



THE CHALLENGER

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EDUCATE

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HOOVERCHALLENGER.COM SPRING 2022

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FLYING SOLO

Hoover's Drama Department gears up for a new season of in-person events.

A couple of weeks ago, the Hoover Drama department competed in a group performing arts competition against a multitude of schools around the state. Now as those events are coming to a close, those performers are opening a new chapter. Independent events.

The members of the department now get a chance to shine solo. For those of you who are sitting there with no idea what IHSSA even is, here is a small definition. The Iowa High School Speech Association. A group who holds two performing arts competitions every year among all the schools in Iowa. Group and independent. The arenas of group competition contain, but are not limited to mime, one-act, improv, choral reading, short film, and musical theatre. While independent events have a lot, but not all, of the same events, it also has a plethora of new events for the competitors to try their hand in. After a year of online and having to compete virtually, our new to Hoover, director and IHSSA coach, Morgan King, is ready to hop into her first year of independent events in person.

"Going into in-person individuals is an

exhilarating and exciting experience. Last year we competed virtually, and we did well, so I am interested in seeing how different our experience is for in-person speech. I am very excited to be back in-person," King said.

King is ecstatic about this year's competition

season. It is not just the coaches who love the competition this way and are excited this year. One of the main components of the competition season is the judges. Judges are assigned an event and sit in on performances, ultimately giving them a score. 1 is the best, the score everyone wants to see. 2 is never good news, and 3 is a disqualification. Judges are mostly volunteers, a lot of the judges are regulars. Teachers and others, returning year after year to watch back-to-back performances all day and give the

performers the compliments or criticism they need to go back and improve, try again next year, or to keep building and move forward. During a competition day, their opinion is all that matters.

"I was in speech in high school and loved it. So, having the opportunity to become a judge



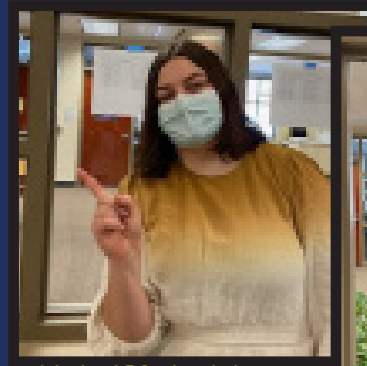
STATE BOUND!

for competitions was perfect! My favorite aspect of judging to seeing all the talent students have for each category I have judged. I love also seeing the passion that students have for performing as well. I plan on judging competitions for as long I can. I really enjoy doing this,” IHSSA judge Jill Dykstra said.

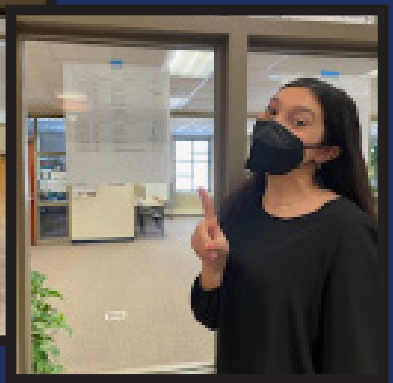
There is one more untapped perspective to look into on this event, and it is arguably the most important. The participant. While there is a flow of returning participants from previous years, and an absence of old performers who have since graduated, this year also has an influx of new students. Either fresh Hoover attendees or others who have been part of the drama department but are just recently coming out of their shell trying to find the right events for themselves. Performers choose their own events and their material. They choose what they want to perform. Sometimes, performers even write their own material.



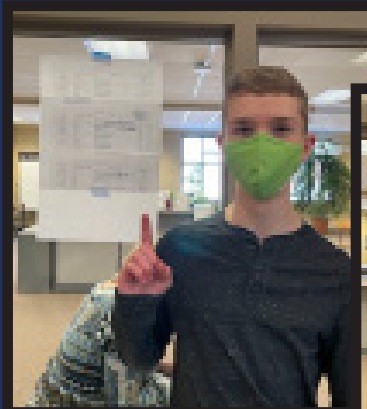
“I chose my events because I thought they would be good for someone who doesn’t perform usually. I’m really nervous because I’m not an actor or a performer... but I think it will be fun!” junior Ireland Fife said. Taking in three different perspectives from the coach, the judge and the competitor, this competition winds up meaning a lot, to lots of different people. With group events coming to a close for Hoover, and independent events season opening, we wish nothing but good luck to our drama department and hope they make it far!



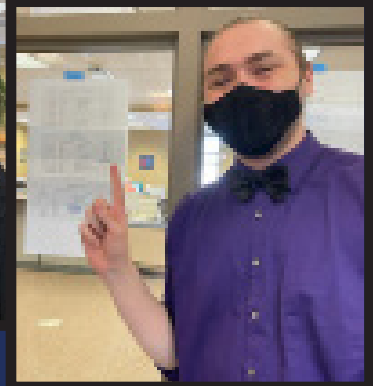
* Ireland Fife- headed to state for Prose



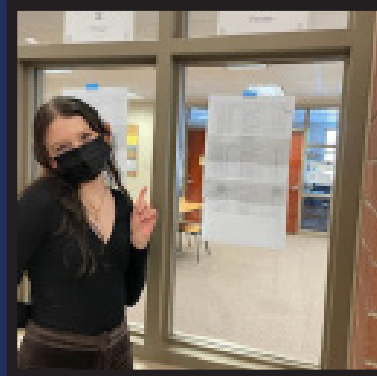
* Sage Johnson-headed to state in two events- Lit Program and Solo Musical Theatre



* Gavin Houchins-McCallum- Headed to state for Storytelling



* Mason Beckler- headed to state for Solo Musical Theatre



* Lilly Johns- Headed to state for Prose

ALSO INCLUDING:

- * Callie Garcia- Headed to state in TWO events- Lit Program and Solo Musical Theatre!
- * Paisha Goodrich- Headed to state for Poetry!
- * Kacper Malinowski- Headed to state for Spontaneous Speaking!
- * Hamida Mokhtar- Headed to state for Acting!

How to Write Better

Learn the methods of writing better.



As juniors are preparing for standardized testing and seniors are finalizing their college admission process, writing becomes a struggle for most as exams require essays. With the help of professional and student writers, there are methods on improving your writing.

Writing is important to every day life as it keeps historical records, allows another form of communication, and saves information, such as a medical profile. Dating back to 35,000 BCE when writing was first discovered, strange letters formed on rock tablets that were decrypted to show stories and concepts of life back then, which helped historians as the tablets were physical evidence.

In the modern world of writing, many academic subjects use writing to express a person's knowledge within that subject, such as biology and other courses. However, some students struggle with communicating their ideas on paper whether structuring a sentence from the mind or finding the right words to describe the idea.

"It's always best to communicate your ideas in a straightforward manner and outline your ideas in a way that benefits you, but be sure to include the main ideas, topic, analysis, etc.," junior Genesis Duarte Perez said.

For clarification, Perez advises answering a writing prompt with an answer that you can understand. For example, the writing prompt is 'what does language mean to you?' and you answer that 'language is something people communicate with each other.' Then, refine that answer to be more specific and detailed, such as 'language is a form of communication between humans.' You can find a specific word by searching for synonyms, but before you begin writing out your ideas, you must have a set topic for your paper.

ADDITIONAL TIPS



1

Avoid being wordy in your sentences by omitting unnecessary words.

Ex. Incorrect: Lisa, who is a student, decided to present about the round and shiny moon.

Correct: Lisa, a student, decided to present about the moon.

2

Check for spelling mistakes by using grammar checkers.

Ex. Incorrect: I think this is the *write* chocolate brand Gwen wanted.

Correct: I think this is the *right* chocolate brand Gwen wanted.

3

Make sure you aren't using the wrong verb form. You can learn about verb forms on YouTube.

Ex. Incorrect: We *was* going to go see the new cafe that just opened.

Correct: We *were* going to go see the new cafe that just opened.

“For finding a topic, I say you have at least three different things you’re interested in, and read it aloud to yourself, which activates a certain part of your brain and allows you to find what doesn’t make sense in your writing,” journalism advisor Sarah Hamilton said.

Be sure to look back on mistakes from past assignments and apply what you’ve learned to your current paper since it’s always a good idea to enhance your writing by removing the flaws you’ve made in the past.

