



## Features

For all those true crime enthusiasts out there, this is for you! Read about new cases and classes.



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## BHM

Highlights from Black History Month as February comes to an end.



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## A&E

Take a look at student reviews of some of the outfits from the 2023 Grammys.



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# LFA FIRE Conference ignites different perspectives

By Max Ma

Senior Editor of Social Justice

“Liberty is to faction as air is to fire.” Factions, in simpler terms, represent different perspectives and views. The FIRE in LFA’s FIRE Conference shares a similar meaning: to ignite the value of expressing and respecting diverse perspectives and viewpoints in a community. The FIRE Conference was started by LFA’s Dean of Pluralism & Multicultural Affairs, Lusanda Mayikana, in 2017. FIRE stands for Fostering Intercultural Respect and Engagement. From 2017 to 2023, despite many changes in its format, the Conference continues to fulfill its initial purpose of engaging the LFA community with diverse perspectives.

The FIRE Conference was first founded in 2017 in response to a fractured and polarized election season in 2016. According to Mayikana, “There was a lot of tension on campus after the result was announced. Students were not kind to each other, in terms of just their views, and always focusing on being right.” Therefore, Mayikana organized a conference inviting students from other schools to have conversations with LFA students. She also

invited speakers that can address how people tend to dwell in their own perspectives, and not meet each other in the middle. The key take-away of the FIRE Conference, as Mayikana nicely put it, was to “look for ways to have conversations, even if they do disagree with each other, however being able to disagree with each other respectfully.” Mayikana believes that conflicts in views is not a bad thing because it is possible to engage conflicts in a very constructive way.

With the same goal in mind, the format of the conference had evolved over the next 6 years. The first FIRE conference took place during the long weekend in January and lasted for two days. However, despite having students from other states including Ohio and Wisconsin, the conference ended up not having enough students from the Chicago area because Chicago independent schools conduct exams after Winter Break. In the following years, the conference was conducted during the long weekend in February. This time, new challenges, including some boarders going home, and some Chicago schools going on Spring Break during February, emerged. In 2020, the conference was switched to a G-day Tuesday,

between seasons. Holding it on a weekday, the conference had a lot of teachers and students coming from Chicago schools. However, it became disruptive to the LFA environment as some LFA students missed classes while participating in the conference, and the volume of people on campus was too massive.

This year, the FIRE Conference was on a Saturday, running from 9am to 3pm on February 25th. Compared to the past years, this year’s conference shifted its balance of focus from adults to students, as the student sessions were facilitated by LFA students entirely. As a result, the adults and students had separate sessions. A student session was made up of three parts. In the first part, students did ice-breakers and community norms. In the second part, students discussed and reflected about various prompts that depicted scenarios where students were being targeted. The last part was a chosen topic designed by the students who ran their sessions. Anusha Srivastava ‘23, who ran one of the student sessions, shared, “We are given freedom to be as creative as we want.” Anusha also liked having the entire conference student-led: “When there are adults in the room, the students’



Courtesy of @lfacademy on Instagram  
Jason Harris, the guest speaker, delivers a speech.

opinions shared will be more filtered. In my sessions, people were just telling stories that they wouldn’t say in front of a teacher. Students will be more comfortable around peers.”

The FIRE Conference represents the LFA community’s value of diversity and citizenship. It is an opportunity for LFA students to not only engage with ourselves, but also with students from other schools. Keeping a close connection with the local community and the outer world, despite the adaptive format, the core value of the conference remains the same-- to stay curious, humble, and respectful towards the different diverse perspectives in the world.

# Jessica Douglas ‘96: New Chair of the Board

By Richard Zhang

Managing Editor of Digital

On January 30th, Ahmed Farag and Chris Tennyson, Chair of the Ad Hoc Search Committee and Head of School respectively, sent an announcement to the entire LFA community stating that Jessica Douglas ‘96 would serve as the next Chair of the Board of Trustees at LFA starting July 1st, with John Marlatt’s ‘65 term coming to a close, highlighting a new chapter for LFA as she steps into the mantle as the leader of the Board of Trustees.

Jessica Douglas was born in Omaha, Nebraska, but, due to her parents’ work, she was able to live in Iowa City, Chicago, Los Angeles, Tokyo, Saudi Arabia, and Spain. However, when Douglas was entering high school, her family decided that it would be best for her to stay at one school. As a result, Douglas chose LFA due to the appealing international community, where she developed lasting relationships. Due to her own experiences, Douglas wants “every student, whether boarding or day, to feel as if LFA is their home and to have every opportunity to follow their passions.” Douglas was a four-year boarding student at LFA, who en-



Courtesy of Jessica Douglas  
Jessica Douglas poses for a portrait in her office

joyed fine and performing arts, Caxy Keys, Girls’ Ice Hockey, lifeguarding, cheerleading, and became a Prefect in her senior year.

After LFA, she majored in Philosophy and minored in Spanish Literature at Occidental College in Los Angeles. She then earned her JD from Creighton University Law School in Omaha, Nebraska, where she concentrated in criminal law and procedure as well as arbitration and mediation.

Today, Douglas lives in Peoria, Illinois with her husband of ten years and four-year old son. She works as a Federal Public Defender for the Central District of Illinois,

representing clients who do not have the resources or access to proper defense representation against charges of federal level crimes.

She attributes much of her public defense work and service to her LFA experience. She explained, “I look at many of the cases I handle, and many of those cases come back to a mental health issue, substance abuse, or a difficult upbringing... if I didn’t have the support I received from adults and peers that I did at LFA during my high school years, I could have just as easily been one of my clients.”

Douglas has already served on the board for five years and held the position of Vice Chair before her nomination to become the Board Chair. According to Jackie Leib, Executive Assistant to the Head of School and the Board of Trustees, selecting Douglas to become the next Board Chair was a “unanimous decision” for the Ad Hoc Search Committee. The committee itself was formed by members of the Committee of Trustees, one of eight committees of the Board, in this case taking on a central role to be ready and responsible to search for and nominate any new board members, or when the time comes, the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

Leib further described the role of the Board

Chair as more of a “managerial role” as she had consistently put together meeting agendas for John Marlatt. For example, they work on important plans that are then presented for the rest of the twenty-eight members of the board to read. Leib that they are in charge of the major capital projects, such as the new Health Center and current plans for a fieldhouse, which are then voted on by the Board Chair and other members. Marlatt also often met with Chris Tennyson, the Head of School, and Leib, to go over the state of the school and discuss projects or anything related to the school. Douglas looks to carry on Marlatt’s duties, and is “very excited to have been selected to this position.”

Douglas is the first woman since Cate Waddell in 2000 to serve as Board Chair. She mentioned how she is “cognizant” and understands that the board has been doing much better in terms of selecting a more diverse board based on merit. She also described how she “feels a responsibility to encourage other women to step into those [leadership] roles and positions and have those [leadership] opportunities.” The entire LFA community is certainly very excited to see what Douglas brings to the table, and we are all invested in what more is to come.

## CROYA: Lake Forest community center open to all students

By Jason Xing

*Managing Editor of Global Perspectives*

On Friday, February 10th, LFA's Varsity Swim Team volunteered at CROYA in preparation for the committee's 2023 CROYA Bowl Fundraiser.

CROYA stands for Committee Representing Our Young Adults. The organization represents local students in Lake Forest, Lake Bluff, and Knollwood from 7th to 12th grade, providing social activities and retreats, community service projects, as well as leadership opportunities.

As a local committee, CROYA connects high school students through Weekly Youth Meetings each Wednesday from 7:00 to 8:00 pm. Youth meetings offer students opportunities for interaction alongside the organization of activities and service projects.

On weekdays, CROYA's Student Union is seldom empty of all things fun. Walking through the front entrance, the center offers food, a game room, ping pong, and pool tables, along with a music and dance studio for students to recharge and unwind after school.

"The values that are most important to us are acceptance, respect, empathy, and accountability," said Todd Nahigian, CROYA Manager. "People who come to CROYA will be treated with those

values. Anyone who walks through the door is welcome here, and anyone who participates in any of the programs or the meetings is afforded the same respect and acceptance," Nahigian stated.

With the aforementioned values, CROYA instills an appreciation among students towards a sense of mutual positivity often taken for granted. Simultaneously, CROYA drives students to converse and cultivate positivity through discourse and initiative.

Unlike most community centers with adult executive committees, CROYA runs by means of a Youth Executive Committee. The youth committee convenes on a monthly basis to organize community service initiatives, fundraisers, and social programs. Student members may propose special projects during weekly meetings and work collectively to undertake the initiative of interest under the guidance and outreach of CROYA staff.

Under student leadership, CROYA successfully raised over 30,000 dollars with its February CROYA Bowl. Priding itself in community engagement and outreach, CROYA maintains robust partnerships with the Artisans Guild of Lake Forest and Lake Bluff, House of Peace, as well as the Kiwanis Organization, the American Legion, the Rotary Club of Chicago, Feed my Starving Children, and North Chicago Community Partners.

Aside from service and socialization, CROYA devotes significant efforts towards Peer Training and support. Aware of young adults developing greater reliance on their peers, CROYA prepares students with the ability to actively listen, problem-solve, and upraise their peers in any circumstance.

"When a teenager has a problem, they're more likely to go to their friends than to an adult [...] because the whole goal of adolescence is to create your own identity and [be] separate from your family," Nahigian explained. "Those characteristics [that CROYA seeks to instill] are empathy, genuineness, and unconditional positive regard. Then, the peo-

ple that need help from you or the people that you go to for help will be more able to help you in a positive way," Nahigian said.

Working with students from public and private boarding schools, CROYA prides itself upon empathy and its outreach in opening existing social groups and fostering appreciative conscience and consensus beyond curricular settings.

As individuals with vast ranges of identities and diasporas call Lake County home, CROYA remains steadfast in offering an olive branch for young adults to discern their worth and, above all, perpetuate the networks fostered amidst a world of prevailing differences.



LFA Students volunteer at CROYA fundraiser.

*Photo by Amanda Krause*

## A legacy of success: Madeley's 500th win

By Mimi Sexton & Connor Drobny

*Staff Writer & Managing Editor of Op-Ed*

On January 6, 2023, against Rice Memorial High School, Darrin Madeley reached a major milestone in his career, his 500th win as a hockey coach at Lake Forest Academy. The final score of the game was 8-0 LFA, a resounding victory.

To reach this milestone in his career,

Madeley said he has had an "average of thirty wins per season; this shows that Poska [the assistant coach] and I have been very lucky to have a lot of great kids." When Madeley walked into the locker room after his 500th win, he shared that, "the players just started drenching me in water." The team was thrilled to be able to participate in Madeley's success.

Madeley is a former NHL goalie who

had a ten year-long pro career. He was signed to multiple NHL teams, such as the Ottawa Senators and San Jose Sharks. Prior to his professional hockey career, he played D1 hockey at Lake Superior State in Michigan. After his time playing pro, he later became the Assistant Athletic Director at Lake Forest Academy in 2005, where he coaches the Prep Hockey team, serves on Dean's Council, and later be-

came the head Athletic Director. He has worked and coached at LFA for 18 years.

Madeley's first and most memorable win came against the Barrie Colts. The Colts are based very close to where Madeley grew up. He said, "It felt odd having my first win so close to my hometown." As a coach, Madeley is superwelcoming and is, "someone you can talk to on and off the ice," said current player Trevor Stewart '25.

He also shared that "Darrin tends to know when something is wrong or that you're in your head and he'll pull you aside to talk to you," but he also knows that "different people need to be coached differently."

"Darrin will also be brutally honest with you," said current captain Tommy Enrietto '23, which he shared has helped him significantly with his gameplay. "Darrin has shown me that hard work always pays off."

Enrietto also shared that this team is "like a family and everyone is always getting along," which helps the team become stronger on and off the ice. Madeley said, "Teams that have not had as much success are teams that don't like each other." Madeley wants his team to take care of one another, which creates a strong team dynamic.

Madeley shared, "If you look at these players that I have coached and who they've become, to me that's even bigger than 500 wins." Madeley wants to set his players up for success--not only in hockey, but throughout their entire lives.



Darrin Madeley with his granddaughter on the LFA ice hockey rink.

*Courtesy of Darrin Madeley*

# Thrifting: Sustainability has never been so easy

By Ava Trandel & Connor Drobný

Managing Editor of Features & Managing Editor of Op-Ed

Thrifting, buying gently used items at discounted prices, has boomed in popularity over the last few years. Whether in-person at traditional thrift stores like Goodwill, online through sites like Depop or Poshmark, vintage stores, or upscale consignment shops, shopping secondhand is in. What appeals to so many young people is the price, accessibility, environmental advantages, and individuality that thrifting clothes provide. Shopping secondhand allows people to shop affordably without contributing to the fast fashion trend cycle that also contributes to climate change. Although buying used clothes has been around as long as clothes themselves, stores such as Goodwill and Salvation Army have commercialized it. With many online and brick-and-mortar thrift stores and more people donating clothes, thrifting is easier than ever, and it's time to take advantage.

