

LIONS' DIGEST

ALL THE NEWS THAT'S FIT TO DIGEST

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STUDENTS AT SCASD DEMAND ANTI-RACISM

BY ELISA EDGAR

Demands that started at a student-organized rally this summer have made their way up to administrators through the hard work of students. This led to long overdue conversations on equitable learning in our schools with the SCASD Board of Directors at a virtual meeting on Sept. 23.

After a summer of sweeping nationwide calls to protest systemic racism in the U.S., a handful of students at State High already submerged in the cause of social justice found a new opening for their voices. Among others, Elana Laing, Isabelle Snyder, and Mikaela Speight organized a socially distanced rally on Aug. 1 to address racism within SCASD.

“The purpose of the rally was to get everybody on the same page for the Black student body, and to help them understand,” Speight said.

Speight and her peers believe that the concept of

racism in education is crucial for a complete understanding of what they were addressing at the rally. While the majority of protests over the summer addressed police brutality and racial profiling specifically, demands at the rally concerned systemic racism in education.

In mid-July, they created a list of demands, and Dr. Seria Chatters, Director of Equity and Inclusivity at SCASD, stepped in to accept those demands and pass them on to the board. Changes demanded of SCASD included: ethnocentric history curriculums, increased diversity among staff, increased funding for the Department of Equity and Inclusivity, a full year African-American studies elective worth a history credit, equitable special education, and the creation of a multi-cultural resource center.

Equitable special education within SCASD is a critical demand when taking into



State High students Demanie Redhead, Bella Witmer, and Rayna Jones sitting at the District Rally in State College, PA, taken Aug. 1, 2020. Demands by students to make schools in SCASD more equitable were mentioned at a board meeting this September. (Photo courtesy of Mikaela Speight)

account data collected by The Pennsylvania Bureau of Special Education from 2016-2019. Black students in SCASD receiving special education are at nearly three times the risk of suspensions and expulsions. Compared to the state-wide disproportionality of 2.5, SCASD’s risk ratio of 6.87 is significantly higher. This remained true even when compared to other marginalized groups

like Latinx and Asian communities.

Laing has witnessed firsthand how these numbers play into real life at school.

“I’ve seen so many of my Black guy friends targeted in our classrooms,” she said. “It’s detrimental to students’ trajectories from K-12, and that success is damaged because teachers aren’t concerned about your needs, they’re only concerned about their comfortability when they

have to teach.”

In response to the students’ demands, the board wrote an anti-racism resolution addressing a broader theme of accountability. Community members, students, and parents all offered revisions and edits to the resolution.

Throughout the meeting this past September, board members David Hutchinson, Laurel Zydney, and Daniel Duffy insisted the anti-racism

SEE ANTI-RACISM PAGE 2

FIRST COVID CASE CAUGHT AMONG SCASD EMPLOYEES



As students prepare to return to in-person school, they must follow the health and safety protocols. This includes wearing a mask. (Photo/ Maya Cienfuegos)

BY MAYA CIENFUEGOS

The first employee at SCASD tested positive for COVID-19 on Sept. 16, 2020. The employee had been out of the building for a few days before her symptoms began and was asked to isolate

once she tested positive.

Although she has since recovered, members of the SCASD community are left to wonder--how many others will become infected with the virus, and how will the district react?

Human Resources Director

Linda Pierce, who is in charge of contact tracing of employees, reported 85 employees have had symptoms or close contact with a positive case. Out of those 85, only one has tested positive for the virus, and this case was not contracted from the school.

“I am told it [the SCASD health and safety plan] is one of the most comprehensive safety plans in the school districts of Pennsylvania,” Pierce said. “We also have the COVID-19 family handbook and a COVID-19 staff handbook.”

Fortunately, SCASD has been prepared for this COVID case since schools were reopened.

“I really hope students understand how hard people are working, and I mean everybody. From the

custodians, who are cleaning the buildings, to the teachers in the classrooms, and the people in the health and safety team,” Pierce said.

As a result of this plan, SCASD has managed to keep students and staff safe as they slowly reopen schools.

As rumors of the SCASD COVID case float around State High, it is hard for students to know what is true and what is false. Freshman Rufaida Rahman said she is scared to go to school.

“I feel like we’re fine learning online and cases are just going up. The teacher testing positive for corona proves that we shouldn’t be going to school. It makes me really nervous,” Rahman said.

With the news of a teacher testing positive for COVID-19, rumors started to spread among students.

“Rumors are not facts,” Pierce said. “If students ever hear a rumor, they can look at the SCASD COVID-19 dashboard to find the facts.”

This dashboard is a resource that all members of the SCASD community can reference to see the number of cases not only in SCASD but all of Centre County. It is updated daily and shows the average growth of cases each day.

“This one case was very easily handled. We know that the individual did not come in contact with the virus at school,” Pierce said.

As the virus continues to spread through State College, it is important to know that the health and safety plan for SCASD is one of the most comprehensive plans in Pennsylvania. As long as students and staff participate in the simple rules of social distancing, mask-wearing, and the constant act of washing your hands, SCASD will be able to keep its COVID numbers as low as it has been since the district opened for the 2020-21 school year.

NEWS & FEATURES

ANTI RACISM

FROM PAGE 1

resolution be shortened.

After nearly three hours of discussions and debate, the board moved to have a 'work day' to further evaluate the resolution and come to a consensus on Sept. 30 at 7 P.M., where students were invited to give input. This decision was made despite the fact that Wednesday's CCL meeting was meant to be the final time the resolution was discussed.

After being invited to speak, Dr. Cynthia Young, Department Head of African-American Studies at PSU and leader of the Race and

Marginalized Populations workgroup at SCASD, detailed her own family's experience with racism in SCASD, along with advocating for Black students with disabilities.

