



Happy Holidays!

from the Hilltop Star staff

Stay-At-Home Issue #4



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What the Coronavirus Means for Us Now

By Justin Pimentel

Ever since the virus came to town, and we were all forced to go into lockdowns, remember last March, a lot has changed especially in Passaic. People are told to wear masks and remain at least six feet from each other, not only Passaic but in the entire country.

In Passaic so far, the coronavirus has taken the lives of at least 1,268 with around 22,551 cases. Schools have been affected, as well, ever since the coronavirus showed up and lockdowns have been put into place, so students have been transitioned into online classes.

These online classes are the first time something like this had to be put into place which led to a very rough transition in Passaic High School, as well as the rest of the nation. Even though Passaic High School and the rest of the district rose to the occasion, transitioning back is going to be a slow process.

Passaic has a lot of good news alongside the bad. Governor

Murphy said on Twitter that, "I spoke with Dr. Anthony Fauci, The good news is that a vaccine is on the horizon – we anticipate broad distribution by this spring. We have a plan ready should that timeframe hold, Let's get through the remainder of this fall and winter together."

Vaccines have just been approved in England and in Canada, and now in the United States where they have been developed. Murphy states that a vaccine may soon be on the horizon for all people in New Jersey. We are certainly looking forward to that. Before vaccination a free COVID tests are also said to be most likely done through saliva during specified hours.

The online classes in PHS were a rough transition last school year, as many students are having difficulty getting used to it as well as the teachers. It isn't surprising as this is a new thing for both teachers and students as online classes are something that are new and never before done.

The plan now, at the time of

the writing of this article, is that this learning plan will last until February when they plan to switch back to a more normal (read in classes) with high expectations that a vaccine should be developed by then.

What restrictions will be placed in the schools is something that the governor has yet to discuss. But no matter what is put into place it will definitely not be the same as it used to be. How weird will it feel to be back in school after all this time out of it?

Apart from the effects COVID-19 has on the school system it also has many effects on other workplaces. Workplaces such as restaurants and dining are said to receive restrictions that will help calm the spread of the virus. With a recent spike after the Thanksgiving holiday, New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania governors placed new more restrictive lockdown orders on restaurants and other places where people gather.

A few restrictions and requirements that have to be met is that

How weird will it feel to be back in school after all this time out of it?

restaurants, unless they have a barrier, must place tables at least six feet away from each other. These new restrictions will help slow the spread of the virus, but what is as important is the cleaning that is done after each group finishes their meal and exits the restaurant. Better cleanliness is nearly as important as staying a distance away.

The virus has forced many changes and affected us in Passaic, and it will take a long time to revert back to normal. Eventually, as the plan stands right now, things will slowly open up under regulations and then the government will slowly remove the regulations as things get better. The new restrictions will be uncomfortable, but it has been decades since some-

thing like this has ever had to be put into place. When and how things will transition back to normal is still being planned and confirmations are being made slowly.

Those in charge in Passaic and around the country, and even right here in PHS are working hard to get us back to normal as soon as possible and as safely as possible. A vaccine has arrived, and doses are on the way which will indefinitely help provide a massive positive change in our society as things will be able to move back into how they used to be slowly. So for now, the only thing we can do is keep going, follow instructions, and stay on task. We will see each other soon in school later this year. Keep those grades up!

What is going to happen to our senior year?

By Amelia Reynoso

Welcome back fellow classmates! As you may recall, last year was very sad for the seniors, but now it is time for the Class of 2021 to show what they are capable of. We, as seniors are surely not happy about the start of our senior year. This year is nothing like anything anyone has seen before.

This year is going to be memorable, senior year always is. It might just be not the type of memorable experiences we all thought we were going to have. Homecoming was very different this year. Actually, homecoming is something that the Class of 2020 has over us, because theirs was normal.

Remember back to the Fall of 2019, when things like homecoming were all we had to worry about? Now that seems so long ago, and we are all experts on social distancing, online learning and mask wearing.