It can be easy to feel skeptical about thrifting at first, as shoppers may be uncomfortable wearing a stranger's old clothes or not want to look through thousands of pieces for just a few buys. Yet,

paying more attention to the corresponding upside of thrifting is important, as stores typically offer a more diverse selection of clothes from different eras, cultures, and fashion styles. Thrifting is also significantly cheaper than shopping at most name-brand stores since your average price for clothing at Goodwill is about \$7 to \$15.

At the same time, there are some red flags to be aware of when thrifting. For instance, if something smells particularly funky or looks extremely dirty, reconsider buying it. If something looks of poor quality or on the verge of collapse with just a slight tug, reconsider buying it. In essence, thrifting is a skill. Different people will have different standards, and finding yours is a process that only comes with time and experience. Luckily, if you do not like what you bought, most stores give you the ability to return the item.

The North Shore provides shoppers with an excellent selection of thrift stores. The aforementioned Goodwill is a fan favorite, as it offers the widest selection of clothes, shoes, jewelry, etc. along with the cheapest pricing. For thrifters, this will be your go-to place.

Crossroads in Evanston is another good place to look. Though the store is small-



Photo by Connor Drobný

Crossroads showcasing their apparel.

er in size and selection than Goodwill, it usually offers better quality. However, the downside is that Crossroads is rather expensive for a thrift store, as the cheapest items will be around \$20, and the more expensive ones will be listed towards the upper forties or fifties.

Another local store is Ort, located in downtown Highland Park. They have a large selection of clothes, accessories,

and home decor for both men and women. However, it's not as overwhelming as some larger thrift stores can be. Ort is a fun place to go, whether for a quick stop after school with friends or a more thorough sweep. Their clothes are affordable, usually \$1-20, depending on the garment. They're constantly receiving new donations, so don't forget that you can also donate the clothes you want to throw away.

## The Alex Murdaugh trial, true crime, and new classes at LFA

By Marvin Ma

Staff Writer

Calling the police from his cell phone on June 7, 2021 at 10:06 pm, Alex Murdaugh, member of an American legal family in the Low Country region of South Carolina, reported that he had found the bodies of his 52-year-old wife Margaret and their 22-year-old son Paul lying near the dog kennels at the family's hunting lodge in Islandton, South Carolina. Both Margaret and Paul had been shot mul-

iple times and with different weapons. The state prosecutors in Alex Murdaugh's trial rested their case on February 27, 2023, after 14 witnesses were called up over about two weeks of testimony. He was found guilty after just three hours of jury deliberations, and has been sentenced to two consecutive life terms in prison.

Since January 25, 2023, when the trial of Alex Murdaugh opened, the public had been keenly following up with the updates as they were being broadcasted across major news media. This public



Courtesy of Creative Commons

A fingerprint is widely-used evidence for forensic detection.

attentiveness in the Alex Murdaugh trial seems to have marked a time of an influx of interest in the idea of true crime, which, as LFA English teacher Lydia Wells put it, is crime that is true, everyday, and around us. "[True crime] is becoming even more prevalent now with the advent of technologies [...] and more at our fingertips 24/7 with the news cycle," Wells added.

With the public being more invested in true crime, Wells decided to propose the addition of two new classes in the English department – "Mystery, Murder, & Mayhem in Detective Fiction" and "Get a Clue: True Crime Stories." "They're still very much in the planning stages," Wells said, "[but] I really want to incorporate and to focus on how we can be an ethical consumer of other people's tragedies."

The two new classes will focus more on the contemporary topics and texts. "It's a different way to tap into all the skills that we do in a regular English class [...]

just with maybe a little bit more of a relevant timely topic." Wells pointed out that there is a void in the English curriculum, which has been composed mainly of classical and older pieces of writing such as Homer's *The Odyssey* and Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, that could be filled with more contemporary texts.

In addition to the novel selection of topics and texts that focus on the contemporary, what also makes the two new classes unique is the fact that they are planned to potentially be as student-centered and student-focused while moving away from the traditional ways that English classes are taught, with quizzes or tests, and towards real life skills and creative projects such as having the students create their own podcast episodes. "If there are particular crimes, cases, or issues that [the students are] interested in, I really want that to be the driving force of the class," Wells said.



True crime books on display.

Courtesy of Creative Commons

# What happened to the Head of School Symposium?

By Ella Gartz  
Editor-in-Chief

We need to bring back the Head of School Symposium. But first, we need to talk about what the Head of School Symposium was because, according to a recent school-wide survey, only 6.5% of current LFA students could tell you.

The Head of School Symposium (HOSS) was a school-wide tradition nearing its twentieth anniversary when interrupted by the pandemic. Its purpose, like many LFA initiatives, was to educate students and faculty members about different topics and regions of the world. What was unique about the HOSS was that it engaged learning outside of the classroom, through reading lists (like a book club), guest speakers, events, off-campus trips, and often international travel opportunities.

Head of School Chris Tennyson said that he appreciated how the HOSS promoted intellectual curiosity and allowed “us [faculty] to continue to learn alongside our students,” showing them that “learning doesn’t stop;” it is life-long.

Through the HOSS, learning explores contemporary themes that help our com-



Courtesy of Dave Atas

LFA invites and hosts musical guests for a performance during All-School Meeting.

munity better understand both those within it and the world outside it. Isabella Malacsina '23 believes that the HOSS is a great opportunity to “learn more about under-represented cultures in our community.”

Some past themes have included “Asia with attention to China” (2002-

2003), “Gender Issues in the 21st Century” (2009-2010), and, most recently, “Inequality and Global Poverty” (2019-2020). The full list of past Symposiums is available online, at [www.lfanet.org/academics/hos-symposium](http://www.lfanet.org/academics/hos-symposium).

The HOSS can also be a meaningful experience for those who are close to the themes and are not necessarily learning anything new. It can be an opportunity to share knowledge, culture, and experience with the undivided attention and dedication of the entire LFA community.

Ted Golota volunteered to be a Faculty Chair for the “Russia: Revolution and Resurgence” Symposium (2018-2019) because, as he said, the theme was “deeply connected to my culture and people” and he was “very excited to give my knowledge and experience to the community and Symposium committee.”

Golota said that his proudest moments were “helping set up a display case with curios from the Soviet Union because it helped people see tangible things that they normally would not be able to touch, examine, or look at unless they were in a museum in Russia” as well as “teaching Lobachevskian Geometry because it helped expose the higher level math students to a Geometry previously unknown to many of them.”

Evidently, the HOSS offered the community opportunities to engage with topics and regions of the world that they otherwise would not have in their regularly scheduled classes. While most LFA students do not know what they are missing, most faculty members do and are not making an effort to bring back the HOSS. In fact, in response to the question, “All things considered, do you think that the HOSS should return?” about 39.5% of faculty members reported “Maybe, with some improvements” and 5% of faculty members reported “No.” Why?

“Whole faculty buy-in and funding was a challenge,” Golota said, with the “main

limitation” being that “it was time-consuming on top of everything else we do as teachers.” 19.8% of faculty members reported that the HOSS “asks too much of the faculty members involved.”

But the main concern, as reported by 61.5% of the surveyed faculty members, was that “students lack enthusiasm for and engagement in [HOSS] topics.”

Tennyson said that he is “all ears” because he believes that “there is value in bringing that [the HOSS] back” and wants “to make sure that it’s done right” as “the first time back is really important.” One of his ideas, which Golota and many others support, is to extend Symposium themes over a two-year period so the community can delve more deeply into themes and even take action upon them.

Other issues to address, according to faculty members, include the “burden on classroom teachers to incorporate the material into classes” and the need for “better organization,” especially “if we are going to give up class days for it [in reference to HOSS Day].”

However, these issues are relatively minor, “knowing the impact that it [HOSS] can have and knowing how great it can be for our community,” Tennyson said.

The Class of 2023 is the only current grade level at LFA to have experienced a HOSS--(well, half of one)--and will be leaving in a few months. If HOSS is going to “come back with an energy and an enthusiasm,” as Tennyson said, that will take student interest and involvement.

Looking forward, the vast majority of both students and faculty members offered positive feedback to the potential HOSS themes of “Digital Minimalism,” “Nutrition & Healthy Eating,” and “Climate Change & Environmental Sustainability.”

We need to bring back the Head of School Symposium. But first, we need to talk about what the Head of School Symposium could be.



Courtesy of Dave Atas

Students learn to design and create their own Matryoshka dolls in art classes

## Editorial: The Prevalence of sexual assault

“The 97%” is a statistic that has trended on nearly every social media platform, and indicates that 97% of women aged eighteen to twenty-four have experienced sexual assault. It’s not just a number, but a match to a movement. Rape culture is a detrimental part of sexual assault, and often leaves the responsibility and blame on girls rather than boys. Many of us have heard the ignorant phrase, “Boys will be boys,” but what does this really implicate? It creates the stereotype that boys can’t “help” or “control” themselves as a sexual predator, it normalizes this behavior and makes it the responsibility of a girl to protect herself from sexual assault. This instills a fear of men by girls. We are scared at parties, gas stations, walking home alone, and essentially just going out in public. It feels like no one is safe from this constantly looming threat of being assaulted or harassed. At schools and universities, rape culture is especially prevalent. Studies have reported that almost one in four undergraduate women experienced sexual assault or misconduct at 33 of the nation’s major universities. However, more than 90% of sexual assault victims on college campuses do not report the assault. Women are scared to report their assault because of society’s culture of victim blaming, or they believe the police will not do anything. Not to mention most women do not want to relive the experience by detailing it to the police.

The truth is that sexual assault in today’s age is incredibly common-- whether or not the media shows it. Our mothers tell us to avoid boys because of what they can do, but they don’t tell their sons what not to do to girls. Jen Madeley, a Health, Wellness, and Community teacher, said that even in her first years teaching Health, Wellness, and Community, the curriculum for teaching about sexual assault was drastically different, to which she made a large effort to change. She said that even though we were headed in the right direction in terms of raising awareness about sexual assault, the perspective was off. At the time, she thought, “All we’re doing here is victim blaming,” and it was always a very gendered and biased discussion. In the recent years before Covid, Madeley and other Health, Wellness, and Community educators brought in experts from the Lake County Crisis Center, who helped to reorient the discussion as non-gendered, based on statistics and facts, and focused largely on the process of asking for and giving consent in the first place. Madeley also noted how the expansion of educating students about sexual assault has gone hand-in-hand with improving sex-ed in general. The logic behind it is that the more students know about consensual sex, sexual assault and the grey area so many people find themselves in between consent and non consent will be lowered. The double standard normal-

izes sexual assault behavior in boys and men, and leaves girls and women constantly in fear. Rape Culture becomes a part of our daily lives or conversations. In society, we turn a blind eye to the conversations held by men and the jokes they think are harmless but in reality target women and create unsafe spaces for them. Objectifying women and consistently putting them in a position of lesser power, even in social settings between peers, has been dismissed and accepted as inevitable behavior. It’s not acceptable nor normal behavior; we as a society have just normalized it--because “boys will be boys.” It leaves girls feeling like it’s their fault they were sexually assaulted, when in most cases, there was nothing they could do to stop it. For girls who haven’t been sexually assaulted, it just feels like something that’s bound to happen at some point. Statistically, over half of women and almost 1 in 3 men have experienced sexual violence during their lifetimes, so sexual assault and harrasment affects a large amount of the population. Not to mention minorities and members of the LGBTQ+ are more likely to experience sexual assault. Following this, 81% of women and 35% of men report significant short-term or long-term impacts such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). It affects both women and men, and it is our job as a society to condemn rape culture and sexual assault.

The Lake Forest

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*The Spectator* is published eight times per year by the students of Lake Forest Academy and is a forum for student expression. The views and reporting herein are the sole product of *The Spectator*'s student reporters and in no way reflect the official views of Lake Forest Academy faculty, staff, administration or Board of Trustees.

### EDITORIALS

Opinions of the staff are presented in the form of unsigned editorials. Personal views are bylined or presented as formal dissents.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

*The Spectator* welcomes responses to its articles in the form of Letters to the Editors in addition to letters on subjects of the author's choosing. Please e-mail Letters to the Editors to Mrs. Krause at [akrause@lfanet.org](mailto:akrause@lfanet.org)

### AWARDS

*The Spectator* has been awarded several prestigious journalism awards in recent years. It has consistently taken first place in competitions against schools of similar size held by the American Scholastic Press Association and the Kettle Moraine Press Association.

### QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“Sexual assault is neither a ‘light’ nor ‘fluffy’ matter, and we cannot treat it as if it were.”  
- Emma Sulcowicz

## Sexual Assault Resources

RAINN: Rape, Abuse, & Incest National Network

24hr hotline: 800.656.4673  
Website: <https://www.rainn.org>



NSVRC: National Sexual Violence Resource Center

Website: <https://www.nsvrc.org>



ICASA: Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault

Phone: +1 217-753-4117  
Website: <https://icasa.org>



National Sexual Assault Hotline: 800.656.4673

Infographic by Avery Martin

Above is an infographic of available resources for those affected by sexual assault.

# Confronting racism at Lake Forest Academy

By **Ambika Gupta & Djasahn English**  
*Editor-in-Chief & Managing Editor of Social Justice*

Lake Forest Academy is not immune to racism. Racist incidents, big or small, have affected the experiences of many students and faculty of color.

A culture that does not outright address accusations of discrimination allows the disease of racism to fester. LFA has made great strides in becoming a mecca of diverse people, perspectives, and ideas, and it would be an absolute disservice to that progress to allow a culture of hidden racism to grow. Experiences of racism at LFA can feel even more hurtful when, in the halls and in the classroom, there's conversation among people complaining about the 'disadvantages' their racial or socio-economic privilege results in (typically regarding the college process) or the guilt they feel about their privilege.

When asked how race has impacted her experience at LFA, Lusanda Mayikana, the Dean of Pluralism & Multicultural Affairs, said, "For me, I feel like life prepared me for LFA because I was born and raised in Apartheid South Africa." Mayikana elaborated, "Yes, I have had a million encounters [of racism] that people will pretend or can claim they didn't mean anything by it."

When asked how prevalent she believes racism is at LFA, Mayikana said, "Well, all you have to do is walk over to the Student Center; just listen to those conversations that the kids have." Mayikana continued, "I think it [racism] is quite prevalent...I know it is happening a lot because my son [who graduated in 2014] went through his education at LFA, and I recall several racist incidents he told me about, and I don't know how much it has changed."

Assistant Head of School Nancy Nassr explained how race has affected her when confronting ignorant comments. She said, "When you try to share micro-aggressive behaviors with folks who have not experienced them or have very limited experiences, there's an automatic response of like, well you're looking for this, or there's an automatic dismissal of your experiences as a person of color. As a person of color, you can quickly become problematized if you bring up any type of concern, especially when talking about microaggressions."

When asked how incidents of racism have affected his relationships with others at LFA, Ackim Mpofu, a History & Social Science Teacher, said, "They make you think twice because when someone does that, it's not only like they're doing it in the workplace. You know, that's part of their lifestyle; they're also doing it at home. You are often thinking how they view you as a person... It can be difficult being around those people or even the workplace because you don't know what is going on behind my back. And it's worrying because if they can look at me like that when I'm an adult who can defend myself, what about students who look like me?"

Many students shared similar experiences facing micro-aggressive or blatant racism, validating Mpofu's concerns for students of color. Saanvi Malkani '23, one of the Multicultural Prefects, was one of these students.

When asked about the prevalence of racism at LFA, Malkani said, "It exists in two forms: one is largely microaggression, and the other is ignorance." Malkani detailed a microaggression she frequently faces: "At least twice a week, I get called by another South Asian student's [name]—it can be a guy's or girl's [name]." Malkani expanded on this experience saying, "I've reported these instances multiple times...I've heard that it's been dealt with, but you [still] hear that teacher call other students—particularly students of color—the wrong name." Additionally, Malkani recalled a time when a student said, "Being called racist is worse than racism." When Malkani spoke about this instance with the administration, Malkani said LFA responded by "try[ing] to dissolve the conflict" rather than the racism.

Malkani has also heard things like, "Asians ruin the curve for every class." When that student was confronted for that statement, the student defeated themselves by saying, "Well, you can say it around 90% of the school."

Ariana Rashid '23, Muslim Student Union Co-leader and South Asian Student Union Co-leader, shared that she was a witness to the incident mentioned by Malkani. She said, "There are groups of people who say these ignorant things together, like an echo chamber, and the only people of color you see around them are ones who are tolerant and enable them."

These incidents of racism can vary from student to student. Some shared moments of microaggressive language that they experienced.

Sajan Shah '23, one of the Multicultural Prefects, recalled a similar experience: "He [his coach] never remembered my name. I had him for three years, and he never remembered my name. That was the same for many POCs on the team."

Kennedy Pemberton '23, a member of BSU, recalled a time when in a discussion of racial classification of Spanish colonists in a class, the teacher said that "The mulattos look like Kennedy."

Ferry Ziyi Ye '23 said that she encounters stereotypes like, "Oh that's an Asian girl. She can't play basketball," or "Asians should be nerdy."

Similarly, Xitlali Ayala '23, UNIDOS co-leader, recalled a time when a student said that "being Mexican is the same thing as being Spanish...grossly grouping us together." Ayala continued by saying, "Classmates make jokes about me being Mexican and make generalizations...[like that] Latina are aggressive or wordy or considered feisty."

Former BSU leader and Pre-Law Society president Joie Romelus '23 described a recent incident in which a faculty member was reviewing her progress report with her. According to Romelus, this faculty member had pulled up her grades, and was "just looking at the screen." Romelus questioned her pause, so the faculty member responded by saying, "No, you just actually have good grades." Romelus reflected, "This is the worst part—I think she thought it was a compliment." Romelus also added that this faculty member "said nothing [similar] to white counterpart next to me" when reviewing their grades. Though this phrase might seem arbitrary to some, like a common expression adults may use to disarm their students from anxiety over receiving grades, it can come across as a judgment on the individual based on preconceived notions and, perhaps, even biases based on race.

Other students shared moments of deliberate action that they were forced to confront.

When asked if he was comfortable sharing a firsthand experience of racism at LFA, Rashad Smith '23 said, "Last year, during lunch, we [a group of Black students] were sitting at lunch and had to hear monkey noises made towards our table and stuff...and you just have to confront those situations and talk it out. Because faculty, in general, will sweep it under the rug and try to handle things privately. All anyone will get is a slap on the wrist."

Smith's comment alluded to a common belief that LFA harbors an environment that fails to properly address acts of racism or sometimes, perhaps, hides them.

When asked about how racism seems to be handled at LFA, Malkani said, "I think our school portrays itself as a very diverse and welcoming community, so when instances of racism do occur—especially when public—LFA tends to sweep it under the rug in order to not stain that image." Malkani expanded on this by saying this strategy "just fractures [the LFA community] more," and it creates a "culture of tension."

In discussion on how LFA handles racism, Pemberton said, "I think they're afraid...of making the school uncomfortable, but sometimes you have to make the school uncomfortable."

This raises further questions: How are racist incidents handled once reported? Does

this method need tweaking to be effective?

According to Mayikana, when a faculty member is accused of discrimination, they are "usually brought into a meeting with the Dean of Faculty and with me" and "sometimes with HR." Mayikana elaborated that the "incident is documented" and "goes into a file for that individual." Mayikana continued, "Very often, we do not disclose who reported the incident" because "we don't want any form of retaliation." On the topic of how LFA responds to an individual committing discrimination, Mayikana said, "It is their responsibility to educate themselves...nor is it my duty to educate them. They are supposed to go out and learn."

However, this method has been shown to be ineffective, leaving LFA students to often feel left on their own. Across the many different spheres of LFA's unique perspectives and diverse cultures, there is a commonality in the disappointment towards the way reports are addressed.

Ayala said that LFA's overall response to racism, "makes me feel invisible...[and] makes me feel frustrated that I've been here for four years, and I've seen very little change on this campus."

When asked how she feels racism is handled, Romelus said, "horribly, absolutely horribly." She continued, "It [LFA's current method] doesn't make you feel protected. It makes you feel like they care more about their image." When asked how LFA can improve, Romelus said, "The best way is to openly address it. I remember when Dr. Smith—which I really appreciated—when we were playing Kahoot [in morning meeting] and someone named themselves 'Build the Wall' [during an UNIDOS presentation], and literally that second, Dr. Smith got on stage and was like 'That's not appropriate. That's not what we do here.'"

Anusha Srivastava '23, South Asian Student Union Co-leader, said that "Racism is not really handled at LFA very well... like students don't feel comfortable just knowing that 'it's been handled.'" Srivastava added, "Racism is not taken as seriously as it should." Srivastava continued, "We treat people who take drugs more seriously than racism...we have more policy on partying and zero tolerance than what to do with racism." Overall, Srivastava said, "There is so much at this school that is not talked about and is hidden."

Students do not feel like confronting discriminatory acts in the moment or reporting incidents later on are safe options, partly due to the historical lack of action by the administration concerning these matters in some cases.

When asked if they felt comfortable or safe reaching out to faculty to report an incident of racism or simply have a conversation about a microaggression, both Braeden Murray '23 and Bryson Royale '23 shared similar sentiments. Murray said, "It definitely depends on which faculty member and in what context. There are a lot of faculty that reach out, but as a minority student, you want to look towards teachers of your own race or background who can somewhat understand or give you clarity as to what your experience is and how you can go about your experience." Murray expanded and said, "Faculty members that are not talking to students definitely need to make the strides to talk to students of other minorities."

Royale said, "I definitely feel more safe talking to Black faculty members about racist instances... but with the dynamics between students and teachers, I wouldn't feel safe conveying to a teacher that a comment or action they made was microaggressive or even just racist."

When discussing talking about discrimination with faculty, Srivastava added, "Since I feel like nothing ever really gets done, I feel like there is no use."

When asked if she feels safe to talk to faculty about these issues, Ayala added, "You can bring it up to a teacher, but at the end of the day, they all kind of say 'that's how the system works.'"

Confronting someone about microaggressive

comments becomes difficult when those confronting are perceived, or painted, as problematizing.

Mayikana explained, "It doesn't matter what their intention is... the impact is what matters" but "most of the time what I hear is: 'but I didn't mean to cause any harm.'" Mayikana said, "Unfortunately, we have a lot of adults [in general society] saying anything to do with diversity is divisive...that is not accurate. It [discussions on DEI] centers the lived experiences of people whose identities are marginalized and decenters anyone who is not a part of the dominant group."

While many student leaders have expressed their distaste for the current system of handling incidents of racism, LFA—with its unique level of diversity—does have the tools to grow. Both students and faculty offered up opinions on how to best approach this.

When asked how LFA could improve, Shah said, "There needs to be more transparency with the students. A lot of the students are in the dark. There's not enough communication [about the process regarding reported racism] between the teachers and the students."

On the topic of prom being originally scheduled on Eid al-Fitr, Mazin Awada, Muslim Student Union co-leader, said, "It would have been nice if students could be involved in the planning of major events to avoid them being scheduled on a major religious holiday."

The LFA Head of School Equity Task Force (HSET), which was created in recent years to investigate DEI issues and propose solutions, has concluded that there are persistent unresolved equity and inclusion issues. To combat this, they recommend a faculty disciplinary process that mirrors the students' Disciplinary Committee. In terms of representation, this task force also found a need for robust recruitment and retention of diverse candidates.

However, when asked whether reported incidents of racism or ignorance should be made public, Nassr explained how a clear policy towards handling the incident would be more productive. Nassr said, "Without the boundaries of employment, I would say its good for people to know what the consequences are or how something is being handled, but as a school leader and as someone who is employed, I recognize that there are employment laws and privacy laws, so you're really bound by those things." Nassr expanded and said, "People are going to make mistakes; those mistakes absolutely need to be responded to through clear policy, without necessarily talking publicly about what happened, because again, you're bound by certain laws that you do need to adhere to."

Malkani said, "They [students of color at LFA] should not have the responsibility to educate faculty on how not to be racist to them but, at LFA, they kind of have to because the administration does not always do that work."

On the topic of DEI training as "punishment," Mayikana said, "Because when people are mandated to attend a DEI course and don't have autonomy, they would take it as punishment and come back resentful because they were forced to attend. In that case, they would learn nothing." When asked about the ideal future, Mayikana said, "What I would like to see is that everyone is required to demonstrate that they have done the work necessary or committed to continuous learning. DEI work is ongoing; it is not a case of taking one course and thinking now you get it." Mayikana expanded by saying, "DEI work is something that everyone [including students] has to do... it is not just something to send them to Mrs. Mayikana. That is not realistic."

Overall, change is required to make LFA a safe space for the entire community. A new DC committee for faculty, as the Head of School Equity Task Force recommended, would be a sign of significant progress. However, racism is not something that can be healed overnight, and, unfortunately, there is no magic solution. On a final note, to ignore the fact that racism exists at LFA is a choice, a choice that not everyone has.

