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CONCERNS WITH 'CANCEL CULTURE'

As we become increasingly dependent on technology, we are turning to social media for our main source of entertainment. Because we use it so often, reputations could be raised or sullied within seconds, and 'Cancel Culture' is a large part of that.

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Concerns With:

‘CANCEL CULTURE’

**By: Sejal Mohan
Reporter**

As we become increasingly dependent on technology, we are turning to social media for our main source of entertainment. Apps like Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok are growing popular among teenagers and young adults. Twitter is known for amusing threads, fan content of celebrities, and cancel culture. With people pouring enthusiasm and spending time over interests they adore through stan culture, reputation can either be raised or sullied within seconds. Stan culture not only involves supporting a celebrity's content, but also various aspects of their character, views, and behavior. It encompasses television shows, books, and music. When someone says they "stan" a celebrity, they are undoubtedly devoted to that person's life. When interacting with others who stan the same person they do, people may find comfort, identifying themselves as a community with similar interests. This heavy devotion may bring joy to some people by dedicating their time to someone whose work they appreciate, but it can easily become unhealthy and toxic.

Cancel culture is the act of a large group of people stopping the consumption of a celebrity's content, due to any controversial acts done by the celebrity in question. To some extent, cancel culture makes sense: it is essentially refusing to support someone's content if their views or behavior is disagreeable. If the celebrity makes money through the medium people stop supporting, it helps the people in those stan communities hold people accountable for their actions. However, with the intense nature of stan culture, online shaming has spiraled out of control and can even warrant the end of a career. Moreover, those partaking in stan and cancel culture are usually at the age when they become more aware of the inequality around them, causing them to feel compelled to take some justice into their own hands and not let fame and status excuse racist or sexist remarks. The time period when the action was done also has a large influence, since the celebrity or content in question might not be aware of their offending behavior

at that time. Passionate devotion can switch to intense hatred with a single, questionable tweet from decades ago. The behavior shamed might be socially acceptable in the past, but it does not mean those views will be supported in the present since people learn and change their views over time. Stan culture demands to hold those people responsible, even if their current views differ from their past decisions.

Earlier in July, Ellen DeGeneres, host of The Ellen Show, known for highlighting rising stars, was investigated and charged for mistreatment of workers in the workplace. The investigation concluded that one current and 10 previous members of Ellen's staff reported acts of racism, intimidation, and unhealthy working environment. With the inquiry resulting in three senior producers leaving the team, and DeGeneres' cancellation by Twitter, it is unclear whether her show will continue airing after these accusations. Those who choose to cancel DeGeneres for mistreatment of her workers,

pressure her into taking accountability for her actions until she apologizes or provides some compensation for those mistreated employees by not continuing to watch The Ellen Show. As in any situation, owning up for past mistakes does not truly have meaning unless it is prevented from happening again in the future. Ellen has publicly apologized for mistreating her staff and has claimed to have made changes in her company to better the environment. However, a formal apology by itself does not erase the event. Celebrities in various situations who have been cancelled often give an apology to reduce the negativity attached to their reputation, yet they are not guaranteed to follow through with the apology and truly change their actions. As a result, Ellen may remain cancelled by Twitter until they see proof of proper kindness in her workplace.

Shriya Doranala, an IB Senior, believes cancel culture “does not leave a lot of room for learning and improving from mistakes. It makes an environment where you cannot learn from your mistakes and grow from it since people still see the accused in a negative light. I believe that every person has the capacity to do good and own up to their mistakes, which is hard to do if people keep on shaming you for your past decisions. It doesn’t allow you to have the mindset and space to grow.”

However, the effect of cancel culture on careers can cause irreversible damage. It can result in the person or content being defined by the allegation or action regardless of whether the allegation turned out to be true or not. Most allegations are true, but there are a few cases in which celebrity news twists the reality to focus on the negatives. The results of cancel culture sometimes outweigh the questionable action; a career could end due to one tweet made years ago when the

tweet’s subject was more socially acceptable than it is now.



Not only does cancel culture affect the celebrity, but it also affects the fans. Fans who look up to the celebrity as inspiration may be shocked and emotionally affected by the sudden news of their idol’s misdeeds.

Health Academy Senior, **Rose Musick**, thinks “cancel culture is a very toxic practice. It can be super damaging to the targeted person and damage careers and friendships. Especially on Tik Tok, the popular creators are young, and shaming them for something they might not have even done could destroy their mental health and potentially lead to suicide. Though shaming people as an act of justice is effective in taking away their platform, I don’t think it’s worth the potential damage to mental health.”

Would the fans be expected to just throw away their dedication to the celebrity? Would the fans be shamed for choosing to support the celebrity even for their harmful actions? The toxicity of cancel culture affects everyone involved, not just those accused.

Photo By: Gwyneth Katker

GETTING TO KNOW JAYDEN MATHENY

By: Mahalla Hynes
Reporter

The student government is often the first place people experience a first-hand view of the political process, so it is clear that this can have a profound effect on how people view politics. Serving as the democratic voice of the student body, student government plays a large role at Seminole High school. "The student government is important because it's sole purpose is to make the four years of students' high school careers as enjoyable as possible! We bend over backward trying to make the student body happy and excited to wake up and come to school." said student body president, **Jayden Matheny**.

Taking his inspiration from the student body and striving to maintain their happiness, he ran for student body president after being involved in student government since middle school. Matheny was motivated to run because he saw the qualities needed to lead the student government to success within himself.

"The student body is who inspires me to make decisions because any decision I make will affect them in one way or another. So I try my best to make the majority of students happy," said Matheny.

However, Matheny's term as president has taken a wild turn. Due to COVID-19, this school year has become drastically different from any previous year, affecting student government. Matheny has been forced to make changes to goals because of the chaos of the pandemic, but the challenges do not stop him. With having to make adjustments to some of the classic events at school, Matheny has had to push some of his original plans aside. Some of these plans included fundraising for a sound system update in the new gym and implementing Food Trucks on Senior lunch days. Since these ideas may not be possible now, he hopes a future student body president will be able to accomplish them.

Although the pandemic may have changed some of his original ideas, he is already making changes. As previously stated Matheny hoped to see changes within the student government organization itself. These decisions were influenced by his convictions of equal representation.

