

Student Reporter

No Covid, Yes Influenza



Hajoong Song

Grade 10
International School of Beijing

To cure Influenza disease, many people tend to get an IV to help speed their recovery. [Source: Author, Hajoong Song]

While the Coronavirus pandemic has started to die down, another common infectious disease is starting to spread throughout the world. Influenza, often known

as common flu, is always present during the summer and winter seasons. Influenza A and B are respiratory illnesses caused by the influenza virus. Influenza B only affects humans, while influenza A can affect both humans and animals. Symptoms of both types of this infectious disease include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, and fatigue. Influenza B typically affects children more often than adults and generally causes stronger symptoms than influenza C.

Most people are able to manage flu symptoms at home and recover within a few days to a week. However, those who are at high risk for flu complications should seek medical treatment immediately. High-risk groups include children under five years old, adults 65

years old and up, women who are pregnant or up to two weeks postpartum, and people with underlying health conditions.

Several over-the-counter medications can help ease the symptoms of influenza, such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen, to combat fever, headache, or aches. Antiviral medications can also be prescribed by a doctor to shorten the duration of the illness and prevent serious complications. It is important to note that antiviral medications work best when started within 48 hours of the onset of symptoms.

Prevention is key to avoiding the spread of influenza. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends getting vaccinated every year as the best way

to avoid getting sick with the flu. Other preventive measures include washing hands frequently, avoiding close contact with sick people, covering the mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, and staying home when feeling sick.

Influenza A and B are respiratory illnesses caused by the influenza virus. Symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, and fatigue. Most people can manage flu symptoms at home, but high-risk groups should seek medical treatment immediately. According to the World Health Organization, prevention is key in avoiding the spread of influenza, and measures such as vaccination, hand washing, and staying home when feeling sick can help prevent the illness.

Student Reporter

GamePigeon: The Rise of Incremental Entertainment



Audrey Park

Grade 10
Northwood High School

Imagine you're at your desk studying for an upcoming math exam when you open your phone's notifications to find that a friend from a neighboring country invited you to play a variety of minigames in real time. See, this scenario isn't a fallacy; all of this is possible because of one app: GamePigeon.

GamePigeon is a mobile gaming app that allows an individual to play simple minigames against another person stored in one's contacts. Game Pigeon can be accessed through the Apple App Store upon installation and appears on the extension bar in iMessages. Being recognized as a quick source of entertainment and friendly competition, Game Pigeon has proved to be popular amongst younger audiences because of its convenience and intuitive games.

Once the app is opened, a menu with numerous minigames will



GamePigeon enables friendly competition between players through strategic scrimmages or coordination-based games. [Source: Author, Audrey Park]

be available to be sent to another individual. The range of games varies from classic, coordination-based games to longer, strategy-based scrimmages. Popular strategic games include Crazy 8s, Sea Battle, and 8 Ball, which best entertain groups of people who are within immediate reach of each other. However, the avail-

able classic games, such as Darts, Basketball, and Cup Pong, suit individuals who are farther away and want shorter, active periods of gameplay.

While the idea of an app providing many classic minigames is not new, one key reason why GamePigeon is popular with users globally is that individuals' busier schedules may not allow for long periods of gameplay, resulting in GamePigeon's versatility in providing a barrage of quick games over several minutes. Therefore, shorter periods of gameplay during the day entertain players with distinct personal schedules. Furthermore, similar to the many extensions that were added to Apple's most recent operating systems (iOS), apps have been able to become integrated into widgets and toolbars. In the age where apps, such as GamePigeon, can be conveniently accessed, it's no surprise that many companies are prioritizing

quick entertainment in order to emphasize their awareness during players' busy lives.

Another factor adding to GamePigeon's popularity is that it is rewarding in several environments. One avid player of the app, Sharon Shin, expresses that, "I usually prefer playing GamePigeon during school hours because it gives me a good break from such an academic atmosphere and there's a high chance that a friend will respond, but I've also had really fun times playing with friends at home. When I get to interact with my friends while we're playing, the mini-games aren't so 'small' anymore."

While the popularity of GamePigeon is apparent to younger audiences for various reasons, it ultimately shows the steady rise of incremental entertainment. So, if you ever need to kill time, give GamePigeon a try!

Student Reporter

Typing Therapy



Derrick Ahn

Grade 11
Oxford Academy

The average office worker makes roughly 45,000 keystrokes every workday, amounting to nearly 16.5 million per year.

With the online age developing in modern-day society, ever since the creation of the Internet, the usage of keyboards has seen a meteoric rise. However, a certain type of keyboard has especially been basking in fame, rising in prevalence. Mechanical keyboards are a type of keyboard that uses individual switches for each key, topped with a keycap. In contrast to popular opinion amongst the recent generations, mechanical keyboards are not the new kid on the block. In fact, mechanical keyboards were developed in the early 1970s! So, what made these versatile tools rebound back into the spotlight?