# Thinking about the past when planning your future

By Esti Rosenblatt, Anusha Srivastava, & Tanya Ganesh

Photo Editor, Managing Editor of Production, & Sports Director

Most LFA students, after high school, move on to their next stage of life through a college education, but to get to such a point is easier said than done. The college process is a long, tedious, and often stressful journey that most will start in the second semester of their junior year. This process entails many steps: finding colleges suitable for the applicant; filling out basic information about the individual through portals like Common App; then adding all the colleges into one portal; and finally, and probably most time consuming, writing all the essays.

However, most college counselors rarely discuss the stigmas of colleges. When left to discover this for themselves, students will hear all sorts of gossip about how one person is applying to this college or how another person's family has connections to a school--less talked about are colleges' pasts.

Almost all colleges have had controversial pasts. Were they racist? Sexist? Thankfully, nowadays, students worry less about the racist history of colleges as now there are certain laws in place to prevent repeating racist traditions of the past.

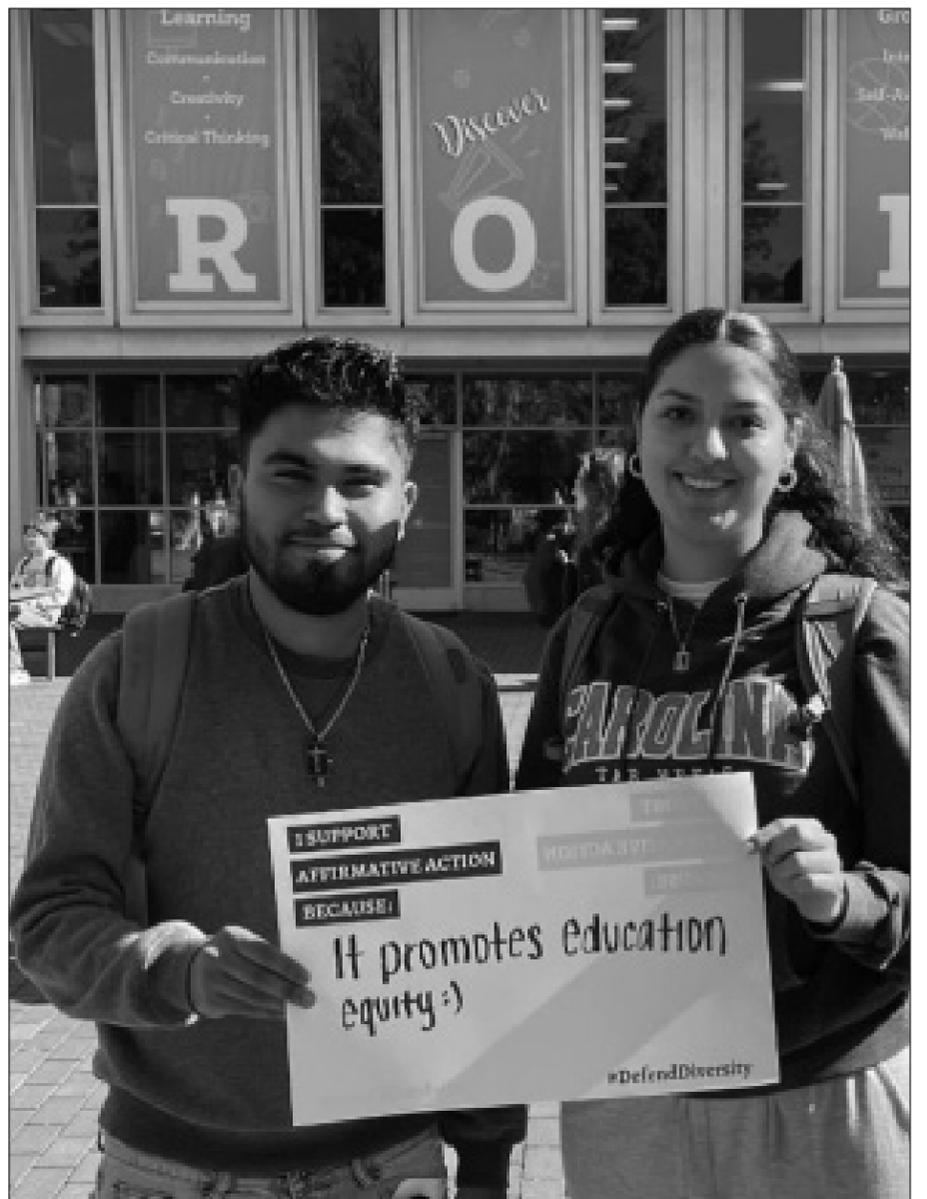
For example, one group that faced heavy quotas was the Jewish population during the 20th century. These quotas were put to a stop not more than a couple years ago. This meant the Jewish populations at schools were either limited or nonexistent. Schools in the past that used these quotas included Columbia University, Harvard University, Yale University, Princeton University, Duke University, University of North Carolina, and Johns Hopkins Uni-

versity, just to name a few. During the 20th century, these universities implemented strict quotas to eliminate, in their words, "undesirable" populations on campus. Religious schools were inclined to educate male Protestants or whomever else they deemed the desirable population, and no one else. Universities felt that too many students of Jewish faith threatened the schools' reputations and would drive away other students. Jewish students were just one of the many diverse groups targeted.

Colleges are now being forced to change due to laws, court cases, and protests calling for institutions to follow affirmative action. Affirmative Action is defined as a set of procedures designed to eliminate unlawful discrimination among applicants, remedy the results of prior discrimination, and prevent such discrimination in the future.

First introduced by the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which outlawed discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, was a major milestone in the history of affirmative action. However, it did not provide specific measures to remedy past discrimination or promote diversity and inclusion in employment and education. In 1978, the Supreme Court upheld the use of affirmative action in the case of Regents of the University of California v. Bakke; although, it limited its scope by ruling that racial quotas were unconstitutional. The court allowed the use of race as a factor in admissions decisions, but only as one of many factors considered in a holistic review process.

Since then, colleges and universities have been allowed to consider race in their admissions decisions, but they are not allowed to use quotas or set specific numerical targets for the number of students from particular racial or ethnic groups.



Courtesy of @uncaffaxn on Instagram

UNC students show their support for affirmative action.

However, there are still ongoing debates and legal challenges over the use of race in college admissions, with some advocating for a race-blind approach and others arguing that race-conscious policies are necessary to promote diversity and equal opportunity. Students now hardly consider the pasts of the colleges they apply to. When asked if students consider the histories of the colleges they apply to, Andrew Poska, the

Dean of College Counseling, said, "If a college is highly sought after, it's rare that students and families aren't willing to overlook missteps and poor behavior in the past." Poska said that applying students are usually unaware of a college's history. In one light, it shows the progress that most students don't feel a need to worry about an institution's past behavior. In another, we see a repeat of strict college quotas with racist undertones.

When talking to Nghi Doan '23, she mentioned great points about what she had to consider when she applied to college this cycle. "Based on talking to seniors from last year, I had to be conscious about what major I was applying for. As an Asian, there are stereotypes about what majors we apply for—like last year, I knew a very smart senior who didn't get accepted into specific colleges because he was considered one of the many Asian applicants interested in computer science."

Students often feel that they have to be cautious when making choices that determine their futures, as it relates to stereotypes about their identities and putting forth that image of "uniqueness" that colleges look for. Sadly, these stereotypes have hindered colleges' full potential of achieving a multicultural mosaic that reflects the real world.

As Lusanda Mayikana, the Dean of Pluralism and Multicultural Affairs, put it, "Students are the ones to shape the school's culture, and depending on what schools encourage and support, that's what the culture of the school becomes."



Protesters during the Regents of the University of California v. Bakke Supreme Court case.

Courtesy of @uncaffaxn on Instagram

# Black History Month celebration

By Djasahn English & Beverly Fishman

Managing Editor of Social Justice

Managing Copy Editor

This year's Black History Month celebration at Lake Forest Academy was headed by both prideful leadership and enthusiastic participation from the students and members of the Black Student Union. Across the month of February, multiple events, presentations, and activities were designed by student leadership and faculty advisors as avenues to celebrate Black culture and beauty.

To start off the month, on Wednesday, February 1st, during the first morning meeting presentation of Black History Month, the front stage was lined with members of the BSU standing adjacent to one another wearing all black. While on stage BSU president Mark Rios '24, shared a short statement to announce the beginning of Black History Month and present the BSU members.

The conclusion of Rios's speech said,

helped us celebrate the different diasporas that fall under the 'Black' Student Union."

During the First All School Meeting slot during Black History Month, on February 9th, 2023, the Black Student Union hosted a lively *Family Feud* reenactment, allowing for students and faculty to participate and compete against one another. The game-show style competition started with Gabi Stewart bringing back her iconic Steve Harvey costume. BSU Head of Committee Yaseen Primus '24 explained, "We wanted to keep the Black History Month celebration as entertaining as possible, while using the ASM to teach and remind the LFA community about the importance and meaning behind the celebration."

The questions were all about Black history and culture with topics ranging from "the creators of our most essential inventions" to "best HBCUs in America." Teachers and students alike were eager to be involved, and the atmosphere was energetic.

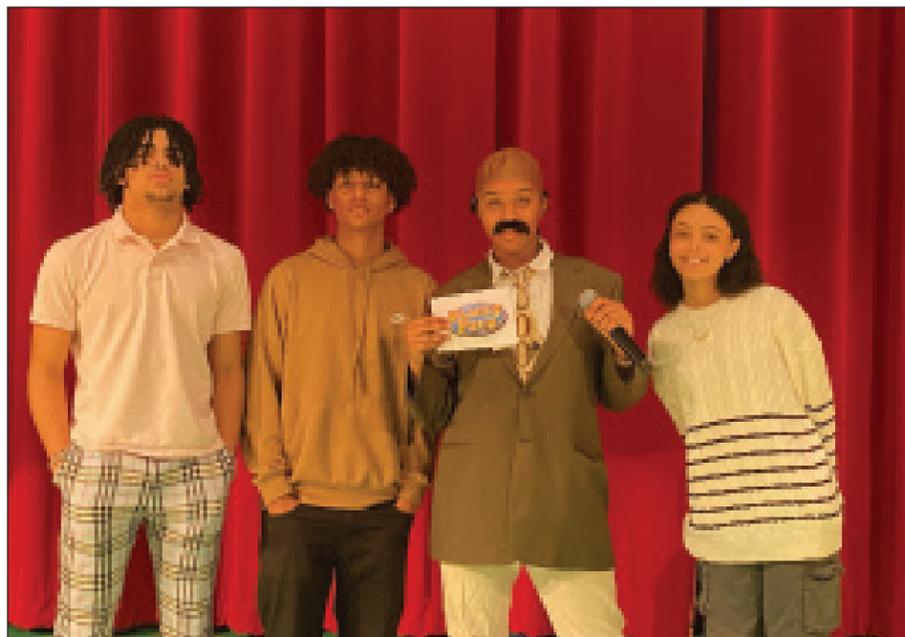


Photo by Nancy Nassr  
Black Student Union leaders from left to right, Yaseen Primus '24, Mark Rios '24, Gabi Stewart '24, and Terry Willson '25

"Up here, with me, I have our Black student body: your friends and your peers. This is our time to uplift each other as a people, which we will do. However, with our uplifting will come malice. But we won't let that bother us. This month is for celebrating my people. Our cultures, our beauty, and our excellence. And I love my culture, and today I'm feeling beautiful and awfully excellent."

Rios detailed what his experience during the on stage black out was like; he said, "We all went up on stage, and I think it came out well. A lot of people came up in black clothes, and it was really encouraging to have that much support to start the month."

The next weekend there was a cultural food event in Warner Dorm. Rios explained what that entailed and how the event allowed the BSU to celebrate its identity holistically. He said, "Mr. Mpofo made a fufu type dish, a kind of dough you use to pick up the mean and juices of the dish. This was alongside some beef and a chicken stew. That event was a lot of fun, and it

Salajan English '24, BSU member, commented, "It was cool to see not just Black students but all students racing down the stage, happy and excited about our Black history. It felt like we were being celebrated." Following *Family Feud*, BSU member Nalani Hill '24 performed a personally choreographed dance to "I Will Survive" by Gloria Gaynor. By her last move, the audience was clapping incredibly loud, and no one wanted her to exit the stage. The next performance was from Terry Willson, who sang Andra Day's "We Will Rise Up." The raw talent and beauty her singing exuded was unmatched. Cressey's auditorium was lit up by flash lights, and she gave what should be a memorable performance to all.

Stewart stated, "It was a great opportunity to allow us as the Black Student Union on campus to showcase our Black Excellence in an interactive and entertaining way." Throughout the All School Meeting, good energy and high participation was constant with people wanting more. The BSU delivered an unforgettable day for



Photo by Terry Willson '25

Gabi Stewart '24 in her Steve Harvey game show host impersonation

the LFA community and truly spotlighted Black excellence, history, and culture.

