

SENIOR
2021

MHS

Volume 73: Issue 4

THE

BULLDOG'S BARK



Metuchen High School's Student Newspaper Since 1948

2020-2021 Academic Year

Letter to the



By Eddie Kalegi

As surreal as it may be, in less than one month's time, Metuchen High School will officially become my former home (in-person, virtually, or otherwise). I have truly enjoyed the opportunity to walk these halls, taking advantage of all that MHS has to offer. I am, of course, going to miss many of my teachers, who have taught me well, been extremely accommodating, and helped prepare me for my future endeavors.

Hosting the MHS Pawdcast since freshman year, I've been privileged to connect with people across the high school community and showcase the hard work that everyone puts into their unique interests and activities. Being involved with a myriad of high school offerings, including the Astronomy Club, Media Club, Geo Club, Concert Band, and of course broadcasting sporting events, I've been able to diversify my knowledge, explore new interests, and expand my horizons. And I will always be grateful for the opportunity to write for the *Bulldog's Bark* since 2017 and have appreciated serving as editor-in-chief throughout this unconventional school year. Looking back at my high school years, MHS has absolutely made me ready for the next chapter of my life.

To the Class of 2021, our senior year can be characterized by just a single word: endurance. We have had to navigate through the most challenging year and a half of our educational lives in the midst of the most globally tumultuous 18 months in recent memory. The coronavirus pandemic, a divisive period in the fight against systematic racial injustice, and a lack of a traditional senior year have left us all frustrated and depressed at one time or another.

However, our optimism, unwavering work ethic, and valiant effort to tackle difficult problems have prepared us better for the adult world ahead—better than any previous graduating class. Despite the hindrances that the pandemic has caused to our everyday lives, specifically altering how we learn and socialize, we have adapted. Distance learning has been strenuous for all those involved, but we've remained focused on attaining our goals and have tried our best to limit the dreaded "Zoom fatigue."

Sports, music, clubs, and other activities were forced to undergo significant changes, but we treasured the opportunities we had and the memories we made, regardless of how unprecedented the circumstances may have been. We've been innovative, using our voice to represent those in need of support, and we now find ourselves ready to take on the new challenges that may lie ahead in college, the workforce, the military, or adult life in general.

And to the underclassmen who will be returning in the fall, I certainly haven't forgotten about you. Dealing with this past year has been an immense undertaking for you as well. But fortunately for all of you, things will be much more normal in the fall. Governor Murphy has affirmed that school will be fully in-person statewide in September, which will subsequently lead to the return of all the regular MHS activities that we have all come to know and love. I encourage you to get involved (especially with the school's journalism and media department, of course!), and take advantage of the opportunities you have.

There will always be bumps in the road, and high school can seem overwhelming at times, but if this past year has taught me anything, it is that we must treasure the finite moments that we have, as nobody can predict what the future holds. Re-entering a traditional routine in the fall, all of you will have the chance to learn, thrive, and grow at Metuchen High School, and make your respective mark on the school.

Thank you to all, congratulations to my fellow members of the Class of 2021, stay positive, and let's all have a great summer!

Principal Peragallo to retire

By Nene Murao

After years of dedicated service to Metuchen High School, Mr. Peragallo announced his retirement, making this his last school year. From a physical education and health teacher to a principal, Mr. Peragallo has demonstrated his great leadership skills and passion for education throughout his professional experience.

To garner his insights, I conducted a brief interview with him.

Q. Can you tell us a little about how you became an educator?

A. "Both of my parents were in education, so it was something that I grew up with and appreciated throughout my childhood. Seeing their involvement in teaching, their achievements, and what they enjoyed most as teachers naturally drew me into this field. I also ironically started my career out as a physical education/health teacher, exactly like both of my parents who did the same."

Q. What would you tell yourself if you could go back to when you first started as a principal?

A. "I guess I would tell myself that since technology has really advanced in the time that I have been a principal, to be more engaged with the use of technology. I recognize very much that technology has been positively transforming the education system over the course of the past several years, so I wish I could've incorporated it more at our school during my time here."

Q. What did you enjoy most about your job?

A. "I always enjoyed seeing our students succeed, whether that be in the classroom or for extracurricular activities, it is always extremely gratifying to see them do so. I also love it when our past students come back and tell me about their experiences in college, or their job, or the military, or whatever they have decided to carry on with after high school. Seeing they were fully prepared to move onto their next chapter in life after their high school is always good to hear."

Q. What do you like about the way in which school spirit is embodied at MHS?

A. "I believe our staff is tremendous. They are all very welcoming and work very well with our students; every single one of them is concerned with the students having success, and they always do everything they can for the students to succeed. Our school is small, but we have a large variety of opportunities that both our students and faculty can get involved in, especially with co-curricular activities. In co-curricular settings, teachers and students are able to see the different faces of each other outside of the classroom, which allows the relationship between the teachers and students to become very intimate. I really enjoy seeing this."