"I incorporate these convictions into my role within student government in everything that I do. I make it so that all student government members have the



Seminole High School's student body president, Jayden Matheny, shares his plans for this school year regarding changes due to the pandemic.

opportunity to voice new ideas and opinions. I ensure that those who participate through zoom don't feel left out or overlooked. I also instilled a new application process for those interested in being a part of leadership which allows for more diversity!"

"Being in this position has allowed me to gain more insight into what goes on behind the scenes here at Seminole. The hard work that our great administration puts into making our school a wonderful place is something that not many students witness so they often take things for granted. Having spoken to so many people in administrative positions and watching what they do to make sure our students' best interests are accounted for has given me a new outlook on Seminole High School!" said Matheny when asked about how this position has changed the way he viewed Seminole High School (SHS).

Matheny hopes to continue making positive changes and everyone's year great despite the challenges students face.

TEACHER OF THE YEAR

By: Christina Davenport
Reporter

Seminole High School (SHS) is one of the most notorious schools in Seminole County. With about 3,380 students, as well as an estimated 170 teachers, it's no surprise that we're known for being a large school. With such a large population administration makes sure to annually recognize one teacher and allocate them with the title of Teacher of the Year.

Teacher of the Year is celebrated in almost every school across the United States. It's used as a place to celebrate and congratulate teachers who show true dedication through their teaching. Although, some schools do it in a very old-fashioned way, not breaking traditions and making it formal. For SHS, that doesn't seem like the case.

For the year of 2020-2021 the student body and teachers voted **Demetrius Galindez**, an Educational Technology Facilitator, as the Teacher of the Year. A video was released on the School's Facebook page showing Mr. Galindez being presented with his new title at a set up meeting. The meeting was set up to replicate a department meeting, however little did Mr. Galindez know he would be greeted by a former WWE superstar, **Matt Morgan**, and presented Teacher of the Year.

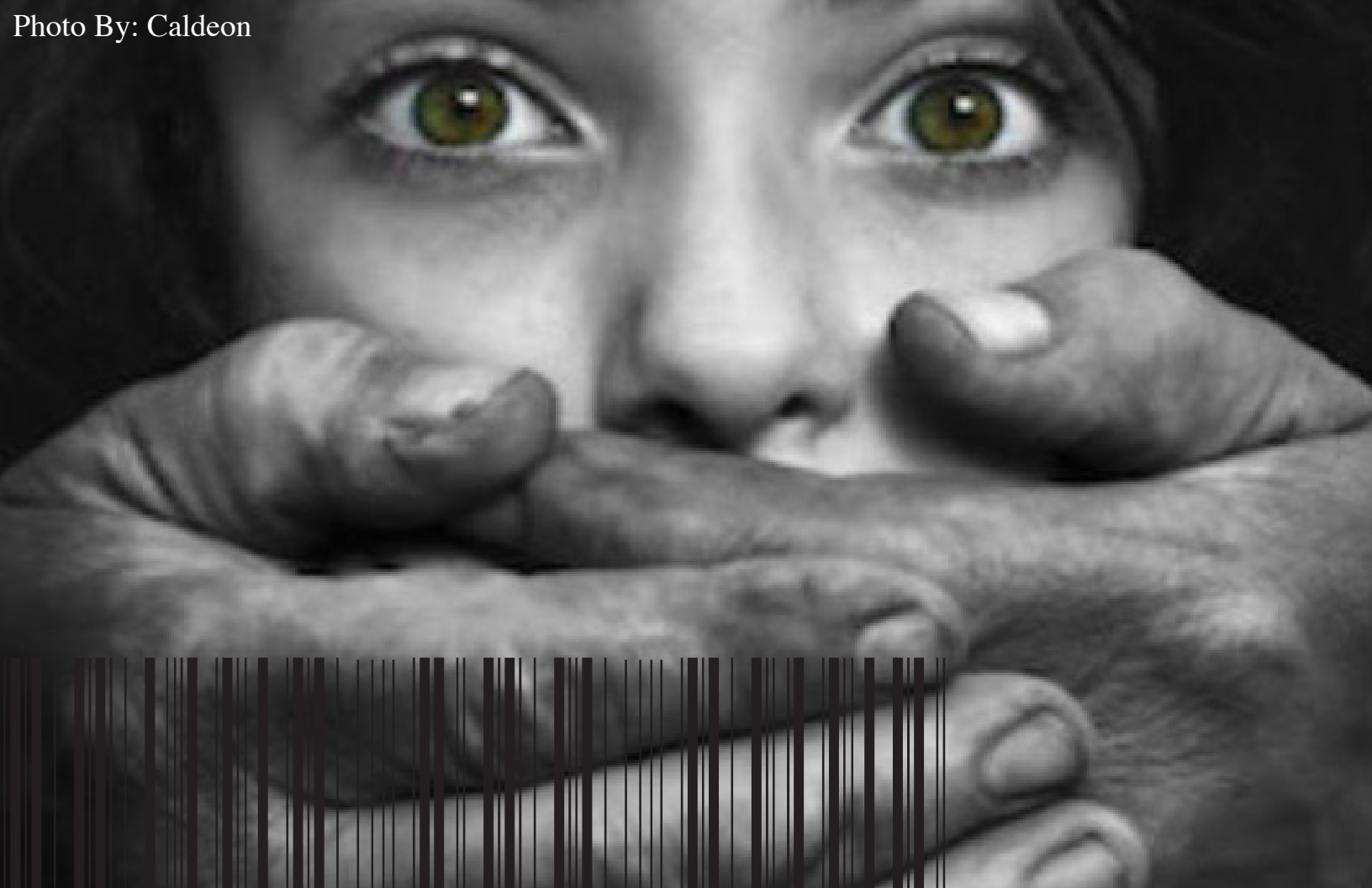
"It was FRIGGIN' AWESOME! That's how I enjoyed it! That was amazing! I am a wrestling fan. It is extremely entertaining to see a +200 lb. man jump 15 feet in the air, does a flip, kicks another dude in the chest, lands on his feet, and both participants live to tell the story. Seeing Matt Morgan, former wrestling superstar, made me feel like such a fanboy. I felt like my 8-year old niece when I took her to see Taylor Swift several years ago. My wife is in the process of getting the belt, some of the swag I received, and the pictures encased, so that it can be displayed. Another important thing about the way it was presented was that my family was there. If you've ever had me as a teacher, I talk about my family a lot when I explain things in social studies. Personalizing the topic is what makes the topic interesting and relatable. So, I was very happy that my family was there, along with the teaching team that I learned so much from and relied so heavily on were there to support me (as they always do)." said Mr. Galindez

The occasion was surely one for him to remember for a very long time. **Jill Firestone**, a substitute teacher for Seminole High School commented on the post. "AWESOME! He is so deserving of this! I am so happy for him! Great job!". Mr. Galindez himself was shocked to receive the news, however, his peers saw it as well deserved.