In retrospect, the BSU had an overall successful Black History Month, succeeding in providing positive attention to the beauty of the Black diaspora. English said, "There aren't a lot of resources for affinity groups and clubs to really excel in providing them the representation they deserve during important times. I think with the resources that the BSU has, they're doing a great job at making us feel comfortable during this time of celebration."

In regards to the BSU's plans moving forward and past Black History Month, Rios shared some goals for the rest of the year. He said, "We have planned a twist-out/salon in the dance room where we'll play Black comfort movies. My guess is that it will be

a lot of people's favorite event of the year, and I know that it will probably be mine."

When asked what about the BSU allowed them to have an impactful year, Primus said, "We have a really balanced group of leaders this year, so we have people who can tap into a lot of different communities or circles at this school. On top of that, our underclassmen have been a lot more passionate about the club than in years past."

Finally, when asked how he would like to see the BSU progress or evolve in future years, Rios cautioned future leaders. He said, "the BSU should continue to focus mostly on allowing Black students to celebrate their culture amongst each other, and only when that's been prioritized, begin allowing others to join in on that celebration."



Photo by Nancy Nassr

Black Student Union members after a successful All School Meeting

# Influential figures in pop culture

By Avery Martin

Managing Editor of A&E

In honor of Black History Month, the Spectator would like to highlight three influential Black pop culture figures throughout the past few decades.

Angela Bassett is most known for her roles on screen, but she is also an incredibly influential member for the Black community. Born on August 16, 1958, in New York to Betty Jane and Daniel Benjamin Bassett, she was a hardworking student who became the first African American to earn National Honor Society at her school in Florida. Then, she went on to attend Yale University earning a B.A. in African American Studies and, later, earned a Masters in Fine Arts from Yale's drama school. She moved to L.A. and made her official film debut in *FIX* (1986) as a news reporter. For the next few years, she landed bigger roles in films like *Boyz n the Hood* (1991), *Malcolm X* (1992), and the television series *The Jacksons: An American Dream* (1992). However, in 1993, she played what many consider her most memorable role: Tina Turner in *What's Love Got to Do with It* (1993). After that, she became the first African American woman to win a Golden Globe for Best Actress and earned an Academy Award nomination. She has been an avid philanthropist throughout her career, but, most recently, she's been working with the American Heart Association and the American Diabetes Association to raise awareness about cardiovascular diseases and type 2 diabetes, which disproportionately affects Black communities. Bassett lost her mother to diabetes. In her personal life, Bassett is married to Courtney B. Vance and has two children. Most recently, on the screen, Bassett is known for her role as Queen Ramonda in the Marvel films *Black Panther* (2018),

*Avengers: Endgame* (2019), and *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever* (2022). Over her career, she has received sixteen NAACP Image Awards, two Golden Globe awards, and nominations for two Academy Awards, and seven Primetime Emmy Awards. Most importantly though, she is a prominent figure of inspiration for the Black community.



Courtesy of @im.angelabassett on Instagram  
Angela Bassett looks gorgeous in this pink gown before the Critics Choice Award.

Chadwick Boseman was a multi-award winner and American actor who had a profound impact on the Black community. Boseman was born on November 29, 1976, in South Carolina. He went on to attend Howard University—earning a bachelor of fine arts in directing—and studied at Oxford Mid-Summer Program for acting. Fun fact: Denzel Washington paid for Boseman's Howard tuition and was a close friend of his. In 2008, he moved to L.A. where he went on to star in *42* (2013), *Get on Up* (2014), and *Marshall* (2017). Some other films he starred in were *The Express* (2008), *Draft Day* (2014), and *Message from the King* (2016). Most notably, however, he was known for his role as the T'Challa/the Black Panther in Marvel's *Black Panther* (2018). While filming those movies, Boseman was battling colon cancer for four years and ended up passing away in

late August 2020. Despite a relatively shorter time in Hollywood, Boseman certainly left an impact earning two Screen Actors Guild Awards, a Golden Globe Award, a Critics' Choice Movie Award, a Primetime Emmy Award, and an Academy Award nomination. Most significantly though, Boseman and his role as T'Challa gave boys and girls in the Black community a hero who looked like them in a world of supermans, spidermans,



Courtesy of @chadwickboseman on Instagram  
Chadwick Boseman poses on the red carpet at *The Black Godfather* premiere.

and wonder womans—a mark that will be remembered and cherished beyond his death.

Beyoncé Giselle Knowles was born on September 4, 1981, in Houston, Texas. She is of Louisiana Creole & African descent. Beyoncé started singing young and enrolled in local dance classes and art schools. In 1992, Beyoncé, along with her family friends, auditioned for an all-girls R&B group called Girls Tyme that went on to compete in the show *Star Search*. The group lost, but Beyoncé's dad, Matthew Knowles, began to manage the group which later became the famous Destiny's Child in 1996. Over the next ten years, the group hit the top of the billboard charts and had a world tour but officially disbanded in 2006. During that time, Beyoncé pursued her solo career as well. In 2003, Beyoncé released her debut solo album *Dangerously in Love* with the hit "Crazy in Love." The album went on to win, not one,

but FIVE grammys. Beyoncé continued her solo career with the release of her first visual album, *B'day* (2006), *I Am... Sasha Fierce* (2008), and *For 4* (2011). She married rapper Jay Z in 2008 and currently has three kids. But her next two releases marked something never before done in the music industry. With absolutely no marketing, she released the widely praised visual album *BEYONCÉ* on December 13, 2013, which inspired other artists to take control of when their albums dropped. Then in 2016, her visual album *Lemonade* premiered as a television special on HBO. *Lemonade* entered a new era of Beyoncé that was more focused on her southern Black roots. Then, after giving birth to twins, Beyoncé became Coachella's first Black female headliner in 2018. The two-hour performance celebrated HBCUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) and Black culture and became an iconic pop culture moment. Beyoncé and Jay-Z released a joint album titled *Everything is Love* later in 2018. With a total of 32 awards and 88 nominations from the Grammy Awards for her music, she is the most-awarded and most nominated artist in Grammy history (not to mention all the other awards she's won). Beyoncé is one of the most culturally significant figures of Black pop culture history.



Courtesy of @beyonce on Instagram  
Beyoncé shows off her newly won three Grammys awards.

## Putting an End to the GOAT Debate

By Nicholas Bisulca

Editor-in-Cheif

Who's the GOAT? Well, in soccer, it's Lionel Messi; in baseball, it's Babe Ruth; in boxing, it's Muhammed Ali; and in Basketball, it's... debatable.

Now, before you get angry, let's get one thing straight: *Space Jam 1* was much better than *Space Jam 2*. There's no argument on who's the better actor. However, LeBron James passing Kareem Abdul-Jabbar in all-time points has strengthened LeBron's case as the greatest basketball player of all time. So, let's break down who's better where.

Michael Jordan played in the NBA between 1984-2003 and took a few years off on two different occasions. He played in an era of basketball characterized by defense, and lenient refs allowed for more aggressive play. On the other hand, LeBron James has been playing in the NBA since 2003, where players' focus has shifted towards a more offensive game, making greater use of the 3-point line. Jordan played in the NBA for 15 seasons, while James has played for 20 seasons so far. Jordan has won six NBA championships, and James has won four. Both players have won

four regular-season MVP awards, but Jordan has won nine more scoring titles than LeBron.

When it comes to playing styles, Jordan was known for his incredible scoring ability and his tenacious defense. He was a master of the mid-range jumper, and his ability to score in clutch moments was unparalleled. MJ assisted on nearly 25% of his teammate's baskets when he was on the court, which made him one of the best playmakers in the NBA at the time.

James, conversely, is known for his all-around game. He is an excellent scorer but also a great passer and rebounder. He can play multiple positions, and his versatility makes him a nightmare for opposing teams. Even at 38 years old, he can be considered one of the faster players in the NBA. James is also the only player in the history of the NBA to be Ranked in the Top 100 for points, assists, rebounds, blocks, three-pointers, and steals.

Another area of comparison is their impact and influence. Michael Jordan is widely credited with popularizing the sport, and his brand, Jordan, has become one of the most recognizable in the world. Being cut from his high school team, then working to play in the NBA, MJ's youth inspiration is unde-

niable. However, LeBron James is a strong social figure, and he's used his platform for good. Off the court, he's known for his philanthropic work and social activism. LeBron has also been featured in many memes, due to his habit of reading the first pages of books and for his love for 'Taco Tuesday.'

Jordan's competitive spirit, his mental toughness, and his unwavering focus on winning were other things that set him apart from other players. Jordan was a winner, and he demanded excellence from him-

self and his teammates. His drive to be the best is what propelled him to greatness.

Despite the many similarities and differences between these two players, one thing is clear: Michael Jordan is the greatest of all time. Jordan's six NBA championships, ten scoring titles, and his clutch performances in key moments give him an edge over James. In conclusion, while LeBron James is undoubtedly one of the greatest basketball players of all time, Michael Jordan remains the undisputed GOAT.



Courtesy of @SSDBurner\_ on Instagram  
LeBron James teamed up with retired Michael Jordan at Jordan's annual summer camp at UC-Santa Barbara in 2003.

# 2023 State of the Union address

Finn Harrison

Managing Editor of Politics

On February 7, 2023, President Biden addressed the nation at the annual State of the Union amidst one of the busier news weeks of his Presidency leaving him with much to address.

Just ahead of the President's speech to the joint session of Congress, a balloon was spotted hovering above the contiguous United States. The balloon was later determined to be a Chinese spy device, leading the President to have it shot down after it had exited American airspace over the Atlantic. The move had sparked criticism amongst Republicans who thought it should've been shot down earlier. This is all in light of Secretary of State Antony Blinken's planned trip to China which has now been canceled in the wake of the balloon. This has led many to question the state of Sino-American relations. With the current geopolitical situation being as hectic as it is with the war in Ukraine, many are concerned with this turn of events. After all, China supporting Russia in the Ukraine war is the last thing the Biden administration wants.

In addition to this, the President also had something to brag about. On February

3rd, the Department of Labor released its jobs report for January indicating that 517,000 jobs had been generated safely avoiding claims of a Post-COVID recession.

The President started out his speech on a humorous note, telling the newly elected House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, "I don't want to ruin your reputation, but I look forward to working with you," poking fun at the partisanship that consumed the Republican Speaker's election. This would set the tone for what would appear to be a relatively jovial speech compared to the resentful jeering of the Republicans in the chamber. At various points throughout his speech, the President was heckled, especially, by the more extreme members of the opposition party. At one point, the President criticized plans by certain Republicans to sunset social security and medicare, which caused vocal uproar and denial among the Republican members of the crowd leading the President to quip back "apparently it's not going to be a problem." Throughout the heckling, though, the President kept his calm, emphasizing the bipartisan stance he has maintained in his half-century-long political career. However, the Republican's reaction clearly showed that the era of bipartisanship that the Pres-



Courtesy of Creative Commons

President Biden gave his speech to the State of the Union.

ident had hailed from, was no longer.

Despite the heckling, the President was able to point to some of his major policy achievements over the past year. He pointed to the American Rescue Plan Act as being the reason for the strong jobs reports. He also mentioned the economy's growth following the Inflation Reduction Act which was passed over the Summer and is by far Biden's biggest piece of legislation to date. He also touted that the deficit had been reduced by a trillion dollars, comparing it to his predecessor who had increased the deficit every year. Additionally, the

President reassured the chamber and the world of his commitment to Ukraine as he has many times prior. The Ukrainian ambassador was even in the audience.

In the end, his speech, while emphasizing his accomplishments, attempted to veer away from partisanship by focusing on the bipartisan support for Ukraine and the various bipartisan bills that Biden had compromised to get passed. So, while even faced with partisan vitriol and an unprecedented crisis abroad, the President in his speech maintained his attempt to unify rather than going on the offensive.

## Introduction of AP African American Studies

Wenxuan Ji

Photo Editor

So far, sixty American high schools have debuted the latest Advanced Placement (AP) course—AP African American Studies. This course, which is still being piloted in selected U.S. high schools

through 2024, is a multidisciplinary curriculum that not only teaches history but offers students an in-depth understanding of African American culture through the lenses of politics, civil rights movements, literature, arts, and geography. The College Board, known for providing students a platform to take undergradu-

ate courses for credit in high school, has become a key component in high school education across the globe. The launching of AP African American Studies allows students to focus on a deep examination on the history of America through a distinctive black gaze, meanwhile offers the context to issues and movements that cohere the Black community over time.