Looking at other people’s works can also help you learn the transitional words that creates a smooth flow in your writing. It can be used as an example on how to write an academic essay or journalistic article.

Writing as a hobby and creative writing is a good way in improving your writing skills over time. You’ll learn more vocabulary, how to structure sentences, and how to effectively communicate your ideas. Writing can also be used as a way to vent your emotions and relieve stress.

If you’re still struggling after reading this article, don’t worry. There are steps on how and where to receive guidance on writing. First, ask a peer or a friend if they could help you after school or a study group that focuses on writing. You can form a study group or find some online.

If your friend can’t help you or they’re too busy, talk to a teacher that specializes on a form of writing and talk

about what you’re struggling to do. This should usually be done during class or after school.

You can even look for tutors if you don’t want to bother your teacher most of the time. Tutors are easily found online and through tutoring centers. Workshops are also something you should join. They are offered by colleges and high schools, which there’s a poetry workshop, hosted by Ms. Wagner, in room 1110 that you can stop by after school.

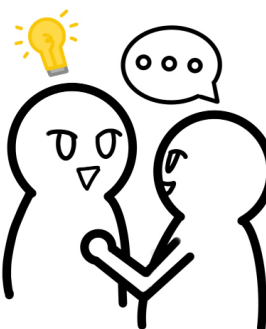
By following these steps, you are on your way to becoming the successful writer you see yourself as, but even the best writers face challenges.

“It may take a while for you to write down what you want to, but your writing will eventually turn out good in the end,” junior Lexi Smith said.

With the encouraging words of Smith, progress is key to successful writing as well as reaching your dream college.



PRACTICE



GET SUPPORT



SUCCESS!

4

Use active voice instead of passive voice. Active voice is more direct and easier to understand. An active voice is when a subject performs an action.

Passive Voice: Six lobsters were ordered by mom.

Active Voice: Mom ordered six lobsters.

5

Add context. Act as if nobody knows what your topic is about. This will help the reader understand your topic more.

Ex. Incorrect: It hurts so much.

Correct: My knee hurts so much because I fell off a 15 feet building.

6

Remember to take occasional breaks. Spending too much time on writing can lead to eye fatigue and isn't healthy on your body when you're sitting around all the time. Listen to your favorite music while taking a walk or hang out with a friend at the mall.



Juniors discuss the decision to graduate early.

“MAKE UP YOUR MIND QUICKLY SO YOU CAN START BEING ON TRACK WITH STEPS THE GRADE AHEAD OF YOU IS TAKING,” SENIOR AFRAA ADAM SAID.

Graduating early can be an easy decision or it can be a very difficult one too.

Graduating early is a sense of independence, saves you from potential loans and tuition but also means you can get a jump start to your career or work force. It won't hurt to graduate early if you have a solid career plan.

“Just make sure it's the choice you want to make. I wouldn't say it's the biggest choice in your life,” senior Hamida Mokhtar said.

When Mokhtar learned she had enough credits to be able to graduate her junior year, she decided that was the best option for her. She does feel like everything is happening really fast though.

“My last in person year was freshman and now I'm graduating. It all feels a little fast,” Mokhtar said.



There is a lot of pressure on students planning on graduating early with things like deadlines with colleges and with the classes they have left to be able to graduate.

“The hardest part about graduating early is that I have to put in a lot of effort to get everything in within the deadline,” senior Afraa Adam said.

Along with SAT & ACT scores, students who graduate early can make impressions on colleges and even employers. SAT scores help colleges compare students from different schools and their strengths. Your scores aren’t the only thing that’s important. Your grades also have a big impact on colleges. Students may think there is no point to taking these tests but these test can be beneficial. Students can make their name available to scholarship programs, and connections to colleges.

If you’re thinking graduating early would be beneficial to you, talk to your counselor and make it possible. It won’t hurt to graduate early.

“Make up your mind quickly so you can start being on track with steps the grade ahead of you is taking,” Adam said.

Graduation requirements

Social Studies

3 credits

+

English

4 credits

+

Math

3 credits

+

Science

3 credits

+

Fine and Applied Arts

15 credits

+

PE

1 credit

+

Electives

7.5 credits

=

23 Total Credits

senioritis

[ˌsēnyəˈrīdəs] 

NOUN US Humorous

a supposed affliction of students in their final year of high school or college, characterized by a decline in motivation or performance.

Ah, senior year. College applications, prom, graduation. The end of an era. Since the invention of a senior class, one ailment has plagued many a student. Senioritis, an affliction teens across the world battle each and every school day. If you are unaware of 'senioritis,' symptoms may include: loss of motivation, drop in academic performance, and crippling attendance rates.

Some dismiss this and just call it laziness while others have a different way of looking at it. Social Studies teacher Christian Davison has become an expert in

senior behaviors as each year he watches the 12th-grade class come and go.

"Yes, I do believe in Senioritis. I think all people when they are approaching the end of an important part of their life experience the emotions and behaviors we associate with Senioritis," Davison said.

Senior Kayla Lounge is anxiously waiting for the end of the year to arrive. Although she has always been aware of senioritis, she is experiencing it for the very first time.

"I think I am feeling it a little, especially first semester. It's definitely a new thing. I am realizing how close I am to being done with high school," Lounge said.

Even she couldn't escape the consequences.

"First semester my grades weren't as good as I wanted them to be and my attendance fell as well. But this second semester, I'm going to work to keep it all up," Lounge said.

On top of senior year stress, Lounge is also a student-athlete on the swim team. This meant that at no point could her grades or attendance fall below the benchmark to participate in meets and practices.

Friends may be the main cause of the spread of senioritis. This was the case for senior Barry Adoobe.

"Some people in my friend group are just used to doing it, and it's more and more their actions affecting me," Adoobe said.

He escaped pretty scar-free with only a slight decline in grade point average. Similarly, to Lounge, it seems the first semester is when it has the strongest hold on you. This lack of motivation demonstrated by students is most likely due to their anxiousness to move on to

"You might be a student who is hyper punctual to every class without fail or you may be someone who is proud of yourself for going to one full day of school each week."

the next chapter of their lives, college. Everybody knows college is no piece of cake and teachers worry that students who don't finish out high school strong may struggle with taking on the workload of college. But some seniors have already devised a plan.

"Having a timetable

and just pushing myself to go to class or having someone or something encourage me into going to class in college, being in class every day in college can help my grades and I have to remember that. Just following my mind and staying true to myself will help me through," Adoobe said.

Whether it be a fictional ailment concocted by youths as an excuse for laziness or a real emotional shift found within the senior class, the last two semesters of high school are bound to be bursting at the seams with emotions. You might be a student who is hyper punctual to every class without fail or you may be someone who is proud of yourself for going to one full day of school each week. Wherever you fall on that spectrum, we all have a draw within us to see what that next step will look like, where we'll be in five years, who will we hang out with once we are no longer a Hoover student, and what kind of person we will become.

»»» Freshman Year Flashback «««



»»» Freshman Year Flashback «««

THE AFFECT

Why was COVID such a huge impact on us?

The pandemic had an impact on so many lives in different type of ways. Some people caught the virus or knew people that had caught it as well and unfortunately some people lost their lives to it. COVID is still and forever will be around but how can we prevent a harsher spread?

A few examples of the impact include some people losing their jobs. According to Monthly Labor Review, accounting and bookkeeping services lost 61,000 jobs, architectural and engineering services lost 69,000 jobs, computer system design and related services lost 68,000 jobs, and management and technical consulting services lost 98,000 jobs.

Some people got evicted and some people were already sick but got even more sick because of the virus.

With all that commotion going on, some people still weren't taking the procedures seriously, and they also found every way to justify that masking up or social distancing during the pandemic was still not the way to go. Some people even went on strike which put their children and even themselves in some danger because of how inconsiderate they were.

"I've lost a couple of family members during COVID, and I also wasn't able to be a part of my grandmother's funeral because of COVID so because of that I take COVID seriously. I think we should all take these procedures serious. Mask up and stay away from large groups," Associate Principal Willie Montgomery said.

COVID started in 2019. At the time, school was still going on but because of how serious the virus got, school was cut short for the rest of the year and the following year there were months of virtual classes.



With the way things were set up, kids struggled a lot with their mental health and had basically lost hope in school.