Tensions rose after Young was cut off during her comments concerning inequities in special education by Duffy.

"When you say you wanna make change and make a more equitable school setting, but you shut people down who need to be heard, what does that say about what you're doing to me?" said junior Elana Laing, who was one of the three students invited to be a panelist of the meeting. Panelists debated with members

frequently, ensuring their own perspective was not drowned out.

Along with equitable special education, representation in SCASD staff is another demand that affects students of color in our schools. Senior Demanie Redhead views diversity as critical for her, especially having personally lived through the negative effects of not having it.

"I still have a younger brother who's a freshman," Redhead said. "Hopefully, within a year, I can see that we have diverse faculty. Since State High is so predominantly white, there are not a lot of opportunities

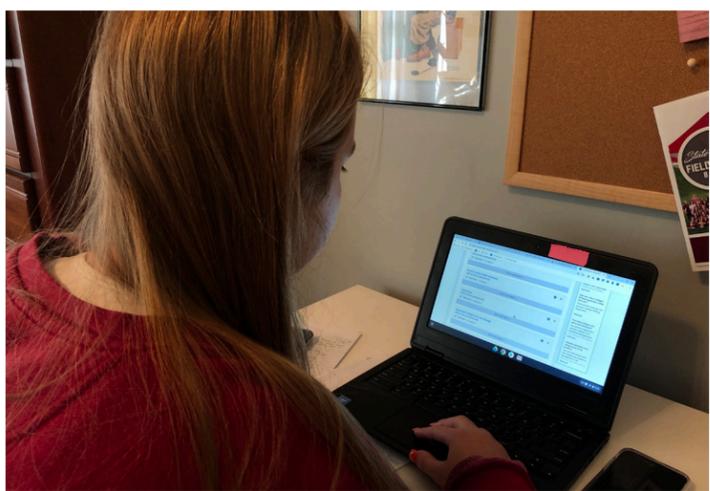
for people to educate themselves on any minority, not just African-Americans. When they see someone that looks like them and can relate to their issues, it's just an example that just because you aren't white and you aren't rich doesn't mean you can't still be successful."

Speight also attributed the un-productive conversations on race in SCASD to missing diversity. "It just doesn't feel inviting for us to see one singular race just teaching a bunch of kids," Speight said.

When it comes to lasting change, power lies in numbers and support from the SCASD community. Community members that

want to contribute can join groups like CCU, district-wide workgroups, Peer Advocates, or the Diversity and Activism Club. These SCASD students have acted as a clear example recently that when there's a cause worth fighting for, you should always make yourself heard.

NAVIGATING COLLEGE APPLICATIONS BEHIND A SCREEN



Senior Grace Garlin sits at her desk at her home in State College, PA on Saturday, Sept. 19. She is looking through her college applications of a total of 8 schools. (Photo/Hannah Garlin)

BY HANNAH GARLIN

The college application process is a serious and stressful affair. It not only affects the four years following a high school senior's life, but it also signals a new chapter of independence. The impact of COVID-19 has made applying to colleges even more difficult in such an unexpected

situation.

The effects of the pandemic have increased the amount of stress on seniors while they've been focusing on the college search and applications.

"Applying to colleges during COVID has made me more nervous because I haven't had anyone coaching me through the application process. I feel like I have to do it

independently," senior Grace Garlin said.

SCASD is fully remote along with many colleges across the country. This makes college visits for students more challenging, and in many cases, they have to do so online. Just as remote learning is different from in-person classes, visiting a college virtually does not have nearly the same impact as physically walking around campus grounds. Garlin is planning to apply to schools that she has never had an opportunity to see.

"I've been stressed out because it's going to be hard to decide on what college I want to attend. I don't know if I'm going to be able to go visit any and gain the full experience," she said. This added hindrance has created more anxiety for Garlin.

The COVID-19 pandemic has left many people on edge due to the uncertainty it has caused. Through much

thought, senior Molly Solo has decided to pursue early graduation from State High.

"I don't want to do online school at State High for an entire year, so I decided to apply to college for the spring semester," she said. Solo was excited about getting back to in-person classes at the start of the year, but the quick change to fully remote learning altered her thoughts.

Senior year is something every high school student anticipates during the years leading up to it. But for the graduating class of 2021, senior year is looking to be one far different from what they'd been expecting.

Students have lost the social aspect of school now that SCASD is fully online. Garlin shared that she misses seeing her friends in school and being able to interact with other students.

"I haven't really been able to partake in any fun senior activities. I just want to enjoy

my senior year with my friends," she said.

The final year of high school is one of the most important and special years of your education, and the decision on which path to take in the future is an exciting aspect of senior year.

"Being a senior involves new challenges and experiences that you don't get to have every year," Garlin said.

With the uncharted territory this year's graduating class is facing, one thing is for certain: The experience of this year and the decisions made about future endeavors will provide tremendous personal growth for every individual.

HUMANS OF STATE HIGH



"I feel like I know a lot of different people and that shapes a lot of the lessons I learn. One of the most impactful relationships is with my mom. My mom has gone through a lot. She grew up in a different country with a different culture so as an immigrant here in America, living a different life and growing up differently, the way our relationship is, shows me the generational and cultural difference. I learned from her that [with] a lot of hard work and sacrifice, all works out in the end and [the result] is a better future for the people you love. I take that to heart in the things that I do."