Q. Do you have any advice you wish to impart to students at MHS?

A. "I would tell students to take advantage of every opportunity that presents itself in high school. High school is not easy, but working hard right now is only going to make you that much more prepared for what you do when you leave here. Get involved in as many things as possible, not only in the school, but also for the community we serve."

At the end of the interview, Mr. Peragallo shared some final words:

"I really want to thank every single one of our students and staff for all of the amazing work they have done and the opportunity they have given me during my time here. Some faculty members have actually been working the whole time I was at this school. I strongly believe that the faculty is what makes the school what it is. It has been such a great honor being able to work with each and every one of them for all of these years. I know it's not easy, but I hope that current students of MHS are able to make the best of their remaining high school years. I hope that our past students are having a great time after high school and enjoying their individual lives. Thank you again, everyone."

Thank you to Mr. Peragallo for the many years of unconditional support and enthusiasm he has given to MHS. We will miss him so much and will never forget any of his contributions to our school. We all wish him the best in his retirement after all of his honorable hard work!

The American plutocracy

By Sophie Villacampa

The 2020 election left a lot of government officials wondering what can be done to combat voter suppression, gerrymandering, and corrupt campaign financing that has occurred for decades. And so, HR-1, also known as the “For the People Act,” was born. This bill proposes widespread democratic reform to fight back against shady election and campaign practices—one of these practices being the use of dark money.

Dark money is defined by the *Oxford Dictionary* as “funds raised for the purpose of influencing elections by nonprofit organizations that are not required to disclose the identities of their donors.” Since the donors of dark money can remain anonymous, they are able to donate to very shady causes and expect something in return. It helps the wealthiest people in America buy politicians in order to further their agenda in our government without having to disclose who they are. Because of this, our country can barely be called a democracy—it is a plutocracy.

If HR-1 were to pass, the public would know who exactly is donating to different political organizations and candidates. As many superdonors have donated to right-wing organizations and attempted to control the conservative base with twisted advertisements, it’s clear why they would rather have dark money stay dark.

Several weeks ago while listening to podcasts on this topic, I came across a startling discovery by the *New Yorker*: a phone call between a policy adviser to Mitch McConnell, a representative of Charles Koch named Kyle McKenzie, Grover Norquist, and others was leaked. The purpose of this call was to brainstorm ways to advertise HR-1 to Republican Americans in a negative light, despite the fact that polling suggested that Americans on both sides of the aisle are in support of the bill.

The men brainstormed, attempting to insert “cancel culture” or Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez into their messaging, even though these two things having little to do with the actual bill. Despite their best efforts to spin it in a bad light, it’s a simple fact that your average American does not want billionaires buying elections.

If you have been paying any attention to politics at all for the past many years, you know that our country is incredibly polarized right now. Propaganda and altered truth are widely responsible for how we got there, but for me, hearing this leaked phone call convinced me of this cemented corruption. It’s strange to hear someone genuinely suggest that a piece of legislation will “cancel” Americans. Frankly, it enraged me.

I believe that the men in this call and people like them have taken advantage of every possible facet of our political system to tip the scales in their favor while still somehow managing to make it all look democratic. If democracy is supposed to be the rule of the people, they poison the people’s logic. If democracy is supposed to mean we have elected leaders, they pay who they want to win elections the most. It’s all somehow still legal, and it is the only way for them to hold onto their political power.

‘...it’s a simple fact that your average American does not want billionaires buying elections.’

The other day I was in the Metuchen Diner and I heard a woman talking to her friend about her husband who watches *Newsmax*, a new right-wing “news” channel. She was distraught because he is getting up in age and has asthma, but refuses to take the COVID-19 vaccine because of what *Newsmax* is telling him about it. She said that it seems like whatever that channel tells him to do, he’ll do. I listened to all this, and it really made me think: our country has a disease.

Many will assert that the Trump administration has polarized our country. While that may be true, we have to look at exactly how that happened, and how it continues to happen. The simple answer is the news and the internet. The news is no longer an unbiased reporting source. Depending on which outlet you watch, you will hear entirely different interpretations of the same story. Someone who watches *CNN* has a completely different truth than someone who watches *Newsmax*. This is the reason why there are people who still fly their Trump flags and believe the 2020 election was stolen. They have been made to believe Donald Trump is the only politician they can trust and the only one who tells the “truth.”

No matter where you stand politically, if you are at least level-headed, it is hard to ignore how bad this issue is for our country. It is a never-ending cycle: superdonors like Charles Koch donate to campaigns that will help further an agenda; news channels like *Newsmax* and advertisements paid for by superdonors feed propaganda to their viewers; the candidates that superdonors donate to win because their base has been strengthened by the media and they have more campaign funds; the wealthiest people in America and the politicians they back keep their power.