"Virtual classes had a big impact on me. Freshman year I was on online school, and I got to the point where I was going to dropout of school because I didn't like it at all but coming back to school has made it better and I guess it saved my high school career. I'm back on track and I like it," sophomore Adolfo Patino said.

As we all know, America wasn't the only country that was cursed with the Corona Virus. According to the St. Louis Fed, low-income countries suffered more because of less resources and there were a lot more people dying because there was nothing much they could do and even with their struggle, rich countries weren't doing much to help at all.

"We could've help them and sent all kinds of stuff like medication, food and other things but as we know America is greedy," Campus monitor Chris King said.

COVID FACTS

1. COVID develops and thrives in dark/moist areas
2. There has been an average of over 3,000 COVID deaths per day in 2021 in the United States
3. The virus is deadlier for men than women
4. COVID-19 and SARS-CoV are not the same thing
5. The virus mutated and transmitted to some other animal and then to a human



COVID RESOURCES

<https://www.who.int>

<http://www.gavi.org/>

<https://www.theglobalfund.org>

<https://www.gatesfoundation.org>

<https://africacdc.org>

CHANGE IN EDUCATION

How the pandemic has affected education today.

The rise of teachers leaving their profession has created a big impact on education.

Since the pandemic began, there have been more teachers leaving their profession. A reason this has happened is due to the amount of stress they have in the workplace. Being overwhelmed with stress, having insufficient pay, having unrealistic federal and state mandates, student discipline challenges, and lack of influence and respect are factors that led to this big issue. Teachers have had enough and decided to leave teaching during this time.

Not only have they had this big decision in mind, but the pandemic was also the last straw that helped them decide enough is enough and leave teaching early. This is most common with public school teachers. Studies show that teachers younger than 40 who left early due to the pandemic were particularly likely to attribute the move due to their pay not justifying the stress and the risks of COVID-19.

"I believe more teachers are leaving due to stress, anxiety, and their jobs being changed so much. Also, them dealing with so many things they didn't have to deal with before," school counselor Janet Stribling said.

The pandemic has affected education nationwide. It has created an increase of teachers' shortage throughout the United States and there is a difficulty replacing them. Not only has it affected teachers greatly, but it also created a big toll on principals as well.

"As a principal, the pandemic has made decision making more complicated as the health and safety of students and the community play into those decisions," principal Sherry Poole said.

During the pandemic, as new teachers were excited to go into the classrooms, it has created obstacles for them. Instead of going in the classroom, their first year became virtual.

"The pandemic was a curve ball as my first year teaching was completely virtual. Not knowing who my students were or how they looked created a disconnection that I now enjoy inside the classroom," algebra teacher Bradley Warner said.

Even students can see that stress has impacted teachers making this decision.



"I think more teachers are leaving is because of stress on staff and teachers and not having that passion for teaching anymore like it faded away over time," junior Andrea N'Goran said.

Teachers leaving education has a great impact on students. This caused students to have less support in the classroom and create losses in relationships between students and teachers.

"When good teachers leave, students suffer the losses both academic and emotionally. It is hard to say goodbye to a teacher that has a great relationship with you, and you feel safe with learning," Poole said.

There are ways we can help educators nationwide cope with stress. As they can get very overwhelmed in the workplace, it's important to have resources and find ways we can help them.

"I believe we should provide more teacher assistants and provide mental health days for them. Also provide mental health resources for them and provide more planning time for them due to most days not having enough planning time and breaks throughout their busy schedules that accumulate too much stress," Stribling said.

Students also believe that districts should provide mental health days for teachers that gather too much stress in the workplace.

"I BELIEVE WE SHOULD PROVIDE MORE TEACHER ASSISTANTS AND PROVIDE MENTAL HEALTH DAYS FOR THEM. ALSO PROVIDE MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES FOR THEM AND PROVIDE MORE PLANNING TIME FOR THEM DUE TO MOST DAYS NOT HAVING ENOUGH PLANNING TIME AND BREAKS THROUGHOUT THEIR BUSY SCHEDULES THAT ACCUMULATE TOO MUCH STRESS," STRIBLING SAID.

"The district should probably raise the salary for staff and teachers or require teachers to get three to five days of release from teaching like a break for their mental health but can only use it after six months of the new school year," N'Goran said.

Not only can school districts help with this issue, but students can help with this issue as well. Students' behaviors are a big factor that accumulate to educators being stressed in the workplace. What can help educators have less stress is by students re-evaluating themselves and check how their behavior is affecting their teachers.

"I think students can help with teachers coping with stress by thinking about how their behavior affects their teachers," N'Goran said.

To prevent these issues there are ways we can help. We can have mental health days, provide mental health resources, and give training on social-emotional learning for teachers that may help decrease the amount of stress they contain in the workplace.

RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS

-CALM: MEDITATION AND RELAXATION APP BEHIND THE CALM SCHOOL INITIATIVE WHICH OFFERS TEACHERS ACCESS TO EXERCISES AS WELL AS AN ONBOARDING PACKAGE TO INTRODUCE MINDFULNESS

- PODCASTS LIKE "TEACHER SELF-CARE PODCASTS" AND "TEACHER'S AID" DIVE INTO TOPICS OF SELF CARE AND MANAGING TEACHER STRESS

- BOOKS LIKE "TODAY I MADE A DIFFERENCE" CAN HELP EDUCATORS OVERCOME OVERWHELMINGNESS TO RECONNECT WITH THEIR MOTIVATION OF TEACHING

-WEBSITES LIKE "RESILIENT EDUCATOR" BRING TOOLKITS, NEWS, AND VIEWS SELF-CARE SPECIFICALLY FOR TEACHERS



photo courtesy of flicker and plinclipart.com

FACTS

- AS OF MARCH 2021, MORE THAN HALF OF THE NATION'S TEACHERS (54%) CONSIDERED LEAVING THE PROFESSION IN THE NEXT TWO YEARS

- CREATED A 20% INCREASE OVER PRE-PANDEMIC LEVELS

-84% OF TEACHERS REPORTED THEIR WORK MORE STRESSFUL NOW BEFORE THE PANDEMIC STARTED

-37% OF TEACHERS SAY THEY WERE "SOMEWHAT" OR "VERY" UNSATISFIED WITH THEIR JOBS.



HOSTILE ARCHITECTURE

AND WHY I HATE IT

HOOVERCHALLENGER.COM SPRING 2022

When visiting downtown Des Moines one day, I noticed something odd about the benches. Instead of one, flat surface to sit on, there were two metal divides placed in the middle of the seat. At the time, I thought it was a weird design choice that restricted the number of people that were able to fit on the bench, as well as making the seat more uncomfortable overall. Later, I learned the uncomfortable nature of the divides were the point - it was placed there to prevent people from laying down on the bench. I learned that the bench divides were not a design choice, they were a deliberate move rooted in hate for homeless people. In other words, they are an example of anti-homeless architecture. With further research, I learned that it didn't stop there, spikes are also laid down on concrete and metal bars are placed in open spaces in attempt to rid homeless people from the public.

Whether it is a public space or private business, the purpose of anti-homeless architecture (also called hostile architecture) is supposedly to improve our surroundings. Dean Harvey, the founder of the UK hostile bench maker Factory Furniture, claimed that hostile architecture discourages loitering and prevents drug use.

While others are happy living in their delusions, I prefer to be based in fact. And the fact of the matter should be obvious: hostile architecture serves no purpose other than to demonstrate the disdain this country has for the poor and disenfranchised. A slope in a seating area or a divide in a bench does not improve homelessness in the slightest. The notion that Dean Harvey espoused, the claim that anti-



homeless architecture somehow “prevents drug use” is laughable. A person’s crippling addiction to a drug will not be affected by them not being able to loiter in spaces. I would argue that the restrictive nature of this architecture only worsens the conditions for the poor, disabled, and elderly. This means that this country’s hate for drug users and the homeless is larger than their want to solve these problems and help the people struggling. At the very least, I wish that people would not pretend to believe in a façade. The people who push for hostile architecture do not have any sympathy for the homeless and I only want them to be honest in their intentions: all they strive to do is to keep “the ugly” parts of society, the people we have failed, out of sight. Because out of sight to them means out of mind.



