

The Lance

Jan-Feb 2021

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Starting Off Strong



By **DAISY YAO**
Lance Contributor

Livingston High School's Speech and Debate Team (above) has competed in two competitions over the past two months and did extremely well in both of them.

Students competed in many categories at the January and February Newark CFL competitions, with the most entries in Lincoln Douglas Debate, Public Forum Debate, Original Oratory, and Declamation.

Livingston High School had finalists in almost every event and placed fifth overall in the February competition. An impressive feat!

The final CFL of the season in March will determine which competitors will have the chance to go to the Grand Nationals this year. Nationals will either be happening in person, in Minneapolis, or virtually, and the

league will select students based on their year-long cumulative scoring in the six total CFL competitions. We wish the best of luck to our March competitors!

After months of preparation, the high school's Science Olympiad team also competed at its first invitational, the Haslett Invitational. This event took place at the end of January.

Due to the ongoing pandemic, the entire competition was modified to take place online this year.

Most building events were canceled, but the study events and test portions of hybrid events still took place.

While teams were disappointed that the event would not take place in person, this online format allowed Livingston to easily compete against schools around the country, including those from states such as Michigan and California.

The invitational had 24 schools and a total of 40 teams competing. Livingston did exceptionally well and placed second overall, getting the competition season off to a great start.

The two teams that registered placed in a total of 21 events, ranging from first place to eighth place.

The teams even managed to place both second and third in one of the events. So, out of the 26 categories, Livingston was awarded in 20 of them.

The second competition of the season, the Golden Gate Invitational, took place in February. 96 schools and 149 teams competed.

Though the awards ceremony has yet to take place, Livingston's teams might just be able to bring home some more medals against the other top tier high schools competing in the event.

LHS NEWS

LHS Battles Global Warming: One Tree at a Time

By **SIA BANSAL**
Lance Contributor

Livingston High School has used over one million sheets of paper in the past year. Now multiply this number by 130,930, which according to the National Center for Education Statistics, is the number of public schools in the country. Let that sink in for a moment. Our world is on the verge of a climate crisis, and every sheet of paper wasted brings us one step closer to irreversible Global Warming.

The good news is that there are ways we can help and offset our school's paper usage, and Livingston High Schools Key Club will be doing exactly that! On Sunday, April 18th, our Key Club will be partnering with Tree-Plenish, a nonprofit organization, to plant 160 trees around our town, and we want you to be a part of it.

How can you help? Well, the first step in the process is to have interested residents and members of our community request trees for Key Club volunteers to plant in their yards. If preferred, residents

can also pick up their trees and plant them themselves, so we strongly encourage you to reach out to friends, family, parents, and anyone else interested in making a difference!

The two trees being offered are Red Maples and Eastern Redbuds, both jewel-toned, and rich in color. Maple trees are a classic, but personally, I love the Eastern Redbuds! They have beautiful vibrant pink blossoms in the spring and are a guaranteed crowd-pleaser!

These trees will be planted and delivered as saplings

between 18 to 24 inches in height, making them easy and hassle-free to plant. Each tree is only \$3.40, and if we reach our goal of planting 160 trees, we will be offsetting almost a million sheets of paper!

The Key Club understands that it is hard to volunteer during these remote times, but an event like this is perfect for following Covid-19 guidelines while interacting with the community. This event falls in line with the New Jersey District of Key Club's District Project "Keeping the Garden State Green!"

If you or someone else you know is interested in requesting a tree, the process is simple and easy! Residents first must go to the event webpage, tree-plenish.org/livingston, to order a tree. On the webpage, they can also learn more information about this event as well as the organization of Tree-Plenish.

Together as a community, we have the power to change the world. As cliché as it may sound, every tree planted brings us one step closer to fighting climate change and creating a greener future for all of mankind.

Moving on Up at Livingston High School

By **ANNIE EISNER**
Lance Contributor

Mr. Charney is no stranger to the Livingston Public School District. After spending the last 23 years teaching at Heritage Middle School, the science teacher moved on up to LHS this year.

When he started at Heritage, Mr. Charney taught sixth, seventh, and eighth grade. But, after sixth graders were sectioned off from Heritage to Mt. Pleasant Middle School, he began primarily teaching seventh grade science. Now, he is teaching ninth grade biology at the high school.

His career inspirations have been his grandfather and parents, who instilled a strong work ethic in him throughout his childhood. As time went on, many of his science teachers had a large influence on him.

Mr. Charney was also very inspired by his sixth grade

history teacher, Mr. Shulak, whose teaching style he loved because Mr. Shulak "made school so much fun."

Mr. Charney, who is also a father to four children, says he loves to watch documentaries on the History and Science Channels. The science teacher then added that he is "always trying to learn and share new information" with all of his students at LHS, which is one of his favorite aspects of being

"I'm always trying to share and learn new information with my students"
-Mr. Charney

a teacher.

Growing up Mr. Charney didn't always know that he wanted to be a teacher. But he did know that he greatly enjoyed working with children. Since he was 16 years old, Mr. Charney has worked at camp over the summer months.

