

## Student Reporter



**Trinity Lee**  
Grade 9  
Interlake High School

## Washington State Age Group Championships 2022



Swimmers from across Washington State gather to participate in the Age Group Championships at KCAC [Source: Author, Trinity Lee]

Swimming was possibly the worst sport to participate in during the COVID-19 pandemic. While other sports have the option to simply pop on masks and provide ample social-distance practices between teammates, it seems that swimming has received the short end of the stick, with practice sessions resulting in cramped, undistanced lanes, and of course, no masks. However, with the gradual laxation of regulations and increasing numbers of COVID vaccinations, swim meets have re-

turned in full swing, starting with the Washington State Age Group Championships.

With large Championship Meets being postponed since 2019, swim teams from all over Washington jumped at the chance to participate. The meet itself was held at the King County Aquatic Center, where a variety of teams gathered, including the major participants- Bellevue Club, Seattle Metropolitan Aquatic Club, and Olympic Cascade Aquat-

ics. Although many swimmers refrained from participating in individual races due to other major upcoming meets, there were plenty of relays that allowed for a chance to swim.

The meet lasted for 3 days, spanning from Friday morning to Sunday night. Different races progressed each day, with preliminaries beginning in the morning. After the end of these rounds, the top 16 from each event progressed to the finals to swim again and score points for their teams.

Despite the shocking number of people and teams that had participated in the meet, it seemed that the COVID scare had no impact at all, with many swimmers and coaches choosing to not wear masks, and many teams sitting in tightly packed congregations. However, despite COVID, the official return to large championship meet only seemed

to excite everyone to the point that there was an overwhelming sense of comradery and support. Each team cheered on their swimmers, with crowds of friends gathering around lanes to support and encourage their teammates. The teamwork and cooperation were amazing, and even touching to witness, as even the younger children were strongly motivated by their older teammates.

The Washington State Age Group Championships after a long period of time officially marked the return of large, multi-team swim meets, rather than the original small, intrasquad meets held within teams. In the end, the meet finished with the top 3 teams being Seattle Metropolitan Aquatic Club, Bellevue Club, and Olympic Cascade Aquatics. The overarching level of competitiveness and support emanating from each team was incomparable and simply made the meet even more enjoyable and meaningful.

## Student Reporter



**Jessica Kim**  
Grade 11  
Christa McAuliffe Academy of  
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## Meet Spring at Flower Festivals

Spring is always greeted warmly after the cold winter. Among the several changes that spring brings, flowers are the most enjoyed. They symbolize new life and energy and are, of course, pretty. In Korea, many flower festivals are planned for the spring, such as the Taean Tulip Flower Fair, Seoul Blossom Tower Festival, and the Jeju Huairi Spring Hydrangea Festival.

The World Tulip Summit has nominated the Taean Tulip Flower Fair as one of the world's five tulip festivals. One of the main accomplishments of this festival is that it was the first to use a two-stage planting technique to bloom tulips. This year, the festival is held from April 9th-May 9th at Korea Flower Park, located in Taean. Visitors can see more than 200 types of tulips, including the purple Jackpot and the yellow Kikomachi. They can also enjoy traditional folk and aroma experiences. The fun continues into the evening. People can enjoy the beautiful



The cherry blossom festival in Korea is a great place to visit during the spring season. [Source: Author, Jessica Kim]

sunset at the Kkotji Beach Park and watch the LED lights illuminating the flowers.

There are also flower events in the country's capital, Seoul. For example, the N Seoul Tower Cherry Blossom Festival opened to citizens for the entire month of April. Due to its high altitude, N Seoul Tower and Namsan have always been 2 to 3 degrees cooler than Seoul city. This allows cherry blossoms to bloom longer than in any other place in the

city. While appreciating the fragrant flowers, citizens can enjoy the "Social Media Photo Festa," in which people post pictures of the tower on their social media, or the "Namsan Cherry Blossom Path Walking Challenge," in which visitors can win prizes after walking a designated path. This festival is an opportunity to escape from the city and enjoy spring.

Jeju Island has always been a special resort for Koreans. This is true during spring as well! Huairi Natu-

ral Life Park in Seogwipo-si will be holding a Hydrangea Festival from March 25th to May 31st. Hydrangeas can be seen in greenhouses and gardens all over the park. Although hydrangeas mostly bloom during the spring, this year, the festival has increased the variations of the flowers and brought in European hydrangeas to make sure the flowers last until late summer. Visitors can create precious memories while taking pictures with family and friends in the photo zones scattered throughout the park. The harmony of colorful hydrangeas will heal any problem and strengthen any relationship.