OUR MINDSET REGARDING HOMELESSNESS IS FLAWED

HOOVERCHALLENGER.COM SPRING 2022

A person does not find themselves without a home or job for no reason. In many cases, homelessness and addiction go hand in hand. 38% of homeless people are addicted to alcohol and 26% are addicted to a drug. I implore everyone to imagine living on the street with no clean clothes, no steady source of food and no access to your loved ones, it isn't hard to understand why a person might turn to drugs. Going further, mental illness is difficult for anyone to deal with, but living on the streets, unsure of where you will sleep at night amplifies any problem you have. 33% of homeless people have a mental illness such as bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, PTSD, depression, or anxiety. The rate is significantly higher in women, though, 50% to 60% of homeless women suffer mental and emotional disturbances.

The problem isn't that there is a lack of awareness around these issues, I would go as far to say that people are increasingly aware of mental health issues and drug addiction in among the homeless. The problem lies in the fact that people seemingly do not care. There is discouragement that surrounds giving money to the poor in fear that the person will spend it on drugs. Some reduce homelessness issue to laziness or stupidity, a completely unfounded idea. There is an odd lack of sympathy unique to the homeless and it disturbs me to no end.

If providing a simple bench for someone to lay on helps a small amount, I believe we should provide that small service instead of going lengths to prevent it.

Dana Rohrabacher, a republican Californian representative stated: "We do not do any good by making it easier for someone [homeless people] to make a decision to change destructive behavior and we certainly don't want more confused and demoralized people trekking through our neighborhoods, day and night." I want to emphasize the word, "demoralized." Reading that, I wonder what exactly makes a homeless person immoral in any way? Then, I realized that to many a homeless person's mere existence is a burden.

My intention for this piece is to shed light on the cruelty directed toward the impoverished. This is not to say that homeless people do not make poor choices that contribute to their way of living, I am only pushing against an overwhelming narrative that is rooted in classism and ignorance. Hostile architecture is not the answer to homelessness. In the short term, an increase in rehab centers, homeless shelters and charities open to the homeless allows for homeless people's quality of life to rise. A shift in the public attitude toward the poor will improve society for the better.

'SO, EVERY SINGLE DAY, I AM SHOCKED WITH THE HYPOCRISY OF THIS COUNTRY. THAT WE ARE THE WEALTHIEST NATION IN THE WORLD BUT WE CANNOT FIGURE OUT HOW TO HOUSE OUR HOMELESS PEOPLE.'

-ILHAN OMAR

Misogyny and Purity Culture

Why the overt sexism of purity culture has no place in society today.

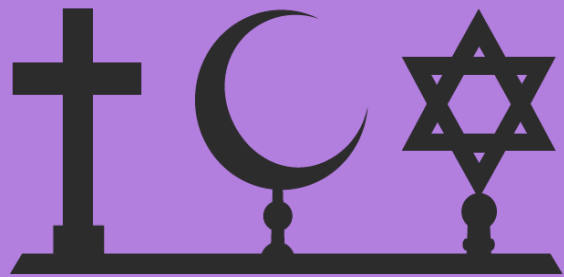
Purity culture claims to encourage women to talk, act and dress in a certain way so they can remain emotionally, spiritually, and physically pure. These rules must be adhered to strictly, meaning a woman must wear modest clothing, save herself for marriage, and act in ways that will not “tempt” the men in their lives. While this was mostly evangelical thought pushing this narrative, in the present we have seen the messaging leak into modern media and perceptions outside religious settings.

It is not difficult to find the sexist inconsistencies in this way of thinking. First, I find myself asking why women are centered in purity culture. Men are the other half of the equation, yet they are nowhere to be found.

How purity culture is taught

Many understand that the values are wrong at their core, but I would push that they are also immoral in their teachings. While the boys are playing outside, the girls are brought into a room to learn that as they grow into women, they turn into something inherently sexual in nature, something they need to hide and be ashamed of. Mind you, they are being sexualized as early as middle school. Their shoulders, knees and collar bones will be seen as distracting. “You are like a piece of gum” they say, “as you let boys use you, no one will want you. What kind of person wants a chewed-up piece of gum?” Gum isn’t the only object we are compared to, it’s cars, pieces of paper, and shoes. Who wants a car one hundred men have driven? Who wants a crumpled piece of paper or a worn-out shoe?

Why is it not a man’s job to wear certain clothes, to show less skin, and act in a non-tempting way for *women*? Why are women seen as solely responsible for the way men react to them? And when looking at sex, why is the blame is almost always placed on women? While I will not concede that sex is wrong in the slightest, if religious people want to place a moral burden on it, the very least they could do is be consistent. If they insist on having a shameful view of sex, they should understand this: it takes two people to have intercourse. It is a split decision between both people, which logically means that the burden should be placed equally on each person. Unfortunately, purity culture is blind to logic, preferring to look through a lens of misogyny instead.



I find the constant objectification that is not only taught in religious schools, but schools throughout America, to be abhorrent and extremely damaging to society. A car’s main purpose is to be driven, yet following the analogy, it is implying that a woman’s main purpose is to be a sexual object. No one should believe that if a woman chooses to have sex that she is worthless, that is a sexist, outdated, and cruel outlook of the world. It is the same people pushing this narrative that ignorantly ask why young girls have self-esteem issues.

Women have self-esteem issues because we are regularly reduced to our looks, youth, and sex appeal as young as elementary school. In reality, we are people, and I am tired of begging to be treated as such. A woman should be respected no matter how she dresses and no matter how many partners she has, calling her as useless as a chewed-up piece of gum effectively plays a significant part in the deterioration of young girl's self-image.

When learning about puberty and intercourse, abstinence is what purity culture pushes to teach. Yes, instead of learning about protection, menstruation, and common misconceptions, some would rather tell groups of teenagers to “not have sex” which has been proven time and time again to not work. It is completely okay for a teenager to apt to abstain, or for a person to save themselves for marriage. But I would assert that is a personal choice that should be up to the individual person, and not taught in schools. Adolescents and teenagers are already exposed to an abundance of misinformation, which only leads to STIs and teen pregnancies. I know purity culture opposes both things, so why are they so against informed sexual education in schools? Not everyone is going to abstain, that is a guarantee, so we should be encouraging safe sexual practices instead of simply discouraging it all together. Most often, sex ed is taught strictly through a heterosexual,

cis, and male dominated lens, and there needs to be a change.

Shame is the main objection I have to purity culture. While you are shamed for your personal choices, you are shamed for your thoughts as well. On both sides, all sexual thought about the opposite gender is immoral, almost evil in the eyes of purity culture. (Same sex attraction is completely out of the question.) You are meant to save yourself, yet I contest the idea that a person controls what they think. There is nothing wrong with thoughts, you cannot sin in your own head, yet that is what purity culture seems to believe.

I do not judge others for their choices, in fact, it is the opposite of what I strive to do. If someone has religious or spiritual values they want to follow, I whole heartedly encourage them to fulfill their desires. To expand further, I believe there is beauty in modesty and women, as well as men, are free to make that choice if it is best for them. But I adamantly oppose the intrusive nature of purity culture. I, and many other young women, never consented to have this narrative pushed onto us, but it is and continues to be. As a society we need to agree that a woman's use lies beyond having sex. We are beyond the labels of daughter, mother, wife, and sister. There are so many talented young girls in this world could change the world, and we shouldn't let anything stand in the way of that.

“What purity culture and sexual abuse have in common is the violation of your sexual agency. Both teach you that your body belongs to someone else.”

-Alice Greezyn

HOW TO STAY FIT

LEARN TO GET IN SHAPE OR STAY FIT

HOW DO I START? WHILE THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO STAY HEALTHY AND EVERYONE'S BODY WORKS DIFFERENT. FROM PERSONAL EXPERIENCE, I WOULD SAY THAT WORKING OUT IS THE MOST BENEFICIAL FOR YOUR HEALTH. NOW, WORKING OUT DOESN'T NECESSARILY MEAN HITTING THE GYM 24/7. WE ALL START SOMEWHERE AND IT'S BEST TO START SLOW AND STEADY. SO WHAT ARE SOME WORKOUTS I CAN DO? START WITH THE BASICS LIKE PUSHUPS, SQUATS, PULL UPS, AND GOING ON A 15-MINUTE JOG. EVEN IF YOU CAN'T DO THOSE, YOU CAN DO ASSISTED VARIATIONS OF THEM TO HELP YOU START OR YOU CAN START WITH 1-3 REPS OR DO WALKS INSTEAD. BUT WHAT'S IMPORTANT IS GETTING STARTED.