When Mr. Charney was about to graduate from college, he wasn't quite sure what he wanted to do and even considered maybe going to law school or working on documentary films.

At the same time, the summer camp Mr. Charney worked at was bought by people who also owned a special education school. They offered him a job, working as a teacher's aide in the classroom.

He fell in love with the job and the ability to teach "information that [he] knows [his students are] going to use for the rest of their lives."

When discussions began about him transferring to the

high school, Mr. Charney said one of his reservations at first was starting during the coronavirus pandemic.

He was unsure how learning "a new curriculum, and a new building and having to do it all online," would be like.

Over zoom, with his background set as a picture of a classroom, he told me that he thinks it has gone well so far and he hopes that online classes will continue to be successful.

Virtual school last spring helped Mr. Charney "[get his] routine down," for remote teaching this year. He was able to figure out and learn new online platforms and websites for his students to use.

According to Mr. Charney, the biggest and most difficult challenge he has faced with virtual school is getting to know his students. However, he feels lucky that he knew most of his students already, since he taught them at Heritage.

Even with the challenges virtual school poses, Mr. Charney still believes there are "better pieces to it." Noting that the online has given shier students the ability to speak up in class and "...the opportunity to be a little bit more comfortable."

"I love that online school provides the opportunity for students to be a little bit more comfortable"
-Mr. Charney

MEET THE LANCE STAFF!



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Advisor:
Joseph Trad

LHS NEWS (CONT'D)

Coming Back Home: An Interview with Scott Patteson

By MANNI BURACH
Lance Contributor

No matter where their career may take them, many people find comfort settling back into a place that reminds them of their roots. This is exactly the case for Mr. Scott Patteson, Livingston High School's new theatre arts teacher.

Patteson grew up in a smaller suburban town before studying theatre at UCLA. After college and graduate school, Patteson spent most of his career teaching in urban areas at art schools. When asked what most attracted him to Livingston High School, Mr.

Patteson replied, "LHS is very similar to the high school I actually went to...so it feels like I'm kind of coming home."

Patteson recalls that his theatre education in high school "was very surface." His favorite English teacher doubled as the school's play director, and although she was passionate about the arts, she didn't have the professional training to give her students a comprehensive background in theatre education.

Patteson is excited to work with LHS students and believes he "could make a real difference and improve the program, bringing what [he] learned from the city at performing arts

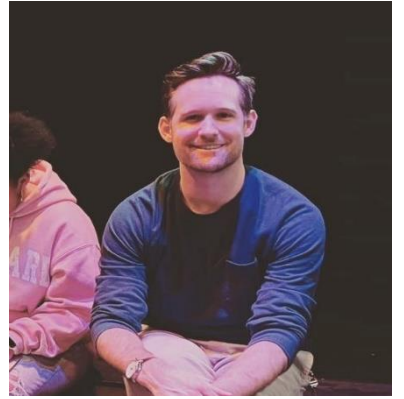
schools to Livingston." But with a new Theatre Arts Pathway and a new performing arts teacher/director this year, Mr. Patteson will have the opportunity to improve the existing theatre arts program here at Livingston high school and to build one from scratch.

Patteson mentions how excited he is at the opportunity, exclaiming, "I get to create it, and I get to create it with you guys!" He hopes to mold the program to his students' interests whether it be improv, playwriting, or even filmmaking.

However, starting a new job as an art teacher during a global pandemic has not been

easy. Patteson recognizes that art classes are dependent on creative collaboration which can be tough to emulate on zoom. But, he has learned to adjust to these challenges and successfully put on LHS's first-ever hybrid fall drama with audience attendance both in-person and online around the country.

Patteson describes his approach to arts education during the pandemic as "negotiating opportunities for connection while also giving [his] students a space to escape, detach, and explore [their] crafts more independently." It seems to be working. Currently, Patteson is directing LHS's



first-ever Winter radio show, Peter Pan, which will run completely virtually.

Each day, Patteson says, his students show that they are willing to take risks and get involved, making him hopeful and excited for his new future here at LHS.

From Ohio and on the Right Track



By SAMARA ELSTER
Lance Contributor

Growing up as a track and field athlete, new science teacher, Mr. Jason Munsch, was surrounded by different mentors such as teachers and coaches. These people inspired him to want to be a mentor for kids, mainly teenagers and college-aged.

Coaching and teaching go hand in hand, which gave him a great opportunity to pursue his career at Livingston High School (LHS).

As a high school student, Mr. Munsch considered himself a "perfectionist in a way." But after taking a science course, his teacher taught him that it's okay to make mistakes; making mistakes is the way to learn.

Going to the University of Toledo as an engineering major and track and field athlete, Mr. Munsch soon realized that engineering was not suited for him. Being able to have personal interactions with others played a big role in finding a career for him, and

in an engineering internship, he soon found out that he was not suited for it.