If long lasting change is to occur, we cannot just rely on scraping together enough votes to get better politicians in office. The people and culture of this country need to change too. But if the wealthiest people continue to keep their power and manipulate the masses, there is not much hope for true change.

Don’t let white superiority cause another pandemic

By Amelia Riebling

A global revulsion towards China’s wet markets has surfaced as a response to the emergence of the COVID-19 virus that originated at a wet market in Wuhan, China. Pretentious public servants have been quick to condemn the practice, but from their ivory towers, such people have failed to recognize the blatant hypocrisy of their disdain. Is condemning China’s unsafe actions really beneficial if we continue to do exactly what we condemn?

Wet markets have been scrutinized for their susceptibility to spreading viruses, which is valid criticism. The animals are kept in crowded conditions, such as stacked cages, which is not only an ethical disaster, but dangerous for two reasons. Most obviously, the cramped nature of the livestock’s living conditions allows for the rapid spread of sickness from animal to animal. The lesser-known harm is the stress that the livestock endure as a product of the crowded conditions, which weakens their immune systems and makes them vulnerable to viral illnesses. This duress can also lead to mutations of the genetic codes of the viral pathogens, increasing their danger to humans. Undeniably, wet markets do pose a large threat to public safety, but the attributing factor—the stressful confinements that the animals are subjected to—is not unique to wet markets in China, contrary to what the public attitude may indicate. While there has been worldwide pressure to ban China’s wet markets, the nations applying this pressure on China are not immune to the proliferation of such dangerous conditions—even the holier-than-thou United States.

Compared to the global statistic of 90 percent, in the United States, 99 percent of all animal products are produced through factory farming, otherwise known as *concentrated* or *confined* animal feeding operations (CAFOs). This practice is named after the very factor that facilitates a viral spread between animals to humans. The definition of a factory farm, according to the ASPCA, is “an industrial facility that raises large numbers of farm animals such as pigs, chickens or cows in intensive confinement where their movements are extremely inhibited,” and where “animals are kept in cages or crates, or are crowded together in pens.” This definition constitutes *every* risk of the wet markets in China, yet lawmakers in the US mostly have not recognized this similarity as a reason to ban CAFOs, or at least implement regulations. It is embarrassing that the outbreak of COVID was not the call to action against factory farming that it should have been.

In 2019 Senator Cory Booker sponsored the Farm System Reform Act of 2019, which would eliminate the biggest CAFOs by 2040. Senators Elizabeth Warren, Bernie Sanders, and Ed Markey became cosponsors of the bill, which was introduced in January 2020 without receiving a vote. Now is the appropriate time to circle back.

Rather, many government officials chose instead to continue passing shame towards China without addressing the United States’ own threat to public health. Former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo addressed China and members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to demand that they abolish wet markets. He has yet to mention factory farming in the United States. Anthony Fauci stated, “it boggles my mind how when we have so many diseases that emanate out of that unusual human-animal interface, that we don’t just shut it down,” referring to China’s wet markets, but what is truly mind-boggling is that Fauci has yet to advocate shutting down the comparable perils that CAFOs pose in the country where he is the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases and the chief medical advisor to the president. The hypocrisy of Fauci’s condemnation of the practice solely in regards to China, but tolerance of equally dangerous factory farming within the United States, is dangerous. His reluctance to communicate that the United States poses comparable threats to public safety as he ridicules China is dangerous towards the global Asian community, as it feeds the notion that China is rampant with unsanitary conditions that the United States wouldn’t accept.

Without public figures addressing the realities of the situation, the media is replete with attacks on China’s wet markets. It is easy and expected for Westerners to view China as a dirty country with dirty practices, and to view themselves as—to put it starkly—superior.

People in Western society are very quick to see China as the *other*. The racist stereotype that Chinese people, and all Asian people, eat cats and dogs is rampant in pop culture despite there being little accuracy to this harmful notion. However, there is complete accuracy in the fact that snails are a part of French cuisine. Instead of being associated with a lack of cleanliness, snails are referred to as *escargot* and viewed as a delicacy. Like much else in this white supremacist world, this is founded in racist ideology. White people have always been regarded with an undeserving sophistication, while nonwhite people have been associated with the opposite. In reality, after all, it was Native Americans who taught the white man how to bathe. The reaction to wet markets has highlighted a widespread attitude.

In Denmark, the excessively cruel mink trade is not nearly as criticized as China is for its practices, but is arguably worse. As a vegan, I encourage people to challenge animal cruelty wherever they see it. But, the disproportionate criticism towards nonwhite perpetrators is appalling. Westerners, who are taught supremacy, and white Westerners especially, often cannot fathom that maybe unsanitary meat production is universal, and not specific to nonwhite countries. Western society relies on *othering* the rest of the world in order to maintain their superior self-view. This attitude continues

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The Pond

By Alex Osborn-Jones

It was a crisp spring evening when I went to the pond behind my house. The sun had lowered itself just below the trees, and a cool orange glow settled on the glassy water. I sat on the bench and looked over the clear green bowl that stood before me, a small smile curled on my face as I thought of the beautiful moments which had taken place over the years. Fishing for minnows with my father, walking with my sister and picking the small purple flowers that grew along the bank.