"Although, I didn't think I would actually win it; yes, I did see myself as a person who is "eligible" to obtain the teacher of the year award. I put a lot of effort, preparation, and research into teaching. I always try to constantly improve. When I teach something in first period, I make sure my lesson is even better in 5th period. Although, I do my part to ensure that I'm successful, I lean HEAVILY on my department. I constantly get advice from them on what's working, I steal their ideas and make them my own. I ask them for suggestions, and I get advice on things that I can do better. Please, understand, this isn't something that I only do. All the teachers work together to help students succeed and achieve more than they thought possible. Honestly, I feel as if the department has won the award MUCH more than I have as an individual. I'm just receiving the recognition." said Mr. Galindez.

It's important to note that all teachers do an outstanding job with doing what they can to help students achieve their ultimate potential. Congratulations again to Mr. Galindez for his outstanding performance and overall work ethic at Seminole High School!





S O U L S F O R S A L E

**By: Manya Garg
Reporter**

For many students, history classes have introduced the topic of slavery. Most students are aware that slavery spread globally from the Triangular Slave Trade, and millions of Africans were legally discriminated against in the United States until President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation during the American Civil War. However, many are unaware of the “modern slavery” occurring worldwide, where sexual or commercial acts are obtained through force, fraud, or coercion. The practice is so secretive that barely 0.04% human trafficking cases are identified; the UN, thus, refers to this as “the hidden figure of crime.”

To put it simply, human trafficking is an industry that steals freedom in return for profit. An example is pornography because traffickers take advantage of human lust to get sinful money. Another big reason is the lack of education which further triggers economic difficulties and lack of awareness about human rights.

Angela Jin, an IB sophomore, believes, “Human Trafficking is most prevalent in South Asian and South American countries. I think human trafficking is common

due to extreme amounts of poverty and low status of women in rural India and other places like it. Of course, it happens everywhere in the world and even America but in first world countries it’s a lot more subtle.”

Many might think this practice takes place in less-developed countries, but affluent countries like the United States experience millions of cases every year. Nevada, Mississippi, Florida, Georgia, Ohio, Missouri, California, and Texas have the highest number of reported cases here in the US.

Traffickers appear friendly and make their move depending on their victim’s vulnerabilities. Tactics such as seduction, false jobs, and abduction are used to enslave and lure ordinary people. The technical terms of such methods are force, fraud, and coercion. Force entails kidnapping and maintaining control over the victims. Once enslaved, traffickers use violent tactics like physical abuse, deprivation of food and sleep, rape or drug administration to control the victims. The traffickers make sure the victims are locked up and unable to escape, and they are not afraid to use inhuman tactics to control them.

Fraud, or deception, is the easiest strategy to capture people. Traffickers give false hope of a better quality of life, better education, and jobs. Traffickers also set up deceiving websites and advertisements to appeal to foreigners, and once the person arrives in the new country, they get kidnapped.

Coercion, or persuasion by threats, is used to prevent victims from escaping. Traffickers threaten with violent actions against the victims or their family members. They also blackmail and threaten to air compromising videos or photographs. These methods cause psychological damage, resulting in victims struggling with shame, grief, fear, suicidal thoughts, anxiety, trust issues.

Human trafficking is broadly categorized into sex trafficking and labor trafficking. A large majority, around 71 percent, of enslaved people are women and girls who are commonly sold for sexual exploitation which occurs in brothels, clubs, illicit massage parlors, and even in the street or private homes. Recently dreadful information about sex trafficking has surfaced on Jeffrey Epstein's island. Jeffrey Epstein was a sex offender who was convicted in 2008. He bought a small private island, Little Saint James, in the United States Virgin Islands. Epstein died in 2019, but left evidence of his wrongdoings there. He kidnapped underage girls and brought them there because it was extremely isolated and difficult to leave. The only means to escape were a private jet or boat, and Epstein controlled all communication and transportation. The island is still under investigation revealing many shocking facts.

Amanda Jayakody, an IB sophomore, expresses her concern; "The United States has a serious issue of human trafficking cases and there definitely needs to be awareness on

the topic. The government should put more time and effort in uncovering human trafficking cases, especially considering how high it is in the USA. I know Florida has one of the most human trafficking cases in the USA."

Men are generally exploited for labor. The different types of labor trafficking include forced labor, debt bondage, involuntary domestic servitude, and unlawful recruitment.

Forced labor is a type of enslavement in which people are employed against their will with the threats of violence, compulsion, or forms of extreme hardship. The International Labor Organization estimates about 20 million victims in private sector and state sanctioned forced labor. Children are also forced under the menace of penalty.

In Debt Bondage, a person is forced to work in exchange for a debt. However, the debt can never be paid. Involuntary Domestic Servitude occurs in private homes when the victim is forced to work for almost no pay and is confined to the employer. These workers are threatened by confiscation of travel documents; threats of arrest or deportation; isolation; and subjection to psychological, physical and sexual abuse.

Unlawful Recruitment is commonly practiced in countries that support terrorism like Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Yemen. Their governments support armed groups to recruit and use child soldiers.

Human trafficking victims will not look out of place in public. They are composed of different age groups, races, genders, or nationalities and may come from any socioeconomic group. Traffickers opt to assign the victims to legitimate and illegitimate labor industries instead of hiding them to obtain more money. Thus, victims can be found at sweatshops, parlors and salons, restaurants, hotels, and even domestic service. Some indicators of human trafficking are poor living conditions; inability to speak coherently; isolation; no identity documents; signs of physical abuse; submissive; extremely low payments; and underage prostitution. However, some of these signs are hard to notice in the real world unless you closely analyze the victim. So, if anyone notices signs or abuse, poor mental health or abnormal behavior, poor physical health, or lack of control, immediately inform 911 and call the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1(888)373-7888.