"This course is hugely impactful," commented Jessica Kapadia, the Chair of the History and Social Science Department. "It's a really great opportunity for students to learn history that's either representative of one's own past or different from one's own past." However, this new course is experiencing backlash on a national scale. In a letter to the College Board, in January of 2023, the Florida Department of Education stated that they refused to include AP African American studies in their course directory, as it is not "historically accurate" and is of "the woke indoctrination." Seemingly, under this pressure, the College Board removed certain contents from its curriculum, which were core to helping people understand the intersectionality of race, gender, and class. Blackfeminism. Queer studies. Reparations.

The Black Lives Matter Movement. These are just a few of the topics that the College Board removed from the course's curriculum. Some scholarly concepts were also targeted, such as intersectionality, womanism, and Critical Race Theory. Yet, these subjects make up an essential part

of African American history and contemporary issues. The downplaying of certain histories to appease political opinions is a denial of human experience. "Sometimes when we look at how great atrocities and injustices in the world happen, it's often times because people who know better don't speak up," Nancy Nassr, the Assistant Head of School and Academic Dean, said, continuing with, "So it's sad to see the College Board, which is seen in many spheres in our country as this intellectual governing body for advanced curricular studies, waver under pressure." African American history is American history. By adding this course, both the teachers and students would see and understand the history, the present, and future from the voice of a neglected and stigmatized group.

"This [course] allows for a deep dive into the experience of African Americans in US History that is a crucial piece to the puzzle," stated Jessica Kapadia. What history class teaches is not merely dates, facts, or the chronology of events, but the "critical and empathetic thinking in students in order for us to have a more just world," said Ms. Nassr. While the College Board had added a fresh perspective to look back at history with AP African American Studies, this course that is still within its preliminary stage unavoidably has to be subjected to comments, critics, and revisions to make an impact on the younger generation.



Courtesy of @ackimtrent on Instagram

The art piece "Prayers of a Black Boy" appears above.

# Chance: LFA's new cheer and dance team

By Liv Kelly & Tanya Ganesh  
Staff Writer & Sports Director

Cheering Caxys, shuffling feet, pumped players, vibrant orange and black--all aspects of LFA's sporting events. However, this year there has been an added element, the Cheer and Dance Team, "Chance." Chance performs and cheers at LFA's basketball games, both girls and boys. The team is composed of dancers of all different levels and grades who have been working to create a more enthusiastic atmosphere at the games they perform at.

Chance is coached by Kim Graham and Emily Hansesn, but the team is also largely student-run. Graham, who danced competitively all throughout high school and college, said "It is very much student run in terms of the performances...the athletes have done a really great job of being passionate and taking initiative and wanting to have ownership over their dances." Dances performed at halftime are all choreographed by the students themselves with little help from the coaches. The dances are choreographed around a theme, for example Y2K, and students are encouraged to come to games dressed in that theme to show that extra spark of caxy spirit.

In years past, the team has been predominantly focused on cheer. However,



"Chance" performs at halftime during a basketball game.

Photo by Dave Atas



"Chance" poses at an away game.

Photo by Kimberely Graham

this year, the team has been focusing more on dance, incorporating halftime performances rather than just sideline cheer, which in turn is creating a more enthusiastic environment at games and gets people rallied during halftime.

The team is also hoping to grow the number of team members in the coming years, in efforts to continue to develop the ecstatic sport-game environment that Chance has worked hard to create. The team this year was a very happy and enjoyable environment, making memories for the students participating. Di-ana Hoftman '24, who is a member of the team this year, said the team "made the cheer experience so much better and overall more fun and enjoyable." She talked about how her favorite part of the season for her was "the relationships I made with the team" and how they overall added to her experience.

In the future, there are also plans for there to be a local dance clinic here at LFA that would be open to local elementary school kids where the Chance team can give them choreography and teach them how to dance. The Chance team is on their way to make an impact on LFA's sporting events and we're looking forward to what they have in store for the future as well as how it will continue to add to the LFA community.

## Name, Image, Likeness: How college sports are changing

By TJ Minsky  
Staff Writer

In recent years, the issue of Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) has become a hotly debated topic in college athletics. NIL refers to the rights of college athletes to earn money from their personal brand. This can be through endorsements, sponsorships, and other commercial opportunities.

For many years, college athletes were prohibited from profiting off their NIL, as the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) had strict amateurism rules in place. However, as of recently, several states have passed laws that allow college athletes to earn money and the NCAA has also loosened its rules on the subject.

Despite the ongoing debate and uncertainty surrounding NIL, many college athletes are already starting to take advantage of the new opportunities.

The superstars in their respective sports are starting to make an amount of money that some professionals can't even achieve. Heisman trophy winner and USC star quarterback Caleb Williams is estimated to hold an NIL net worth of \$3.2 million – signing deals with huge companies such as AT&T, Fanatics, Beats by Dre and more. Some of these partnerships have gained the eyes of celebrities like Snoop Dogg (self pro-

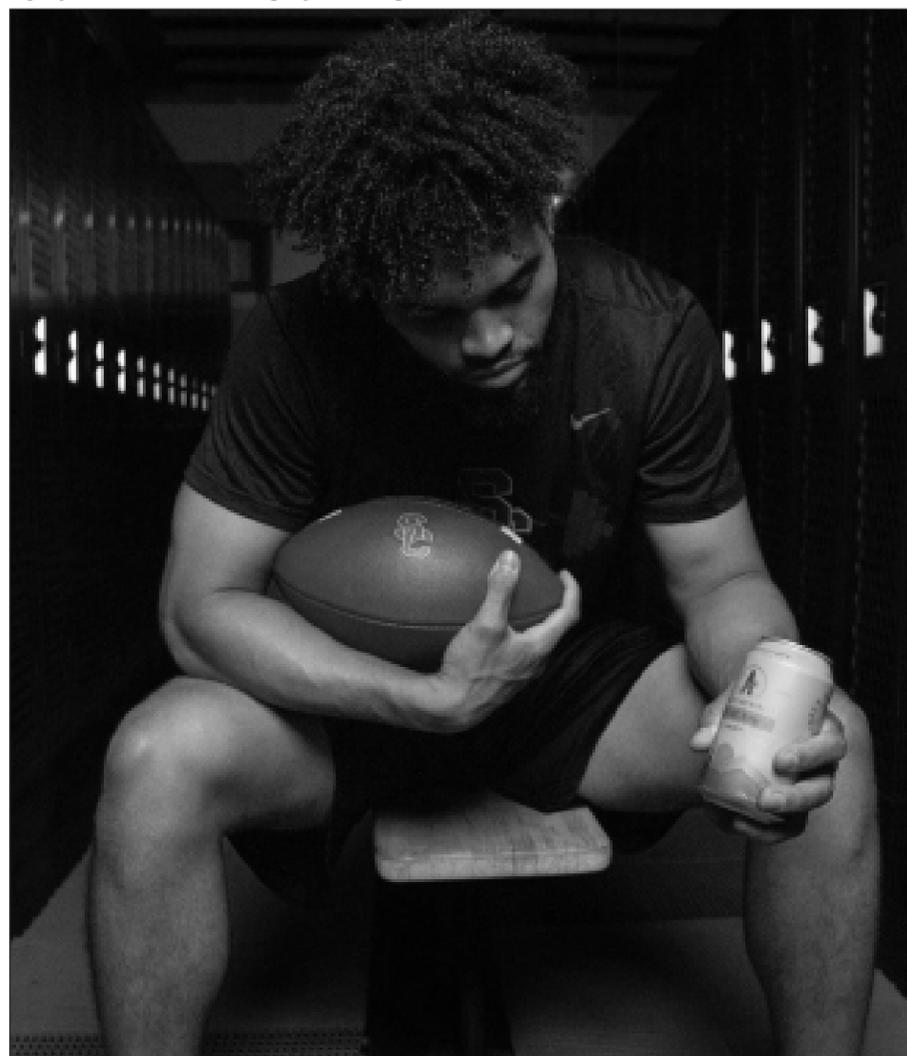
claimed USC fan) and have brought attention to Williams' team. NIL can also be used to give back to communities and the less fortunate. Four-star football prospect Malachi Coleman, who signed with Nebraska, wants to put his NIL towards this type of fund. Coleman grew up in the foster care system and had to deal with abuse. After NIL was made legal in the state of Nebraska, Coleman signed a deal with a Mexican restaurant and developed a burrito. The proceeds from the burrito goes towards developing and building up the foster care system.

With the positives, there also comes negatives. Some people see NIL as a way to illegally recruit highly touted high school prospects. Giving millions of dollars to high school prospects can be seen as damaging towards the kids. Four-star football prospect Jaden Rashada was offered \$12 million dollars to commit to the University of Florida – which he ended up doing. However, the deal quickly fell through and Rashada had to scramble to find a new school and opportunity.

LFA Athletics Operations Manager, Pam Dye, believes NIL can be good; however she believes education comes first: "If you add getting paid a salary, that could place further duress on a young athlete to perform or show their commitment to the school and team in

other ways. In my humble opinion, I would always put education first. If a student-athlete suffers an irrecoverable injury and is unable to play their sport,

they will always be able to fall back on their education and pursue a career in their field to earn a sustainable living."



USC quarterback Caleb Williams advertises for his new NIL deal.

Courtesy of Creative Commons

# Last season of the 2022-2023 school year: Spring sports

By Tanya Ganesh & Esti Rosenblatt  
Sports Director & Photo Editor

The season is always bitter-sweet. Being the last season of the school year, many students will find themselves saying a forever goodbye to a sport that had carried them through highschool. With sports being a huge part of a Caxy's time at LFA, a sense of community and comfort through shared passion and love for the game, develops through each season. It is this passion that has created lasting bonds through our student body.

The season will offer the same roster

ber of the Girls Varsity Soccer and Softball teams, voiced her hopes for the upcoming softball season saying, "We were second in the league last year, but I think this year, we can be first. Although we lost a few players, we are gaining a lot of new players as well under the coaching of Darrin Madeley and new coach, Glinda Hall."

The Girls Soccer teams will also be welcoming a new Assistant Varsity Coach, Nancy Nassr and new JV Coaches Dieter Villegas and Isaias Cairampoma. The team will also be bringing in many new players, attracting many that wish to explore soccer for the first time.



Photo by Dave Atas

Coach Hall goes in for a hit, warming up for the baseball season.

of sports as last year; girls sports will include soccer, lacrosse, badminton, and softball, while boys sports will consist of tennis, baseball and volleyball, along with co-ed track and field. However, there are few new coaches, and teams are looking to be quite different in efforts to fill the empty spots left by the large class of '22.

Many are taking the time in between seasons to reflect on their sports career at LFA, and many are already aspiring, setting goals for the upcoming season. Diana Bishopp '23, a mem-

In an effort to ease the transition to try-outs, Bishopp explained, "We've been doing lifts, starting informal practices, and I know Mr. Mpofu has been helping a lot, along with working one-on-one with new players." With the JV team being relatively small last year and not playing out of school games, Villegas is excited for the large number of students trying out, to develop a "structured, successful and closely knit team."

Although it is not a "team sport," Chandravi Soni '24, a member of the



Photo by Dave Atas

Boys Volleyball practices spikes and blocks in the Glore Gym.



Photo by Dave Atas

Girls kick a ball around on the soccer field.

Varsity Track team explained that "the track team is pretty close knit—the boys and girls warm up together, mid and long distance takes fun trips to the beach and most of the team goes to the trainers after practice to relax and talk. I feel like it's such a good community because of the coaches (Rogers, Golota, Gorowski etc) and how they structure the workouts to build a team." Track and field had also been holding optional practices with great turnouts. Gabi Stewart '24 said, "This incoming class presents a lot of talent

who went on to play for CalTech, he is "ready to welcome in new and promising players." New teammates will not be the only change in the upcoming baseball season, as Hall introduces access to a nearby indoor practice center where the team will practice during the cold beginning of the season.

The Boys Varsity Tennis team is welcoming new varsity coaches, Sam Wold and Mathias Kerr. Ned Koh '23, a 4-year member of the team said, "It's definitely going to take a little bit of adaptation...we lost a couple great



Photo by Dave Atas

The Track & Field team practices sprints in preparation for their first meet.

that I think will really foster healthy competition amongst the team."

With team bonding being a huge part of developing a competitive team, Bishopp explained "We are implementing team lifts and yoga. It's a great place to relax and get away from the stress of school and games. I'm looking forward to team bonding events like laser tag and bowling, maybe watching a college game—a great source of inspiration."

Boys Varsity Baseball will be coached by Dr. Mike Hall, who explained that although the team has lost many strong players such as Brendan Flaherty '22,

seniors, but we have some promising talent coming in too." He continued, "I think if anything being on the team has really shown me the importance of having mandatory sports—it helps you get a great sense of community as soon as you arrive on campus and throughout your time here."