Spring is a favorite season for many people because of its beautiful flowers. However, there is another reason that spring is important to people. Spring holds a message of starting new and gives people the energy to challenge themselves. I hope the flower festivals can heighten this "spring effect."

## Student Reporter



**Sophia Lee**  
Grade 11  
Buford High School

## How Has COVID-19 Impacted Our Daily Lives?

COVID-19 has brought many unexpected changes to everyone's lives. School, in particular, has changed drastically. As a result, many parents, teachers, and students alike are concerned that they may not receive or provide an adequate education.

In the midst of this pandemic, Buford High School in Buford, Georgia has been providing its students with an opportunity for both online and in-person education. Students and their families can make the choice, however, the in-person students still carry the risk of being contact-traced if anyone near them during the day is exposed to the virus.

To address the voices of concern, teachers Mr. Andrew Eager and Mrs. Cheri Edwards and juniors Henry Gaines, James "Abe" Gonzalez, and Amelia Barnard provided their insight on in-person and virtual learning as experienced.

The greatest difference between the "normal" and the "new normal" for both Mr. Eager and Mrs. Ed-

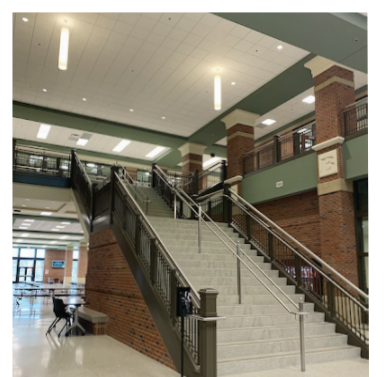
wards was "not being able to see all the students daily and not being able to interact as much." Both teachers said that they like to connect with students personally while teaching them, but they are unable to do so because of the virus. For the students, the greatest difference was the change in everyday life. Gaines says that he noticed a big difference in how "society interacts," and Gonzalez states, "there is now a sudden fear that you could be taken out of class [...] for two weeks."

As for the differences in academic performance, Mr. Eager and Mrs. Edwards both say that they notice a significant difference in the level of depth in which the students acquire information. Mr. Eager says, "[T]he [digital] students don't interact, ask questions...and become distracted..." Likewise, Mrs. Edwards also says that digital students "struggle with learning new concepts and skills." The students give similar insight into this topic. Gaines says, "he see[s] a sizable difference in the quality of at-home learning vs. in-

person instruction." He also states that "online/digital learning did not offer as many opportunities to ask the teacher questions."

Both teachers give their advice to students, telling them "to treat their days as if they are in the school building...allowing 'class-time' hours comparable to the 50 minutes given in the school setting..." Mr. Eager also emphasizes by saying, "There has to be a schedule. Get up, get dressed, have a place without so many distractions [...] There's such a routine built at school, you just have to build that routine if at home."

The students also gave their opinion on what they think would help students succeed when studying digitally. Gaines says, "[A]t home, one has to rely on oneself and if they cannot understand the subject they are lost." Therefore, he arrives at a conclusion that "if there were some way for digital students to interact with their classmates in real-time, then digital learning would not be such a hindrance." Gonzalez gives



The New Buford High School halls are not as full these days, with many students choosing to continue online classes. [Source: Author, Sophia Lee]

a similar opinion by commenting that "more Zoom calls and interactions with the teachers" would help.

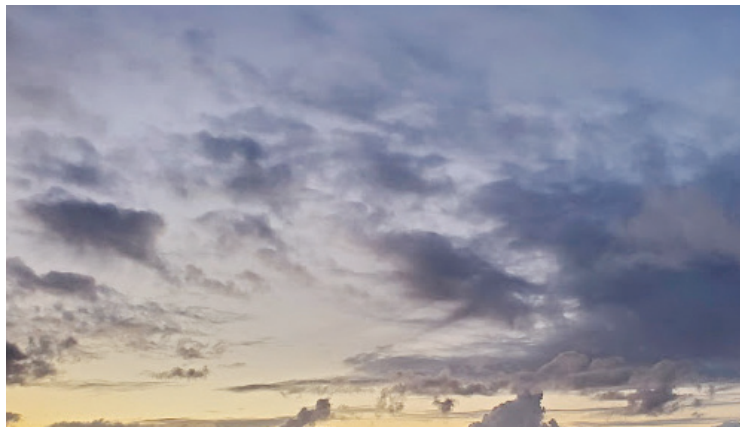
Although this type of learning situation was inevitable, the efforts of teachers and students to continue to excel in their fields are evident. With the lessening number of COVID cases each day, we hope to return to full normalcy soon. It is important for students to continue to realize the importance of education and to continue to work diligently, even in these difficult situations.