BURNED OUT +

By: Christina Davenport
Reporter

After three long years, It's finally time for the class of 2021 to have their senior year. But many people are catching a new "illness" spreading throughout the class of 2021. No, it's not COVID, instead, it is better known as senioritis. For those who are unfamiliar with the term senioritis, it is an affliction of students in their final year of high school or college, characterized by a decline in motivation or performance. It is quite common for seniors to start to feel this in the second semester. In the second semester of senior year, students are still engaged with the same people and activities of the last four years, but the terms, pressures, and motivations have changed. For the next few months, the rules are very different. Another popular term that circulates the senior class is the term "burnout", however, it's important to address that many people could experience burnout. Burnout is a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress. It occurs when you feel overwhelmed, emotionally drained, and unable to meet constant demands.

Let's go a little more in-depth with the meaning of the word burnout. Yes, they may mean you're overwhelmed and constantly stressed to your limit but, how does this affect you, and what are some of the signs? Common feelings associated with high school burnout include Depression, Detachment, Cynicism, and Lack of accomplishment and effectiveness. It is super important to keep an open eye for these clues because the sooner you notice it, the more likely it can be managed. The consequences of school burnout can be serious and noticeable. Specifically, burnout has been linked to tedium, poor quality of school life, self-handicapping, failure-avoidance strategies, depressive-anxious symptoms, low self-esteem, general school maladjustment, a higher risk of dropout, risky behaviors, and underachievement.

When it comes to the harsh impact of all the stress that lays on you during your senior year, it's no surprise that many people have a lack of motivation. It all comes down to organizing your schedule and pushing yourself to get work completed. However, some

students find it easier than others.

"Honestly knowing that I have to do these classes to graduate is like kinda the motivation, but at the same time it's just a day in and out and I have OJT so it's not like I need to be at school for a whole day or anything. Now since the classes are blocked it's just two classes every day and go back home and sleep... I'm not gonna lie, I may procrastinate but I still get the work done on time." said **Sebastian Castillo**, a Seminole High School (SHS) Senior.

College-bound students tend to suffer the biggest consequences. Most colleges and universities won't stop caring about your grades just because you've been given an acceptance letter. Colleges can and do revoke admissions if final-semester grades drop too low. Not only are the classes a bit more rigorous but surprisingly enough many students don't have a set idea on college and that idea alone can be very stressful and affect the mental health of these students.

"It impacts me in a negative way, during senior year you should attempt to keep boosting your gpa. Over time it's neutral for me when it comes to stress but as more work piles up it will get worse" said **Garret Borgos**, a SHS alumni from the class of 2020.

"I believe I had senioritis because there wasn't a week where I felt like I was obligated to stay every day. It impacted me in a very negative way because my grades started to slip so I stopped cutting class. Over time it got better because I was able to get my priorities straight and decided I needed to end my high school career with a win" said **Alejandro Real**, a SHS alumni from the class of 2020.

Of course, not everyone faces the dreaded "senioritis" but it's important to note that it can affect any school and on any day. In a survey conducted by The Omniscient, 78 percent of seniors admitted to having senioritis. Even though a majority of seniors

BUMMED OUT

believe they have senioritis, it has not seemed to take a toll on their performance thus far. Compared to the previous year, 48 percent of seniors say their absences have stayed about the same, while 33 percent say they have decreased; 53 percent say their tardies have stayed consistent, while 32 percent say they've decreased; and 43 percent don't see a drastic change in their grades, while 37 percent saw improvement.

A common way to combat senioritis is to seek the help of a school counselor and to find new ways to motivate yourself. School counselors do a variety of things to help mitigate senioritis, including helping students engage in tasks that are relevant to their personal interests and goals. The College Board recommends an approach that supports deeper student engagement. They encourage students to main-

tain a challenging course load, avoid obsessing over the college admissions process, and enjoy the senior experience overall.

It's super important to remember what you're working toward. Graduation will be here a lot sooner than you think. Look at all the work you've done and recognize what you've accomplished. Be proud of yourself and use that as motivation to carry yourself through graduation. It's okay to feel a little cloudy some days just make sure to be making the best out of your circumstances. So rather than waiting and wishing for it to be over, make the most of it. Take a fun class you've been wanting to take. Join a club or participate in a sport of interest. There's so much you can do to help keep your mind active and keep senioritis away.



Photo By: Ashley Dang

Many seniors are struggling to meet demands as they are nearing the end of their high school lives. How will the class of 2021 overcome their struggles?

A CURE FOR

COVID

**By: Samhitha Katuru
Reporter**

As the risk of endangerment from COVID-19 continues to increase, researchers and scientists all over the world are becoming desperate to find a cure. COVID-19 was first declared a global pandemic on March 11, 2020 by the World Health Organization (WHO). Shortly after, countries blocked international travel and individually quarantined their citizens, which proceeded to extend longer than expected due to no vaccine found. This unprecedented extension has resulted in the loss of businesses, an economic decline, and other negative side effects. Therefore, it is no surprise that countries are doing everything in their power to find a vaccine. In fact, some countries have some of the most bizarre remedies that are “supposedly” efficient against COVID-19 symptoms.

In India, Ayurvedic medicines have recently experienced a spike in usage. The herbal remedies have been known to treat numerous ailments, and are now used against COVID-19. The natural medicines have no verified effect against the disease, yet they are still used as precautionary steps. In addition, most patients treated in India are put in supportive care to treat their symptoms and avoid spreading the virus. Another idea used not only in India, but other nations as well, are home remedies. They are folk medicines created or used by families at home without proven effect by the drug administration. Most likely herbal paste or another unique concoction, the remedies are unusual but can help restore faith in a household.

“I know that my family and I take these packets of Vitamin C powder and mix it with water as a precaution,” adds Health Academy sophomore **Nandita Gujarati**.

Earlier in June, there was a rumor of usage of malaria pills in India as well. This may have been influenced by Donald Trump, as he admitted to taking malaria pills to fend off the disease. The U.S. Food and Drug administration (FDA) disapproved of the drug due to the correlating heart problems. However, in

India, the pills were being sold and bought excessively to help against COVID-19. This was highly dangerous, according to researchers in the U.S. The pills had limited effect on the virus, but had life-threatening side effects. Despite the clear objections, a health ministry task force stated that all citizens, diagnosed or undiagnosed with coronavirus, should take the malaria pill to protect themselves. There are also concerns about meaningless dosage of medicine against the coronavirus.

“It might be a bad idea, even if the pill works to some extent. COVID-19 is a virus and the use of a pill against it, minimally effective or not, can help the virus evolve and grow more dangerous,” expresses IB sophomore **Mikayla Mahabir**.