When looking for a public school to teach at, Mr. Munsch expressed that he, "wanted to be at a public school that had the same, if not higher academic expectations," as his past jobs.

And with all of the different science courses that are offered at LHS, it seemed like the perfect fit.

The main thing that stood out to Mr. Munsch about LHS is the supporting culture in the school.

He noticed the teachers collaborating and helping each other grow and get better. This has been fun for him since he can get to know the school more.

Starting your first year of teaching during a global pandemic where you have to teach remotely is not easy for any teacher. But Mr. Munsch is looking at all of the positives and says, "It is helping us use technology that we have never used."

Mr. Munsch cares a lot about collaboration with students and getting to know them better. But when teaching online, he claims, "there is no replacing that in person connection that students and teachers make."

"For me, it's the impact outside of the classroom. Being a role model or setting an example that maybe inspires and motivates students to pursue their passion and have a positive outlook on life," Mr. Munsch reaffirms about online schooling.

In the classroom, Mr. Munsch likes to keep positive energy and reaches out to his students on all different levels.

From living in 7 different states after college, he likes to share exciting and different life stories with students.

Regarding his goals set at LHS, Mr. Munsch said that he wants to encourage more students to take the life science courses offered. He lastly added, "I would like to establish myself in the community."

Bookworm to English Teacher

By EMILY ARONOW
Lance Contributor

How did Kelsey Collins end up at LHS? Well, it all started at freshman orientation at TCNJ (The College of New Jersey), when Ms. Collins met future friend and eventual LHS English teacher Ms. Atkins. Throughout her college experience, she and Ms. Atkins had many classes and group projects together, Ms. Collins recalls, which led to the friendship between the two aspiring English teachers.

Ms. Collins chose to be an English teacher because she feels that "the skills we learn in English class apply to real life in so many ways." One example, she explains, is that in English class, you "practice reading, writing and speaking, and you need to do those things well in almost anything that you are interested in pursuing."

So far, Ms. Collins thinks that LHS has a positive environment. Although students and staff haven't been in the building for the better part of the year, she could "feel a lot of positivity and school spirit."

While teaching during a pandemic is difficult, Ms. Collins puts an emphasis on creating a positive classroom environment, even if it is online. Ms. Collins recognizes that part of creating a positive classroom environment is encouraging interaction. She likes when her students make an effort to participate in class and really enjoys little things, like students turning their cameras on and responding when she greets them at the



beginning of class. "Those are some meaningful things," she says, "because we are going through a pandemic."

While the pandemic has made teaching online more challenging, it does have some positive effects. In quarantine, Ms. Collins has had more time to get more into bullet journaling. She likes to use stickers and different colored pens in her journal to be artistic because, she tells me, "I'm not the best at drawing."

Ms. Collins also really enjoys cutting pictures out of magazines and pasting them into her journal. She used to have a subscription to Vogue, a monthly fashion and lifestyle magazine from which most of her pictures came from.

Ms. Collins likes to take daily walks to de-stress and relax. "I think that's part of the pandemic," she says, "wanting a reason to be outside and to get out of the house."

Overall, Ms. Collins loves being an English teacher, since it is the one thing that she is "most passionate about" in life. She overall hopes that she can prepare her past, present, and future students for the life ahead of them after they leave her classroom.

LHS NEWS (CONT'D)

There's No Shortage of Excitement

By **JOSH BROWN**
Lance Contributor

Señor Krumholz, a first-year Spanish teacher at LHS, has been bringing excitement into his classes. Even though Covid-19 has created many obstacles for teachers, he tries his best to keep the classroom spirit alive.

From “a very early age, [Señor Krumholz] always knew he wanted to teach.” However, he did not plan to teach Spanish, as he didn't feel a particular or strong connection to the language.

During his time as a student Muhlenberg College, he had a professor who ignited his passion for the language. The professor saw massive

potential in him, so she “asked [him] if he would take an advanced course and “further study.” After a great deal of convincing, he decided to pursue a minor in Spanish.

Especially in a World Language class, enthusiasm and participation are key to learning and retaining material, with the understanding that using the language (thoughtfully) is key, rather than solely taking notes and studying from textbooks all day.

Conversation, presentation, and writing are methods Señor Krumholz uses to help his students retain and improve upon their knowledge.

The new teacher is “thrilled to be teaching

secondary ed.” at the high school. He connects well with Livingston because he likes the size and the broad course offering, so there's room for him to grow. “The beauty of a big department, like Spanish [is that] we offer courses from Spanish communication and culture all the way up to AP Spanish.”

Señor Krumholz likes to bring “creativity to the classroom.” Whether it's reading a Spanish novel, holding an in class discussion, or even interpersonal assignments, he ensures interactivity and creativity in each.

Acknowledging that retaining a new language can be hard, he likes to keep every

class exciting and interesting.

In “Spanish 2 CP, we're reading a novel... it has lent itself to productive in-class discussions,” he explains.

The most important aspect for Señor Krumholz is having students using the language whenever possible.