DIET

MANY PEOPLE OFTEN FORGET ABOUT DIET WHEN THEY WANT TO GET IN SHAPE. DIET IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF GETTING IN SHAPE. YOU COULD BE DOING ALL TYPES OF DIFFERENT EXERCISES BUT WITHOUT DIET, IT WILL BE EXTREMELY HARD TO REACH YOUR GOALS WHETHER THAT BE LOSING WEIGHT OR GAINING MUSCLE. THERE ARE ALSO SEVERAL FAD DIETS OUT THERE THAT PEOPLE TURN TO. HOWEVER, I WOULD NOT RECOMMEND ANY OF THOSE. SIMPLY BECAUSE MOST OF THEM DON'T WORK AND THE ONES THAT WORK ONLY WORK FOR A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF TIME. AFTER AWHILE, YOUR BODY WILL GO BACK TO THE WAY IT WAS. SO, IF YOU WANT TO START GETTING IN SHAPE, DO SOLID RESEARCH ON DIET AND HOW YOU CAN REACH YOUR GOALS WITH A GOOD, HEALTHY DIET.

““

DURING THE PANDEMIC, I GOT INTO WEIGHTLIFTING EXERCISES,” SENIOR TU REH SAID.

EVEN IN A PANDEMIC

“

YOU TAKE EVERY DAY AND BE THANKFUL. MAKE EVERY DAY THE VERY BEST AND MAKE PEOPLE BETTER AND MAKE YOURSELF BETTER,” COACH MEANS SAID.

BENEFITS

EXERCISING HAS SO MANY BENEFITS. ACCORDING TO “NUTRITION.ORG,” BEING PHYSICALLY ACTIVE CAN HELP REDUCE ANXIETY, STRESS, AND HELPS YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM WHICH IS SO IMPORTANT DURING THESE TIMES WHERE YOU’RE STRESSED OR ANXIOUS DUE TO THE SURGES OF COVID AND SUPPORTING YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM WILL SIGNIFICANTLY HELP BATTLE COVID. NOT ONLY THAT, BUT PHYSICAL ACTIVITY CAN HELP WITH WEIGHT MANAGEMENT WHICH CAN HELP WHEN WE ARE ALL STUCK IN OUR HOMES WITH NOTHING TO DO. ANOTHER BIG REASON IS BEING PHYSICALLY ACTIVE CAN HELP A LOT WITH REDUCING HEALTH RISK AND PREVENTING DISEASES.

OTHER FACTORS

DIEET IS NOT THE ONLY FACTOR WHEN IT COMES TO FITNESS OR JUST STAYING IN SHAPE IN GENERAL THERE ARE OTHER MAJOR FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO STAYING IN SHAPE , SUCH AS CONSISTENCY. CONSISTENCY IS SO IMPORTANT BECAUSE PEOPLE START BEING ACTIVE FOR A WEEK OR TWO AND SEE LITTLE TO NO RESULTS AND QUIT. THEREFORE IT’S CRUCIAL TO STAY CONSISTENT AND DO NOT QUIT. ONE OTHER FACTOR IS SLEEP. IN ORDER FOR OUR BODIES TO GROW AND IMPROVE, IT NEEDS REST. WE GET THE MOST REST WHEN WE ARE SLEEPING. BUT MOST PEOPLE DISREGARD THIS FACTOR AND DON’T OFTEN GET ENOUGH SLEEP. THERE ARE OTHER SEVERAL FACTORS, HOWEVER, DIET, CONSISTENCY, AND REST ARE SOME OF THE BIGGER ONES.



BANNED BOOKS

Legislation and controversy is putting educational content in danger of being banned in school curriculum.

The Hate U Give. The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian. All Boys Aren't Blue. These are just a few examples of books that many schools around the country, especially in Iowa, are in the midst of heated debates over whether or not they should be included into school curriculum. Students in our own school are reading these books for their English classes while nearly six school districts across the state are fighting to get 'controversial' texts off school bookshelves. From 1982 to 2015, approximately 11,300 books have been on the list of banned books according to the American Library Association. Topics such as race, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, or language are examples of the reasons why parents and even Iowa's current governor find these books inappropriate for students.

I believe that books should not be banned because this act erases important knowledge, history, real-life discussions, and brings about more misinformation on worldly topics.

School is a place for education. With learning comes discussions. Many parents have concerns of the topics that are in books because they believe their children are "too young" to understand. In reality, young kids are already facing tough issues such as racism or any form of discrimination just by being who they are in general.

In November of 2021, WHO Channel 13 news covered the Johnston school district's school board meeting discussing books taught in school. A freshman student from Johnston High School spoke up at the

meeting to show just how young kids are exposed to discrimination, before they can even read a book like the ones the school was trying to ban. "I experienced my first act of racism at six years old. I was told because I had dark skin, the other kids weren't going to play with me," said Johnston High School freshman Kaylee Jones. "All that *The Hate U Give* is doing is drawing attention to the problem, and I'm asking you to hear me out."

Most banned books are banned for the type of content in the book. Words such as 'harmful' and 'obscene' are just a few of the words that have been used to describe books that have been banned. Not discussing the topics within these banned books erases important history in school curriculum.

For example, a book I recently read in English, *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker is considered a banned book for its content and themes surrounding the ideas of racism, sexual abuse, and racial slurs. The book takes place in the United States around the 1930's and centers around a young Black girl named Celie and her struggle with discrimination both with her race and gender identity. The abuse that Celie faces through the book because of her identity are very realistic translations as to what life as a Black woman in the 30's was like and can even relate to Black women's experience in our current day. The book has been banned because of the harsh reality that people had to live through in our country that is infected by racism and misogyny. By banning books such as *The Color Purple*, it is diminishing the reality that many Black Americans

faced in our history. This also minimizes the issues that Black Americans are still facing today.

Conversations of controversy are everywhere, not just in books. Adults need to talk to their kids about these topics rather than avoiding them. Often the problem with banning books stems from parents avoiding tough conversations with their children.

In the article “Book Banning Does More Harm Than Good” published in the Rochester Democrat-ic and Chronicle, author Regan McMahon writes, “exploring complex topics like sexuality, violence, substance abuse, suicide, and racism through well-drawn characters lets kids contemplate morality and vast aspects of the human condition, build empathy for people unlike themselves, and possibly discover a mirror of their own experience.”

Books provide a space to go in-depth with difficult content to expand and educate without having to take the uncomfortable step of talking to your kids about ‘touchy’ subjects. Learning through literature allows young people to obtain accurate information. The article also includes a sentiment that many families can relate to. “Many teens would rather get a tetanus shot than have the sex talk with their parents.”

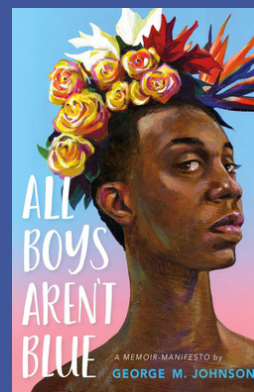
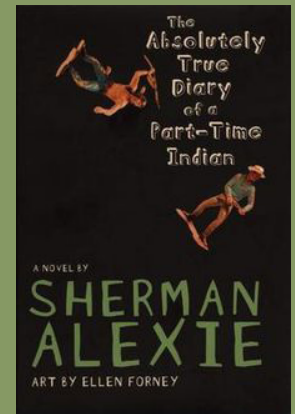
While this is true for many parent and child relationships, it is still valuable information to learn at a young age. So why not continue to allow teachers in schools to educate through these books? While uncomfortable conversations arise from books on controversial topics, people live and have lived these experiences and they need to be recognized and talked about. The importance of education through literature and having hard conversations with students can be the first step into a better community of people.



OPINION

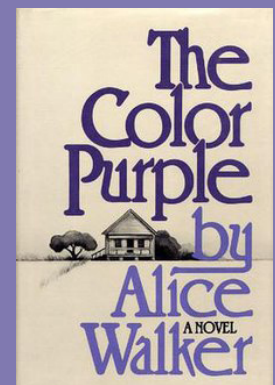
TOP 10 MOST CHALLENGED BOOK IN 2018

MOST CHALLENGED BOOK FROM 2010-2019



BANNED FOR TOPICS OF GENDER AND SEXUALITY

BANNED SINCE 1984



Photos courtesy of wikipedia.com.