This place, the pond, the banks, the trees, always had been, and always would be my home. I stood up and walked to the old wooden dock which jutted about a fifth of the way into the lake. I remember the summer I turned twelve, helping my father build the dock out of nothing more than a few planks we found on the side of the road. It took days of sawing and hammering in the blazing sun, my mother or little sister stopping by every few hours to give us a cool lemonade or a green ice pop.

Once it was finished, my father gave me the honor of testing it out. I cautiously walked across, tensing when I heard boards creak. Eventually, I made it to the end and stared at my reflection in the water. My face was distorted by the rippling surface, eyes too big, smile too wide, and almost seeming older. I stopped smiling and it copied, giant eyes following me as I bent down. The tip of my nose was almost touching my reflected face when its expression turned into pure agony, mouth opening to a silent scream and hands reaching up, just a few inches shy of the surface of the water. My heart stopped, and I was just about to turn away and run off the dock when I heard loud thumps coming towards me, and I was pushed into the water by my father.

I forgot about that strange reflection for a while, chalking it up to nothing more than being in the sun too long. As I stood on the dock now, I looked down. My face was again warped by the shaky surface, eyes too big and mouth contorted. It seemed almost as though my reflection was trying to hold in a laugh, lips pulled taught and slightly upwards. I reached my hand down and splashed the surface. *That's enough of that*, I thought, sitting down and dipping my toes in the bitter water. I sat back and rested on my elbows, taking a deep breath.

The sun had finally said goodnight, and the first stars were peeking out through soft clouds. It was a new moon, so other than faint glimmering sparkles, the sky shone a deep, endless black. My eyelids were slowly closing and I was so drowsy, splayed out on the homemade dock which housed my childhood, when I felt something brush up against my foot, now fully submerged in the dark liquid. I jumped, my mouth making a small squeaking noise, until I remembered the small fish that lived in the pond who had gotten a little too comfortable with humans.

I laughed to myself, putting my feet back in. I lay back, closed my eyes, and smiled. *This is my happy place*. I was just drifting off when the brush against my foot returned. I ignored it, wanting to float into a dream, but this time it was persistent. It felt almost as if fingers were brushing against my ankle, slowly closing around the bone. *Nope*. I tried to pull my leg out of the water, but something was holding it back.

Something was... holding it. I began to panic, pushing against the creaking wood of the dock and thrashing about, but my foot stayed submerged. Before I had a chance to call out for help, it began pulling me. Closer and closer to the dark abyss of the pond. My hands reached out for something, anything to hold on to, but the weight pulling me was too strong, too fast to escape.


'I stopped smiling and it copied, giant eyes following me as I bent down.'

I was wrenched under the water, my lungs like a vacuum completely devoid of air. I quickly shut my mouth as I looked up for a glow of any light, but I was surrounded by complete darkness. The hand around my ankle had disappeared. I had lost all sense of direction, adrift in the nothingness. My chest was starting to burn, the lack of oxygen seared the inside of my lungs.

I pressed my eyelids shut, wishing for this to be a nightmare and to wake up in my bed. Wishing for this all to go away and to be safe. When I finally opened my eyes, I wasn't alone. Right before me stood a being. The same features as mine, yet distorted, as if by water refractions. It smiled, baring long, sharp, angler-fish-like fangs. What would be pearly white teeth had a sage glow to them from the color of the pond water.

I can see the pond water. I looked up and saw a glimmering sun and rippling blue sky through the surface. When I looked back at the horrific beast, it lunged at me, throwing its clawed fingers through the clear water. Without hesitation, I kicked my legs. Away from the horrors of the deep and towards the light and the shadow of the dock. I needed air, fast.

I was about four feet from the surface of the pond when I stopped. Standing there, looking down at me, was my twelve year old self. The child got down on her knees and squinted intently at me. I gazed up in confusion and hesitation. I needed to keep swimming. I tried to kick my legs, but something was stopping me. Hands again wrapped around my foot and my heart dropped. Pain and horror washed over my face as I reached up, towards myself, towards my childhood, and was pulled down, ripped away. The sun and the dock became a tiny speck in an open field of blackness until, again, I was lost in the dark.



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Reinvention and erasure—a package deal: Brit Bennet’s ‘The Vanishing Half’ By Isabel Li



This story of family, choices, and identities begins in Mallard 1968, when African American twin sisters Stella and Desiree run away from home. The town of Mallard is a bit of an anomaly given its unique population—made up entirely of light-skinned African Americans. And it’s this particular trait that cements the divide between these twins as they run away from their old life, one twin choosing to live a new identity as a white person, leaving her sister and her former life behind.