He likes to say, “Focus less on the technical aspects and more on just using the language.” This helps students retain the most knowledge and learn by practicing grammar while using the language.

Using a wide range of technology, having students focus on making connections from Spanish to their lives, and making sure to mix-it-up, Señor Krumholz is looking to the future.



The Chinese Department's Newest Addition

By **ADRIANA PIPITONE**
Lance Contributor

Growing up with parents who were both university professors, Mr. Cai decided to pursue the same degree in education. This year, he settled into becoming a Chinese teacher at Livingston High School.

Searching for teaching jobs, Cai found Livingston to be the most appealing because it “has a very good reputation and it has a very

good Chinese program.”

Mr. Cai stated, “Growing up, [my parents] have inspired me a lot as a teacher and continue to inspire me.”

His parents convinced him to continue working with students throughout his life. Cai went on to mention how practicing the art of teaching with his parents throughout his past years really made him love his choice in pursuing a career in education.

This past school year, Mr. Cai has built a deep passion for teaching and working with all of his students. Being one of Livingston High School's newest teachers in the Language Department, Mr. Cai thinks it is most important to have certain qualities, such as “being patient and knowledgeable.”

Even more so this year, teaching via Zoom can be very difficult and

frustrating. This is something that is not only new to students, but teachers as well.

According to Mr. Cai, his students have truly been keeping up with the struggle amidst the pandemic and are doing a fantastic job.

As he stated, they are “hard working, enthusiastic, and motivated,” which he considers to be some of the best qualities that he has seen in his students so far at LHS.

LHS.

Cai understands that learning from home can be far from easy, but he knows that his students are not giving up during these tough times.

Even with the global pandemic affecting in-person schooling, Mr. Cai doesn't let these disruptions get in his way. He continues to do what he enjoys and makes the best out of being a Chinese teacher at Livingston High School.

FEATURES

The Second Biggest Mall in America



By **NOA KADOURI**
Lance Contributor

EAST-RUTHERFORD, NEW JERSEY—Shopping, ice skating, skiing, a waterpark, an amusement park, mini-golf course, and restaurants are all at the American Dream Mall.

It is one place where you can have endless entertainment. The second biggest mall in America is finally open after many years of construction and diligent work.

The New York Times reports that the mall “features roughly 3 million square feet of

stores, water slides, a caviar bar, and an indoor ski slope.”

The Real Deal, an online publication, elaborates on how the “\$5 billion retail and entertainment complex in the Meadowlands finally

started opening its facilities in phases in October 2019.” With only 80 stores open, the pandemic hit hard financially.

The pandemic has had a hard toll on the opening of this long awaiting mall. People all over the world were expected to come and visit this place, but the pandemic changed all plans.

A Forbes article titled “American Dream Mall Had Retail Problems Before the Coronavirus, Now They Are Worse,” explains how “the mall had drawn 790,000 visitors during the first three months it was open.”

This might seem like a lot, but with about 9,000 visitors a day, the overall business was considered slow.

Now, the retail business is looking bleak. “Many of the planned retailers may no longer be able to afford to

open any new stores in the mall” (Forbes Magazine). CBC News says that “the value of the mall was recently reduced to \$1.94 billion from \$2.3 billion.”

With stores remaining closed, jobs are hit hard. “100-plus jobs were lost because of financial problems” at the American Dream Mall (Forbes Magazine).

Since unemployment is at record highs and more economic problems are expected for the second half of the year, the price of the American Dream attractions also could be an issue. High prices may deter future customers.

The American Dream Mall is a great place for entertainment and an overall fun place to visit with family and friends, and only time could prove that.

SOFT NEWS

Britain Stands at the Forefront

By ANNIE EISNER AND
JOELLE SONET
Lance Contributors

LONDON--On December 8th, Britain began its mass vaccination plan with the now 91-year-old Margaret Keenan becoming the first person, aside from those who participated in clinical trials, to receive the coronavirus vaccine.

With Britain getting the ball rolling on its vaccination plan, many countries have followed suit. Canada took the initiative and purchased “nine doses per person” (Mullard), meaning that there will be enough for each citizen to get a second dose of the vaccine. The second dose is highly recommended and

must be administered within a specific time frame in order to be effective.

The 27 countries of the European Union have also purchased and pre-ordered doses. Countries that have ordered the most vaccine doses per person include the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Japan.

Following those nations, China, Indonesia, Vietnam, India, Switzerland, Brazil (and the rest of Latin America), Israel, Egypt, and Mexico have also pre-ordered their vaccines.

To start the rollout, the UK ordered enough of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for about 30% of people. The government also designated 50 hospitals to receive the

the vaccine first and begin vaccinating citizens who are considered a part of the “high risk” group. This group includes nursing home residents, their caregivers, and people over the age of 80.

Although a good start to ending the pandemic, Britain’s vaccine has brought complications with it.

A small number of people began “reporting minimal side effects” (Mueller) and peculiar but non-life-threatening allergic reactions to the vaccine.