BY FAITH BENNETT



"I'm probably proudest of my mom because she's a woman of color and she immigrated to the United States when she was nineteen for grad school. Despite being a woman and a person of color, she hasn't let that stop her from having an extremely successful career, although she continues to experience a lot of things at Penn State. She continues to stay here and fight for our education and for us to have a better life and to be able

to succeed in our futures. Growing up, it was like a constant struggle of wanting to hide my identity as a Latinx person and always wanting to fit into white stereotypes or trying to look whiter and act 'white.' But she's taught me to be proud of it and to not hide it and to stick up for myself and for others in situations of injustice."

BY ELISA EDGAR

NEWS & FEATURES

WE ARE... LOCAL BUSINESSES



Outside India Pavilion on East Calder Way in downtown State College, PA, taken Sept. 28, 2020. This is what we do," owner Baljinder Dadra said. "This is what we've been doing for a while and we're part of the community." Like many business owners, Dadra's business means the world to him. (Photo/ Elisa Edgar)

BY ELISA EDGAR

State College has always depended on local businesses. Now, after the economic crisis that consumed the U.S. in the spring, local businesses are depending on State College residents more than ever before. The often unseen business owners create the fabric of this town, filling streets with enticing aromas and hot meals. The faces and families behind the food of our town make State College a place to call home.

State College staples India Pavilion, Yallah Taco, Lupita's, Kaarma Indian Cuisine, and Rey Azteca are a few restaurants that share two things in common: a

small town in Pennsylvania and a global pandemic. Five different restaurants, five different families, and five different attempts at staying afloat while our country submerged last spring.

Since March of 1997, India Pavilion has sat tucked away on 222 East Calder Way beneath a set of stairs in downtown State College. The North Indian cuisine fills the air, from chicken curry to mango ice cream, leading to the restaurant quickly becoming a community for locals to gather and eat. When his uncle and dad opened the restaurant, Baljinder Dadra was just 10. Now, he's the owner.

33-year-old Dadra never could have expected what 2020 had in store. As the national shutdown began over spring break and students were told to stay home, losses became immediate.

"It affected us a lot," Dadra said. "I'd probably say we're at about 25% of what we used to be, as far as revenue is concerned. I've had to let go of some of the staff."

As a co-owner with his dad, the entire business is rooted in family. Dadra's parents, sister, brother-in-law, and wife have all helped out. Having been in State College for nearly 24 years, they have a strong local customer base. However, as students returned

this fall, locals retreated, and the number of customers retreated with them.

"With all the restrictions going on, people are still a bit nervous to come out. It's had its ups and downs, but I believe it's been fairly difficult," Dadra said.

Taking large hits in their catering business, with no venues to feed all summer, was also a missed opportunity to increase revenue. Despite all of this, Dadra optimistically awaits normalcy.

"Things will definitely, definitely, kick back to before, it's just all a matter of time. It's just a matter of when the vaccine comes out, and how the government handles all that in execution," Dadra said. He estimates a return to normal in one to possibly three years.

As a State High and Penn State graduate, Dadra grew up in the State College community.

"It's more than business itself," he said. "It's a stable atmosphere, the community, and just being a part of it. It means a lot to us."

Since the pandemic, Hitham Hiyajneh has had to close five out of the six businesses he owned in State College. Yallah Taco remains a staple downtown for Mexican food, including heavy burritos, refreshing soda, and (of course) tacos. The students they depended on, however, left with no return.

Hiyajneh lost about 70% of his business in the new

ghost town that became State College. Even after moving locations to College Ave., business only slightly improved. For two weeks, he had to shut down when a few of his employees were exposed to COVID-19. In the meantime, he and his family carried the load.

Hiyajneh didn't pay the rent for five months, and in some locations, still doesn't.

"I've had to choose between paying rent and giving my employees money," Hiyajneh said. "I chose employees over rent. Not because I don't care about the guy who's my landlord, but because my landlord can survive more than my employees. My employees live paycheck by paycheck."

As a business of brothers, Hiyajneh can't claim himself for government support, since they're not a corporation.

"We got like \$4,000, that's nothing. The big corporations get the money, we don't get it," Hiyajneh said. "We spent over \$120,000 just to survive, and that's our savings, gone."

Yallah Taco also suffers from the added responsibility of the people depending on them. Money is sent back home to Jordan, Lebanon, where Hiyajneh immigrated from 30 years ago. People in El Salvador, Palestine, Guatemala, and Syria also receive money from Yallah, as the pandemic has put millions out of work.

"In our business, we like to get back to our community,

SEE LOCAL BUSINESSES PAGE 8

A STROLL DOWN MEMORY LANE

BY RIJA SABEEH

In the span of four short years, awkward freshmen become confident seniors and their lived moments turn into fond memories.

Though it's hard to keep track of everything a student's experienced, learned, and, sometimes, tried to forget, as they approach the end of their high school careers, friends they've made, and, for this year's senior class, all they've missed out on.

So let me take you, beautiful reader, on a trip down memory lane.

Now-seniors Anisha Prabhu, Mabel Tong, and Anna Garlicki all had the same fear going into their freshman year of high school:

"Getting lost." This was such a worry for Prabhu, that in order to overcome it, she found herself printing maps of the school--each one pointing her to a different class.

"I, like, drew out my path and how I was gonna walk because I was so freaked out about this," Prabhu said.

Though her methods may seem outlandish to the average student, her fear certainly wasn't. At the time, State High still functioned with two separate buildings: North and South. Luckily for the class of '22 and onwards, that issue has since been eradicated (along with the North building), though some sophomores still find themselves lost with no direction in the middle of the cafeteria when they're already fifteen minutes late for

AP World History. But that's another story.

Though it is believed that freshmen tend to be afraid of the upperclassmen, intimidated, even, Prabhu and Garlicki did not add to that stereotype. The preseason for sports and other extracurriculars oftentimes leads to freshmen mingling with seniors even before they start their high school experience. For Prabhu and Garlicki, upperclassmen were simply other students.