Over in Turkey, a similar treatment has been in use. To prevent a higher death rate and further infection, Turkey’s Ministry of Health has recommended treatment with two drugs: malaria pills and Japanese antiviral favipiravir. The drugs are intended to fend off intensive care while protecting others from the disease. In fact, antiviral favipiravir has been claimed to be effective by over thirty countries in the world, including world leaders, Japan and China.

Recently, in Russia, a vaccine has been discovered. The nuclear superpower is the first country in the world to officially declare a vaccine for COVID-19. The vaccine supposedly improves the immune response against COVID-19 effects, creating antibodies designed to fight the virus and protect the body. Russian scientists claim that in testing, the virus has been effective. This cure can drastically improve our situation for COVID-19 and increase our pace of recovery all over the world.

With recent news and predictions, the WHO estimates an official cure will be discovered in early 2021. However, it will take time for things to return to normal, as the vaccine found must be given out and be accessible to everyone.

Until then, stay safe, take necessary precautions, remember to wear a mask, and wash your hands.

Creativity and Covid

How students are utilizing face masks for creative expression

By: Christina Davenport
Reporter

With the rise of COVID-19, 2020 has become the year of the mask. Masks are now mandatory to enter grocery stores, malls, and theatres in many states. Masks can be easily purchased in stores such as Target or even more popular retailers such as Anthropologie, Pacsun, and Hot Topic. Even designer stores are begging to sell face masks with celebrities like Jennifer Hudson, Olivia Wilde, and Serena Williams purchasing some of their own decorative masks. However, those hoping to save some money on this necessary purchase have turned to making their own masks. Designing masks yourself is both cheap and allows people a creative outlet for personal expression.

This idea first became popular on social media as it helps people cope with the stress of the pandemic and allows for creative expression. It has also become a great way to keep busy and stay active while still practicing safety.

Crafty students like **Deepika Kannan**, a Seminole High School (SHS) student, have definitely stepped up to the challenge as she spends her free time making masks of her own. She created a website selling personalized decorative masks, scrunchies, and more. Her inspiration for the projects started in the smallest way:

"I like sewing fun things like bucket hats and shirts and scrunchies so then I thought

that I should try out masks! I just think it's really important that everyone wears masks and since everyone needs to wear them we might as well wear cute masks! I get all my inspiration when I see all the cute fabrics at Joann's!" said Kannan.

Kannan is not the only student to create her own masks. **Celah Tesch**, a senior at SHS had the same idea about creating her own stylized mask.

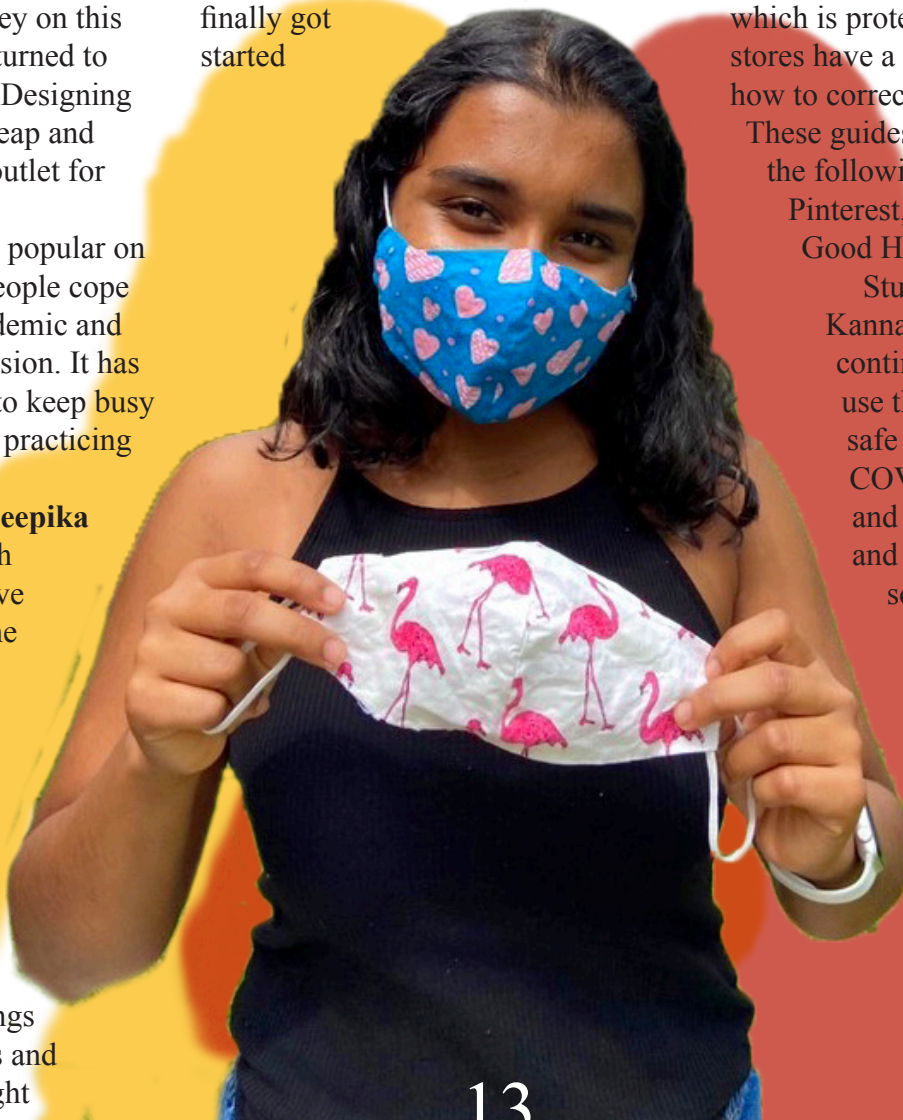
"My inspiration is just that I noticed a lot of people were creating their own masks. I finally got started

because I wanted a stylized mask that could fit my face a bit better. The masks only take about an hour to make and I get most of my materials from Joannes fabric store. I think it's a really cheap and affordable way to stay safe during the pandemic and make the most of the situation in general!" said Tesch

As entertaining as this task may seem it is important to note that when making your own masks, you have to be using the right tools in order to fulfill the overall function of the mask which is protecting your face. Some stores have a step by step guide on how to correctly create these masks.

These guides can be found online at the following distributors: Joann, Pinterest, Youtube, CDC.gov, and Good Housekeeping.