Those in charge of regulating the vaccine addressed the reports of allergic reactions and advised that “people prone to severe allergic reactions should not receive the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for the time being”

(Mueller).

People are also encouraged to get vaccinated at locations that have the proper equipment and tools to handle severe reactions.

Another complication with the vaccine in Britain is that everyone must be vaccinated before second doses can be administered.

This means that, while the second dose should be administered within 21 days of the first.

AP News reports that “the U.K.’s Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunization [...] has stretched out the time between the doses from 21 days to within 12 weeks.”

A second dose, heavily advised by many medical professionals, is important

to ensuring the effectiveness of the treatment.

As coronavirus cases continue to surge, with a reported 407 new virus-related-deaths, the vaccine rollout is even more crucial and important.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson says that a “massive ramp-up operation” has begun in the vaccination program.

Despite the challenges of the vaccine, Britain is planning to continue the rollout plan until everyone is protected against the virus which has already taken the lives of over 81,000 British citizens (New York Times).

The Road to the Future: Self-Driving Cars

By SIDHANT
SRIVASTAVA
Lance Contributor

The most influential technological inventions are those which elevate everyday life. As such, the novel innovations in autonomous driving over the past decade have contributed to building a more technologically advanced society, displaying promising results for the future of machine learning.

In September 2014, Tesla pioneered its advanced assisted driving program with the launch of Autopilot, marking an important milestone in the real-world applications of AI and data science.

The intriguing technology that constitutes this can be broken down into three elements: sensors (input data

constructing a virtual setting); connectivity (analyzes traffic patterns and road conditions); and control algorithms (reliably makes driving decisions based on available information).

Each Tesla has eight external cameras, twelve strategically placed ultrasonic sensors, and a built-in radar.

Coupled with the hardware, Tesla utilizes an advanced neural network to gather real-time feedback and make rapid modifications.

Over the past few years, large tech companies like Uber have demonstrated interest in the field and are looking at self-driving cars to provide more efficient means of transportation. Google

has made significant strides with its autonomous vehicle business Waymo. Similar to Tesla, the Waymo Driver’s software scans for surrounding objects.

With a vision of three football fields in every direction, Waymo can predict outside movements and adjust the trajectory and speed of the vehicle accordingly.

Even with recent innovations, there is still a great deal of discovery left to be uncovered.

This intersection of automobile engineering and data science strongly interests many engineers, who are committed to improving the cyclical process—as well as more technical components such as the feedback loop

mechanism that relays information from the sensor to the car’s computer—used to design and test code for self-driving cars.

Over the next twenty years, many scientists envision the transposition industry to gradually become fully autonomous.

This change will drastically reduce

accidents and fatality numbers, constructing a safer societal environment, and extending the boundaries of technological impact.

However, one question still remains: what regulations are necessary to oversee this dynamic machinery?



The Georgia Senate Runoffs

By SHREYA SAMPATH
Lance Contributor

The first week of January, specifically January 5th, was an important day for American politics. This senatorial election in Georgia was especially vital because it decided the majority of the Senate during President-elect Biden’s presidency.

The Senate runoffs were triggered because neither candidate in both elections reached a 50% majority in November. According to Georgia state law, this allowed for a special election, which took place on January 5th. The two races attracted significant national attention and

spending because of the consequential results.

The Republican contenders and occupiers of the seats were David Perdue and Kelly Loeffler, ardent Trump supporters. Their Democratic challengers, Raphael Warnock and Jon Ossoff, have a background in politics and activism in Georgia.

Raphael Warnock is a senior pastor serving in the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, Dr. King’s former congregation. Jon Ossoff, a documentary filmmaker and investigative journalist, was the Democratic nominee for a 2017 special election for a

Georgia congressional district.

Though the race was close, both Raphael Warnock and Jon Ossoff were elected as senators representing Georgia. Through this victory, they broke barriers; Raphael Warnock will be the first Black senator from Georgia, and Jon Ossoff will be the first Jewish senator from Georgia. The reason for their victory is the grassroots organizations that fought against voter discrimination, increasing turnout in cosmopolitan areas and the surrounding suburbs.

Advocates such as Stacey Abrams, a former candidate for governor, built many

organizations that created programs to increase awareness about voting.

Also, both races spent millions of dollars on advertisements and campaigning, making it the most expensive senatorial election in American history.

This victory for the Democrats will create a majority in the Senate, replacing Mitch McConnell with Chuck Schumer, as Senate Majority Leader.

Now, the Democrats hold a majority in both the House and the Senate, with a Democratic president in the White House.



FREELANCE

NICOLE ZHU



“AUTUMN WOODS” by GRACE SONG

I walk through the woods on a crisp autumn day.