"They were my friends," said Prabhu.

The one thing that can be said for certain is that 2020-2021 has not been the senior year any of these three students were hoping for.

Garlicki smiled as she took a moment to reflect, then said, "This is not what I expected." She continued, "I was expecting being able to go to school every day, and I would be able to talk to my friends up close, I would be able to drive, like, pick up my buddies



Anna Garlicki poses and smiles in anticipation of her first days of freshman and senior year at State High. (Photo courtesy of Anna Garlicki)



and drive to school together. I was expecting to not have to wear a mask...I was expecting to be able to hug my buddies, you know?"

Garlicki was not asking for much. In any other year, each of these things would be overlooked, underappreciated. Despite the inability to do all these things she and many others were hoping for, Garlicki ended on a note more understanding than would be expected, and without hesitation:

"It's not what I expected, but I think we've adapted to this situation well...I understand the importance of all the different precautions we have."

Reminiscing on all that has happened, and all that could have been is not an easy task. While nobody really knows what the future looks like, we know that the class of '21 will face whatever path they take with a near-unprecedented level of resilience and strength.

NEWS & FEATURES

GLOBAL DAY OF CLIMATE ACTION

BY MIRANDA MARKS

One year ago, on Sept. 20, 2019, the largest climate strike in history took place. An estimated 4 million people took to the streets internationally to protest climate inaction and the destruction of our planet through fossil fuel entities. Over fifty students from State High, Delta, and Penn State joined in and led a strike on Old Main Lawn. Various community members shared chants, songs, stories, and poems through a megaphone.

This year, things looked a little different. COVID-19 has made protesting more difficult due to social distancing and gathering restrictions. However, the fight for climate justice is far from over and more relevant than ever before. Activists have been forced to become versatile in their methods and create new ways of fighting for climate action. Delta senior Kate Loomis-Adams transitioned from weekly strikes in front of the Municipal building to digital strikes on social media.

“COVID-19 has not stopped the global climate movement. Using digital platforms to strike allows activists from all over the world to connect in ways that have not been possible with in-person strikes. We live in an era where technological resources can support our advocacy and strengthen our

relationships,” Loomis-Adams said.

Each week, Loomis-Adams creates a poster relating to climate change, snaps a picture, and posts it to social media. She is one of thousands who participate. At the end of each week, Fridays for Future Digital creates a collage of every single photo taken. At the beginning of the pandemic, there were only about a dozen people participating. Now, the group has racked up thousands of committed strikers.

On Sept. 25, 2020, climate activists across the globe attempted to recreate the famous September 20th strike in compliance with CDC guidelines. Some countries held socially distanced strikes, while others joined in digitally. State High junior Luly Kaye participated in the global day of action by striking through social media. Kaye shared pictures of their sign on the SCASD Environmental page in solidarity with the Fridays for Future Digital strikes. In addition, Kaye dedicated their day to learning more about environmentalism.

“I took the chance to educate myself on things I can do in my life to reduce waste and emissions,” Kaye said. “I learned about the way indigenous people treat the environment and use their surrounding resources. They

have so much to teach us.”

Delta junior Lena Logan Adams dedicated her time to speaking with Lee Griffin, who is currently running for congress in Pennsylvania.

“One of his top priorities is to address the climate crisis,” Adams said. “It was interesting to hear his perspective and plans on securing voters and addressing the effects of the climate crisis from a state level. It is important that we familiarize ourselves with politicians who have plans to combat the climate crisis on all levels, whether it be federal, state, or local, as there is always work to be done, even locally.”

One of the most prevalent issues in the U.S. right now is racial injustice. Adams believes that discussions of institutionalized racism go hand-in-hand with the fight for climate justice.

“I think that the Black Lives Matter protests have really opened people’s eyes to the realities of environmental racism, and I believe that when it is safe enough to strike in person again, that topic will be at the forefront of many people’s minds.”

Adams reminds us of the severity of the crisis and the importance of dedicating our time and energy to this fight, regardless of whether we’re able to gather in the streets or not.

“This is not just a conversation about polar bears losing their habitats, it is also about marginalized communities being torn apart. A message that the Black



State College high school students participate in a digital strike for climate justice on May 22nd, 2020. (Photo courtesy of Fridays for Future State College)

Lives Matter protests in State College have been pushing is that racism is embedded in every part of us, our actions, and our society. So of course, racism must be in the conversation about the climate crisis,” Adams said.

Delta senior Casie Eifrig shared a similar sentiment. “Marginalized communities are disproportionately impacted by climate change, as the most vulnerable and poorest communities are in the front lines. This link can even be traced back to redlining, as disproportionate percentages of people of color live in toxic waste polluted neighborhoods with less access to proper medical care.”

Eifrig believes that climate justice should be our top priority during this election season.

“The earth is not waiting

for us. It is crucial that we put climate reformation plans into action now before time runs out,” Eifrig said.

Loomis-Adams, Kaye, Adams, and Eifrig were all able to find ways of striking digitally during quarantine and will continue to do so until in-person actions are a safe and viable option. This year’s global climate strike may have looked slightly different, but it was just as impactful.

Students can join the fight by taking part in digital strikes with the local Fridays for Future chapter, attending webinars, listening to the voices of Black and Indigenous activists in some of the most violently impacted communities, and working to incorporate conversations about climate justice into their homes and community.

EDITOR’S NOTE

As the end of August rolled around and school once again began, we at the Lions’ Digest found ourselves facing a tall order: To continue our coverage not only during a pandemic but with the smallest team we’ve had in years. It wasn’t shaping up to be an easy task.

And yet, we found a way.

