

Student Reporter

Thoughts on Social Media



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It is easy to get addicted to social media... Scrolling and spending hours “relaxing” is a common thing. [Source: Author, Seah Kim]

Social Media existed before phones, and both had major impacts on the world. Phones allow communities to share their personal lives and news, and the Internet provides information more quickly, with just a few clicks on a keyboard. In our modern world, even young children own phones, making social media that much more accessible to anyone, regardless of their identity. Online activities can negatively influence users, create dangerous “trends,”

and normalize controversial ideas; therefore, restricting the use of social media makes sense.

It becomes easy to stay on addicting apps when brand-new information pops up every day. Gossip, celebrities, new trends... People like entertainment and chase those that offer the most. A person’s identity can lose itself among others. People seem as if they are living a perfect life, and social media allows them to

do that when most are just acting it out. Young viewers such as teens, however, want the “newest” and most “popular” thing, trying to catch up to the impossible idea of perfection. It drains people, physically and emotionally, when it seems like your peers live a wonderful life, compared to yourself.

My personal opinion as a teenage girl living in this fast-media society is that using social media has affected me, where now I believe girls need to present themselves in a certain way. Not just with teenagers but in society, social media influenced us to take away each person’s personal beliefs and ideas, replacing them with the majority. For example, the most common stereotypes are how girls should look at a young age. All the beautiful girls teenagers witness on screen aren’t real; most of the time being edited and filtered. However, it makes girls set ridiculously high

standards for themselves, lowering their self-esteem and mental health. It puts them at risk for eating disorders, depression, as well as thinking all there is to life is outside beauty. Another common example is how the media affects our view of children’s futures. You can’t say seeing your friend’s brother going to an Ivy League school has no effect on you, right? It creates pressure on people and forms the idea that the only way you can be successful is to be like everyone else.

Therefore, before getting up with the heat, don’t lose your own thoughts. “Do I really want to be like him?” “Is this the right definition of success?” Of course, a major difference exists between being getting influenced to like apples or oranges versus human morality. We need to consume the right ideas, letting go of the bad ones; that way, we don’t spend too much time in other people’s brains.

Student Reporter

The Thrilling Game of Spikeball



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Spikeball, also known as roundnet, is a fast-paced and exciting sport that has gained immense popularity in recent years. Many people like to think of spikeball as if volleyball and foursquare had a baby. This unique game is played with a small circular net, a ball, and a whole lot of energy. With its emphasis on skill, agility, and teamwork, spikeball has captivated players of all ages and skill levels.

The objective of spikeball is to spike the ball onto the net in such a way that the opposing team is unable to return it within three hits. Each team consists of two players, and the game begins with a serve from one team to the other. The receiving team must then return the ball by hitting it against the net, setting up an exciting rally as both teams maneuver to keep the ball in play.

One of the reasons spikeball has become so popular is its versatility.



A group of friends getting ready for a competitive spikeball match. [Source: Author, Alex Byun]

It can be played on a variety of surfaces, such as sand, grass, indoors, or even in water. This adaptability makes it a great choice for beach outings, picnics, or backyard gatherings. The compact size of the equipment also adds to its appeal,

as the net and ball can easily fit into a small bag, allowing for spontaneous games wherever you go.

Spikeball is more than just a recreational pastime; it requires quick reflexes, strategy, and teamwork. The intense rallies demand players to stay alert, anticipate their opponent’s moves, and react swiftly to keep the ball in play. It is a game of precision, as players must carefully aim their shots to exploit gaps in the opposing team’s defense.

In addition to its physical demands, spikeball fosters a sense of camaraderie and sportsmanship. The fast-paced nature of the game encourages constant communication between teammates, developing a strong bond as they work together to outsmart their opponents. With its easy-to-learn rules, spikeball provides an inclusive and enjoyable experience for players of all skill levels, making

it an ideal game for friends, families, and competitive athletes alike.

Spikeball has gained significant attention through organized tournaments and leagues around the world. These events showcase the incredible athleticism and skills of top spikeball players, further propelling the sport’s popularity. With its growing fan base and dedicated community, spikeball continues to evolve, attracting more players and elevating the level of competition.

Whether you’re a seasoned spikeball enthusiast or just discovering the game, its fast-paced action, physicality, and the opportunity for thrilling rallies make it an irresistible choice. So grab a net, gather your friends, and experience the excitement of spikeball—a game that will keep you on your toes and leave you wanting more.

Student Reporter

Take the Baton: Start Running this Summer!



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One cold morning, I woke up to find my mother filling a bowl with an inordinate amount of vegetables and preparing liters of water, telling me that she’s gonna run. A few weeks after this observation, however, I found myself carrying out the same routine due to encouragement from her and a few “Track and Field” athletes.