Students like Deepika Kannan and Celah Tesch continue to stay inspired and use their creativity to stay safe amidst a pandemic. COVID-19 has been chaotic and continues to challenge and change our normal society and our everyday lives. However, with everything going on it's always super important to stay positive and remember that we should aim to make the best out of every situation.



ARTIST OF THE ISSUE

By: Samhitha Katuru
Reporter

This year's Artist of the Issue, **Sophie Burns**, is an International Baccalaureate (IB) sophomore at Seminole High School (SHS) who was first introduced to art through cartoons at the young age of eight. Ever since then, she has had an ever-growing passion for artwork. Growing up, she often practiced drawing or sketching during her free time. Her most beloved art styles are traditional and digital art. Her family also has a significant influence on Burns's love of art as her paternal side of the family are all artists who love to paint. Thus, her family is very supportive of her passion and the prospect of a future art related career.

"My dad used to paint these amazing acrylic paintings for me and I used to have them on my wall when I was little. My grandmother also paints in her free time. So, I have always had the support of my family to become an animator," adds Burns.

Besides her family, social media also has a notable influence on Burns's love of art. Through Instagram,

she fell in love with the artwork of prominent, talented Instagram artists. They not only inspired her but also made her more passionate about art.

Over quarantine, Burns utilized her free time to improve her art and explore different art styles. She has proven that her talent does not lie only within traditional or digital art but various forms of painting as well. One such form is gouache painting, a complex style of obscure watercolor art. She also has a couple of social media platforms on which she shares some of her artwork.

"I've been drawing and uploading my art onto my Instagram page and I have been making TikToks of characters from shows or original characters," says Burns.

Burns even started writing comics during the extra time she had before school started.

Planning to pursue art professionally, she wants to major in animation and minor in computer science in college. Her dream job is to work at either Disney or Pixar, but her biggest goal is to start her own animation company.

Burns advises future artists: "Honestly just do what you love and don't compare yourself to other artists. If you get into an art block then take a break and step away from art. Maybe try going on a walk or experience something new to get those creative juices rolling. And never give up, if you truly want to do art for a living then don't let anyone push that aside."

Wise words from a wise person; Burns is truly an amazing and inspirational artist. Be sure to check her out on social media on Instagram and TikTok!

Instagram: @weird_works
TikTok: @weirdworks



ATHLETE OF THE ISSUE

By: Samhitha Katuru
Reporter

IB senior, **Anneli Brugge**, is Seminole High School's Athlete of the Issue. As a varsity swimmer for 4 years, Brugge is a dedicated and hard working athlete. She was introduced to swimming as a young child to learn basic water survival skills. However, Brugge quickly took to the water and started competing on a swim team as a mere five year old. Ever since then, swimming has been a significant part of her life. As a student in the IB program and a varsity athlete, Brugge has to manage her time wisely.

"I manage my time by staying organized and making a plan for how and when I am going to complete my work. Typically, I try to be as flexible as possible with my plans, as I am not always able to stick to them," she states.

Time management, as she states, is incredibly important. Besides schoolwork, Brugge's training and practices for the varsity swim team are rigorous. Brugge typically has morning swim practice three days a week from 5:30 to 6:45 A.M. The other two days are usually spent in weights for 45 minutes. In addition, there is afternoon practice from 2:30 to 5:00 P.M. However, all this intense training is worth it. The SHS swim team are perennial State Top Ten finishers. Brugge has even qualified for the state meet sophomore and junior year for the breaststroke leg of the medley relay.

As far as personal goals, Brugge hopes to drop time on her 100-yard breaststroke and make it to states again. Her favorite stroke is breaststroke, so getting better at it is a beneficial goal for herself. Her favorite part of competitive swimming is the feeling of getting better. Improving times is a self-motivator. She also loves going to the big meets of the season.

"Even though the meets are competition, there is always a really good energy and vibe. We are always making new friends in the locker rooms or behind the blocks," she expresses.

As with all forms of competitions there is always anxiety and nerves. For Brugge, this fact does not change.

"When faced with stress or nerves before a meet, I usually just remind myself that swimming is something I do because it is fun. At the end of the day, it doesn't matter how I do, just that I did my best and had fun while doing so," she reveals.

When asked for future tips Brugge states:
"The best thing to do is show up for practice ready to work and get better. Motivate yourself to do your best and remember to have fun while doing so!"

However, Brugge does not plan to continue to swim in college. Although swimming may be an important part of her life, she does not want to do it competitively after high school. That being said, Brugge plans on majoring in fashion management or international business in college.



Overview of Human Rights in Northwestern China

**By: Mahalla Hynes
Reporter**

What happens within the walls?

Despite what the Chinese government says, life inside the walls is not safe, but rather extremely abusive.

In 2019, a leaked memo included orders to “never allow escapes,” “increase discipline,” and operate with “strict secrecy.” The camps seek to destroy culture and use psychologically abusive tactics in order to see “their past activity” as criminal or dangerous. The camps act on a point-based system: the prisoners are awarded points for their success in learning, “ideological transformation,” and compliance. The system determines if detainees will be allowed contact with family and when they will be released. This data is collected through detailed surveillance of everything they do.

A unique account of experiences from inside the camps has emerged recently. A Uighur model was forced to return to Xinjiang and not long after placed into one of these facilities. He was able to gain access to a cell phone to send pictures and a rare-first-hand account of what happens with these “‘schools’.” He said that he was first placed in jail, in a small room with 50 to 60 people, with constant screaming coming from somewhere within it. He sent pictures of a document that called for children as young as 13 to “repent and surrender,” referring to

China is being accused of a disgusting abuse of human rights. The Uighur people in China’s Xinjiang province in the northwest are being persecuted and placed in so-called reeducation facilities. China claims this is because of a separatist movement.

Who are the Uighurs?

Uighurs are a minority ethnic group in China, made up of Turkic Muslims. While the majority of them live in Xinjiang, where they number 11 million, Uighurs regard themselves as ethnically and culturally closer to Central Asia nations.

Uighur communities are also found in surrounding countries, like Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Australia. They have a separate language called Uighur, and an economy dependent on agriculture and trade, lasting for thousands of years.

How did this start?

On April 22nd of 2018, a satellite showed what looked to be a massive, highly militarized compound in the middle of a previously empty stretch of desert. Not long after the first reports, China’s system of internment for Muslims began to emerge. The compound seemed to develop with new satellite imagery.