Homecoming this year was not open to everyone to watch like all past years. This year you had to get a ticket from a football player or coach in order to be let in the stadium. However, our homecoming court was picked usually the same way it's done



every year. Except, they didn't have to hang up any posters or give stuff away, which is a disappointment to me because I was really looking forward to those cookies. Big congratulations to Nicole Marulanda and Freddy Huitzil on becoming our 2020-21 homecoming king and queen.

Another thing of the past is having pep rallies. This year there is talk of having a virtual pep rally. This is all new, and we are all just trying to figure out how to make this work as normally as possible under these crazy conditions.

If someone states that they know what is going on or what is going to happen, then ignore them. They are lying. When researching this article, those in charge of these events were asked if anyone had heard anything about what they are planning to do, and they honestly don't know.

We all also have to come to

terms that we might not have a prom like the class of 2019. Maybe, we will have something, but it will be greatly reduced capacity. Prom is the one thing everyone has been excited about ever since freshman year, literally everyone. Now, we might have a virtual prom in our bedrooms, which is even more than they had last year.

Information changes from day to day, and it is slow to come out. Those in charge are making this up as they go along, because this is completely different than anything that has ever happened. At the time of the writing of this article, this is the most up-to-date information available. So, please watch the next issues as new information comes out, then it will be reported here.

On a personal note, I hope you are all doing well, and don't worry, we will get through this being apart, together.

Class of 2021 Unite!

By Evelin Cabrera

While we all feel sad for the Class of 2020, their senior year was cut short in March, and they did not get to have a normal prom, or complete any of the senior activities that they had been looking forward to, or even have a normal graduation.

This is now the year of the Class of 2021, and it is supposed to be getting back to normal, right?

It is finally senior year for us, and we are making it work from the comfort of our own home. While we may be able to get extra sleep because we do not have to wake up early to walk to school, and some of us get to work more hours, we still have a lot of senior stuff to do.

Applying to colleges, trying to get your resume to look good, and staying on top of your work is hard to do from a distance. When it comes to applying to college and financial aid, we would usually have our counselors or teachers to help.

While it may seem overwhelming, or that you are on your own in trying to get this all done on your own. You

are NOT alone. Teachers and counselors are still there to help you. "I am at tutoring every morning, (Google Classroom code yfcjnhx) and that is not just for help in class, it is for EVERYTHING you might need help in, including college essays," said Mr. Zeiler, who does humanities tutoring every morning with Mr. Vallila.

However sad this year might be, for the same reason that last year ended sadly, at the end of the day it is our last year of high school and we need to grow up a little faster. We still have our whole lives ahead of us and that means taking advantage of the things that are offered at our school. We always thought we had one last year before we had to grow up and start our lives. With everything going on that last year is gone. We need to do everything to make ourselves ready and take on some more responsibilities.

As students, school was always a place to see our friends and make memories. Now we just do school and try our best to have an outside life. With the pandemic and having school from home the stress

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The Pros and Cons of Online Education

By Anthony Alvarez

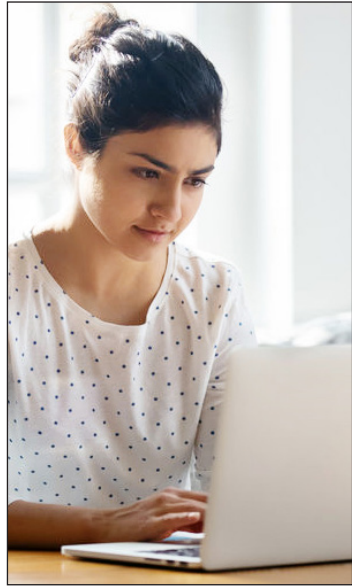
COVID-19 brought a lot of changes to the lives of PHS students. Schooling has definitely taken a major hit from the coronavirus. Online school is new and different and an adjustment for all involved, and it is affecting students in many ways as they try to do class through the monitor. As all new systems this one has its pros and cons, just like everything new.

