



2020 through the looking glass



Carlmont High School Journalism 
@Design by Allison Raisner



Since March, the Bay Area has been pulled apart by the pandemic. Everything from the personal to the professional to the academic went virtual, and though many events have shaken the community to the core, they've done so through the unfeeling glass and hollow blue light of a screen.





Black Lives Matter in the Bay Area

@BLM

The movement reached new heights after the death of George Floyd at the hands of police officers.



March 2020

ANITA BEROZA

The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement has shaken up the political landscape on a nationwide scale, and residents of the Bay Area and students at Carlmont are protesting.

“I went to one protest with my dad in San Mateo,” Abby Sanders said. “There were speakers, and we marched down to the police departments.” Sanders is just one of many students who attended the wave of BLM protests sparked after the death of George Floyd at the hands of a police officer.

“I went to...a mostly youth-led protest at the San Mateo police department, and also in East Palo Alto,” Amber Enthoven, a senior, said. “In the one at East Palo Alto, we stopped at a park, and multiple speakers talked about their experiences and what they think should be changed.”

Though Enthoven has attended these protests herself, she does not think they will have a broader impact.

“I don’t think [the protests] have had any effects. Derek Chauvin, the guy that murdered George Floyd, hasn’t had his trial yet, but he [paid] a million dollars for his bail, and he was just able to go back into society. I know he is going to have to go on trial, but I feel like nothing’s changed. Even if he does go to jail, it will just be because of the protests, but I don’t think any permanent change is going to happen,” Enthoven said.

Carlmont’s Black Student Union (BSU) has yet to respond as a whole to the developments in the BLM movement, but many individual members have.

“I know a lot of our club members were responding and sending out information through their Instagram stories and

Snapchat stories on what to do and how to be a part of the movement,” Virginia Brase, a senior, said. “I know that a lot of our club members were a part of [BLM] and wanted to make sure their voices were heard.”

After the events of June and July, Carlmont set up the Equity and Diversity Committee intended to tackle racism and microaggressions on-campus.

“I was able to join this committee at Carlmont that is meant to educate students who aren’t people of color about racism and the racism that goes on at Carlmont,” Brase said.

In addition to her work on the Equity and Diversity Committee, Brase also is president of BSU. Though they haven’t held meetings yet due to COVID-19, BSU normally holds meetings where students are able to hang out and build camaraderie.

“The purpose of BSU is to bring together and educate students of color and Black students in particular,” Brase said. “We’re just trying to support each other.”

Though many often think of the Bay Area (and Carlmont by extension) as very progressive, neither is without their own issues when it comes to race— Carlmont is a majority white school, with Black students making up only about 1% of the student body, according to greatschools.org. Brase has encountered some problems resulting from this disparity.

“With some of the fully white students, they tend to not be able to see how some of their words can be offensive to people of color,” said Brase. “A fellow classmate [asked me] if they could say the n-word because they were 2% Black... Please do not ask for the n-word pass.”



Life beyond quarantine

ANITA BEROZA



COVID-19 has left many students with more free time with the dozens of canceled hangouts, club meetings, and classes. In addition, with the advent and upsurge in popularity of many new technological platforms, they've found ways to stay occupied. From activism to Etsy, find out what Carlmont students have been doing online since March.

#United by Advocacy

Giovanni Cinque is co-president of Green Team, a club dedicated to spreading awareness about climate change and making environmentally-friendly change.

"Green Team is...focused on climate change and educating members about climate change first," Cinque said. "which we've been focusing more on because of COVID-19."

Cinque has been a member of Green Team since last year. Before the pandemic, they hosted a variety of activities, including implementing the tri-bin system on campus. With the advent of COVID-19, however, they have had to adapt to include different strategies, such as online activism.

"At the start of every month we have a different topic. At the first or second meeting of the month, we'll have an educational component, for example, this month has been green politics, the month before that was energy," Cinque said. "Towards the beginning of the month, it'd be 20 to 30 minutes of presentation."

Though it has been a challenge to move online, Cinque finds there are some benefits.

"The one thing that's really good is that we can share our screens, so the educational component is pretty much there," Cinque said. "The main thing that's missing is having the classroom feeling, the feeling that people are there and you're talking to them."

Despite the difficulties of moving beyond the educational aspects of activism, Green Team has launched other virtual projects, including two petitions: one for Carlmont High School and one for the Sequoia Union High School District to develop a climate action plan.

"That petition was related to the September Global Climate Action Day, and we decided for our climate action we were going to draft a petition," Cinque said. "It's not like when we reach that [signature] threshold, we're all of a sudden going to have solar panels sprouting out everywhere or a bunch of legislation passed; what we're doing is declaring that climate change is a problem."

#Democracy in Action

Abby Sanders also engages in community work and activism but in a more political landscape. Among her work are participation in city government and Junior State of America (JSA), a student civics and debate group.

"A lot of the stuff I've been doing recently has to do with electoral organizing, so I send postcards and texts, and I phone bank," Sanders said.

Despite the pandemic, Sanders has not seen much change in her work, at least not as much as those who might depend more on in-person organizing, such as rally organizers.

"Most of the stuff I've been doing has not been too different from before COVID-19, except for maybe knocking on doors," Sanders said.

#Connection through Creation

While some students have channeled their passion into causes they care about, others have explored their creative side.