*The golden sunlight warming my back
peeks through the canopies of trees,
turning red and orange leaves to copper and
gold.*

*A rock clatters down the path when I hit it.
Aside from the occasional birdsong,
crunching of crisp brown leaves under my feet
and chatter of squirrels,
it's completely silent.*

*It feels like I'm the last person on Earth.
A tiny gray dot stands out in the colorful
landscape. As I get closer, I see it's a cabin,
almost hidden by overgrown bushes and
shrubs.*

*The wood is faded and worn from years
of wind and rain, large stones from the broken
chimney
scatter the ground. Shards from the broken
windows glitter like stars.*

*I jump when a crow breaks the silence with a
loud caw
before leaving in a whirlwind of ink-black
feathers.*

*The door hangs ajar, showing only darkness.
I go in.*

“New Year Poem” by Russell Fan

*Among the golden, bubbling champagne and roaring cheers lies the entity that
seemingly has been lost this past year: Hope.*

*Tucked away in the dark vastness of global agony, a gem of shimmering,
shining hope struggles to thrive.*

*Its absence manifests into a mere feeling; one that is so unrecognizable, yet so
coveted.*

*Dampened by the tears of suffering and hardships, hope could barely be
fathomed.*

*Isolation, chaos, injustice, civil unrest, all appeared to have stripped it of any
of its familiarity.*

The year 2020 was its breaking point.

*But a realization dawned upon citizens from the southern to the northern
hemispheres: A new year was near.*

*To some, it is a reset button, to erase all the unpleasant elements of the recent
past and enter the present with a sense of relief.*

*To others, it is merely a continuation of the concurring crises, a transfer of our
problems to the current era.*

*However one chooses to view this new year, it is a chance for a revival of
hope: A long-awaited, much-needed return.*

*Radiant optimism offers the opportunity to burn out somber sorrow and
despair.*

It possesses the potential to restore some degree of stability or normality.

*It assures the ability to lighten the dejected spirit of this country and the
world.*

*As the gleaming sun ascends in the early morning of the new year, hope
permeates throughout the globe in illuminating rays.*



JENNIFER CHEN



EDITORIALS

Soul Critique

By NISHNA MAKALA
Lance Contributor

With a bowl of homemade popcorn in front of me, I mentally prepared myself for another masterpiece by Pixar studios as the opening scene of *Soul* started to play on Disney+. With its exploration of the relationship between passion and capitalism in *Ratatouille*, Pixar has become reputable for its thought-provoking themes. However, *Soul* is arguably the most nuanced film the studio has produced.

In the film, Joe (Jamie Foxx), a part-time school music teacher, is finally given the opportunity to perform with his idol, Dorothea Williams

(Angela Bassett). Although Joe dies in the first few minutes of the movie, he is given another chance at life if he can help an unborn soul named Twenty-two (Tina Fey) find her passions.

Many of the criticisms of *Soul* is that it confronts heavy themes, asserting that children would be bored or confused by its messages. Nonetheless, noting the film's subtleties in the trailers and lack of consumerism, *Soul* is aimed towards older audiences.

Since many animated works are often geared towards young children, animation is not respected as a serious genre. But, animation is a tool, much like the vivid technicolor used in *The Wizard of Oz* or the type

type of lens cinematographers use for shots. Thus, *Soul* should not be judged as a “kids’ movie,” but rather critiqued solely on the basis of its artistry.

As always, Pixar’s quality animation is breathtaking. The blend of 3-D and 2-D animation is natural and adds to the story. The stunning landscapes of New York City are strengthened by Ross and Reznor’s jazz compositions. The movie demonstrates that we are not solely defined by our passions, but by the simple joys of life as well.

While Pixar’s trademark is handling complex, real-world issues, this project was risky. For a filmmaker, complex,

complex, real-world issues, this project was ambitiously risky. For a filmmaker, complex, vague topics, such as “war,” “poverty,” or in this case, “the meaning of life,” mean navigating an endless road of controversy and unintended implications. For the audience, it means consciously donning a defensive shield to avoid becoming “indoctrinated” or “preached” by the filmmaker’s ideas.

Pete Doctor, an experienced Chief creative officer of Pixar, tries to compensate by skillfully maintaining secrecy in *Souls’* trailers which allowed the audience to watch the movie with an open-minded outlook.

Similar to how Disney presented its first African-American princess in *Princess and the Frog*, *Soul* has garnered critique about how Pixar’s first African-American character is transformed into a bluish-blob and a cat for the majority of the film. However, unlike in *Princess and the Frog*, most of the characters in the film are African-American (and in their own bodies). Critics raise a valid point considering that the majority of Pixar’s protagonists have been white.

Soul is far from a “perfect movie,” but it signifies a reformation in film which can allow for more diverse that can be accepted and expected in animated films.

The Pandemic that Affected Us All



By SASHA LUKONEN
Lance Contributor

Our pre-COVID lives were often packed and filled with social interactions throughout the course of the day. Due to the stay at home orders, these interactions have been decreased significantly, if not eliminated. In general, teenagers are at a lower risk to get COVID, but they are just as likely to feel the effects of the pandemic.

Depression is one of the many things that this pandemic has brought upon teens. According to the CDC, “Symptoms of anxiety disorder and depressive disorder increased considerably in the United States during April–June of 2020, compared with the same period in 2019.” The pandemic totally obliterated our daily activities.