First of all, the need to complete last year during the lockdown, as an online program, is well documented. However, speaking to students the use of the online school this year, while better than last year, still has some room for improvement.

As a student I can say that it has not been a good experience overall, but necessary for all of us. While some students enjoy the ability to go to school without getting dressed or even getting out of bed in the morning, most actually miss their school and their friends.

For some students this was a way better option than school for them. On the other hand, most students want to go back to school. One friend said, "I can't believe I am saying this, but I miss that old and dusty school."

While going to school online has had some advantages, like not having to wear our uniforms,



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Some students adapt and do amazing work, because they can work in the comfort of their own home and are not bothered by the lack of interaction with classmates and teachers. However, some people do terribly in this environment.

or get out there in the cold every morning, there are also disadvantages. For example, now students are spending a lot more time on electronics. There seems to be many more hours of school work going online. Instead of speaking to friends at school we are stuck in front of a screen. There are so many school hours and then the hours of trying to do homework after school. This

has all increased the amount of time students are spending on their electronic devices everyday. Students then tend to stack their device time on their phones, tablets, and what not.

Although according to the OSF HealthCare, "5-17 years old - No more than two hours per day (homework not included)" should be spent on devices.

With this in mind already mandatory a total of 5.1 hours a day (without reconnect time). This comes out to an unhealthy amount of time being spent on the computer. Even so the teachers are also spending an absurd amount of time on electronic devices (7.1 hours). Then combined with the screen time outside of school, this situation is not ideal for teachers as well as students.

Another problem is how it is so easy to either attend or not attend classes. It is harder for students to get into a lesson when there is not a teacher standing there watching you. All a student has to do is just close their Chromebook to leave school. This fact makes students feel like school is more optional, and that should not be.

According to University of Illinois, the online situation "places a greater responsibility on the student. In order to successfully participate in an online program, students must

be well organized, self-motivated, and possess a high degree of time management skills in order to keep up with the pace" than "other students who are dependent learners and have difficulty assuming responsibilities required by the online paradigm."

Then other times people around me just have bad days then they miss some work then they get more bummed out because then the work starts stacking. There are also some who are just completely checking out and not going to class. Teachers, counselors and administrators are urging students to try their best to continue to learn, no matter the format. The first part of succeeding in class is just to show up.

On the positive side of things, the online class can be done form anywhere where you can get a wi-fi signal. "The online format allows physically challenged students (and teachers) more freedom to participate in class. Participants access the Virtual Classroom through their computers instead of having to 'go to class' physically." Students who are typically shy in classes can excel now that they can attend class from a distance from the comfort of their own home. There are the students that know what needs to be done and they do it. Additionally, they can do

the work anytime on the work.

In addition to that, "the learner may reflect on comments from others before responding or moving on to the next item. This structure allows students time to articulate responses with much more depth and forethought than in a traditional face-to-face discussion situation."

Online courses have a pros and cons. Some students adapt and do amazing work because they can work in the comfort of their own home and are not bothered by the lack of interaction with classmates and teachers. However, some people do terribly in this environment. Some students just cannot seem to stay on task and get their work done. There is a general lack of interest from students in online classes.

Many teachers are also getting tired of feeling like they are talking to nothing in class. Its just not a great system, but its what we are forced to deal with now because of the pandemic. That being said we should all do our best to make the best of a bad situation.

Sources for this article:

<https://www.uis.edu/ion/resources/tutorials/online-education-overview/strengths-and-weaknesses/#weaknesses>

<https://newsroom.osfhealthcare.org/screen-time-for-kids-how-much-is-too-much/>

Joining Clubs During the Pandemic is Possible And More Necessary than Ever!

By Manuela Lopez

Even with the virus going on, and PHS students continuing to learn from home, it is still very much possible to still join clubs. PHS offers a wide variety of clubs to choose from, and one is certainly a right fit for whatever interests are out there. There are tons that are available just waiting for new members, including DECA, NOH8, FACS, and many others! There are still so many clubs to choose from and they are around. PHS offers a vast variety of clubs that could fit anyone's interest.