Mechanical keyboards are often regarded in high praise due to their highly customizable, practical build, not sacrificing aesthetics and quality despite being placed at a rather lofty price for the com-

mon populace. Ranging from stoic, monochrome keyboards that define class, to vibrant, colorful builds that appeal to those who desire keyboards that "pop" out, the beauty of these keyboards lies within its mass appeal toward all demographics.

As a mechanical keyboard connoisseur myself, I feel that mechanical keyboards have the ability to enchant and hypnotize an individual with psychological solace. Mechanical keyboards captivate many with visuals, auditory cues, and tactility. As such, keycaps often contribute to the pleasing visuals, as does the PCB with its RGB lighting, or the printed circuit board, casing the keyboard. In hand, a switch, consisting of a base, a spring, and a stem, can greatly personalize the volume and the "thockiness" of each keypress. "Thock," a word in the mechanical keyboard nomenclature, used to define a deeper sound signature, can often make or break a keyboard, based on each individual. In conjunction, the degree of



Switches come in a variety of colors, but they also can feel different! [Source: Andrew Tran]

thock can also be interpreted into different tactilities. These qualities can be further refined with modifications, or "mods," such as lubrication and embedding foam padding.

To scope into the psychological aspect of mechanical keyboards, Andrew Tran, a mechanical keyboard enthusiast and commissioner, expressed his opinion, stating, "Keyboards are able to please the senses of touch, hearing, and sight, all while confined into a small rectangular box that sits stationary on your desk. The ability to customize it really defines the hobby, almost like each keyboard

you make is your very own piece of art. With more and more options emerging on the market, each combination of keycaps, cases, and switches is sure to pertain to its uniqueness." Beyond the superficial looks of a keyboard, every keyboard's sound can be altered in an indefinite amount of ways, molding a perfect-sounding keyboard for each person's likeness.

What was a seemingly dying community of mechanical keyboard fanatics has become an international trend in 2023 and counting. Will you choose to make the divisive switch to mechanical keyboards?

Editors Column

The Test That Defines Math



Jeremiah Chun
Grade 12
West Ranch High School



The AMC taking place at West Ranch High School.
[Source: Kishneet Kaur]

Technology is becoming a vital part of our everyday lives. Everywhere we go, we are exposed to the wonders that electronic devices bring us. Behind all of this madness lies the basics of computer science, and even more fundamental than that are the dreaded principles of numbers and computations. Many students in the world often struggle with math, intimidated by its complicated concepts and confusing problems. However, it is important to note that math can be extremely useful in many situations that are relevant to our society today, and because of this,

there are many opportunities allowing one to raise awareness of math and logic deduction. One of the more ambitious events that promote advanced math is the American Mathematics Competition.

The American Mathematics Competition, or AMC, is a series of exams where students solve various math problems that require both common sense and proficient problem-solving skills. One may think that this sounds easy and simple, but there is a catch; each problem is extremely difficult, re-

quiring insane levels of comprehension and quick analyzation skills. None of the test sections allow a calculator but instead offer “puzzle pieces,” which are tiny snippets of information that lead to bigger clues and patterns. There are a total of 25 problems to complete in 75 minutes, approximately 3 minutes per question. It may seem that you can just make educated guesses to get around 25% of the questions right, but guessing is highly discouraged on these types of tests. This is because each correct question grants 6 points, and each unanswered question rewards 1.5 points, but a wrong question actually rewards none. Because of this, a test that is not answered at all generally yields a better score than a test filled with guesses.

I was able to witness one of these tests live at my high school. There were around 30 students kids who were taking the test, and it was fascinating to see so many kids having the privilege to participate in the AMC. I can see the intentions

that the AMC wanted for those who take it; the exposure of academically rigorous math for great use in the future. Overall, this competition is extremely beneficial for students, even if it is just to attempt it. It opens one to a wealth of potential real-world mathematical applications and offers a taste of the number skills necessary for specific jobs and industries, from architecture to accounting. With proper training, a student’s problem-solving and common sense capabilities can greatly improve in regard to math, and AMC is a great testing ground for that progress. This competition not only teaches math but also general concepts that require precise and logical thinking, increasing a person’s overall intelligence. In fact, anyone naturally gifted enough to get 18 questions right can move on to higher levels of AMC and even score a chance of competing nationally!! AMC is a great way to assess your current math skills and explore the potential that math can bring to the world.