As we close off the 2022-2023 school year with the spring-sports season, feelings of excitement, reminiscence, and spirit lie in the LFA community. As Bishopp said, "I'm excited to be around these people again...I am going to miss it, but make the best of it."

# AI in art: A tool crossing ethical borders

By Theresa Fu  
Senior Writer

The age of artificial intelligence (AI) has supposedly descended upon us; your Tik Tok feed generates an impressive algorithm categorizing your user behavior with the help of AI, Chat GPT seems to hold the answer to any question, and AI like Midjourney, which produces art from text input, is winning contests.

Built and trained upon millions of humans-made images, AI is designed to mimic “human” intelligence and output results at a much faster rate. Deployed in heavy-duty manufacturing and involved in research breakthroughs, AI has been viewed as a force of change that can complement human efforts.

However, AI’s uprising in art is dependent on the craft of human creators. AI image generators draw from countless images online and re-interpret their style to reproduce novelty, leading to concerns about the preservation of human innovation— and whether it has met its demise.

The exploration and integration of artificial intelligence with art is no new concept. In the 1840s, Ada Lovelace, self-deemed “creative coder”—widened the scope of computing to apply beyond mathematical com-

putations. Additionally, throughout the 20th century, scientists like Alan Turing and other visual artists further probed the aesthetic capability of computers and were drawn to its potential to defy the human bounds of imagination. Generative adversarial networks (GANs) was developed as AI art evolved with a newfound understanding of how machines learn visually – thanks to Google researcher Alexander Mordvintsev – and can detect forgery with an inhuman accuracy just by analyzing artistic patterns.

With a few key terms, AI tools can spawn artwork inspired by that input. Though, whether the machine-output captures true creativity is debated. As AI is trained on images – some of which include copyrighted works – it lacks its own style. LFA student artist Dariana Yu ‘24 noted that “AI, as it is right now, cannot invent something completely unique, but it can derive off of what already exists... what it takes and steals is an artist’s essence and their individuality.”

To combat the numerous copyright infringement accusations, artists are calling for stricter laws and pushing technologies, like Midjourney, to respond to backlash regarding the involuntary usage and theft of thousands of artist works. DALL-E 2, on the other hand, developed by ChatGPT’s OpenAI, refused to reveal the exact data its



Courtesy of @midjourneyartwork on Instagram

AI-generated art depicting a spherical dystopian world.

AI art is sourced from, adding to tensions regarding the ethics of utilizing AI in a creative setting, especially as current technology is able to replicate (and sometimes outperform in competition) the job of artists.

Criticism extends to the potential misuse of AI that intensifies the messages stemming from harmful images, including the enforcement of racial stereotypes, mass-production of pornography, and violent deep fakes. Although there are ongoing efforts to mitigate what inherent biases AI accumulates from scouring data – as seen from early tests

showing DALL-E 2’s inclination to generate images highlighting sculpted white men and oversexualized women – worries continue to arise about the extent an algorithm can grasp sensitivity, an intrinsically human trait.

“As we enter the digital age, the degree to which we process and share art is unheard of. It’s no simple task to regulate that,” Yu continued. While AI infused art is continuing to grow in relevance, digital users need to be aware of what content they choose to distribute— and the road they pave for this transformative tool.

## Five rom-coms to warm your heart this spring

By Riya Kapoor & Claire Ireland  
Managing Editor of Collaborations & Senior Editor

Valentine’s day is one of the most stressful holidays. Since it is full of expectations, it is probably filled with let-downs as well. Whether you are looking for a movie to watch with your partner or one to watch by yourself after being stood up on a date, here are five romcoms to give a chance this Valentine’s day:

### 1) *Love Hard*

Unlucky Natalie Bauer falls in love with a man from the East Coast on a dating app. She decides to fly from Los Angeles to the East Coast to surprise him for the holidays, only to find out she’s been catfished. What is predicted to be a severe letdown turns into a heartwarming, charming comedy about

finding love where it is least expected. Stars: Nina Dobrev, Jimmy O. Yang, Darren Barnet, Mikaela Hoover, Harry Shum Jr., Rebecca Stabb, Heather McMahan and James Saito

*Where to watch:* Netflix

Rating: TV-MA language and content

### 2) *To All The Boys I’ve Loved Before*

Lara Jean (Lana Condor) keeps a hat box her mother gave her and puts all the letters she has written to every boy she has ever liked in them. Since she is a shy, quiet, quirky girl, she could never dream of ever mailing these letters- until one day, her sister mailed them for her. Lara poured her heart and soul into these letters- assuming she was the only one who would see them. When these letters get exposed, Lara Jean’s love life wreaks chaos. Stars: Lana Condor, Noah Centineo,

Jenny Han, Jordan Fisher, Janel Parish, Maddie Ziegler, and Israel Broussard

*Where to watch:* Netflix

Rating: TV-14

### 3) *The Proposal*

In an effort to avoid deportation to Canada, Margaret Tate, a successful and intense book editor in New York “forces” her assistant Andrew Paxton to marry her. For fear of losing his job in the case that Margaret gets fired, Andrew agrees but necessitates that they visit his family in Alaska for his grandmother’s birthday. As this weekend adventure ensues, the two grow closer under the scrutiny of a quirky immigration official and Andrews family members who suspect foul play is afoot. Stars: Sandra Bullock, Ryan Reynolds, Betty White, Oscar Nunez, Mary Steen-burg, Craig T. Nelson

*Where to watch:* Hulu, Apple TV

Rating: PG-13 Language and content

### 4) *You’ve Got Mail*

If you’re looking for a movie that will make your sentimental heart swoon, look no further than *You’ve Got Mail*. Made especially for book lovers, this New York-centric movie features the story of Joe Fox, owner of a Barnes and Noble akin mega bookstore chain, and Kathleen Kelly, the owner of a small children’s bookstore. These individuals are instantly at odds due to the competing nature of

their businesses. The only catch is that they have been anonymously communicating with one another on an internet chat room where they have an intense connection with each other, despite not knowing each other’s identity. As Joe and Kathleen’s interactions, both online and in-person, steadily increase, feelings of love and hate bubble to the surface. Stars: Meg Ryan, Tom Hanks, Greg Kinnear, Heather Burns, Parker Posey, Dave Chappelle, Steve Zahn, Jean Stapleton

### 5) *Notting Hill*

William Thacker, a bookstore owner in the *Notting Hill* neighborhood of London, continually runs into famed American actress Anna Scott. One thing leads to another, and the two start an intense relationship. As they grow closer, the schism between their realities seems to grow larger, as their statuses could not be more different, and yet they still seem to keep coming back together. With heart-wrenching dialogue and brilliant acting, *Notting Hill* is a satiating and beautiful love story with the power to bring a couple of tears to your eye. Stars: Julia Roberts, Hugh Grant, Rhys Ifans, Hugh Bonneville, Gina McKee, Emma Chambers, Tim McInnerny, James Dreyfus

*Where to watch:* Netflix

Rating: PG-13 Language and Content



Courtesy of Netflix

Lara Jean and Peter Kavinsky from *To All the Boys I’ve Loved Before* share a loving moment.

# A check in on the current state of comedy

By Ela Jain & Claire Ireland  
Staff Writer & Senior Editor

In recent years, comedy has taken on new roles and relinquished some of its old ones. With social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and Youtube featuring clips of comics doing stand up and original content, comedy as a whole has become more accessible. But with this reality has come changes to what comedy is and what it is allowed to do.

Looking back, the 70's have been widely considered the beginning of the comedy renaissance. This was the time comedy became cool, as the days of basic setup, punchline jokes were over, replaced by increasingly political and edgy content fueled by a younger generation of comedians. Jerry Seinfeld, with the help of some other prominent comedians, started the trend of observational comedy, making stand-up more appealing to a wider audience. Comedy clubs opened to host this growing entertainment medium, and comedians were also becoming popular enough to perform in theaters and stadiums. However, this was also when comedy became more legitimate, with comedians going on strike to be paid for their acts. After a six week strike at the comedy club Comedy Store, clubs agreed to start paying their workers, allowing comedians to make comedy a career. People like Steve Martin, Andy Kaufman, George Carlin and Richard Pryor became leg-

ends in their own right for their routines.

One of the most prominent concerns and conversations found in the comedy sphere right now is that of censorship and cancel culture. Comedy, especially stand up comedy, has often existed at the intersection of mockery and storytelling capabilities for the sake of entertainment. The issue with the former half of this intersection is that making fun of someone can transition from lighthearted to cruel, especially when critiquing marginalized groups. While this realization is not new at all, there has been a large increased consciousness of this reality within comedy in the past few years as people have been more willing in general to call out racism, homophobia, and misogyny amongst other negative rhetorics. Turn to Dave Chappelle, a notorious comedian called out for a series of transphobic jokes. But even with backlash, Dave Chappelle has remained largely unaffected by this supposed "canceling." He has maintained his popularity, been a host of *Saturday Night Live*, and continued to produce comedy specials with the support of Netflix. Valerie Sorenson, Spanish teacher and occasional stand-up comedian, said, "Dave Chappelle in the early 2000s was such an inspiration for people my age... it was very disappointing to see him double down on some transphobic views in his special." This all goes to beg the question, how much has comedy really changed?

In an attempt to answer this question one can turn to *SNL*, a withstanding litmus test



Courtesy of @lovegildathefilm on Instagram

The original cast of SNL acts in a sketch in the very first episode of the show.

for the general comedy scene since 1975. When *SNL* started, it was wholly different to the sketch comedy show it is now. *SNL* was originally called NBC's *Saturday Night*, where the host did not participate in the sketches, and instead did stand-up sets in between. This transitioned into the model of celebrity host and sketch comedy seen today. However, *SNL* has never been particularly diverse. Notably, Bowen Yang is the first Asian-American to ever be cast on the show in its almost 50 year run. Leslie Jones, a former *SNL* cast member, only auditioned for the show after it faced increasing pressure from the press about the show's lack of diversity and released a casting call calling for at least one black woman on the show, around the time. Molly Kearney is the first non-binary comedian on *SNL*, and they have gotten little to no screen time in the current season. Punkie Johnson is almost exclu-

sively in sketches about being a lesbian.

While still necessitating more improvement, an increased push for the broadening of the voices of the comedy world has been seen more generally. "There's a huge opening up in voices that are being heard. I'll go to an open mic and there will be a person saying 'I have social anxiety' and they're talking about that or 'I have a speech impediment' and they're talking about that," said Sorenson.

Comedy is an ever-evolving performative artform. Its reliance on shock value and comments on current events ensure that an air of controversy will continually be associated with it. However, the change in atmosphere is showing that the art form is capable of evolving, and becoming more and more inclusive. Sorenson elaborated, "I hope we keep seeing more and more perspectives that are given voice and are allowed to speak for themselves."

## Fashion highlights from the 2023 Grammy Awards

By Nghi Doan  
Managing Editor of News

It's that time of year again- the Grammy Awards season is upon us once more, and as always, the red carpet was filled with a plethora of stunning ensembles. From bold and vivid colors to timeless Hollywood glamor, most of our favorite artists didn't disappoint. However, there were also a few misses among the hits. So, let's take a look at who sported the top-notch and terrible attires at the 2023 Grammy Awards.

One of the standout ensembles of the night was worn by Maneskin, the Italian rock band, donning coordinating Gucci outfits, giving the classic aesthetic of the fashion house without the implementation of the overused monogram print. Steve Lacy looked sophisticated and refined in Anthony Vaccarello's Saint Laurent outfit serving



Courtesy of @elleusa on Instagram  
Italian rock band Maneskin poses on the Grammy red carpet.



Courtesy of @elleusa on Instagram

Doja Cat poses on the Grammy red carpet.

classic with a twist. At the same time, Doja Cat's off-the-runway single-sleeved black vinyl Versace dress with a lengthy train and accompanying gloves show the brand's true colors instead of the gold essence in clothing typically seen in their ready-to-wear line. Kim Petras and Sam Smith, accompanied by many famous Drag queens, also arrived in matching showy red Valentino apparel, complete with a cane and top hat in the same hue committing to the energy of his new music video. Cardi B stole the show with her enchanting azure gown from Gaurav Gupta's high-end Spring/Summer 2023 strutting down the red carpet.

This season, vivid colors and bold, striking accessories were a major trend on the red carpet, with celebs making a statement through their clothing selections. From classic all-black outfits to vivid blue and red hues, it's clear that these stars weren't afraid to take risks. Mary J. Blige's glimmering gilded dress and Sam Smith and Kim Petras' eye-catching red Valentino ensembles were also a testament to this trend. Celebrities like J.Lo, Lizzo, and Parrell Williams were seen embracing bold jewelry on the red carpet, expanding the extravagance of the event.