Student Reporter



**Kaylyn L. Yu**  
Grade 7  
Juniper Christian School

## How Does Weather Affect Your Mood and Lifestyle?



You feel so gloomy on a rainy day due to clouds and a lack of vitamin D.  
[Source: Author, Kaylyn Yu]

The weather has multiple upshots, such as temperature increase or decrease, precipitation, and even in the appearance of the sky. Not only does weather affect these basic parts of the world, but it can also pique your current lifestyle and feelings. As spring coats our days, I noticed how much the warming weather was influencing how people lived. When I went out for a walk on a cloudy winter day, there were scarcely any people to interact with, and the people I did meet seemed stony and sullen. One day, when the frost had ceased, I

noticed huge changes. A lot more people were outside enjoying the sunshine, and when encountering people just like before, they seemed much brighter and friendlier. Suddenly, the weather seemed like such a huge component and raised a question: how the weather could affect a person's mood.

What are the major factors on why your mood depends on the weather? Your mood might be affected by the varying activities you can participate in based on the

weather. Each season represents a loose approximation of weather because you know what a season will be like before it approaches. For instance, you know it'll be warmer than winter around springtime, and cooler than summer when autumn comes. Because you can guess what the weather will be like beforehand, your mood can change knowing what interests you can play a part in.

Everyone needs vitamin D, and the sun is the main source of it. Perhaps this could be another point on how solely we rely on the weather. Vitamin D helps your body and is also known to enhance your mood. This might be why you feel so gloomy on a day that is pouring rain. As clouds play a vital role in our climate, when they merely cover the sun, it leaves us with fewer vitamins to absorb. Without vitamin D, our energy levels threaten to drop, so it is naturally harder for our bodies to function on a cloudy day than on a sunny one.

Most people look to weather fore-

casts to schedule their days so that they won't be at the wrong place at the wrong time; like ending up going to the beach on a rainy day. You might not notice, but it is almost like the forecast itself sets your mood for the coming day. When forecasts are incorrect, people grow angry at it for ruining their day. However, it is a challenge to predict the weather, for the weather itself is unpredictable! You might think the weather is a nuisance, but it's not something you can push away. You can't avoid it, nor pretend you don't notice it. These details again show how controlling weather can be in our lives.

Although it's not enjoyable to learn that weather can control your life, it's good to know so you can understand the ways it could affect you. Weather is an important factor in our daily lives, as it shapes how we live. The flowery breeze of spring, the beating sunshine of summer, the crisp rain of autumn, and the bitter hail of winter will always be there, a meaningful brilliance that we experience each year.

Student Reporter



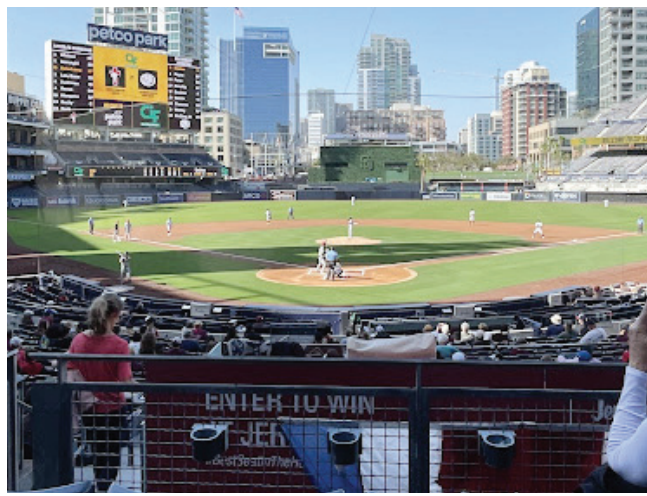
**Aspen Lee**  
Grade 7  
Santa Fe Christian Middle School

## MLB Opening Day Returns as Fans Show Their Team Spirit

Baseball. It's the sport that always seems to be popular, but then it feels like it dies down again. It takes so long and it causes controversy, yet no one really knows what the fans are even arguing about. This is the sport that millions of people around the world tune in to watch, including many students and teachers in the San Diego County area.

Opening day was just a few weeks ago, with all the teams in the Major Leagues playing during the first week of April. Will your team take the first win of the season? Will the opposing team make your loss streak begin with your first game? Every game ends with a loser and a winner, and the fans of baseball sometimes have a hard time understanding, and even more so accepting their team's defeat.