Actually, there are too many to bring to light in this article, but here are a few. The Girls Who Code Club is not just for girls. It is "gender oriented but not gender exclusive," said club advisor, Mr. Suarez. This club teaches coding but also offers a place for students to play video games and compete in many different genres. The Girls who Code Club is one of many that is ready for your arrival, they have activities to satisfy the most competitive of players out there! However, gaming is just for fun, learning to code can actually introduce you to a whole new world of creating apps.

Looking for a club to better your future? Then why not join STRIVE? Strive asks what you are prepared to do to get the most out of school by getting the most out of yourself. Getting better grades in school is only the beginning. Whether it be helping with grades or help your peers want to better themselves then this might be what you're

looking for. Club advisor. Mrs. Jose said, "The comradery that is built in STRIVE helps students have fun while the strive to do their best."

During the pandemic we have all been home more, streaming more television, and eating more too. On the prowl for baking and cooking? Then join the FACS club. Learning to cook and get the most out of your food is the best way to have fun with friends. When we are back at school, then you can even bring in some of your creations. What a great time to improve or create a new skill or hobby, cooking. They even do community service to help others in Passaic.

This distance learning has made us all a little bit more nervous. What better time to learn to deal with stress than during a national lockdown pandemic? There is even a club for that. Want a peaceful state of mind? Meditation club is there to melt your daily stresses away. People can learn to be more effective in the outside world, by first looking inward. We can all use a little more peace right now, so join up!

Looking for a community to be accepted, no matter who you are? Then why not join NOH8 club, where you can be you. There is a lot of hate in the world, and people can and should learn to accept others, no matter what they look like or what they believe. Diversity starts with an understanding of others and looking past what makes us different, to what makes us the same.

Looking to dive into a new culture, or celebrate one that you are already familiar with? Then join the French or Japanese Culture clubs! The French club is a celebration of all things from France and the rest of the French speaking world. France has a lot to offer, (other than fries that is) and the French Culture Club is the place to start! Food, music, movies and language from France is a great way to make new friends and learn something new.

Like anime or Godzilla movies? How about Nintendo or Playstation? Maybe you are into Pokemon or YuGiOh? What do all of these things have in common? They are all part of the Japanese culture and so they are also part of the Japanese Culture Club. Another way to share interesting and different cultures with new friends is to join this club, where movies, shows, comics, books and even video games are shared and explored with others. What a great way to make friends during this lockdown time. You know you will be watching these shows anyway, why not share it with your friends?

If you are just so sick of being cooped up inside, the gardening or hiking clubs are also still available. Take a hike or learn how to have a green thumb! There is no better way to forget that you are cooped up than by going outside!

The coronavirus does not have to be an excuse for you not to join a club. There are so many options, with friends to be made, waiting for you.

It is worth the effort and more fun than you can imagine. Not only is it fun to be joining these group activities but it's bound to benefit you. You can learn new skills and it'll look great for college. If you set your mind to it

you can even one day lead one of these clubs. It's never too late to start either.

There is bound to be a club that's the right fit for you. So why not join one sometime? See you all back at school, SOON.

<u>Club</u>	<u>GCC*</u>	<u>Meeting Time</u>
All PHS Clubs listed	f576wq5	
A/V Club	w3urweb	Thursdays 7:30
Bio-Ecology Club	5lnuawx	Friday 3:45
CyberPatriot Team	v4dif3e	Thursdays 3:40
DECA	exg4vuc	Thursdays 7:45
Family & Consumer Sciences Club	p6urfko	Tuesdays 3:40
French Club	7v42vko	Tuesdays 3:40
Green Thumb Club	wvupj7g	
Hilltop Star Newspaper	mygwvuu	Every day at 7:15 and after school as needed.
Hiking Club	pbrjsvc	Wednesdays 3:40
Inner Visions Lit Mag	fbjwnmk	Fridays 3:40
Interact	u2pu277j	
Meditation Club	notuwix	Wednesdays 3:40
NOH8	bplaxhn	Thursdays 3:40
PHS Student Council	z2w4uyj	Mondays 3:45
Sociedad Honoraria Hispana Reuniones	jtn6nug	Viernes 3:40
STRIVE Club	hk3qbro	Tuesdays 3:40
Youth Alive Bible Club	evybnxd	Tuesdays 3:45