Armed with strong writers, Lions’ Digest took off with its coverage. Like everything else, journalism has had to adapt in the face of the pandemic. We moved from in-person interviews to Zoom calls, from physically attending events to watching live streams.

Our initial concerns quickly dissipated as we adapted to our new circumstances. Despite everything, our staff writers and editors have committed themselves to

delivering the stories of the SCAHS community.

At the start of September, we began work on the first issue of Lions’ Digest. We went into this issue without a specific theme, intending to only report on the most relevant stories of the community. Yet as we conducted interviews over Zoom and typed out articles, a clear theme emerged: resilience. We talked to student activists pushing for change in their schools, and met seniors taking on this unprecedented year with smiles on their faces. While we worked to tell their stories, we saw firsthand the unwavering strength these students exhibited in the face of adversity.

As the Lions’ Digest team worked on the first issue, I spent time myself thinking about what I wanted this specific issue to mean to readers, and what I want the future of our publication to

look like. Telling stories that will educate, push readers to question what they know, and perhaps even inspire--that is what I want Lions’ Digest to do. If you can walk away from our newspaper having heard a new perspective, or perhaps having become aware of change being made in the community that you previously didn’t know of, then we’ve made it one step closer to our goal.

Our yearly journey in pursuing the stories of our community has only just begun, and I hope that you will join us in this endeavor by reading the stories we write.

All that being said, I sincerely hope you enjoy the first issue of Lions’ Digest.

-Adrita Talukder, Editor in Chief

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We encourage all readers to send us feedback by emailing lionsdigest@scasd.org.

SEND US YOUR WORK OR GIVE US FEEDBACK

The Lions’ Digest encourages all readers to submit cartoons, guest columns, and letters/emails to the editor. Writers must provide their full name, grade(if applicable), date, and email address. Letters are limited to 250 words, and guest columns 600 words. Upon submitting your work, it is subject to approval editing for space and journalistic style. The Lions’ Digest reserves the right to reject letters.

SPORTS

GIRLS' TENNIS IS A GO FOR THE FALL SPORTS SEASON



Senior and captain on the girls' tennis team at State High, Sruthi Ramesh warms up for her match against Mifflin County on Wednesday, Sept 23, in State College, PA.

BY HANNAH GARLIN

State High Girls' Tennis added another successful match to their undefeated record on Wednesday, Sept 23. The team came out strong and defeated Mifflin County in all five matches they played. They

are now 4-0 on the season and will continue to compete frequently.

Senior captain Sruthi Ramesh is very excited about the accomplishments that her team has made so far this season.

"We have a really solid

team this year and I'm excited for the rest of our season," Ramesh said.

Although the season has been extremely successful so far, the girls' tennis team has had to adapt to the difficult changes COVID-19 has brought upon them.

"We started the season much later than usual, and we have a shorter season playing against fewer teams," Ramesh said.

The team has also had to take precautions at practices and competitions to ensure every individual's safety. These precautions consist of mask-wearing at all times, sanitizing hands and equipment, and not sharing equipment with other teams.

While these precautions are absolutely necessary, there are some benefits to playing tennis during these uncertain times.

"Tennis is more of an individual sport [unlike a contact sport] and is outside," sophomore Kelly Steel said.

Because of these benefits, players are able to be more distanced from others and can ensure the safety of those around them.

Steel noted that COVID has also affected another important aspect of the team's

season: away matches.

"[COVID has] also affected our away matches, which means fewer people are allowed to travel this year," she said.

Along with this and the fewer matches being played, the team's season will be cut short this year.

While the future of this team's season is unpredictable, it is clear that the girls' tennis team will take any opportunity they have to make it a successful and safe season.

"We believe that the safety of the team, coaches, families, and the community is the most important thing," Ramesh said.

With all of the precautions put in place, the girls' tennis team is confident in their ability to keep every individual safe as they continue competing.

MEET YOUR 2020 FALL CAPTAINS

FOOTBALL



Seniors Dresyn Green, (2) Sammy Knipe (29), Conrad Moore, (7) and Carson Franks (11) are the 2020 football captains.

Green, who has been playing since he was seven, is excited to spend his last season playing with his younger brother one more time. "I love the unity that football creates for not only us as players but us as a community," Green said.

GIRLS' GOLF



Morgyn Wiley (left) and Riley Kracaw (right) are both seniors. Wiley has been playing golf for three years, and she's excited for districts despite the short season. Kracaw, who's been playing golf since she was 9, is excited to see how far her team will advance this year into the postseason. "I'm looking forward to being captain and being able to be a leader for the younger girls who will carry on the team next year," Kracaw said.

GIRLS' CROSS COUNTRY



Senior Jordan Reed (left) started Cross Country in 8th grade, and she's excited about running with her teammates and spending time with them. "As a captain, I am looking forward to getting to know everyone on the team better and being as supportive as possible," Reed said. Reed's co-captains are Maggie Leahey (middle) and Molly Solo (right).

GIRLS' TENNIS



Senior Sruthi Ramesh (right) started playing tennis as a young kid, but only began playing competitively when she joined the team in 9th grade. "I am really excited about the opportunity to have my senior season and play tennis with my teammates," Ramesh said. "Additionally, I am excited that I can help lead the team and be an example for the younger players." Ramesh's co-captains are Catelyn Janac (left) and Ellie Morar (middle).

BY ETHAN JONES

SPORTS

BOYS' CROSS COUNTRY



Senior Brady Bigger started running track in 9th grade. "I've always loved cross country and I just want to keep getting better and faster," Bigger said. "It's just the best feeling when you knock a couple seconds off your PR or place high in a race." Bigger's co-captains Bennett Norton (middle) and Jacob Messner (left) will also be taking leadership positions on the team.