Let’s rewind our imagination back to the pre-COVID school day: riding the bus, walking to class, and eating lunch with friends. Within a few short weeks, our everyday routines no longer existed and we were forced to exist within the confines of our homes. Our new normal, which included no social interaction,

led teenagers to feel trapped in their own bubble.

Gen Z is very familiar with social media and during these unprecedented times it allows us to safely stay connected. It enables teens to connect with each other without risking the health of themselves or those around them. Snapchat, Instagram, and Facetime, are just a few of the many platforms that are helping teens feel socially and interpersonally connected. These apps provide a lifeline for people who feel isolated from their friends, family and loved ones.

Having said this, social media isn’t going to solve all of our problems. New York Times author, Emma Golding, states that “Research shows that adolescents depend on their friendships to maintain a sense of self-worth and to manage anxiety and depression.”

FOMO: the fear of missing out. While sitting at home scrolling through social media, seeing influencers and classmates doing fun, normal activities makes some adolescents feel left out. Seeing others having fun when you cannot leads teens to reflect on the negatives in life. They

question why their parents are so strict with COVID protocols and others aren’t. It can foster a sense of resentment between children and their parents. These feelings, coupled with the anxiety and depression they may already be feeling, create a perfect storm of feeling burnt out and little desire to do anything.

Though there may be less work in online school, students generally do not feel like they have less work; there is no sensation of having more free time amongst teens. Being home most of the time negatively impacts my motivation. Completing assignments takes longer than usual because I don’t feel I have the energy. My eyes sting and my head throbs after looking at the bright screen for the entirety of the school day. I am constantly searching for ways to deal with the burn out.

After nearly a year of being at home, many of us are still limiting our social interactions between friends and family to stay safe. We must find safe ways of keeping in touch with your loved ones. A simple phone call can make a world of a difference.

Our Subconscious Adventures

By BOBIN PARK
Lance Contributor

Dreams, bucket lists, life goals, whatever you want to call them, most of us have them; sometimes they are the same, and sometimes they are different.

What types of dreams do we all have? And no, not the one you had last night, about leaving your home to take the nearest plane to Cook Islands, which is a real place and also one of the states that has yet to report a coronavirus case. If you actually had this very dream, I hope you took that plane. Now back to the dreams.

There are many reasons why some of our dreams overlap: money, power, family.

I’m sure during awkward ice breakers, you had to squeak out a word or two about your dream, and you realize it coincides with the dreams of others in your group. This happens because we have similar fundamental influences in our lives and have witnessed all their positive impacts. For example, talking about rich corporations, billionaires, and the insane amount of media coverage on their lives, has become almost inescapable.

We also dream about family because everyone wants that *Best Kid In The World* mug every Christmas. I kid you not, it is one of the greatest joys in having a family. One of the ultimate reasons why our subconscious

flock to these dreams is because we haven’t actually faced the truth behind the scenes.

Those dreams that don’t overlap and are deemed unique, are derived from your own life experiences. John Locke, an Enlightenment thinker, proposed the theory of “*tabula rasa*,” where humans are born with a blank slate and are affected based on our experiences. Those who have had previous experiences with mentally traumatizing incidents might make it their lifelong goal to make sure incidents like those don’t repeat. Dreams are built upon your beliefs, your opinions, or the lessons you’ve learned through your experiences.

In some dreams, we wish for the things we don’t have. Those are the trips we always want to go on: Asia, Europe, Africa. These are experiences we didn’t have in our lives personally, so we thirst for them even more. Although some of us may not have been to these places, we’ve built fantasies around the prospect of going. These types of dreams can be motivated by friends sharing stories about their own trips, famous celebrities visiting a certain place, or just having a generic image of that certain place and wanting to go.

The subjects in your dreams are what you deem is most important in your life and what you want to accomplish. These elements influence the type of dreams you’ll revisit. Think about that for a second. Now, go back to reality.

EDITORIALS (CONT'D)

The Future of Renewable Energy

By **ALAN ZHU**
Lance Contributor

Environmental changes in the past decade have been a rude awakening to the reality of global warming.

With the Paris Climate Accord in 2015, many countries have realized the necessity and importance to take major strides in reducing carbon emissions by transitioning to renewable energy sources.

While many people instinctively think of solar, wind, and hydropower as the main renewable energy sources, geographical restrictions and a lack of technology to effectively store the energy for future use have limited their widespread use.

Hence, scientists began to research and perfect a renewable energy source: hydrogen, one that can be easily stored and transported.

Hydrogen-powered fuel cells have been around since the 1800s and produce nearly zero carbon emissions.

Previous methods of acquiring pure hydrogen were costly and produced carbon emission, making the process very inefficient.

But in 2018, a group of Australian scientists working for the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO) presented a revolutionary discovery that could make hydrogen the major source of renewable energy in the future.

Utilizing a ruthenium catalyst and a thin sheet of vanadium, they were able to easily and efficiently convert ammonia into pure hydrogen with a nitrogen byproduct.