*Google Classroom Code

Halloween 2020 – Not your typical fall holiday

By Kannara Ruiz

As the coronavirus pandemic continues from the summer into the fall, the idea that Halloween might be normal this year seems crazy. With this whole health crisis going on, is it safe for kids to go out? Some cities, including Passaic, were forced to create new regulations during this holiday, as new cases continue to plague Americans.

This year, as new instances of novel coronavirus began to infect Americans, several cities have been forced to establish new laws and regulations for Halloween festivities.

In the fall, health officials expected a new increase in COVID-19 cases as temperatures dropped and the flu season approached. The CDC advised



Pumpkin carving is a safe activity to do for Halloween, during the COVID pandemic.

people to avoid high risk activities such as trick or treating, costume parties, and instead try low-risk activities such as decorating and pumpkin carving.

“Trunk or Treat” activities,

where children visit car trunks should restrict the numbers of cars to reduce crowds and to have cars in a line rather than a circle. The CDC warned that indoor gatherings with poor ventilation pose more risk with gatherings that have good ventilation. If you decide to have indoor gatherings, everyone needs to wear a mask and keep the capacity to 25 percent or any household members who live there. Also to arrange treats in such a way that they can be easily and safely accessed without several hands touching. As always candy and other food items should be individually wrapped to prevent tampering.

Many states allowed trick or treating, while others did not. For us, Governor Murphy assured residents that Halloween

would not be cancelled this year. Some New Jersey residents were disappointed about the decision to cancel trick or treating though. Like everything else during this pandemic the idea of a normal Halloween is just not going to happen. Local mayors recommend if you are planning on handing out candy, wear a mask, keep a distance, and don't do any activities if you are experiencing any symptoms. The governor states that a costume mask does not meet the guidelines as it does not provide the appropriate level of protection. He also encouraged all celebrations to be held outdoors and that individuals must comply with his executive order.

Here in Passaic, many residents around town did not

follow any of the CDC regulations. A lot of people decided to throw big parties with no masks or social distancing. Haunted houses were still open even when the CDC recommended not to go, even hayrides were still available to the public.

While it appeared that children were restricted from going trick or treating from door to door, many families did some pumpkin carving, baked some cookies, watched some Halloween movies, and let their kids wear their costumes.

I stayed home and watched scary movies with my mom, as did most of my friends. So Halloween was not cancelled, but it did look different than in the past. Hopefully next year will be better and we can all celebrate together.

PlayStation 5 vs. Xbox Series X/S - Which one should YOU buy?

By Angel Lopez Bello

The time has come once again to make a decision that will affect you for the rest of your life. Are you going to go with Xbox or Playstation, Microsoft or Sony? Not since the 2013 release of the PS4 and Xbox One, has there been such a decision to be made. Sony and Microsoft finally released their newest generation of consoles for this year's Christmas season. Perhaps the best thing to remember 2020 for is the duel between these two contenders for the next generation of consoles and of course all those new video games that will be designed to take advantage of the new technology.

The new PlayStation 5 arrives in two versions, digital and physical. Sony enters this battle of the consoles with a price of \$499 (for the Blu Ray version) and \$399 (for the Digital only version). The new Xbox Series X/S from Microsoft compete with the same price of \$499 (for the Series X) and coming in at a price leading \$299 (for the Series S). But like any other console that releases from these companies, it always begs the old same question, Which console should you buy?

Which of them are more powerful?

The processing and video power of these consoles is the biggest selling point and major upgrade for these two systems. The Xbox Series X/S has a slight advantage on this front with 18% more processing power than the PlayStation 5, although some people at Digital Foundry had tested the



Playstation or Xbox? That is the question.