The novel takes place over multiple generations, reflecting the long standing battles of race decisions that shape future lives. As the narra-

tion jumps between the two girls and

their daughters, it’s clear that both sisters face consequences and compromises for their choices. Desiree marries a dark-skinned man and has a dark-skinned “tar-baby” child. For this, they both face judgement from the white community and even their light-skinned African American peers. When her daughter is able to get into UCLA, it’s the lauded accomplishment of someone who overcame racial expectations and barriers.

Stella marries a white man but spends her life calculating her actions and remaining closed off so that she may remain untraceable. Because of this, she keeps her current family at arm’s length and deals with having had to abandon her former family. Her daughter lives a life of privilege, able to flirt her way out of speeding tickets and use bribery in the wake of failed classes. She is also somewhat sheltered from the race issue, instead imbued with a certain ego that can come with naivety.

While Americans laud the idea of total control of one’s identity, Bennet suggests that sometimes there is a certain sacrifice to becoming who we want, especially with race and privilege in America. Indeed, the vanishing half may be this precise phenomenon that Bennet gets at, which implies the potential ease of “disappearing” and reinventing oneself, but also the similarly “disappearing” former identity.

Whether *The Vanishing Half* is your first or fiftieth experience with a story about passing, it offers insights on how successes and failures, prejudices and allowances, and love and secrecy all tie into how we shape our identity and what we may have given up to be ourselves.



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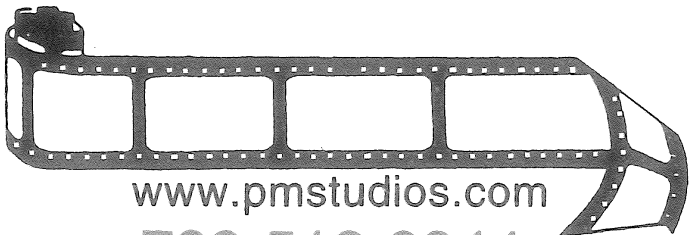
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Artist Spotlight

Tsering Nyandak

By Itai Geller



“Land of No Heroes” by Tsering Nyandak

In my initial column, I discussed Takashi Murakami, his ideologies, and his fame. But the focus this time is going to be a little different. Unlike Murakami, this artist is someone you have likely never heard of, regardless of where you live.

Tsering Nyandak is a Tibetan contemporary artist who was born in Lhasa, Tibet. It is important to note that Lhasa is one of Tibet’s few cityscapes, but also the center of Tibetan Buddhism. It has always been regarded as a holy city, mostly because it is occupied by multiple historic Buddhist temples and monasteries.

Potala Palace, now one of Lhasa’s main tourist attractions, was once a location where the Dalai Lamas would stay in the winter. Although Lhasa is now a bustling city, it still has a significant amount of religious importance. Lhasa maintaining its religious importance is vital to the people of Tibet because of past events involving the Chinese occupation of the Himalayas. In 1950, the People’s Republic of China invaded Tibet, occupying it and forcing the Tibetans to sign the 17-Point Agreement for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet. In the 1960s, the Chinese government put into motion the Chinese Cultural Revolution, which intended to wipe out the support for Buddhism in the now illegally occupied “independent state.” They began by destroying multiple key religious sites and imprisoning monks.

Although this was met with protest and rioting from the Tibetan population, the Chinese quickly suppressed them, killing around 1.2 million Tibetan civilians as a result (*The Washington Post*). Eventually, restrictions on Buddhist practices were lifted. However, there are still laws today that restrict any actions that are in protest of Chinese rule. For example, China uses economic incentives to keep the citizens of Tibet in check. If they attempt to protest against religious repression, the government of China will impose collective economic punishment through taxation or other methods. (Freedom House) As you may be able to tell, religious freedom is something that the citizens of Tibet will go through great lengths to achieve.

The reason that Tsering Nyandak’s art is so special is because he takes contemporary art and fuses it with his feelings on the unstable political, religious, and cultural environment that surrounds him. As a boy growing up in Lhasa, Nyandak bore witness to the changing political and religious climate in Tibet because of Chinese occupation. He draws inspiration from these experiences and feelings when creating his paintings.

“The Land of No Heroes,” which was displayed in his first solo art show (featured above), is a landscape piece depicting a defining part of his environment, the Himalayan Mountain Range. Above the mountains descend red umbrellas from the sky. At the same time, flowers sprout from bricks on the ground. Although the landscape is relatively desolate, it has many representations. The floral imagery is meant to represent the increase of self-immolations in protest of Chinese rule (one of the most extreme methods of defiance, which involved setting oneself on fire), the red umbrellas are symbols of unrestricted motion, and the bricks (hard to see in the painting) represent a growing society. (*Wall Street International*)

His pieces are visually stunning and also incredibly meaningful. Another thing that is very special about Nyandak’s art is its deviation from Tibetan culture. Although it embodies aspects of the Buddhist religion, Nyandak creates art that is not at all common in the society in which he lives. Tibet is almost completely devoid of art that is not affiliated with religion. That is why he is one of the very few recognized artists from his country.