HOOVERCHALLENGER.COM SPRING 2022

WHY YOU CAN'T HAVE ACTIVISM WITHOUT INTERSECTIONALITY.

A deeper look into the concept of intersectionality and the role it plays in activism.

HOOVERCHALLENGER.COM SPRING 2022

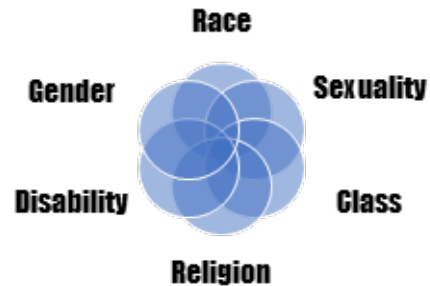
Michael Brown. Tamir Rice. Eric Garner. These are all names most of us have heard and recognize as Black Americans that have fallen victim to police brutality. But what about Tanisha Anderson? Meagan Hockaday? Or Michelle Cusseaux? The second set of names also contains Black Americans that have fallen victim to police brutality. The only difference? They are women.

Professor, lawyer, and American civil rights activist Kimberlé Crenshaw uses this exercise in her 2016 TEDTalk, 'The Urgency of Intersectionality', by having her audience members sit down once they hear a name they do not recognize. A majority of the audience was seated by the time the first woman's name was spoken.

So, what does this mean?

Crenshaw's exercise proves that the awareness of Black women's experience with police brutality is extremely low. Black women face issues that are different from Black men because they are women, and different issues from white women because they are Black. "Emma DeGraffenreid was an African-American woman, a working wife and a mother," Crenshaw said. "Emma, like so many African-American women, sought better employment for her family and for others... But she applied for a job, and she was not hired, and she believed that she was not hired because she was a Black woman."

DeGraffenreid's case to a judge of her discrimination as a Black woman was dismissed since the employer had hired both African-Americans and women. The judge, much like many others, failed to realize that Black women were not being hired. "The African-Americans that were hired, usually for industrial jobs, maintenance jobs, were all men. And the women that were hired, usually for secretarial or front-office work, were all white. Only if the court was able to see how these policies came together would he be able to see the double discrimination that Emma DeGraffenreid was facing," Crenshaw said. This is when intersectionality comes into play.



The word intersectionality, a term coined by Crenshaw in 1989, represents "the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage," (Oxford Languages).

Activism without intersectionality dismisses the overlapping discrimination individuals who identify with multiple minorities face on a day-

to-day basis. But those who do not encounter this type of discrimination remain oblivious to their own ignorance.

Dating back to the first wave of feminism, when women were fighting for the right to vote, women from all over the United States were a part of the women's suffrage movement. In 1920 when the movement achieved the remarkable success of the right to vote, this large step in society seemed to leave out an important group of people: women of color. It wasn't until 1965, when the Voting Rights Act was passed, that Black women finally gained their fundamental freedom to vote.

While this was more than a century ago, women of color continue to be left behind in acts of progress for the women's rights movement. Marginalized groups endure the challenges of systemic abuse as well as environmental complications. UN Women, the United Nations organization dedicated to the empowerment and equality of women writes, "While issues ranging from discrimination based on gender identity to disparate environmental burdens may seem separate at first, intersectional feminism illuminates the connections between all fights for

justice and liberation. It shows us that fighting for equality means not only turning the tables on gender injustices but rooting out all forms of oppression."

As a white woman, intersectionality is something I do not directly experience. As a young, self-identified feminist, I was unaware that my feminism was only focused on success for myself, and not every other woman in the world. The first step of becoming a better ally and activist begins with the acceptance and understanding of your privilege. As stated by the International Women's Development Agency, "You may not know what it's like to live as a person with a disability or have never had to deal with racism. But a woman who has, may not have experienced discrimination that you have, like homophobia. Checking your privilege isn't about creating a sliding scale of who's worse off – it's about learning and understanding the views of other feminists and remembering that we're all in this together. True equality leaves no one behind."

With an intersectional mindset and awareness of other people's discrimination, we can reduce the amount of ignorance and hate towards minorities.

intersectionality

[in(t)ərsekSHə'nalədē]

NOUN

the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.

Definition courtesy of Oxford Languages.



Cartoon courtesy of Swedish artist, Emanu.

GENDER NORMS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

The damaging effects gender stereotypes have on Gen Z.

Society has changed drastically over time, but the impacts of gender norms are still apparent everywhere you look. Gender norms are witnessed through family and religion, as well as TV shows and movies alike. These societal expectations encourage the way we dress, talk, and act. These ideas follow you through life, hiding in the background in the workforce and household. Gender stereotypes are often intertwined with gender identity and sexuality. These stereotypes can lead to a decline in mental health and toxic expectations in children and teens as they move through life. The influence of gender norms leave dangerous mindsets and self expectations, leaving children and teens to pick up the remains of their mental health.

Representation plays a significant role in one's self-esteem. As a child, this can make or break your sense of belonging. TV shows and movies leave an impression on children as they develop.



“Growing up was difficult, but with movies like High School Musical, or even Miss Congeniality, I saw characters that were like me; guys that weren’t afraid to like traditionally feminine things like dancing, singing, fashion, or even makeup. But that representation wasn’t the best because it stereotyped gay and queer men by putting them in a box. A box filled with rainbows and sparkles, when not all gay or queer men are like that,” Beckler said.

GENDER NORMS= A GENERALIZATION ABOUT BEHAVIORS ATTRIBUTED TO MEN AND WOMEN. WOMEN ARE VIEWED AS EMOTIONAL AND CARING. MEN ARE VIEWED AS STRONG AND RATIONAL.

As a kid I remember watching older shows like I Love Lucy and Disney movies like Snow White. I wore mainly dresses as a kid and found myself spending time in the kitchen with my mother because I felt my place was there. I felt the most represented through YouTubers and singers rather than actors in movies and cartoons. Senior Mason Beckler saw himself represented in movies that featured guys participating in traditional feminine activities.

Your family and their attitude regarding gender plays a huge part in how a person views themselves and their own gender expression. Sophomore Paisha Goodrich often felt pressured by their relatives while growing up.

“When I was little I had a grandma that basically said that I needed to wear dresses and present myself as a feminine person because I was assigned a girl at birth. Whenever I had more

stereotypical boy clothes on she'd get angry at me. From a young age I was told by them that since I was a girl I needed to have a boyfriend and that I couldn't like anything else, I couldn't be gay, couldn't be anything like that and I needed to present myself as female," Goodrich said.

Family isn't the only obstacle many have to face; religion is also an obstacle for many families. In many cases, religious people struggle to accept their loved one's gender identity and it proves to be a problem in many ways. I grew up in a strict southern Baptist church and never had the freedom to change my wardrobe or hair due to expectations of women being modest. Looking at old photos, I was often seen in long dresses and maxi skirts with long undyed hair. As a child, this was my normal way to dress but as I got older, I started not conforming to those standards by cutting or dying my hair and wearing jumpsuits. In a way, defying these expectations made me feel free and comfortable with who I am and what I like.

Goodrich shares a similar experience that broke through societal expectations while growing up.

"I was raised in a catholic church and people told me I needed to wear dresses to mass and be a good little girl and do those kind of things and once I stopped listening to those kinds of people I was like I don't care anymore, I don't care what you tell me I need to wear I'm going to do what I want and people didn't like that but I felt more comfortable and I felt better about myself after," Goodrich said.

Gender roles don't stop after childhood. When you reach the adult stage of life, the workplace pushes traditional views of femininity and masculinity as well.

"Gender norms in school are very apparent. Most

teachers are female because the stereotype of them being better with children and having to take care of the children has always run thick and deep," Beckler said.

In a traditional sense, teaching is seen as a woman's job and careers requiring physical labor, like construction, are seen as men's jobs.