GIRLS' VOLLEYBALL



Seniors Anna Letendre, Sarah Neely, and Kacy Sekunda (left to right) are the 2020 volleyball captains. "I love to win. I'm a very competitive person, and I come from a very competitive family, so it has always been a big part of my life," Sekunda said. "My teammates are also one of my main sources of motivation. I work hard and put in 100% because that's what I expect from them."

FIELD HOCKEY



Maddie Tambroni (right) and Johanna Lee (left) are both seniors. Lee started playing field hockey in 8th grade. "I'm excited to represent my team and to take on a higher leadership role," Lee said. Tambroni, who's been playing field hockey since as long as she can remember, started officially competing in 3rd grade. "This year I am so honored to be leading this team along with Jojo and the 6 other seniors," Tambroni said.

CHEERLEADING

"In place of captains, our cheerleading program has, instead, set up committees that are led by our seniors. Each committee has specific leadership roles and responsibilities, and have been chosen based on the strengths and interests of our student-athletes. We've found this to be a successful way to create strong team bonds and develop collaborative work," Head Coach Rachel Webb said.

Practice Committee

Senior Chairs: Mark Argiro

Team Bonding Committee

Senior Chairs: Emma Limegrover, Garrett Poorman and Maddy Willson

School Spirit Committee

Senior Chairs: Collette Kissell, Allison Clemson

Game Day Committee

Haley Haller, Grace Bodner, and Molly LaMotte

BOYS' SOCCER



Seniors Owen Adams, Jacob Jeffries, and Griffin Lee are the 2020 Boys' Soccer captains. Adams has been playing since he was seven-years-old and is excited for the opportunity to still have a season. "My main motivation comes from my teammates," Adams said. "We all feed off of each other's energy and work hard for one another."

Jeffries, who's been playing since he was four, is looking forward to improving as a team and earning hard fought victories. "My determination to excel motivates me because I always am looking to get better than my opponent every day," Jeffries said. Lee, who's been playing since three, is motivated by wanting to put in the best work possible for his teammates. "Personally I love the feeling of winning a close game, knowing that I played to the best of my ability," Lee said.

THE FOLLOWING TEAMS ARE NOT IN THIS ISSUE: GIRLS' SOCCER, BOYS' GOLF
To read the full version of this article, which features interviews from additional captains, head to lionsdigest1.com.

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CALLING ALL WRITERS: Interested in writing for the Lions' Digest? It's not too late to join! Journalism 1 will be offered period four during the second marking period. Talk to your counselor today to sign up.

AN SAT SAFETY SAGA

BY ISABELLE SNYDER

This August, 469 of my peers and I embarked on a rite of passage central to the plot of every high school drama: the SAT. The dismal weather seemed to be taking its cue from the students standing below. Some stood frozen, eyes locked in the distance, others jittery and talkative, both dreading and anticipating the hours ahead. The scene, in and of itself, sounds pretty ordinary for a group of high schoolers taking their post-graduation lives in their hands. But that utter mundaneness is in fact what

makes this morning anything but ordinary. Let us not forget, we are in month 6 of a global pandemic, and State High is located at the epicenter of an unprecedented spike in cases for Centre County. The long line outside the building, the crowds of students chatting and jostling, that all felt like something from the “before-times.” So this is a story, not of star-studded standardized testing success, but of the College Board’s failure to uphold needed safety measures, and the way we rolled over and let it happen.

“That’s the most amount of people I’ve seen in one

place since before quarantine,” senior Payton Treaster said.

The doors were set to open at 7:45 a.m. and close promptly at 8. When I arrived at 7:50, the line of students wound twice around the parking lot in front of the building. The test was delayed nearly an hour and a half, with all students finally entering the building around an hour after the doors opened.

“I just felt like there should have been multiple entrances because everyone was packed in the long line in front,” senior Rebecca Zeigler said.

Worse than the line, however, were the safety measures taken, or rather the lack thereof. While a

safety screening is mandated by the College Board prior to admittance to the testing center, the questions were, at best, ineffective. Students were asked if they had come closer than 6 feet to someone with COVID, experienced symptoms themselves, or entered the testing center in violation of travel restrictions. Finally, we were told to acknowledge the risk involved in taking the SAT, and promise to wear our masks the entire time.

These questions are clearly designed to protect the College Board, not the students or the school. Now, I know a set of written questions can only accomplish so much, but still. Are we really expecting students to admit to coming in contact with someone who has contracted COVID after months of studying, weeks of panic and pressure, and waiting in line outside the testing center for an hour? They even come out and say it in the final question: We have accepted the risk, so when something goes wrong, it’s on us. No, not the national organization that gathered us all together and stuffed us into a building like sardines.

To make matters worse, most of us weren’t even asked the screening questions as we entered the building.

“The questions on the health screening created an

unanticipated major delay and contributed to the line that extended for quite a distance. We did have 5 stations set-up upon entry, 30-minutes prior to the student reporting time, to expedite the process, however, we would likely need many more stations if we tried to use the same admission procedure. I’m sure this was not anticipated by the College Board, especially with larger test centers,” State High counselor and SAT Test Administrator Steve Guthoff said.

So there we were, being ushered into the building as the rain started to fall, with no discussion of COVID symptoms, contact tracing, or travel restrictions. It was about 15 minutes later, as we nervously fiddled with our pencils, that the intercom crackled to life, and the questions were asked to all of us. We were instructed to raise our hands if we had come into contact with someone who tested positive for COVID, had experienced symptoms, or had crossed state/county lines in violation of travel restrictions. Unsurprisingly, no one raised their hands.

The proctors, too, were unreliable when it came to safety measures.