As the season begins to show its colors, fans have been getting into heated arguments on which team is better. As for the San Diego area, the Padres are a very popular team along with the Los Angeles Dod-



Santa Fe Christian Varsity Baseball Team Playing at Petco Park Before Opening Day  
[Source: Author, Aspen Lee]

gers. Due to the fact that the Dodgers are from LA, not San Diego, there is a lot of tension between both the teams and the fans. The two teams play each other very often, as they are in the same division, as well as the San Francisco Giants, Colorado Rockies, and Arizona Diamondbacks. The Padres have signed contracts with many excellent players before this season began, and the Dodgers are no different. When these two teams meet on the base-

ball field, it will be a tough match to see which baseball team will come out victorious. Similarly, in states with multiple baseball teams, or teams in the same division, the teams constantly play against each other to make it to the playoffs, and potentially win the World Series.

Before the first game, students at different schools have been chatting about their favorite team, player, and who they predict will win

each game. At a nearby San Diego middle school, there are baseball fans that moved from all over the country: Giants fans, Dodger fans, Padres fans, New York Yankees fans, and so many more! Santa Fe Christian middle school students especially like to show their team's superiority at this time of the year; SF fans say the Dodgers and Padres suck, while Padres fans believe their team is the best. All of the commotion leads fans of the recent World Series champs, the LA Dodgers, to humbly state the facts and stats of their team's players. This includes my family, who are hard-core Dodger fans for life. After living in Los Angeles for four years, we've been prepared to take on any arguments opposing our favorite team. Our great starting lineup, coaches, and players have helped us win two years ago, and won't disappoint this season! Will the underdogs win the World Series? Will one of the California teams take the trophy this year? How will the season play out this year?

Student Reporter



**Ashley Seong**  
Grade 8  
Canyon Hills Junior High

## A Visit to the Huntington Library

The large acres of this imposing exhibition were difficult to cover in one evening. With the Huntington Library covering 96,000 square feet, this museum is filled with various artifacts and architecture that is accustomed to leaving people astonished. Viewing one location to another, this exhibition takes time to explore, making it impossible to see each aspect of the park. But, from the art museums focusing on European art, to gardens celebrating the beautiful greenery of Japanese and Chinese cultures, these inclusive features made the visit pleasant and joyful.

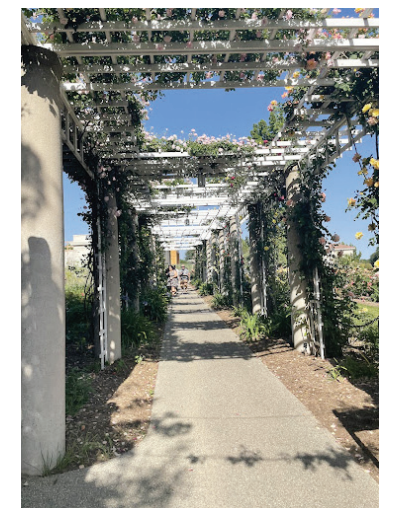
An estate originally owned by Henry and Arabella Huntington was opened to the public in 1928 to promote their passion for literature, various historical arts, and botanical gardens. Their collection of these treasures were secured by a document they both signed, to transform their private property into a public institution. The Li-

brary continues their hosting of visitors, with the sole purpose of supporting and continuing the study of botany, as well as promoting expressions of art. The Huntington Library also strives for diversity in both architectural designs and with its audiences, making it a hospitable environment for all.

With limited time, my friend and I were only able to capture the elegance of the rose and Japanese gardens. First entering the rose garden, our senses were filled with a sweet aroma that was paired with a natural inclusion of insects that were said would help pollinate and keep the roses hearty. The flowers were placed according to their different hues, covering each area of this garden. In the middle, there was a dome-like structure, allowing visitors to pass through. Close by, there were areas covered by grass that were soon populated with families and friends for picnics. The beautiful landscape of the Japanese Gar-

den was my favorite location. The bridge that hung over the ponds filled with large Koi was shaped like a moon, with tall trees and greenery surrounding it. A staircase led to the Japanese House that displayed an early 20th-century architecture piece, acquired by Henry Huntington. The inclusion of Asian art was so appealing, as it is rarely recognized in modern architecture.

Besides the gardens, we visited the Huntington Art Gallery, which focused on British artistry with more than 1,000 pieces held at the Huntingtons' former mansion. This collection is considered to be one of the best. Even glancing at a distance, the white columns on the front and back of this house are remarkable, with statues and designs embroidering the front. Inside, the white columns are seen again, opening the entrance of the large two-way staircase. The ceilings hold delicate chandeliers and the floors are marveled with white.



The aisle filled with columns, in the middle of the beautiful rose garden at the Huntington Library.  
[Source: Author, Ashley Seong]

As you walk around, up and down the house, you spot many portraits colored with brilliant paints and framed with fancy copper. Visiting this profound piece of architecture was an excellent way to end the visit to the Huntington Library of Botanical Gardens and Art Museums.