In the beginning, China denied the reports that they were imprisoning Muslims without trial

or reason and that the camps even existed, yet frightening new laws emerged that would significantly limit Islamic identity. They banned headscarves, religious instruction of children, and Islamic names. Uighur government officials and university students were not allowed to go to the mosque, fast during Ramadan, or practice Islam in any way. Travel was also restricted. Checkpoints sprung up in Xinjiang that many Han Chinese were just waved through, but Uighur Muslims were profiled in. Passports were also taken. This demonstrated a shift in thinking from the police and the government. Uighur separatism was no longer a problem the government had with a few individuals, but with Uighur culture itself.

Later, China acknowledged the camps as evidence became irrefutable. They labeled them as reeducation camps and schools. They said they were teaching vocational skills to maintain stability within the region. They were teaching the Uighur Muslims mandarin because many only spoke Uighur, their cultural language. However, these compounds do not resemble schools; schools do not have watchtowers and tall fences. Facilities continue to be built and expanded.

their Uighur identity and Islamic faith.

His story of being forced to return to Xinjiang and then detained seems to be common. Others have also reported relatives returning home and not being heard from again. This division of family also includes family members outside of China being told by family to stop communication with them forever.

The children of the imprisoned parents are placed into another vast system. Research shows the Chinese government separates the families and places the parents in “re-education facilities” and the children in boarding schools., even if they have other family members who are capable of caring for them

Recently, additional reports have shown sterilization, birth control, and abortions forced on Uighur women to help curb the Muslim population, yet China denies these allegations. These procedures seem to be falling in the rest of China, but in Xinjiang, they are rising.

Why is China doing this?

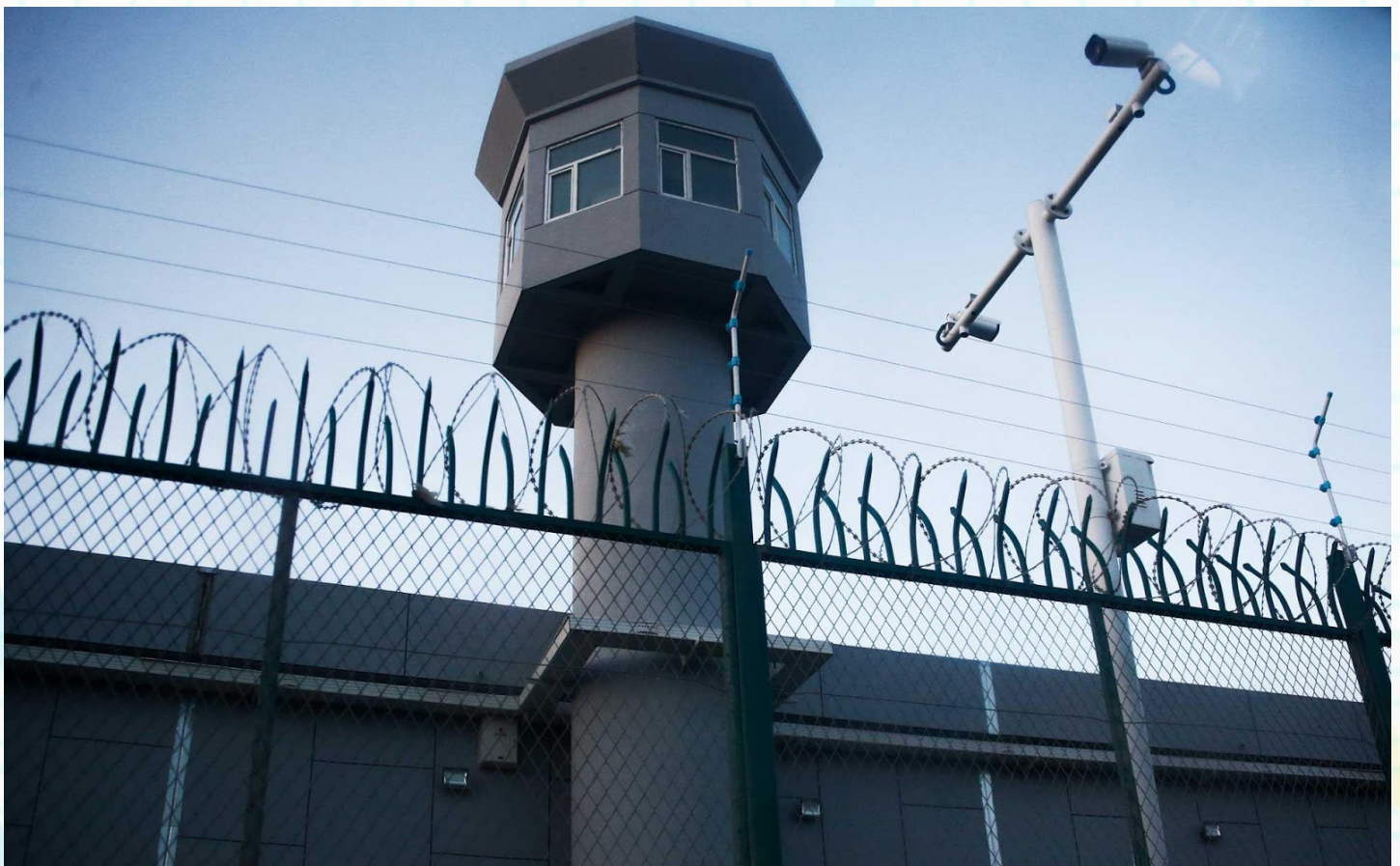
China claims that the camps are a way to eliminate the separatist and extremist threat the Uighurs pose. They view religion as a tool for

separatism, supported by the way the country has come to view any expression of Islam as religious extremism.

After 9/11, they used the “war on terror” as an excuse to persecute Muslims, and in 2009, protests began about the state-incentivized migration of Han Chinese people to Xinjiang, and the discrimination the Uighurs faced. Over the next few years, the government blamed the Uighurs for attacks on government buildings and markets. All of which, the government uses to explain the detention of thousands of Muslim people, citing the recent lack of protests and violence in Xinjiang.

The province is also in the center of China’s infrastructure project called the “Belt and Road Initiative”. It is also home to China’s largest coal and oil reserves. Han Chinese people are going to benefit far more from the jobs and growth created, and the Uighurs are preventing them from accessing these natural resources.