Of course, as with any fashion event,

there were also a few misses. Blac Chyna's plumaged leotard was seen by many as a bit too much of a statement, while Coco Austin's sheer dress, completely adorned in silver sequins, also missed the mark. Shania Twain's black and white polka dot pant suit brought some amusement and grandeur to the carpet, but it wasn't enough to make her shine. Finally, while Mary J. Blige's sparkling golden dress was stunning, it didn't quite do it for many. These outfits collectively used overdone prints, colors, or silhouettes that don't make them appealing or even appropriate for these occasions, making them not judged highly by the critics.

Even some of the biggest names in the music industry were not immune to the occasional fashion faux pas. Harry Styles, known for his bold and daring fashion choices, shocked many by showing up in a dazzling, multi-colored jumpsuit that left some people puzzled. Pharrell Williams' too-bright and gaudy red and brown ensemble were also seen as a miss by some.

All in all, the fashion at the 2023 Grammy Awards was remarkable and show-stopping. These stars used their ensembles to make a statement and shine on the red carpet, whether it was with vivid hues, timeless Hollywood allure, or striking assertions. Some individuals' fashion decisions were triumphant, while others were not. In any case, the Grammy Awards season continues to be a highlight of the year for both superstars and fashion admirers.



Courtesy of @elleusa on Instagram  
Harry Styles poses on the Grammy red carpet.

# Artificial Intelligence in education: How it's changing the learning experience for students

By Quinn Knight  
Senior Copy Editor

The thought of AI has been a topic of discussion in recent years, but within the last few months, the integration of AI has become prominent and become more of a tangible thing affecting people in their daily lives. The evolution of AI is having a significant effect on the student population across the globe, having both positives and negatives on both sides of the argument.

When people think of AI, they tend to think of the negatives first, especially in



*Courtesy of Creative Commons*

Chat GPT's logo.

a school setting, and they see it as a way to cheat and complete assignments faster. As ChatGPT has become integrated into the web, some people sadly have relied on it. But others see it as a learning tool to help them broaden their studies. They use AI to generate study guides and other forms of learning which were inaccessible previously. Instead of being afraid of AI and its capabilities as schools, such as blocking ChatGPT from school computers and tablets, teachers need to tackle it head-on and learn to teach with it in a way that could benefit anyone. Some schools have embraced it as a teaching aid, which has unlocked some students' creativity and offered tutoring from the AI. Luke Feltzin '24 is well aware of AI's effect as he commented that he wouldn't use it to complete assignments; however, "If I am stuck on a question for an assignment, I will use it to guide me and lead me in the right direction. It is much more con-

venient than searching through the mess of results google [provides]." Feltzin agrees that if AI is used correctly, it can benefit students never thought of before.

Although if it is used correctly, the benefits could be substantial. Unfortunately, people tend to use different AIs negatively. When commenting on AI's effects, Sami Awada '24 said, "AI is being utilized in certain ways to help and benefit students to get their assignments and studies done more effectively. However, with the use of certain AI programs, students also pick up negative effects as it makes students rely on and have a dependency on AI." Many students use it to complete homework quickly, as AI will answer all the questions. They also use it to write papers, making the process effortless and (sometimes) getting A's on papers quickly. When commenting on the downside of AI, Feltzin said, "It can be negative [as] it is a crutch many students may rely on,

blind to the fact that in the long run may harm their ability to perform in a setting where AI may be unavailable, like during a test, and even their capacity to retain information, when it is so readily available with AI." When relying on AI, people who think they can successfully memorize information by completing the work do significantly worse when taking tests and other assessments--ultimately hurting the student. Using AI like this prevents students from absorbing the information taught and affects students negatively, and in some cases, causes grades to drop and attention spans to decrease, not to mention the issues regarding Academic Dishonesty that all involved in the education world will have to grapple with quite quickly.

Thus, depending on the approach, the integration of AI has seen benefits for some and drawbacks for others, and people continue to adapt to this new world filled with Artificial Intelligence.

## International registration for digital SAT

By Cynthia Li  
Staff Writer

In spring 2023, SAT tests in international locations were shifted to online tests. In spring 2024, the tests in the US will make the same change. This transition to digital testing worldwide can be considered the most major change made by the College Board in recent years. Aside from the change from paper to online, the format and the structure of the test are adjusted. Such changes include a reduction of test duration, the cancellation of the non-calculator section, and the implementation of stage-adaptive sections, in which two sets of questions are generated with different difficulty levels based on the performance of the previous section.

Digital SAT testing, compared to paper-based tests, is beneficial in multiple aspects. One of the most discussed advantages of digital SAT is the guarantee of security. "You don't have to worry about all the logistics that come with sending those test materials in advance and making sure that they are correctly dealt with and not mishandled," said Ben Wetherbee, Associate Dean of College Counseling. "It's a big cover-up of how these different people were able to kind of cheat the system and are able to mitigate a lot of the cheating overall." The accuracy of the online test is another aspect that people found to be beneficial. Wetherbee stated, "It is going to be more of an accurate assess-

ment because of the fact that it's gonna be this adaptive test that is going to be done through staged questions." In each section of the test, students will first answer the same set of questions, then move to the stage-adaptive parts configured based on the performance of the first part. Through this process, students' abilities to answer the questions will be more justly examined since it allows students to compare and compete with others of similar levels. Thus, the stage-adaptive format can help College

Board to generate the most accurate score based on the individual's abilities.

Despite the benefits, there are also concerns about the transition to digital SAT. The fairness of the test is doubted due to the difference in access to computers and the internet. "The challenge is obvious, making sure that schools from especially under-resourced areas still have access to be able to take the exam in comparable settings and have access to the necessary internet, wifi, things like that. So that it's available to anybody that wants

or needs to take it," Wetherbee said. Yet, people have concerns about whether the content of the test would change. Wetherbee responded, "There's still going to be overlapping, like the majority of the content is gonna be the same."

Harry Luo '24, commented on the digital SAT, "The digital SAT limits the freedom to cheat but standardized testing always has frauds, we'll see how it goes over time."



Poster of the SAT going digital.

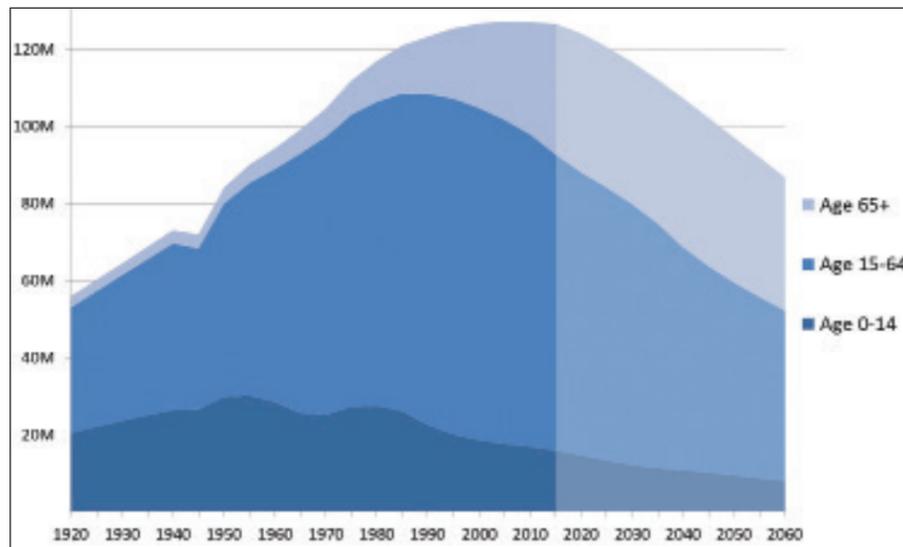
*Courtesy of Creative Commons*

# Japanese population crisis: The verge of no return

By Theresa Fu and Harry Luo  
Senior Editor & Staff Writer

With one of the world's lowest birth rates and highest aging population, Japan grapples with a population crisis on the verge of being irreparable. According to the latest government data, Japan's population decline is on its 11th consecutive year, dropping around 390,000 people in 2021 alone. The streak is unlikely to be broken, unless somehow reversed, experts predict that the total population could fall by as much as a third by 2060.

Japan's low fertility rate is one of the leading causes of the nation's population crisis as it approaches its sixth year of decline. According to the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, the fertility rate in Japan was just 1.34 in 2020, which is well below the necessary replacement rate of 2.1. With the pandemic, the country's borders have been closed to tourists for the better part of the past year, which contributed to couples waiting for Japan's reopening to plan for children. Social norms, such as the praise for arduous work, may have led people to prioritize work over family in a system where



Courtesy of Creative Commons

Graph shows Japanese population by age from 1920 to 2010, projecting to 2060.

companies implicitly guarantee college graduates stable income till retirement (coined lifetime employment system). With this preference for "fresh" college grads, women are often excluded from high-skilled jobs after their first maternity leave. Furthermore, an unequal childcare culture contributes to gendered parenting as women are often left alone to shoulder household responsibilities and even less time to grow the family with more children while the men toil away in the workforce.

Consequently, with a disproportionate

number of deaths to birth, Japan's labor force is becoming older as well. With over a third of the population aging 65 or older, there is an increased risk of workforce shortage as people eventually need to retire—regardless of efforts to retain laborers by raising the retirement age to 68. Some of Japan's most profitable industries—the automobile and electronic industries—will suffer in productivity as they may not have the manpower to preserve their current pace of production. Japan's position as the third largest global economy will

waver if the crisis is left undealt with.

In response, the Japanese government has recently declared a number of radical incentives—including measures to increase immigration, provide baby bonuses as support for families with children, and expand social security programs to lessen the financial strife of having children with Japan's high cost of urban living. The government hopes that through these actions, the population count can re-stabilize and cultivate a sustainable future.

Yet many experts remain skeptical and believe that the population crisis's long term implications have no panacea. Professor Keichiro Kobayashi, an economist at Keio University, told the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) that "the demographic trend in Japan is irreversible," and that the country will have to "adapt to a shrinking population and workforce." The government's efforts to address this issue are commendable, but it remains to be seen whether they will be successful. The demographic trends in Japan are likely to continue for the foreseeable future, and the country will need to adjust to a new reality if it is to thrive in the many years to come.

# Turkey and Syria's earthquake

By Beverly Fishman  
Managing Copy Editor

On February 6th, 2023, southeastern Turkey and northern Syria were hit with an earthquake measuring a magnitude of 7.7. Soon following the first disruption, a second earthquake occurred at a magnitude of 7.6. To put this into perspective, these two quakes were reaching nearly 8 on the Richter scale of seismic intensity, a scale of which only goes up to 9. The initial impact was devastating, creating a mass destruction of buildings, households, and cities. No one was prepared for the aftershocks, which followed for weeks after the 6th, amounting to more than 9,000, according to the Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD). Turkey's government reports that 170,000 buildings have been severely damaged or collapsed, 1.9 million people are taking refuge in temporary shelters and public facilities, and nearly 530,000 Turkish residents have been evacuated from the impacted provinces.

Recent estimates record approximately 45,000 Turkish deaths as a result of the earthquake, yet continuous aftershocks create difficulties for aid organizations to account for further losses. The United Nations reports that nearly 9 million Syrians have been severely affected by the quakes, and the latest announced death toll in Syria was 5,914.

As frequently explained in Kevin Hagen's "Introduction to Natural Disasters"



Courtesy of Creative Commons

The Emergency Response Coordination Centre working with Turkish authorities to rapidly mobilise assistance.

course, he relays the idea that "the earth is a force that we can not control." When disasters occur, we can only try to minimize the effects, give our overflowing support, and do our best to reshape the communities impacted. Those injured, displaced, missing, and killed are at the forefront of the world's minds. As a result, it is seen that in devastation, there is comradery. Nearly 240,000 rescue workers and volunteers continue to work to help those affected. People have opened their homes, providing shelter and necessities to those who have lost their sanctuary due to

the disaster. Along with the assistance of Turkish and Syrian residents, dozens of nations around the globe have stepped in to alleviate the damage. The Israeli army sent 150 engineers and medical personnel to provide immediate assistance in life-saving efforts. Russia has sent rescue teams to Syria, along with members who are searching for survivors and clearing extreme debris. Major corporations have spread awareness, such as America's NFL.

The impact is not singular to the impact zones as people around the globe have been influenced, including LFA stu-

dent Almira Tepe. She and fellow impacted students recently held a bake sale to raise funds for relief efforts, saying, "We made sure that we gave equal donations to Syria and Turkey in order to provide the same support for both struggling nations." Despite the great support LFA showed, it is an extremely emotional and terrible event to witness from so far away. "I feel like I can't do anything about it from a distance, and recently, it seems like the news has forgotten." She implores our community to remember that "just because it happened, it does not mean it's over."