“She was coughing the entire time and sometimes, after she took her mask down for a drink, she just straight



470 students wait to enter the SAT test administration outside State High on the morning of August 29, 2020. (Photo/Isabelle Snyder)

SEE SAT SAGA PAGE 8

ADMINISTRATORS, MAKE LEARNING EQUITABLE

BY MIRANDA MARKS

While the transition to remote learning has been a difficult one for many, it has been particularly challenging for neurodivergent students. Many people in our district rely on both academic and emotional support, but that support hasn’t always been attainable during online learning. The district’s focus and funds have been directed towards finding a way to go back to school, not finding a way to make online learning equitable. Students who require specific educational accommodations have been left in the dark.

Delta senior Sophia Galvin felt as though the district failed to consider the needs of marginalized community members. “They prioritized funding over their students’ lives. It is crucial that they take into account the needs of neurodivergent students and students of color.”

Galvin has ADHD, and it makes sitting and staring at a screen for prolonged periods

of time extraordinarily difficult. But she felt unsafe in school hallways and was forced to sacrifice her education to maintain the health of her family.

“I learn best in a classroom setting and surrounded by people, but I have two parents in the medical field, and I live with an 80-year-old. Going to school in-person was far too dangerous,” Galvin said. While the district is providing resources and support to neurodivergent students who are still attending school, Galvin wishes that they would do the same for neurodivergent remote students.

A similar sentiment was offered by Delta senior Jenna Reed Panisiti.

“The same level of support hasn’t been offered to online and in-person students,” said Panisiti, who struggles with anxiety, panic disorder, and depression.

The format of remote learning has been stress-inducing for her, and having her camera on has led to panic

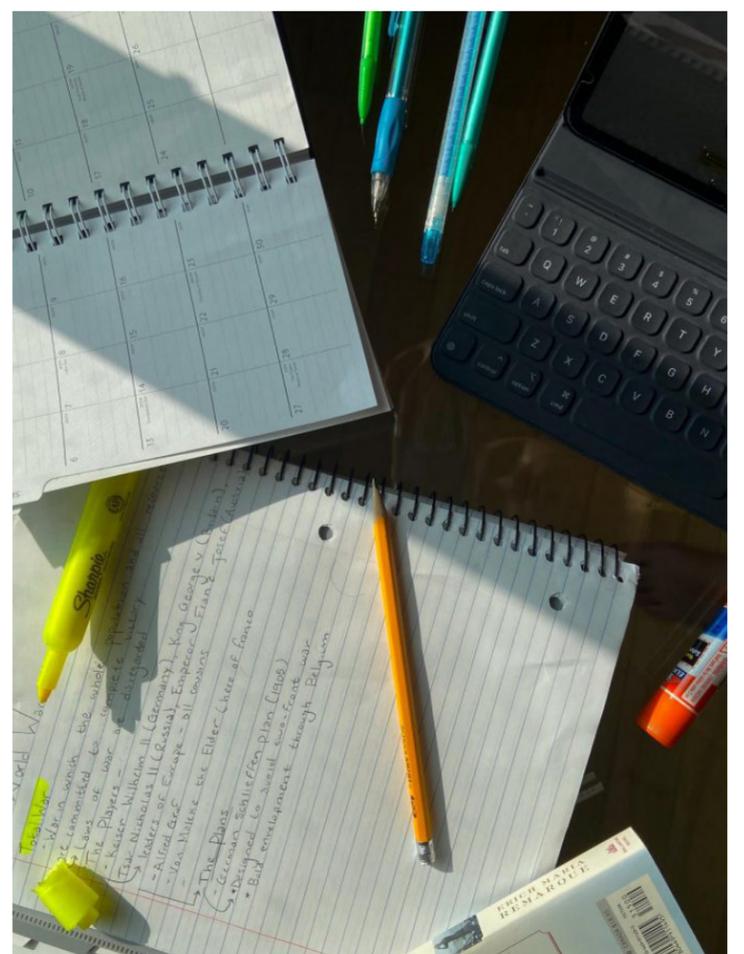
attacks during class.

“This is a difficult time for everyone; we have to be understanding and kind to each other,” Panasiti said. She believes that administrators are spending more time trying to make the school year “normal” when they should be prioritizing mental health. Remote learning is the safest option, but we must be conscious of the effect it has on students; flexibility and open mindedness are key.

Delta senior Tyler Ryland has been working to destigmatize Autism and shed light on the ableism that takes place in our community.

“At the end of last school year, my mental health began to deteriorate. Online learning made it difficult to connect with teachers. My emotional support teacher used to be down the hall if I needed to talk in the middle of class.

Now I can’t access that support at any time, I have to schedule meetings and have enough motivation to reach out.” If Ryland could change one thing, he would hire



Pencils and highlighters are scattered across a notebook, planner, and desktop. A make-shift workspace for remote learning, Sept. 14, State College. (Photo/ Miranda Marks)

SEE EQUITABLE LEARNING PAGE 8

FEATURES/OPINION

SAT SAGA

FROM PAGE 7

up coughed in the room,” senior Franklin Dorman said while recalling his proctor.

If you cannot bring yourself to wear a mask, you’re not evil, but you do need to stay home, in the name of all things good and holy. And please, please stay out of a public school on test day!

“I was taking subject tests, so there were only ten people in my room, but the proctor told us if we needed to pull our masks down to take a few deep breaths, it would be fine. He also kept taking his own mask off,” senior Claire Tyburski said.

So, here’s the tea. The College Board set us up for

failure, and we let it happen. 470 students tested in our building, half of which were from outside our district, from as far as New York City, New Jersey, and Boston. The health screening was ineffective, and the safety standards differed between proctors. As far as we know, no one has tested positive for COVID as a direct result of the SAT at State High, and we should consider ourselves lucky.