GOOGLE.COM

hardware to their extent and they found out that while both of these consoles are seem to be very close when it comes to their power in specs, the PS5 will outperform the Xbox Series X/S in terms of frame rate, such games as Devil May Cry 5 Special Edition handled the frame right slightly better on the PS5 than it did with the Xbox Series X/S.

Which consoles have the better games?

In the end it is the games that make the system. If there is some great hardware without anything fun to play, it might as well be a toaster. These systems are still brand new, so there is still some way to go before all the latest titles start coming out for these systems. However, a majority of the titles being released in the near future will be console specific, which means that some care must be taken to choose the right console.

However, most third-party games such as the new Call of Duty: Black Ops Cold War and Assassin's Creed: Valhalla are avail-

able for both platforms, and every single Xbox Series X/S games are playable on PC.

At launch, the Xbox Series X/S again has the biggest advantage in games, mostly due to the availability of Microsoft Game Pass. With the payment of a monthly subscription fee, a user gets access to hundreds of games from both Xbox one and Xbox 360. Microsoft is also going to bring new games to the Game Pass on launch day, such as Halo: Infinite. They are also updating some old games like Gears 5 and Forza Horizon 4 to make the most of the new hardware.

The PlayStation 5 at the moment only has some exclusive games such as Marvel's, Spiderman: Miles Morales, Astro's Playroom, Bugsnax, and the remake of the 2009 PlayStation 3 game, Demon Souls. Other franchises such as God of War, Ratchet and Clank, and Horizon will have new installments coming for next year, and games such as Final Fantasy XVI, Deathloop, and GhostWire Tokyo are also set to release next year. So purchas-

ers of Sony's box will not have to wait long for a pile of games. It is also worth mentioning that the PS5 will also have a PlayStation Plus subscription service which will grant new free games for each month. With the PlayStation Plus Collection, you get to play 18 excellent games from the PS4 on the PS5 as long as they're subscribed to the PlayStation Plus membership. But at the moment, Microsoft's offering is more valuable but we'll have to wait what Sony has in store in the future.

Which controller is the best?

There really isn't that much more to say about these contenders, but to add that the controller for the Playstation is also new. The all new Dualsense controller for the PlayStation 5 has far more advanced features such as haptic feedback and more adaptive trigger buttons. The Xbox Series X/S controller is what is considered to be an upgrade over the Xbox One's controller, so it really doesn't give many new features. Although it feels nicer to play it on PC for the time being.

Conclusion - Which one should you buy?

Since both of these consoles have recently been released to the market, there really isn't a lot of reason to pick these consoles right from the get-go. If you want to buy them right now (if you're able to since they are already sold out in stores), then don't worry, you are not missing out a lot as there isn't a lot of exclusivity to purchase these consoles, meaning they will be in all the stores completely restocked soon.

The winner of this battle depends on what the purchaser wants to get out of this machine. If you want to have a gaming console which almost has the same capabilities as a gaming PC, then you'll want to go with the PlayStation 5 as it will allow you to play games that you would not play on a non-gaming PC. However, if you're looking for loads of games to play for more entertainment and without spending a lot of money, then the Xbox Series X/S is the console for you. For this reviewer, more games, right now, means more fun, so look for the upcoming review of the new Xbox console in the next issue!



Playstation's controller is new and the Xbox controller is an upgrade.

GOOGLE.COM

Beware of Bullying

By Wendy Medina

Not to alarm anyone, but online sources state that bullying has doubled since 2008, causing suicide the second leading cause of death for ages 10-24. Bullying has always been something many people have dealt with. There are many different types of bullying. The common ones are verbal bullying, physical bullying, and cyber-bullying. Did you know about 16,000 teens who skip school due to bullying? Kids who self-blame and think they deserve to be bullied are most likely to face negative outcomes like depression, prolonged victimization and maladjustment. A meta-analysis found that students facing peer victimization are 2.2 times more likely to have suicide ideation and 2.6 times more likely to attempt suicide than students not facing victimization.