Student Reporter

Bringing a Community Together Through the Love for Ice Cream



Minseo Kwon
Grade 11
Portola High School

Many high school students partake in community service events and volunteer at local centers to support those in their area. Some direct their love of animals and work at an animal shelter, while others use their teaching abilities to assist younger students with their homework. A unique organization, Rotary International, provides individuals of all ages the opportunity to participate in service events through the communion of leaders worldwide to promote peace and equity. Rotary International has created an opportunity for the youth to start their own clubs in their schools and district areas for students to develop leadership skills. At Portola High School, a dedicated group of juniors stepped up in order to start a chapter of Rotary Interact and



Portola High School’s Rotary Interact Club members collaborated with Handel’s Ice Cream to create a fundraising event.
[Source: Author, Minseo Kwon]

help fellow students engage in and improve their community.

Portola’s Rotary Interact Club recently hosted a fundraiser in collaboration with Handel’s Ice Cream, located in the Tustin Marketplace, in order to raise money for the Lahaina fire in Hawaii. Because the fire destroyed much of Hawaii’s beautiful, natural landscape

and caused destruction in many homes, the club hoped to donate money to support the needs of the community. As many people enjoy ice cream as a delectable treat, the club carefully chose Handel’s as the perfect location for the fundraiser. Twenty percent of the funds received on the day of the fundraiser became part of the donation fund. The club also had the honor

of being joined by the Mayor of Irvine, California, Farrah Khan. She shared her experiences with Irvine Rotary and showed her support for the cause by buying her own chocolate ice cream.

The members of the club worked tremendously hard to organize the fundraiser and plan the event. Over the course of a month, they met each week to contact organizations and the people involved and used social media to publicize the event. Through this process, the students learned to utilize their leadership skills and understand the importance of assisting others through difficult situations. If you’re looking for a way to give back to your community this holiday season, consider joining your local Rotary club and participating in a volunteer event.

Student Reporter

The Difference of Gas Prices Across America

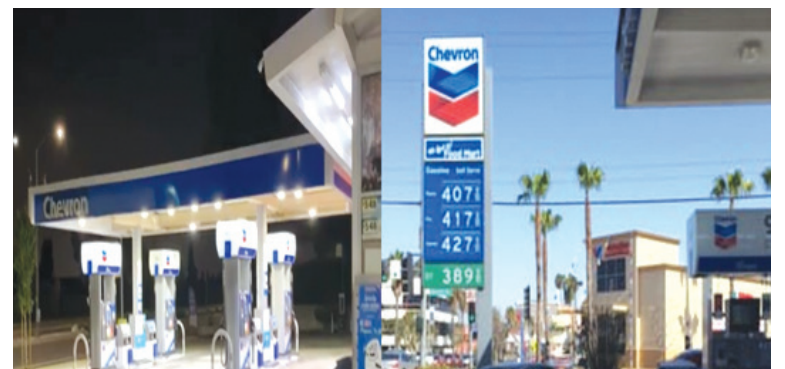


Aaron Kim
Grade 10
Cerritos High School

For anyone who has been keeping an eye on the cost of gas recently, the difference in fuel prices across the country, as a whole, can be a burden on daily life as people take to the road for travel. In addition to daily travel that involves work or driving long distances, the occasional road trip also needs to be taken into consideration, as these regional prices fluctuate, especially at this time of year. In the West Coast states of California, Oregon, and Washington, gas pumps feel a lot more like a robbery rather than paying bills. Costs per gallon have risen to a point that many consider to be ridiculous, making them an overall stress on household budgets. One of the main issues with higher gas prices is stricter environmental regulations in the western parts of America. While the promise of supposedly fresher air is nice, the standards required to meet this goal forcefully add higher oil production costs.

Geography also plays an important role in pricing. The West Coast’s reliance on imported fuel, along with many transportation destinations at greater distances, contributes to the demand for pipelines and refineries, so every extra mile at the pump seems to increase the price. On the East Coast, the gas pump can come at a cheaper price, if at the right location. States like Texas, Louisiana, and those in the Midwest benefit from their proximity to major oil fields and the oil industry as a whole. The result is gas prices, while still increasing dramatically, generally seem like a more reasonable investment for everyday use.

This economic imbalance highlights the frustration faced by drivers on the West Coast. The gas price spike between the West and the East of America raises questions about the need for a proper economic system and alternative



A comparison with a Chevron gas station near my home in Southern California, compared to where my friend lives. [Source: Author, Aaron Kim and, Jacob Janke]

energy considerations that are not overpriced per gallon. The complexity of fuel regulations and the associated cost of their implementation are stark reminders of the need for more electric cars. These can be a great investment long term, as charging the car can sometimes be more efficient and is certainly cheaper than the current trend in rising gas prices. Electric cars are also better for the environment, as they do not emit any harmful emissions into the atmosphere.

As the nation moves toward renewable energy solutions, the imbalance in gas prices shows the unfairness and unsustainability of current pricing policies. Perhaps a movement to significantly increase the number of electric cars on the roads would serve as a reminder to oil industries that a nation will not stand for their runaway increase in prices. But above all, drivers everywhere should consider electric cars if they want a better environment and path to the future.