The implications of this discovery are huge. Ammonia is one of the most abundant commercially used elements, frequently used in fertilizer, textiles, dyes, pesticides, plastics, etc.

In addition, transporting and storing hydrogen as ammonia eliminates many of the risk factors presented by hydrogen.

Unlike hydrogen and other gases, ammonia gas can be stored at much lower temperatures and is not easily flammable, making for much safer use in a commercial

More importantly, the only waste produced in this process is nitrogen gas, which isn't harmful to the environment.

This discovery is already having a large impact on the world of renewable energy.

Backed by government support, the CSIRO scientists are planning to achieve "H2 for \$2" where, through their cheap and innovative discovery, they will eventually bring hydrogen prices down to \$2 per kilogram, making hydrogen a feasible contender in the energy market.

So far, prices to create hydrogen have reached a low of \$6 per kilogram.

Other countries including Japan and Korea have also invested billions into the development of hydrogen

These investments have led Japanese car companies Honda and Toyota to release a new car design entirely powered by hydrogen. These cars would produce zero carbon emissions and only emit water and warm air.

At the Karuizawa G-20 forum, Japan promoted these models to other countries. In a joint statement with the United States and the European Union, they declared their intention to begin a transition towards hydrogen fuel cell technology.

As Australia continues to improve the efficiency of creating hydrogen from ammonia, the world is beginning to recognize hydrogen as the fuel of the future.

This is America

By **CECILIA FRESCHI**
Lance Contributor

January 6th, 2021 was a day that will go down in history.

The US Capitol, one of the most iconic American landmarks, was breached by hundreds of people, leaving five dead and more injured.

After the presidential election, President Trump voiced his concerns about

Voter fraud. He also urged his supporters to fight against the ceremonial counting of the electoral votes that would confirm President-elect Joe Biden's win.

Among the fatalities is 35-year-old Ashli Babbitt who was a married Air Force Veteran. She frequently attended Trump rallies, including flying to

Washington to attend this one.

Officer Brian D. Sicknick was another victim of this attack.

He passed on January 7th due to "injuries sustained while on duty" while trying to protect the Capitol. He served for 13 years.

These are only two of the five deaths that occurred on what the protesters called a "revolutionary" day.

What do you think would have happened if this same situation occurred during any other protest?

Some politicians claim that white privilege allowed the protestors to breach the nation's Capitol building with ease and little repercussions.

To outsiders, America is known as a place created on an ideal set of values and rights given to each American. Equality is one of

core values we, as a country, strive to have. All of us should aspire to maintain and improve equality, which is one of the main tenets that define our nation. No group should be given a societal advantage over another.

The comparison of the two situations is hard to look past, but realizing that there is a problem is the first step in creating much needed change.

SPORTS

Yankees Vs. Mets...The Battle for New York

By **DYLAN TOVITZ**
Lance Contributor

One of the most iconic rivalries in sports is the rivalry between the New York Yankees and the New York Mets, who are crosstown rivals in arguably the greatest city in the world.

The past has seen the Yankees get the better of the Mets; however, after a change in ownership this offseason, the Mets appear to be serious contenders.

Since the "Subway Series," as it is often called, first started, the Yankees have beaten the Mets 71 times, while the Mets have only won 51 times.

However, last year the two teams split the season series, each winning three games. Both teams have made some huge acquisitions so far this offseason.

The Mets offseason kicked off with a change in ownership, as Fred Wilpon sold the team to billionaire Steve Cohen for a whopping 2.4 billion dollars.

The Mets then followed by signing an abundance of players including catcher James McCann, and pitcher Trevor May. They are also in the market for reigning Cy Young award-winner Trevor Bauer.

However, the biggest move the Mets made was trading for all-star shortstop Francisco Lindor and starting pitcher Carlos Carrasco from the Cleveland Indians.

Although they did have to give up Andres Gimenez and Amed Rosario, two young shortstops with bright futures, this was seen as a great deal for the Mets.

According to Mike Mazzeo, a rival executive of the Mets claimed that the Mets "stole



[Lindor]. Total steal. It's ridiculous. People in Cleveland should be fired for doing that trade."

On the other side of the city, the Yankees started off with a much quieter offseason.

After making it deep into the playoffs for the fourth straight year and still being unable to make the world series, General Manager Brian Cashman knew he had to step it up. He did this on January 15th by re-signing

MVP candidate D.J. LeMahieu to a six-year contract and bringing in former Cy Young award-winner Corey Kluber.

In addition, the Yankees acquired starting pitcher Jameson Taillon from the Pirates and signed relief pitcher Darren O' Day to a one year contract.

With these deals, the Yankees are looking at a deep postseason run yet again.

If both of these teams can stay healthy, it would be a surprise to nobody to see the Yankees returning to the playoffs for the fifth straight season, and the Mets getting there for the first time since 2016.

One thing is for certain: this will be a super exciting year for both teams, and for the first time in a while, there will be serious competition for the baseball champion of New York.