Oh might think that since schools are locked down and that students really do not have any contact with each other, that bullying would be shrinking. This logical argument is not correct. In fact, 1 in 6 high school students have reported being cyberbullied in 2017.

According to edcorner.com, a scary fact is that nearly 75% of school shootings have been linked to harassment and bullying. Which if we think about it it's really scary what bullying can do to people who just wanted to mind their own business and just go to school. Social execution is a form of bullying as well its not a nice thing to do to leave your friends out of things on purpose just to hurt you. What found is that 37% develop social anxiety, 36% develop depression and 24% end up having suicidal thoughts and or actually taking their own lives.

However, this is a problem that we can all do something about. People can talk about this problem in schools. Many districts have one specific class that highlights the problems of bullying in a one session twenty minute class. Our district recognizes Black History Month, Hispanic Heritage Month and

Women's History Month, so providing a week or even a day, to help stamp out bullying or give students who are suffering from bullying hope, is completely do-able.

Bullying will never be something thats going to end but working together we can eliminate a lot of percentage due to bullying and save lives.

Warning signs to look for in someone who you think might be getting bullied is if that person is constantly sad. If they distance away from people. If they have unexplainable injuries or frequent nightmares. And some of the warning signs to look for in the bully is if they have friends who bully other kids. In order to fit in or get accepted they will end up bullying others. If they don't accept their responsibilities for their actions. If they get into physical fights for no type of reason. If they blame others for their problems.

During the pandemic cyber-bullying has increased a lot. Zoom has already had some people saying hurtful things. Kids who used to be bullied will most likely end up being cyber-bullied because their bullies are bored or they need to entertain themselves.

The best way to help someone is to be there for them. If they tell you something even if it is in confidence. Remind them of all the beautiful things and tell them to think about their loved ones. Because even when things seem dark there is always an end to it. Tell them, "Yes, it will take a while, but you will get through it."

The best thing anyone can do for someone who is being bullied or who is depressed is to just be there for them. If you think they need help, get it for them. There are trained professionals who care and will help at school, even if we are distance learning. But there is and always will be help to anyone who needs it. Our school community is helpful to students and they will help because they want the best for you. Please, if you are having an issue, reach out for the help that is available.

Top Five Movies of 2020

By Joel Soto

It has been a tradition at *The Hilltop Star* to have a review of the best ten movies of the year. Unfortunately, this year's movie season ended in March, just as some great movies were getting ready to drop.

However, here are the top five movies from 2020, and some hope that 2021 will make up for the lack of real entertainment at the movies (at least on the big screen).

First Disney had a few movies that were going to be released in March just as the world went inside. The first selection was released the week before the lockdown took effect, essentially costing Disney millions of dollars. But don't worry, they can afford it. After all, they own Star Wars and Marvel.

it is bad, but because it was released at just the precise moment when no one was allowed to go watch a movie.



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Mulan

The second Disney movie is a remake of the classic animated film, *Mulan*. Before you get your singing voice ready this is NOT a musical. Also if you are a fan of Eddie Murphy's character MuShu, you will be disappointed as well. He isn't in this movie. However, what is left is the story of Hua Mulan who secretly joins the Chinese army to save the life of her father who cannot physically fight. It seems like people either love it or hate it. Those who hate this flick, were probably expecting to sing along with the colorful characters. Those who love it, see this movie for what it is, an action adventure movie, that demonstrates that a woman has a lot to offer, even in the military. COVID hurt this film too, making only 70 million.

Bad Boys for Life

A long running buddy cop series, *Bad Boys* links the action and comic talents of Will Smith and Martin Lawrence together for another time. They bring the bad guys to justice, making us laugh as they do it. It is hard to believe that this movie series spans twenty-five years, the first installment coming out in 1995. This may be one of the

only movies to actually make money in 2020, grossing 426 million, mainly because it was released in January before we all stopped seeing new movies. If you are looking for an action movie that will also make you laugh, this is it.

