, there are many speculations that the third *Coming to America* might be possible.

“I think it’s quite possible because of how the movie ended with a common theme of empowering women. Women of the ruling, especially having all of the racial issues that we’ve all faced and having the majority of the cast is black, showing the diversity of cultures and race,” Ludwig added.

There is a possibility that with this new plot line, another reboot could be made, breaking off into another storyline.

With the role of women empowerment being portrayed in the second movie, it draws many viewers in out of respect for bringing awareness to the issue of gender equality. The movie plot followed many Africa cultural misconceptions and stereotypes of that particular country. However, when it

came to a man for the ruler, the directors decided to go a different route.

Krize said without even seeing the films, based on the description of the movie, she would be open to watching this reboot. Price is, “not a fan of the comedy genre of movies”, but based on the role of women empowerment of different ethnicity, she would be interested in seeing the plot.

Since this is a newer movie, the improved graphics, compared to the original movie, also made it enjoyable to watch. Community member Shawn Goldsmith continues that he too enjoyed watching the movies, but found himself enjoying the reboot more. With the original movie being released in 1988, not only the quality of the film has improved, but also aspects and opinions in society.

This is a classic film that conveys a positive message for not only females but humanity. The producers were able to successfully create a story that encompasses nostalgia from the past and social issues from the present, with humor wrapped into the plot to entertain the viewer.



Graphic by Alexis Schmitz

# ‘Moxie’ addresses issues that have impact women

Mackenzie Chang

“Girls should not be punished for a boy’s lack of self-control,” junior Isabella Chau said about the new movie “Moxie”. Moxie tells a story about teenage girls, and their fight to be treated respectfully and equally by the boys at their school.

Many girls struggle with sexism and harassment in their daily life, especially high school girls. The movie “Moxie” gave everyone a peek into the issues that girls deal with, whether it is in school or out in the world. Educator Jill Tinkham thought it was an honest reflection of how society continues to ignore the blaring sexism in daily life.

These issues are not just because of other students, but also the school and faculty. Schools enforce rules like dress codes that really only apply to girls, and these dress codes are meant to keep “distractions” minimized. Just like in “Moxie”, real high schools dress code girls wearing outfits they deem too revealing.

Chau believes, “These rules right now are completely unfair to girls, and put way more restrictions on what girls can wear” and barely any restrictions on what guys are able to wear.

Although “Moxie” did reveal the issues that women face, it also had a message behind it that empowered women. The girls in the movie did not stand up for themselves for a long time, but that did not help change anything for them. The main character, Vivian,

started writing zines that inspired the girls to stand up for themselves, and what is right. “The message was that staying silent and just taking it won’t help anyone. It was trying to inspire girls, especially younger girls to stand up for themselves and what’s right,” senior Mira Williams said.

Even though the target audience was the younger generation, the movie also serves as a great reminder for educators. Teachers and other staff members do try to prevent bullying and harassment, but sometimes they fall short. In the movies, when the character, Lucy, tries to report harassment the principal warns her to not use that word, and basically says “boys will be boys”. It’s understanding that usually teachers can not do much, or just do not have enough proof, but sometimes teachers do need to get a little more involved and help show that they are on students’ side.

Tinkham said educators need to teach about women and the contributions women make in our world - and not just during women’s history month. They need to break down barriers and raise women’s voices.

“Moxie” not only includes the feminist movement but also tried to include race and identity as well. Adding race, although not a lot, helps point to another big issue people face. It showed powerful, confident women of color, but also timid, unsure characters of color as well. Moxie held a wide range of characters, as well as a diverse cast that gave representation to people of color. “They definitely could’ve taken race into account, since it’s



Photo submitted by Isabella Chau  
Junior Bella Chau watches the movie ‘Moxie’. She is inspired by the message behind it, and thought the movie was very good.

such a big issue. Like stereotypes, slurs, and other comments are hurtful,” Williams said. However, she gets that it was mostly based on women empowerment, which she’s okay with.

All things considered, “Moxie” was a great movie to help bring attention to racism, sexism, and just your average growing up problems. It showed that no matter how little the change is it’s still a step forward, and no matter what, do not sit silently. Stand up for what’s right, even if it’s hard.

“We should try, fail, learn, and get better with any issues that we may come to face as teenagers now or later in life as adults,” Chau said.

The movie Moxie was another step forward to raise awareness about hard issues like women’s oppression, and



Graphic by Alexis Schmitz