With the summer approaching, high school athletes are preparing to get on their desired sports teams and simultaneously develop physical soundness. However, it won’t be difficult to find that several individuals are focused on maintaining their general fitness. Whether their method involves weightlifting or full-body exercise, many have realized that the few months of summer behold a long period to experiment with sports.

One component that is common in most of these activities is the training of cardiovascular endurance through running. Due to the prevalence of this action in

exercises, one should consider it in training for their desired sport through it. But don’t worry; having doubts about one’s capabilities can be common at this stage. Audrey Brown, one of Beckman High School’s Varsity Track runners, advises, “First, I established that running was a sport based on my mindset and hours given to practice. But, focusing on one factor would negatively affect my other abilities. Eventually, I began running and preparing for meets in groups to uphold multiple goals at once.”

A clear benefit is forming a supportive group for activities, this lies in the fact that the members must collectively maintain a positive mindset and monitor methods to achieve goals. Whether your running circle involves friends, family, or even pets, the preservation of one’s mindset is vital for future steps.

Furthermore, the best method to measure one’s capabilities in the



Mountainous trails are often traversed by “Track and Field” members of Irvine’s High Schools. [Source: Audrey Brown]

sport, after some preparation, is to run trails or community races. Trail running is when you run on a premade path with natural scenery accompanying you. While sidewalks and parks may conveniently be available near residential areas, scenic trails near beaches, lakes, or mountains may harbor the most enjoyable sights for “Track and Field” beginners and returning runners. Additionally, the extra benefits that come with these destinations may prolong a group’s journey with running, and paint an often difficult or tiring exercise as pleasant. Through the company of fellow runners

and tranquil water breaks on trails, I also started running and plan to train for the coming sports seasons with members of my school’s Track team. The longevity of my and many “Track and Field” members’ commitment to running came in the form of enjoyable training: a component that can be further explored through marathons or community races once one is experienced!

Ultimately, investing in the previously mentioned activities may be beneficial for physical, social, and psychological factors of your future years. Happy running!

Student Reporter

Promoting Energy Awareness



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Turning off the light to save energy is a great way to help save money during a time of rising costs.
[Source: Author, Jiyong Kwak]

The international increase in natural gas, fossil fuel, and coal prices has led to a never seen trade loss in South Korea. Of the countries in the OECD, South Korea has the 3rd cheapest energy price of 154.6 kWh. Compared to the United States of America, which has a price of 240 kWh, it is 64 percent cheaper. Until recently, the production cost of electricity in South Korea was greater than the list price. As the government realized

the situation, they raised the price of electricity. However, the stuttering increase of 17 percent did not negatively change the citizen's way of spending electricity, but actually increased the use of it compared to last year.

The energy war and the war between Ukraine and Russia have led to huge inflations. As the cost of energy, such as electricity, goes up, there is a change in the price of other manu-

factured products. As the steady increase is becoming a cycle, the wallets of ordinary people are shrinking in size. Spain increased their electricity price by 68 percent, and Germany increased by 43 percent. However, through energy awareness, companies and consumers can save money and stop this cycle of deficit spending on energy.

Energy awareness is a campaign that motivates people to be aware of the electricity they are consuming. According to research, more than 20% of home energy demand could be saved by changing how you live. In the streets of Hongdae or Myeong-dong, most of the shops turn on sign lamps at dawn when there are almost no pedestrians. Similarly, most stores turn on air conditioners while the door is open. This leads to huge energy and budget losses. The change in the way people treat energy needs to be different to achieve maximum savings.

Promoting energy conservation is not just done by turning off all the lights in the daytime. It is also about making and using energy wisely. By harvesting energy using nuclear power plants, factories could harvest energy efficiently without shaving the mountains to build a solar panel farm. Consumers could also use LED lights which need less electricity to make a room bright. They could also use less meta (Facebook), Instagram, or Tik Tok to save the electricity needed to cool down server farms.

Hyunwoo Lim, a ninth-grader, said, "I save electricity by closing the faucet while I am shampooing my hair, and I use daylight instead of a lamp in the morning." This act of kindness toward Earth and his family's budget is the ultimate model of energy conservation. I hope this article shares with you how we can help the Earth will have an impact on one's bad habits and lifestyle.

Student Reporter

Gyeongju, South Korea: In-Depth History and Culture



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Gyeongju, South Korea, is so greatly considered one of the top most historically influenced locations in Korea that the whole city was named a world cultural heritage by UNESCO, and was even christened 'the museum with no walls.' One of the main reasons for its numerous ancient landmarks and artifacts is that the city once belonged as the capital of Silla during the Three Kingdoms period for over 1,000 years.