The rest of the world has criticized China for these blatantly horrific abuses of basic human rights, but the Chinese government answered few questions and does not seem to be halting this disgusting process.



Background Source:
Foreign Policy

Photo Source:
Reuter

BALANCING THE BALLOT BOX

By: Sejal Mohan
Reporter

Everyone is familiar with Michelle Obama as the 44th First Lady of the United States, an attorney, the author of *Becoming*, and as the loving mother to her daughters Malia and Sasha Obama. However, most people aren't aware of her nonprofit that advocates for voting in America. She is a co-chairwoman of When We All Vote, a non-profit organization geared to increase the number of voters in both the primary and presidential elections. She works alongside a few other well-known people, such as Tom Hanks, Janelle Monae, Lin-Manuel Miranda, Selena Gomez, and Megan Rapinoe.

When We All Vote involves educating American voters on the voting process and ensuring that race and age do not negatively impact an individual's ability to vote. For the 2018 midterm elections, the organization promoted voter registration through setting up events, spreading education, and sending mass notifications, which spread to over 200 million American citizens.

The organization's method involves: offering volunteer opportunities to those interested in helping others register to vote (this can be done in-person or through text messages), joining a community of team leaders to organize registration events, working on a national scale, and making donations to support the training of new members and supplying the resources needed for registration events. In addition to this, When We All Vote volunteers help make and distribute resources to schools about voting registration. Most of the current and upcoming

events scheduled involve orientations in schools to educate children, staff, and parents, about how to vote and to emphasize the importance of voting. The organization also collaborates with other non-profit organizations to gain support and promote their cause.

Recently, Michelle Obama dropped a merch line for When We All Vote, in preparation for the 2020 presidential election. The collection, called Vote4EVER, remains nonpartisan while still advocating for the importance of voting, and includes items from mugs to bags to beauty products. Vote4EVER features gender-neutral items and apparel from black and women-owned businesses. The products are also sustainable and

government. The organization also focuses on a younger audience with support from current celebrities in hopes to increase the turnout of younger voters.

Seminole High School International Baccalaureate (IB) senior, **Kira Worthey** believes that people not being able to vote based on race or level of income is anti-democratic, and stands with When We All Vote's beliefs on equating voting abilities. She states that, "voting is the main way the people of our country are able to have a say in our government since our votes affect how we're governed and how we live day to day. If someone has to live by the laws of the land, they should get a say in what the laws are."

Another IB senior, **Divya Srinivasan**, believes, "barriers to voting are very harmful to democracy and need to be removed as much as possible." Although she is not eligible for this year's Presidential Election, she still stresses the importance of voting and believes that voter suppression is still a big issue within many communities, stating that "it's very important to be able to have a say in local and national politics."

Americans are grateful for citizens like Michelle Obama who advocate for voting and contribute to improving the lives of everyday Americans. Even if you can't vote, there are a number of steps you can take to stay politically active and advocate for voting. Staying educated on current political debates and situations can help you get ready for voting in a future election. Additionally, it's never too late to register to vote and make sure your voice is heard.



can be found on their website.

Michelle Obama's organization will pave the way for those with fewer opportunities. By spreading awareness on the importance of voting, while providing resources to further educate voters, more people will have a voice in the United States'

PANDEMIC PRODUCTIVITY

By: Manya Garag
Reporter

The closure of schools gave many students extra time to pursue their interests. During quarantine, hobbies were means to cure isolation and bring positivity. Many students even acquired new skills. Tik Tok, a new social networking application, especially displayed those interests

including the cooking, painting, and dancing revolutions that occurred on the app. Although people had to limit physical interaction with each other, new means were found to interact virtually and share hobbies. Hundreds of groups on Zoom and Webex were created. Libraries formed teen activity

groups via zoom and engaged teens in fiction and craft. Not only art, but physical activities like yoga and fitness groups were also promoted.

Here in Seminole High School (SHS), hobbies varied immensely, showing the vast interest of SHS students:



MUSIC



Most students pursued different forms of arts as they can be easily practiced at home. There are many online resources and organizations that help students cultivate these interests. Music is an art form that expresses emotion and soothes the mind.

Toni Curry, an IB sophomore, practiced piano over quarantine. She recounts, “I started to play piano more. I’ve played piano since 7th grade so it’s always been there, I just never really practiced much. I started practicing everyday or when I was bored.”

Quarantine allowed many others as well to bring out those neglected instruments.

A sophomore in Health Academy, **Nandita Gujarati**, pursued a similar passion: playing guitar. She expresses, “I developed interest in learning how to play guitar when I was a kid, but recently got back into it after dropping it in the sixth grade. I practiced by watching YouTube videos, practicing chords, and memorizing and playing the tabs or chords of a song.”



DANCE



Dance is another artistic hobby. Along with listening to favorite music, it gives the body a whole workout keeping the mind and body invigorated.

Jiya Bhatt, another IB sophomore, built harmony with the music. She recounts, “During quarantine, I put in double efforts to improve a passion I developed from a young age: dance. I had already been taking dance lessons before the pandemic and decided to channelize my free time into improving it. It took a lot of ankle wraps and ice, but the effort put into it was worth it.”



CULINARY SKILLS



In addition to providing energy to the body, food represents culture and even brings comfort for some. Due to the virus, many families were cautious about eating out, so they experimented with different cuisines at home.

Lucy Guo, an IB sophomore discovered her love for Asian food, “I became obsessed with cooking Korean food. I cooked and baked a lot of yummy Korean food. It made my stomach very full and I felt very happy.”

Cooking also brings people together. The whole family will excitedly taste the dish prepared by the novice chef. Many of us even discovered that bread could be made without setting it to fire.

Shahana Nizar, another sophomore in IB, made many delicacies over quarantine. She proudly informs, “I engaged in a lot of cooking and baking. I was motivated to cook after watching random food videos on YouTube. I can now cook a full meal without burning it and it’s fun for me.”



OTHER HOBBIES



These were just some conventional hobbies, but quarantine gave time to discover multiple new avenues. Students discovered their passions and actually had time to practice them without the burden of school or other tasks. Many students also had time to pursue time-consuming interests which would not have been possible otherwise.

For example, **Sharon Sajeew**, an IB Freshman, decided to write a book. “I’ve always had a passion for writing, but I never had the opportunity to pursue it, so quarantine gave me the chance to pursue my interests. Over quarantine, I usually tried to write 500 words each night.”