"When people think of construction they think of males. They think females can't be construction workers or they don't even think about them being construction workers. It's only ever thought about as males, and it really needs to be broken because I've seen so many females hurt by that kind of stuff. That kind of goes along with the generational stuff from earlier generations where you need to do this because you're a girl and you can't do this because that's a man's job," Goodrich said

Gender roles can also be seen in households. The wife or mother may do all the cooking and cleaning while the husband or father is expected to work full-time. Stereotypes are also enforced on LGBTQ+ relationships. Questions such as "Who's wearing a wedding dress?" or "Who wears the pants in the relationship?" are brought up frequently. There seems to be a generational gap in expectations. While younger generations are typically more open to new concepts, this leaves them more susceptible to mental health issues such as low self-esteem and depression.



“When I was told to wear dresses and like all the girly things, I felt really sad and upset and it kind of spiraled into a depressive state from a really young age. It’s a really big struggle and I don’t think a lot of people really understand that people struggle with that type of stuff and are sad because they can’t or are told to like what they are supposed to like,” Goodrich said.

Teens already face mental health concerns but the effects of a forced identity are long lasting.

“People say hurtful things to people when they are talking about gender norms, like if your parent tells you that you need to wear a tux because you’re a boy or you need to wear a dress because you are a girl. I feel like people need to really sit with themselves and think about that, like, hey I can’t be saying this, this could hurt somebody in a really irreversible way,” Goodrich said.

Our generation has come a long way and I see that as a positive in many ways. It is widely known that Gen Z faces problems across the board regarding gender identity: toxic masculinity, gender and societal norms, as well as mental health issues and social media addiction.

“I think our generation is keeping track of gender norms in a really unique way. They are very opinionated about this type of stuff. They don’t want to fall into a society where you’re supposed to like this because you are a boy and you’re supposed to like this because you are a girl. Our generation likes to step out of the generational aspects and they like to rebel against what other people tell them to do and I think that’s really good. There’s a lot more representation,” Goodrich said.

Our generation is actively paving the way for younger children so they can feel accepted and heard.

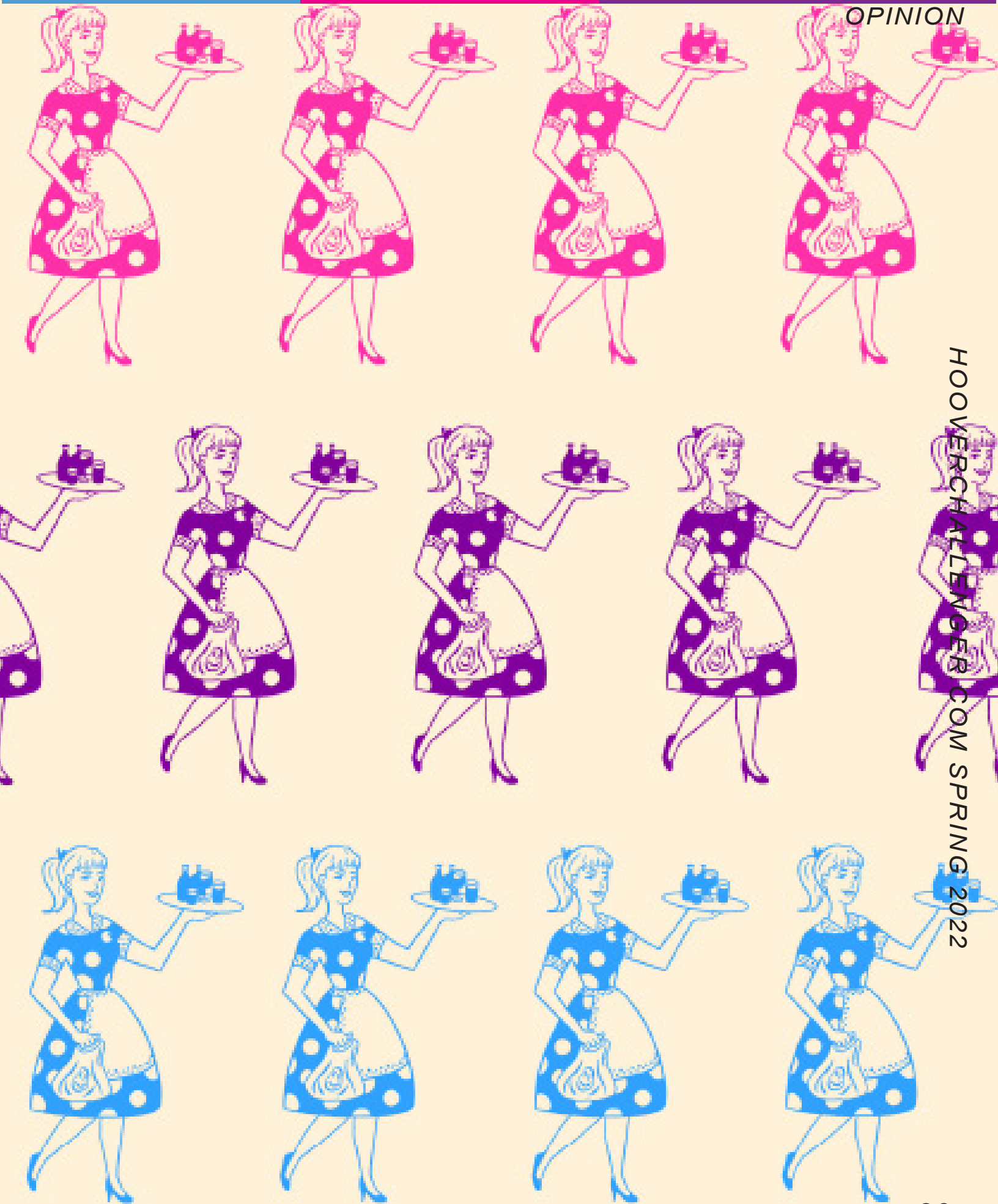
“These societal imposed gender norms have plagued humans ever since Eve ate that apple. But thankfully, our generation has taken the steps

forward to support inclusivity. Women in the workforce have long since shattered that glass ceiling, and men aren’t pressured anymore to keep up that macho façade,” Beckler said.

We’ve all faced gender norms and stereotypes at some point in our life, with or without realizing it.

“THERE’S ALOT OF PEOPLE WHO CAN FEEL COMFORTABLE IN THEIR OWN SKIN, WEARING WHATEVER THEY WANT, LIKING WHATEVER THEY WANT AND I THINK THAT’S REALLY AMAZING.” -PAISHA GOODRICH

This conversation is long overdue and deserves attention. These expectations leave damaging impressions on today’s youth that influence society as a whole. With men feeling inferior to feminine activities, women feeling shut out of authority positions, and nonbinary people feeling pressured to pick a side, our society will become divided, and teens will be too scared to live as themselves. Overtime we will lose what makes us, us and we will no longer have a variety of culture in the community. Our whole mindset regarding gender norms and identity needs a refresh with a lot of compassion and empathy for others so our generation doesn’t end up all the same, like a dystopian novel.



ONE WORLD?

The Olympics bring together world-class athletes from all over the globe to compete in varying athletic competitions. The event takes place on a four-year cycle called the Olympiad. In the past 30 years, it has followed the routine of the summer games taking place during the first year of the Olympiad and Winter games taking place in the third. As the name suggests, summer events host volleyball, gymnastics, swimming, and much more; whereas the winter games offer figure skating, skiing, snowboarding, and plethora of other ice or snow related sports. As it provides a global stage for most countries to interact on there is no shortage of controversy and political intrigue.

The looming question of whether Russia will turn violent in their ongoing conflict with Ukraine was a dark cloud over much of the events this year at the winter games in Beijing China. Ukraine and Russia have gone many years without a healthy diplomatic relationship and if we take a look at history, it does not paint a very optimistic outlook. During the 2008 Summer Olympics, Russia invaded Georgia in 2014 while the Winter Olympics were under way, Ukraine faced an invasion from the Kremlins.

For the first time in two years, Russian President Putin is set to discuss the ongoing dispute with China's President Xi. This display of global comradery in a time of intense international turmoil can seem a little ridiculous.

The Olympic committee has always praised itself for the 'Olympic Truce' it promotes. For example, the 1936 games took place in Berlin, Germany; in just a few short years, they would host one of the greatest atrocity's known to man. The horrific events brewing in the German government were not a secret; yet these games saw the highest participation ever received at that point in time. Nazi propaganda was smeared all over the broadcasting of the events.

The American Olympic committee along with other formable countries at the time could have boycotted

the games in a show of defiance against the current German government. Today, the world faces a different conflict but a very similar moral decision.