Although he clearly cares about the political and social issues facing his homeland, he also wants people to find other ways to express themselves. For years, the issues with China have consumed Tibetan daily life, making it impossible for people to occupy themselves with things unrelated to their religious identities. Nyandak is unique because he has found an escape from this unfortunate reality through his art.

The following sources were used in preparation of this article, included here for further reading:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/inatl/longterm/china/overview/tibet.htm>
<https://freedomhouse.org/report/2017/battle-china-spirit-tibetan-buddhism-religious-freedom>
<https://wsimag.com/art/4423-tsering-nyandak>
<https://artdaily.cc/news/64190/The-Land-of-No-Heroes--Tsering-Nyandak-s-most-recent-paintings-at-Rossi---Rossi-in-London#.YIIvUOhKjIU>

Jaimie Hong: writing like a pro

By Mary McGrath and Jaimie Hong

Junior Jaimie Hong became interested in American Sign Language (ASL) because of a family friend who was learning ASL. She soon realized that most of the world had little knowledge of American Sign Language, and she vowed to change that.

“Soon after I exposed myself to the mediums of communication as well as the culture of the deaf and hard-of-hearing community,” Jaimie said, “I was hit with a harsh reality: hearing-affected individuals are significantly more likely to be unemployed, sickly, and even imprisoned when they come of mature age.”

Shocked to see the poor outcomes and the barriers within society that have hindered this specific demographic, Jaimie strove to find an explanation through researching how hearing-impaired individuals can benefit from an early reliance on visual language.

When asked about how the research impacted her, Jaimie focused on three areas: acquiring a new learning experience, developing maturity, and impacting others. She first spoke about learning American Sign Language and the cultures around ASL. She then explained how she has matured as a person during her research, and she now understands a new part of the world. Jaimie also hopes to impact people in and out of the deaf community.

Her work has culminated in a research paper titled “Signing and the Brain: The Importance of Early Education for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children,” which has been approved for publication in the *Journal of Student Research*.

“It focuses on the misguided assumptions,” she explained, “of professionals and parents of deaf and hard-of-hearing children about the invalidity of signed language; they do not realize that this rejection of visual language can result in language deprivation, irreversible cognitive damage in their children. The purpose of my paper,” she continued, “is to educate the public, more specifically those related to deaf or hard-of-hearing individuals, on the importance of signed language education to help create a truly inclusive society.”

In a review from the *Journal*, the editors indicated that Jaimie’s research had the specificity in a less conventional discipline and genuine intent, and these were some of its strongest traits, meriting publication. By the end of this month, it will be visible on their virtual database at jsr.org.

Superiority

(Continued from page 2)

to oppress already marginalized groups, and may cost us another pandemic.

As hate crimes towards Asians have increased to account for 3,000 reported incidents since the beginning of the pandemic, it is time we recognize our behavior and begin the process of unlearning this bias and instinct to other nonwhite peoples. This is not a problem with China’s wet markets alone, this is a problem with meat production and consumption in general.

Instead of ignoring the issue with factory farming in the U.S., and reinforcing racial stereotypes by acting as though Asian peoples are the only ones with unsanitary food preparation, a restructuring of meat industries all over the world is needed. As Michael Greger, the author of *Bird Flu: A Virus of Our Own Hatching*, puts it, “If you actually want to create global pandemics, then build factory farms.”

The following sources were used in preparation of this article, included here for further reading:

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Pandemic-era baseball exposes the need for sweeping MLB rules changes By Eddie Kalegi

While countless professional sports leagues have used the past year to assist the community and reconcile with past racial biases to make changes geared towards increasing inclusion, the abbreviated 2020 season brought to light several other pressing issues that must be addressed within the sport itself.

A game that once truly lived up to its name as “America’s pastime” has seen its popularity continue to dwindle, as the sport has fallen behind football, basketball, and soon enough, soccer, in terms of the most watched sports in the United States.

Over the past decade, MLB leadership has focused on addressing “pace of play.” While they were correct in recognizing that younger viewers simply no longer have the attention span to sit down for a three hour game, their methodology in combating this issue has been nothing short of a failure. A “pitch clock” has been utilized in the majors since 2013 to limit the time between pitches, but it is never enforced.

In order to find lasting solutions, Major League Baseball realized that more significant changes were necessary. Thus, in 2020, after the season was shortened by more than 100 games due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, MLB used an abbreviated schedule to experiment with rules changes at the major league level. Notable alterations included a designated hitter in the National League, limitations on the number of pitching changes a team can make, and having a runner-on-second with nobody out in extra innings.