For my eighth-grade graduation trip, my class visited Gyeongju City, to review the various heritage sites of the past, for three days and two nights. On our first day, we visited the Gyeongju Donggung Palace and Wolji Pond, Gyochon village, Woljeong Bridge, and the Cheomseongdae. All these sights are known to be more enhanced and beautiful at dusk, with night lights. Built around the crystalline Wolji Pond, the Donggung Palace consists of 26 separate buildings and can be identified as constructed in King Munmu's reign by the intricate floral pattern details of the palace. Within Gyochon village lies



The Cheomseongdae is an ancient Silla star observatory, which is still standing after centuries and gleams under the night sky. [Source: Author, Kaylyn Yu]

two striking landmarks of Joseon, the Woljeong Bridge—established during King Gyeongdeok's reign and the largest wooden bridge in Korea, it is also remembered as the bridge that linked the couple Monk Wonhyo and Princess Yoseok—and the Cheomseongdae—the oldest existing astronomical observatory in Asia and structured by Queen Seondeok herself. The classic build is made up of bricks arranged in a very par-

ticular way that has allowed the site to stand for such a long time without falling apart.

On our second day, we explored the Tomb of King Muyeol, Cheonmachong, the Bunhwangsa Temple, the Seokguram Grotto, and the Bulguksa Temple. King Muyeol was the 29th ruler of Silla, and his actual name was Chunchu Kim; his tomb is noteworthy as it is the only royal tomb with whom we know the owner. The Cheonmachong, meaning 'heavenly horse tomb,' is the only one of the old historical tombs of Silla to have been excavated and open to the public, rendering diverse treasures, including the Golden Crown. The archaeological site is assumed to have been shared with the rest of the world because of a Korean president's encounter with Egyptian pyramids and the relevance between the two. The Bunhwangsa is the remains of a Silla temple complex, and the most renowned building is the Bunhwangsa Seoktop, a former nine-story structure that had been dismantled on three separate occasions: once by

Mongol invaders in 1238, second during the Imjin War by Japan in 1592, and again in the Imjin War in 1597, so sadly only three stories presently remain. Both the Seokguram Grotto and the Bulguksa Temple are located on Mount Toham and were erected by one builder around the same period. The Seokguram Grotto contains a Buddha figure of stone inside a dome-like room that previously comprised a system that was able to regulate perfect humidity inside, causing effecting the material to last longer. The Bulguksa temple was created to recognize and honor the Buddhist culture in Joseon and was also partially impaired and restored.

On our third day, we passed through Hwangnidan-gil, a street with structures resembling Korean architecture and culture, with many promising foods and activities you can try, such as traditional Gyeongju bread. Overall, the trip was a very enjoyable and a meaningful learning experience of Korean history through real artifacts.

Student Reporter

Yallwest: A Sensational Book Festival



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Have you ever wanted to go to a festival as a bookworm, where you can meet authors, new people, and receive free books? If so, Yallwest is for you. On April 29 of this year, Yallwest took place at Santa Monica High School. Every year, the school introduces this event where over sixty known authors come to sign books and hold panels for readers of all ages to come and experience.

This year, some authors that attended this event were Soman Chainani (author of The School for Good and Evil), Nicola Yoon (author of The Sun is Also a Star), Marie Lu (author of Legend), Angie Thomas (author of The Hate U Give), Chloe Gong (author of Secret Shanghai series), and so many others. These authors had specific time periods where you could bring your books to get them signed or watch them talk in pan-

els, where they would speak about the different writing styles they used in order to write the book that got them to where they are now.

The different panel topics included Banned Books, Middle Grade Storyball, The Mystery of Mysteries, and many other fun panels that you could just pop in and listen to for about an hour. Outside of the buildings, there were many tables set up where you could stand in line to receive free books, buy books that were brought in from Barnes & Noble, or even spin a wheel to win prizes!

The atmosphere was great, as you could see that everyone attending the festival was passionate about their reading, as some attendees brought a cart full of books, or ended up leaving with a cart full of books! It was a heart-



Standing in line to get my books signed by Nicola Yoon was tough, but it was definitely worth the wait!
[Source: Author, Hannah Lee]

warming sight, and I was glad I was able to attend.

I personally attended the book signings for Soman Chainani, Nicola Yoon, and Margaret Stohl, and it was definitely an experience I do not regret. My satisfaction has reached the sky tops with the six books that I now have autographs in.

If you are a dedicated and pas-

sionate reader- or a person that wants to get into reading, this festival is for you! Yallwest is an annual, taking place for almost the whole day, and when it comes close to the festival, the schedule is uploaded on its website. Just type in 'Yallwest,' in Google, and the main website should pop right up! I urge you to take books to get signed, as well as pop into a panel or two. 10/10 experience!