It’s not all bad news, however. In the wake of the August 29 fiasco, State High, led by the counseling department, reached out to the College Board, requesting that we be allowed to limit future SATs to only students in our district. Their answer? No. If we want to be a testing

center, we have to open the flood gates to all the germs populating the east coast. Rather than give in to the will of the almighty system, State High took a stand and canceled its SATs up to November 7th. While this may be a bummer for those of us hoping to get a few extra points before the Early Decision Deadline, I couldn’t be prouder of the choice.

Though there was a learning curve, and a pretty major one at that, seeing as it endangered the lives of 470 students and proctors and administration, our school has taken a stand for safety. I guess all we can do now is wear a mask, continue social distancing, and hope that all returns to normal by... 2040.

EQUITABLE LEARNING

FROM PAGE 7

more emotional and learning support teachers. “There are a lot of neurodivergent students in the district. Remote and in-person students need to be able to meet with (learning support) teachers regularly.”

Galvin, Panasiti, and Ryland all felt that remote school was necessary for the safety of the community, but that the district needed to do better for neurodivergent students.

“Take us into consideration when you make decisions. Ask your students individually what they need, don’t just tell them what they’re going to get,” Galvin said.

Ryland stressed that the district needs to give students space to speak. “They often only ask the parents of neurodivergent kids what they need, but the voice they should be prioritizing is the student’s.”

The needs of neurodivergent students need to be taken seriously. Putting all of our energy into reopening is counterproductive (as we’ll inevitably close again). Right now, our funds and resources need to be directed towards improving remote learning for everyone.

LOCAL BUSINESSES

FROM PAGE 3

you know what I’m saying?” Hiyajneh said. “It’s not your money, it’s God’s money, you just know how to distribute it and help people out with it. It will always come back to us in tenfold.”

Hiyajneh, like many, sees a wide-spread vaccine as the solution to his business’ losses.

“People are not gonna be comfortable going out until we have the vaccination. Nobody knows what to do. I mean, that’s the whole problem, when you have a lack of leadership,” Hiyajneh said. “I came to America with \$400 in my pocket. Complaining is not in my vocabulary. But sometimes, you have to assess your risk.”

16-year-old Melvin Lopez still remembers going to construction sites with his parents and selling Mexican food out of the back of their car for over 10 years before Lupita’s opened. During the

summers, his day started at 5 a.m., cooking, getting to the construction sites by 12, and trying to sell all their food. Now located inside the Uni-Mart on College Ave., Lupita’s is a far cry from a car trunk, but Lopez can still be found helping out.

Unlike many businesses in State College, Lupita’s doesn’t depend on Penn State students because of their location outside of downtown. However, customers and sales still shrunk as residents grew cautious of the quickly spreading pandemic. At their lowest, revenue was at 30-40% of what it usually had been. “We made just enough to cover the bills and it was a tough time,” Lopez said. “Everything was expensive because the price of things didn’t go down, but the money we were making did.”

Aside from monetary losses, the sanitization changes Lupita’s had to make proved difficult. Even after getting used to them,

masks are still a big issue due to greasy, oily, and hot conditions. Fortunately, sales are nearly back to normal and Lupita’s has been able to cover all their expenses.

To Lopez and his parents, the business means everything.

“It’s hard to say what something means to you. It’s hard to say what an emotion feels like. The thrill of just coming in and seeing how many people come for lunch, it’s crazy,” he said. “Say you cook something for somebody, and they say, ‘ew, this is disgusting.’ You’d feel bad, right? I think it’d break my mom’s heart if somebody said it was disgusting.”

Whether he’s frying, cooking, serving, or working the cash register, Lopez appreciates every customer that comes in.

Halal restaurant Kaarma Indian Cuisine opened 15 years ago, and while it isn’t new, its owner is. Ekaterina Yakhina has made monthly payments for the last two



Outside Kaarma Indian Cuisine in State College, PA, taken Oct. 2, 2020. The restaurant will soon be renamed to “Masala Place” by its new owner, Ekaterina Yakhina. (Photo/Adrita Talukder)

and a half years to buy the restaurant herself. Just a few months ago, amid the pandemic, the restaurant became hers. Her husband, the chef, has been working at Kaarma for 10 years, and now that it’s theirs, they plan to make it their own. Soon to be renamed “Masala Place,” the restaurant is a huge part of their life.

As COVID-19 took its place in State College, the buffet at Kaarma proved the most difficult to adapt to pandemic life. While the buffet, a large part of the restaurant, is still closed, dine-in seating in small numbers has begun to restart.

“It definitely went down,” Yakhina said, explaining the shift in revenue, “but we’re a strong family. We just finished paying for the restaurant, which is a big expense covered.”

Aside from the responsibilities of business owning, family life never stops.

“I used to go to the restaurant a lot with my baby there because we don’t have childcare,” Yakhina said. “I brought them there, but with COVID and everything, I was

home a lot. I did other things that I could do from home to help the restaurant. The family just had to pull together, work hard, you know? I wish I could help more.”

Even as Penn State students returned, revenue is still down due to the lack of buffet. “If COVID hopefully goes down, God willing, Mashallah, we’ll get better,” she said.

For Ramadan this year, Yakhina was able to make food for locals breaking their fast, which helped business. While the downstairs floor of Kaarma is used for working, the upstairs floor has been reserved for giving help to the elderly.

“We try to help the community because I always believe when you try to do good things, good things also come back to you, whether you know it or not,” Yakhina said.

For continuing coverage, read the full article on lionsdigest1.com



Outside Yallah Taco in State College, PA, taken Oct. 2, 2020. After opening a new location even amidst a global pandemic, owner Hizham Hiyajneh calls himself an optimist. (Photo/Adrita Talukder)