Though the extra innings rule did shorten games, with just one game going 13 or more innings in 2020, these other resolutions neglected to address the league’s most glaring issues. Pace of play remains at the heart of baseball’s most central concerns, and while the extra inning rule does help, nothing has been done to make changes to the typical nine inning contest. Additionally, changes to appeal to younger generations should not come at the expense of traditional fans. Many longtime fans see the extra inning rule and subsequent changes as gimmicky, and given the league’s decrease in ratings last summer, even when there were few alternatives on television, the 2020 rules package clearly isn’t the answer.

In fact, while pace of play is a major problem, and the pitch clock should be enforced, the aspect of baseball that is driving fans away is officiating inconsistency at all levels. Ever since the 2017 Houston Astros cheating scandal, to which Commissioner Rob Manfred controversially called the historic World Series trophy simply a “piece of metal,” public distrust in Major League executives has skyrocketed.

Additionally, umpires like Angel Hernandez and Joe West, who repeatedly make significant errant calls that alter the outcome of a game, are still allowed to officiate key games. And while the league does have an instant replay function, regulations as to what types of plays are reviewable make the system ineffective. All of these issues manifested themselves into a major scandal just one week into the MLB season, when the New York Mets won their home opener against the Miami Marlins. With the bases loaded and the game tied in the bottom of the ninth inning, New York outfielder Michael Conforto illegally leaned his right elbow into an incoming strike from Miami pitcher Anthony Bass, but drew a base on balls from home plate umpire Ron Kulpa to win the game in walk-off fashion. Though it’s unfair to criticize Kulpa for making a mistake on such a difficult split-second call, MLB rules declared this easily “overturnable” play unreviewable, confirming a Mets victory, despite Kulpa admitting his mistake and Mets manager Luis Rojas calling the victory a “gift.” While transitioning to robotic umpiring might be too drastic for now, the league needs to make full use of the highly advanced instant replay system that they have access to.

On the other hand, just three days later, even the umpires reviewing an instant replay remotely in Secaucus, New Jersey blew a game-altering call at the plate in a nationally televised game between the Atlanta Braves and Philadelphia Phillies. It was abundantly clear from three different angles that Phillies third baseman Alec Bohm did not touch the plate when he slid to try to score the go-ahead run, but after being initially ruled safe, the umpires in the replay room deemed the review inconclusive and allowed the call to stand, helping the Phillies win the game and the series. These umpires had all the necessary technology at their disposal and couldn’t put it to good use, once again proving that much of the issue within the sport involves the people in charge themselves.

Is it easy to find solutions that both appease traditionalists and intrigue new fans? Absolutely not. Is Major League Baseball giving its best effort to do this though? Absolutely not either. The sport has angered its base with changes that eliminate tradition, but the alterations have done nothing to encourage new viewership. The only hope remains this offseason, when the current collective bargaining agreement is set to expire. A brief lockout could be impending, but if league officials, owners, and players can all brainstorm together to create solutions that protect America’s former pastime from becoming irrelevant in the modern world.

The disaster behind FIFA and the 2022 World Cup in Qatar
By Andrew Bellows

On December 2, 2010, FIFA, the international federation governing association football (soccer), met to select locations for the 2018 and 2022 World Cup. It was an occasion that many around the world eagerly awaited. A winning bid for a country meant an automatic qualification for that country’s national team, home-field advantage, and bubbling excitement among fans. For the 2022 World Cup, seven countries put bids in: Australia, Indonesia, Japan, Mexico, Qatar, South Korea, and the United States. Indonesia and Mexico were eliminated from the running before the deciding date. The United States was the favorite to host the tournament. The country’s growing fan base and existing stadiums made it an attractive choice. But in the end, FIFA selected Qatar to host the 2022 World Cup. Immediately, there were question marks.

Let’s start with corruption. For years, FIFA has been associated closely with it. Stemming from former FIFA President Sepp Blatter, the federation has been known to collude under the table. With this in mind, many quickly accused FIFA of being corrupt, persuaded with money to select Qatar instead of more ideal options. They were right. Since the selection, 11 of the 22 committee members have been fined, suspended, or arrested.

Qatar is also a rather problematic location to host the World Cup for a few reasons. First, it is incredibly hot in the summer because it is a desert. For this reason, the 2022 World Cup will be the first to take place in the winter, something inconvenient for the club season. Having the tournament in the middle of a club season makes it more likely that players will be injured for the tournament. Second, countries generally want to host the tournament when they have fans that are interested in attending games. Qatar has never had an interest in soccer among fans like other countries around the world have. To fill stadiums, fans around the world will have to fly into the country, which is no big difference compared to past tournaments. But considering there is a worldwide Pandemic and traveling restrictions may still be in place by then, people may be less inclined to make the trip to Qatar out of safety precautions.

‘Over 6,500 laborers have already died under horrific working conditions with the number expected to be higher when the project is finished.’