International politics aside, the 2022 Beijing games faced back-lash in more areas than not. Another smear on the Russian's international image is their continued abuse of drugging and doping their athletes. Back in 2019, the World Anti-Doping Agency banned the country from any international sport competitions for the following four years. This action was in result of new news reports that Russia had held a yearlong state-sponsored doping scheme. In 2017, Russian athletes were suspended from the game for the very same reason. However, an agreement was made that if their athletes could pass repeated drug tests, they would be allowed to compete not under Russia but under the 'Russian Olympic Committee' (ROC). This was the team Kamila Valieva was competing under as a front runner figure skater when she tested positive for multiple banned endurance medication. The day after the news broke, she was suspended, but just 24 hours later, that punishment would be taken away. The Olympics announced she would still be able to compete and, if she placed with in the top three spots, they would simply cancel the medal ceremony. Prominent figure skaters around the world shared their outrage over this decision. "This is a slap in the face to the Olympic Games, to our sport, and to every athlete that's ever competed at the Olympics clean," former Olympian Tara Lipinski said. At only 15 years old, it's hard to place the blame solely on Valieva especially when her coach is notorious for her harmful teaching methods. At the end of the day, Valieva was just another manipulated pawn of the Russian government.

This is now the second Olympic games held during the COVID-19 pandemic. In a streak of good luck, there were only 437 recorded infections at the game with no outbreaks large enough to disrupt any events. China is not known as a country that just "lives with the virus," they have continually showed aggressive procedures to quell infections and deaths. The Tokyo games last summer saw a large spike in cases after the games had

ended, and Beijing wanted to make sure that didn't happen. Volunteers at the winter games were required to quarantine even after the events had ended and the athletes went home. Time will only tell if this was an effective measure. During the games, if an athlete tested positive, they were moved into quarantine where they could continue to train, many who were sent there complained that they were not supplied with sufficient equipment and food. Regular testing within the Olympic bubble offered many athletes great peace of mind when it came to moving about the Olympic village and arenas. To have people flying into your country, some coming from parts of the world, still ravaged by Omicron and successfully pull off a low infection rate is not something to overlook. With this success also came many sacrifices. Stadiums still remained empty along with much of the Olympic village. Athletes were held under strict social distancing rules. Fear of infection and quarantine still

inevitably grown and changed from then, so has the Games. No Olympic games have gone off perfectly. How can it when we bring together the powerhouses of the world, while expecting to leave all international conflict at the door?

**“THIS DISPLAY OF
GLOBAL COMRADERY
IN A TIME OF INTENSE
INTERNATIONAL
TURMOIL CAN SEEM A
LITTLE RIDICULOUS”**

loomed over the heads of viewers and athletes alike.

American athletes could be seen dominating the medal count, but one would not be able to find any sort of diplomatic support from the American Government. In December, President Joe Biden declared the United States would hold a diplomatic boycott against the 2022 games in Beijing. This decision was made due to the fact that China as a country runs rampant with abuse of their people through genocide and other crimes against humanity. Unlike the ill-fated Olympic games of 1936, it seems our government has pushed aside the idea of the aforementioned ‘Olympic Truce’ and wanted to hold China accountable for their misgivings.

Since the inaugural games all the way back in 776 B.C at the base of Mount Olympus, the Olympic games have offered a place for world class athletes to practice healthy competition. As the world has



Change has finally come for the Hoover Huskies.



Hoover seniors take in the moment after playing on their home court for the very last time.

"ALL I EVER WANTED SINCE I CAME BACK WAS TO HAVE THE CHANCE TO PLAY IN THE STATE TOURNAMENT" -TERAN "BIG TIME" BATES, SENIOR

Beating multiple top ten teams in the state, being top five defensive team in the state, winning the metro and having one of the longest winning streaks in the state is exactly how Hoover Basketball has created the change they always hoped would come.

Even with all the accomplishments the team is making, the biggest reason for their success is the adversity they have had to face this whole season so far. Whether it be losing to a team by 30, losing your star player or even having to deal with outside influences like opposing fans the team has become used that adversity as a motivation factor to prove people wrong and show why they belong.

"The really good players don't fold when adversity hits and it has motivated me to be better. We had a three-game stretch where we lost three in a row, but we had to find a way and keep pushing. Adversity has made me a better player and shows how hard basketball really is with all highs and lows and keeping that winning mentality through the lows," freshman Abe Vos said.

One of the biggest reasons they have been successful is because of how the scenery and mindset in practice has changed. The players treat practice like it is their last and give everything they have even when they don't have a lot left in the tank. It has been a complete turnaround in practice this season for all the right reasons.

"The mindset has changed a lot because most of us are upperclassmen and we have gone through our high school years together and practice has been way more focused and important because we know are goals and can actually obtain them," junior Chase Henderson said.

A big key component for the players to do what they have been doing is the hunger to make it to the state tournament. This is the last chance for the seniors to ever get to have the feeling and gratification of making it to the tournament. As for the rest of the team, they want it so bad because they love the game so much and are willing to do whatever it takes to make it to tournament at Wells.

"All I ever wanted since I came back was to have the chance to play in the state tournament and the feeling of doing so would be indescribable for all that hard work to pay off," senior Teran "Big Time" Bates said.

Change was going to have to come for the basketball team to be successful and the tell of the tape this season is that change is upon us.

4

PEACE**FAMILY****PROSPERITY****WEALTH**

Best Buddy Ballers

HOOVERCHALLENGER.COM SPRING 2022

The Unified Sports game is good for the community.

On a cold and wintry Friday night, fans flood into the gymnasium to watch some great basketball. They get exactly that, with what you can debate is by far the game of the night. This is the Unified Sports basketball game that takes place during halftime of the girls' varsity game.

This is a chance for kids who don't get a chance to play basketball to be a part of a team. Everyone loves this game. Fans and students get out of their seats to cheer for these kids as they go out and play. But let's take an inside look on how this fun experience was made possible and how the coaches and players feel about it.

"It was a district wide idea from some of the leaders who were then able to fund and create this league," athletic director Jake Burke said.

Unified Sports was created in 1989 which was adopted by the Special Olympics.

"Adding this to the gameday experience where they rally around the kids and have fun watching them play, kids see it and want to be a part of it," Burke said. "Plans for the program are to attempt to do a track program during the track season

and then branch it out to other sports in the near future."

Players are a big part about what makes this game so enjoyable.

"It's one of my favorite things to do," senior Kenbeck Ajoung said. "I enjoy my teammates we work hard together."



"Getting to see them celebrate and enjoy the moment is the best," senior volunteer Ian Hawks said.

Let's not forget who gets the players ready every week to play. Teachers Michelle Scoular and Shauna Soderstrum are the coaches of the

team.

"I enjoy seeing the happiness and smiles on the players' faces. They are having fun, laughing, and helping each other. The kids cheer for each other, even if the other team scores, everyone cheers," Soderstrum said.

Unified Sports is a great experience for gamedays and hope it stays around for many more years to come.



“Getting to see them celebrate and enjoy the moment is the best,” senior volunteer Ian Hawks said.



Ketanji Brown Jackson

Supreme Court Justice Nominee

As the political setting ebbs and flows through different eras of leadership, new faces are bound to pop up in different places. In light of the recent retirement of Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer, it's time for a new person to step into his shoes.

As a presidential candidate, Joe Biden promised to name a Black woman to the Supreme Court if given the chance to do so. The process for appointing a new Justice goes like this: First, a current sitting Justice must either die or retire. After this, the president then gets the choice to appoint whomever they would like as their replacement. This nominee then has to go through

a hearing and confirmation done through the senate. Enter Ketanji Brown Jackson. If appointed, she will make the historic move of being the first-ever Black woman to sit on the Supreme Court. She has over a decade of experience in the realm of law with a special interest focused on low-income criminal defendants (the only justice that would have that kind of experience). Graduating not once, but twice from Harvard University, both times with honors she would go on to clerk under Judge Breyer, a highly coveted position for up-and-coming Democratic lawyers.

In a less polarizing time, her nomination would be a shoo-in due to her outstanding resume, but due to the current political climate, there is a chance she may just be narrowly confirmed. Many Democrats are still waiting to see the case the Republican party will try to build against her when conservative ideologies currently control the court.



Education and Empowerment