Love and Monsters

Released after the pandemic shutdown, *Love and Monsters* is the most unique of the films on this list. Need a movie that satisfies both a love story and an action flick. After seven years of living underground (it only feels like seven years for us in the lock-down) with the rest of the human race's survivors, Joel Dawson reconnects with his sweetheart over an emergency radio. She is only eighty miles away in a coastal colony. The adventure of Dawson's quest to get back to the girl of his dreams makes this quite the adventure flick. A low budget of thirty million dollars means that even though this movie was not released in the theaters, it still might just make a few dollars.



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Birds of Prey, starring Margot Robbie as Harley Quinn.

Birds of Prey

The only super hero movie to make the list is *Birds of Prey*. How odd that in a year after *The Avengers* finished their massive movie black hole, (and I know that *Avengers* is Marvel and that *Birds of Prey* is in the DC universe) that 2020 would see no movies come out. Margot Robbie plays Harley Quinn, and everyone is after her because she broke up with the Joker. It seems like every thug in Gotham City. She gets some girl power together when she adds Huntress, Black Canary and Renee Montoya to her gang. Though not as good as the examples from DC, like *Wonder Woman*, Robbie's performance is entertaining, and that is what it is all about.

There are five of the best movies of the sad, sad year of 2020. We may not have many to talk about this year, but stay tuned for the top ten movies to watch in 2021. You can always finish off 2020 with the rental of one of these, all available to rent, and some of them for free with premium streaming services. Enjoy the break and have a wonderful time, NOT at the movies.



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Onward

Onward tells the tale of elf brothers who go on a quest to spend one full day with their father. The older brother Ian, remembers his father as a child, but the younger son Barley, has no memory and craves that fatherly connection. There is magic too. The quest of course goes off the rails and their mother comes after them, but the heartwarming ending is worth the watch. This movie only made 141 million dollars, not because

Getting along in Passaic

By Avi Rana

A group of hundreds of people rallied outside Passaic City Hall just before Thanksgiving Holiday. They demanded tougher discipline for a city police officer who was accused of making racist comments. These comments were recorded and went out on a Facebook video.

Passaic resident Jasmine Vidal and her boyfriend said they were sitting on their front porch with a friend when the officer drove up in a patrol car. Vidal said they told the officer to get out of the car when he started speaking to them. Being told to get out of the car made the officer angry, using foul language and making threats about calling immigration.

Even though there were protests, Mayor Alex Blanco said that the community should remain calm while the internal affairs division of the police department conducts an investigation. The officer has been disciplined, and pending an investigation, will either be cleared of serious charges or punished.

Not related directly to this incident, there had been a some protests related to racial inequity around Passaic County since the deaths of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor. Most of them were in Paterson and Wayne Townships. In Paterson, the death of Jameek Lowery was a local example of the need to combat police violence.

Many in the Black Lives Matter movement are fighting for systemic changes in policing. Lowery, a Paterson man, died in 2019 after he live streamed an encounter with police in which he asked for water, and for officers not to shoot him. Due to the altercation he died at St. Joseph's Regional Medical Center a couple days later.

Many students, staying in contact by phone during the pandemic, are concerned about police violence, and racial inequality. It seems like everyone has a story that can be related to their race, and my friends think that people should be judged by who they are, rather than what they look like. Together we can all learn from each other and grow.

Class of 2021

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load has increased. We went from being regular high school students to having all this responsibility being thrown at us. It is not easy and this pandemic brings a lot of stress. Everyone is trying their best to make the best out of a hard situation.

Sadly the thing is that no one was prepared for this. No one knows how to deal with this. We are all as a school community trying to make the best out of a bad situation. Seniors in particular have no room for error. Nobody wants to have to repeat their senior year, but how can we get everything done without self-motivation?

Although we are having an irregular school year, I guess it's time for us to grow up. It might be a sucky experience but at least we know how to take care of ourselves and be more responsible. This is stressful and usually stuff we would have help for but not everyone has that luxury.

Good luck to all the seniors and I know you'll make it through. Remember no one is all alone, and we will all get through this together.