Lastly and worst of all, Qatar has violated human rights in the process of building stadiums. To begin with, Qatar needed to build all of their stadiums and didn’t have the workers to do it. Convincing people from nearby countries to work for them, an influx of immigrants came into the country as workers without their families. They were promised a decent wage that they could give back to people at home. However, workers are generally paid much less than they were promised and aren’t allowed to return home. Working in oppressive heat with no clean water or sanitation, workers have suffered. Over 6,500 laborers have already died under horrific working conditions with the number expected to be higher when the project is finished. This is an abhorrent violation of human rights that FIFA nor Qatar has answered for.

Recently, National Teams such as Norway, Germany, and the Netherlands have spoken out against the World Cup in Qatar. The teams’ reasoning was to put pressure on FIFA, but who knows if they will actually boycott come tournament time? The FIFA World Cup 2022, born in the depths of corruption, may be in danger of never happening. Or worse, it may happen in stadiums that were built in violation of human rights. As time wears on, it is looking increasingly likely that the world will turn a blind eye to the corruption and inequality surrounding the 2022 World Cup, a disaster in the making.

The following sources were used in preparation of this article, included here for further reading:

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FUTURE PLANS OF THE CLASS OF 2021

Congratulations,
SENIORS!

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Lily Almeida	The College of New Jersey
Romir Anand	Cornell University
Julia Armeli	Wesleyan University
Elizabeth Baginski	Rowan University
Noza Bahridinova	Stevens Institute of Technology
Hana Baiod	Virginia Tech University
Andrew Bellows	The College of New Jersey
Adrian Biba	Rutgers University
Ryan Breen	Penn State University
Diana Rebeca	Candescu University of Notre Dame
Matthew Chinchar	University of Pittsburgh
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Jocelyn Chou	Rutgers University
Gabe Cruz	Rutgers University
Eric Davideit	University of Wisconsin-Madison
Sophie DeCoite	University of Delaware
Gerald Daniel Dela Cruz	Montclair State University
Serena Deniz	Rutgers University
Jai Dreher	Amherst College
Annika Fricke	Pratt Institute
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Anelia Gelber	Rutgers University
Vishali Govender	Northeastern University
Jessica Grace	Stetson University
Logan Grice	University of Delaware
Augie Hines	University of Vermont
Josh Hyman	University of Delaware
Noah Hyman	University of Connecticut
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Emma Jacobson	Pace University
Talia Jacobson	Middlesex County College
Eddie Kalegi	Rutgers University
Adam Kass	Kean University
Anna Keenan	School of the Art Institute of Chicago
Anna Kelly	Boston College
Claire Kenny	Saint Joseph's University
Sean Kenny	Rutgers University
Karim Khan	The University of Texas at Dallas
Brandon Kick	The College of New Jersey
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Maggie Kleiner	Connecticut College
Ethan Kozo	University of Miami
Matthew Kwok	Rutgers University
Thomas Kwok	Rutgers University
Paige Larson	University of California - Los Angeles
Andrew Lau	Rutgers University
Noelle Leaf	Rutgers University
Lucie Lee	School of Visual Arts
Caroline Leon	Smith College
Erica Li	Smith College
Isabel Li	Rutgers University
Arvin Manivannan	Rutgers University
Mary Kate McCunney	Rutgers University

Kevin McGrath	Northeastern University
Natalie McHam	George Washington University
Simar Monga	Rutgers University
Jake Musmanno	Penn State University
Jesse Nunez	Middlesex County College
Sophie Palter	Lafayette College
Anais Peyrot	University of Tennessee
Ava Piotti	Moravian College
Michael Piovoso	University of Delaware
Nick Pocchia	University of Georgia
Brian Popeck	University of Maryland
Vegas Rockafeller	University of Vermont
Max Rubin	Kutztown University
Raj Safi	Rutgers University
James Santus	University of Vermont
Nicholas Sarka	Middlesex County College
Paul Sarka	Middlesex County College
Misha Sarkar	Rutgers University
Hruday Shah	Georgia Institute of Technology
Arav Sharma	The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art
Jenna Smith	Middlesex County College
Solomia Sonevytsky	Montclair State University
Ilana Stein	Goucher College
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Sophia Su	Rutgers University
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Allie Tay	University of Rochester
Bridget Thomas	Towson University
Jaydah Victor-Morse	Montclair State University
Isabel Weiner	Rowan University
Justin Wentnick	University of Michigan
Maddy Whitmore	Wheaton College
Madisyn Wilkins	Boston College
Sela Wyetzner	University of Pittsburgh
Alan Xia	New York University
Phil Xie	University of California - Berkeley
Alisa Yanovsky	Northeastern University
Sammie Zhu	The College of New Jersey

The above information reflects only seniors who chose to complete the Bark's "Future Plans" survey according to the deadline stipulated by the editor.

The school newspaper publishes the responses yearly as a traditional courtesy, but it does not guarantee accuracy.