"Originally, on Tiktok, I saw someone crochet a shirt, and I thought that was cool. My mom is really into knitting, so we already had the yarn around. One day, I sat down for a few hours... and I watched a few videos on it," Maggie Pavao said. Pavao has since learned to crochet dolls and cat figurines, even making some gifts, but it eventually evolved beyond that.

"Once I started making dolls, I started getting unofficial orders from my mom's friends. I realized instead of making these dolls for my friends, I could make an Etsy and people could order them from there," Pavao said.

Overall, Pavao enjoys having an Etsy page and hasn't encountered any major downsides yet.

"It allows me to meet people from around the world; I'll get an order, and it'll be from Tennessee or Florida," Pavao said. "It's interesting to reach a wider audience."



 **Emma Scott**
@Junior 

Quarantine was pretty relaxing and I got time to do stuff I never had time for previously.

 **Larkin Chock**
@Junior 


Quarantine itself has not been great, although it's given me more time to play my sport.



 **Alice Finkelstein**
@Sophomore 



Quarantine has been okay. I started a jewelry buisness recently!





 **Chesney Evert**
@Sophomore 

We've started to get to know our neighbors through BBQs and block parties.


   

 **Maile Firenze**
@Sophomore 

One good thing is that I've started going on sunrise walks because of quarantine.



Joe Biden 
@JoeBiden



A Biden-Harris administration will:

- Implement nationwide mask mandates
- Ensure access to regular, reliable, and free testing
- Accelerate the development and distribution of safe and effective treatments and vaccines

We won't waste any time getting this virus under control.



A sickness and a cure

ANITA BEROZA

As the Bay Area approaches a full year in quarantine, many are looking forward to an end to the pandemic. While there is no way to deliver a specific timeline to recovery, there are a few important steps that need to occur before life goes back to “normal.”

California has a tiered county risk system that dictates which business and other organizations are allowed to reopen when. Though everything will have to operate with some restrictions, the level of least risk is called minimal, which requires less than one new case per day per 100,000 people and less than 2% of the population testing positive. The only restrictions are those that allow for social distancing and the like.

The subsequent level is called moderate, where one to four new cases emerge daily per 100,000 residents and 2-3.9% of the county who are testing positive. This is followed by substantial, with four to seven new cases and 5-8% positive testing.

Widespread is the category of most risk, where there are more than seven new cases per day and a greater than 8% positive test rate.

San Mateo County would be, at least within its borders, mostly back to “normal” if it reached the minimal risk level.

However, in order for the pandemic to be truly “over” on a broader scale, many people expect there to be a vaccine. Vaccine development is a complicated process, and an integral part of its development and distribution to the public are clinical trials, which determine if a vaccine is safe and efficacious. Among the first organizations involved in the development of a drug or vaccine is the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

“The FDA is a legislative organization of the government to make sure things are safer. Drugs will probably never be completely safe; there’s always a risk, but the aim is the benefits way outweigh the risk,” Wendy Young said. Young is the

Senior Vice President of small molecule drug discovery at Genentech, a biotech company in the Bay Area.

According to the New York Times, 35 COVID-19 vaccine candidates are approved by the FDA for Phase 1 testing, as of late October, and 14 candidates are in Phase 2 testing. Phase 1 testing is centered around determining a safe dosage with a small sample, whereas Phase 2 tests safety on a much larger scale.

“Vaccines go through a very regulated process.

They generally go into healthy volunteers, first, just like you probably saw on the news,” Young said.

However, the process for testing vaccines is a lot more complicated than some forms of medications, especially treatments.

“Because you’re trying to prevent a disease, you can’t go out and get sick patients because they already have it,” Young said. “Let’s say Carlmont’s all vaccinated, Aragon is not. Then you move forward for a year, and you count how many people get sick at Carlmont and compare it to Aragon. You would hope the number is less at Carlmont, because [then] the vaccine works, but you actually don’t know who was affected who was exposed.”

Because it is so difficult to determine who was infected by and exposed to diseases in observational studies, many vaccines are tested through what is called challenge testing, which offers more definite experimental data.

“[If I were] to inject my vaccine into you, I’m going to wait a day or a couple of days; then, I’m going to inject you with the active COVID-19 virus,” Young said. “Then that’ll be real clear evidence that you were infected; did the vaccine work?”

Currently, organizations like 1Day Sooner in the UK offer challenge tests for COVID-19. While challenge tests can provide some hard short-term results, vaccine testing gets a lot more complicated down the line.

“The controversy is that you really need vaccines to be in the population for years to fully understand their full efficacy, like the shingles vaccine... only lasts for five years, and then you’ve got to go get re-inoculated. The same thing could happen [with coronavirus]; they don’t know how long the COVID-19 vaccine could last,” Young said. “Pushing these vaccines quicker than you normally would, that puts people at risk. That’s a lot what’s in the news, is Trump trying to push the FDA to approve things that may not be safe. I mean, people want vaccines, but they don’t want them to be unsafe.”

As of late October, 11 vaccines are in Phase 3 trials, and six are approved for limited use, according to the New York Times. Phase 3 is focused on large-scale testing for efficacy, or how well a vaccine works. Even with these great advancements in the vaccine process, there is still no long-term data available, which means no guarantee of a long-term solution to the pandemic.

“I think some people think when the vaccine is approved, we’re all saved, but it’s just step one of the process to learning how effective it is,” Young said.

