

Final 2020-2021 School Year Issue



# THE TRIDENT

## Anti Asian Hate

By Victoria Choi

“My teacher didn’t even bother remembering, and kept confusing me with another classmate” When talking about racism it’s hard to think it’s happening right now or even nearby. But it happens in more insidious forms where you think you're harmless, but in reality you are not. The quote is a personal incident from a student in Santa Cruz High, showing that racism is a lot closer than a lot of us would hope. Even in the very liberal city of Santa Cruz, the stereotypes have ingrained themselves into the culture, slowly but surely.

In the past months there have been alarming reports of elderly Asians being attacked and gravely injured, and of the spa shooting in Atlanta in March. Something that could be led back to the fact the Covid-19 pandemic was started in China. But that was only when the media began reporting it, incidents of racism have been hidden for a very long time. It doesn't matter what type of Asian you are though, so long as you mention that you are Asian or even look a bit East Asian you'll be the next victim.

Recently the media has largely stopped talking about Asian hate crimes, or at least it no longer lands on the front page of newspapers around the nation. Protest to the common eye has stopped, and there have only been a handful of Youtubers and influencers that have talked about this: all primarily Asian themselves. The word 'talk' should be highlighted, as retweeting a hashtag, or uploading an image with a black background with white text saying 'Stop Asian Hate' onto instagram is the bare minimum, and it looks cheap. It seems disingenuous, like you're only doing for the internet points or so that you won't get any flack. It would be more thoughtful to actually do something to help, whether it be donating to a cause or just getting better education.

While I, as a Chinese immigrant who moved to the United States when I was 3, didn't get stereotypically bullied by my peers. I've had people say how horrible Chinese people are for having ceremonies that involve eating dogs, while I was in ear shot. At that moment I wanted to sink into the floor, in absolute shame. It hurt even more as I love animals with all of my being, and to generalize all Chinese in this way was painful to say the least. But to be told by my white peers what my culture should be, was equally enraging.

While my personal incidents aren't as severe as what's shown in the news, dismissing them like we have been leads to pain in and out of the community. From the generalization of Asian cultures to dog eating jokes, anti-Asian racism exists. The solution is for people to open their hearts and to listen. Listening would show that you care, and that you are willing to change. Here are a few resources to learn more about AAPI cultures and ways to end the violence and stop racism against Asian:

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/anti-racism-resources-support-asian-american-pacific-islander-community-n1260467>

<https://asianamericanstudies.cornell.edu/anti-racism-resources-aapi-community>

<https://anti-asianviolenceresources.carrd.co/>

## The Importance of Raising the Minimum Wage

By Otto Redlien

On April 27, 2021, President Biden issued an executive order raising the hourly minimum wage for workers in contract with the federal government, starting in early 2022, sparking opinions on all sides. This order will increase the federal minimum wage from \$10.95 to \$15.00 for thousands working on contracts and will be the first increase in over a decade. Raising the wage will be beneficial for the economy, businesses, and workers.

The concept of raising the minimum wage has been a political and social-economical debate for decades. Likewise, the idea of pushing the federal minimum wage up has been discussed for a while now. Increasing the pay for federal workers is a first step to lifting the minimum wage for the majority and demonstrates care for workers enabling them to make a living to support themselves, which aligns with Biden's goal as President. This executive order demonstrates why an increase would be beneficial for more than just federal contracted workers.

There are many upsides to an increased federal minimum wage. It will help boost the now crippling economy on account of the pandemic, combat poverty, and income inequality. The rise of the federal minimum wage would overall improve the standard of living as 15 dollars an hour would help minimum wage workers pay for their monthly expenses. This increase would improve worker morale- increasing productivity, and benefit minority and women workers, helping close the continual race and gender-based wage gaps.

Despite popular belief, raising the minimum wage will help boost the economy, as it will most likely be spent, supporting communities and growing the national economy. Opposers of the increased minimum wage argue that small businesses would be negatively affected. However, small business owners are in support as business owners, in general, are voluntarily raising wages.

Biden's plan will ensure the 15 dollar minimum wage for disabled federal contract workers, restore minimum wage protections, and "Continue to index the minimum wage to an inflation measure so that every year after 2022 it will be automatically adjusted to reflect changes in the cost of living," as stated by the White House brief room fact sheet. Not only will this be beneficial for workers, but it also dismisses the concern of overinflation.

You might be asking: why was this plan established with yet another executive order? It was enacted by the President to, yet again, overrule the lack of bipartisanship in the legislative branch, as it would never be passed otherwise.

To rebuild the economy the minimum wage is something that should be acknowledged. President Biden's executive order to support federal minimum wage workers is a step in the right direction and should be valued as it supports workers. The working class is the backbone of this country and is arguably the most important group. Their wages should represent that.

For more information check the Briefing room fact sheet:  
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/04/27/fact-sheet-biden-harris-administration-issues-an-executive-order-to-raise-the-minimum-wage-to-15-for-federal-contractors/>

## **Gay Marriage Is Legal. So Why Do We Still Need Pride Month?**

Same-sex marriage was legalized in all states in the United States in 2015. However, homophobia is still prevalent: both in our legal system and our personal beliefs.

by Gensen DeLeon

Pride Month commemorates the anniversary of the Stonewall Riots. The riots began in the early hours of June 28, 1969, when police were raiding Stonewall Inn (a gay club in New York City). Sadly, raids on gay bars were not uncommon during this period. Many of the bar's patrons were dissatisfied with their treatment by the police, and because of their discontent, a riot ensued. Though this incident did not incite the LGBTQ+ movement, it led to the formation of many organizations that advocated for queer rights. Additionally, it has become a symbol for the queer community; it represents the resistance to the inequalities that we will no longer accept.

Since Stonewall, many positive legal reforms have been made. For example, in 2004, the first legal same-sex marriage in the United States took place in Massachusetts. In 2011, openly homosexual women and men were allowed to serve in the military. In 2015, the Supreme Court officially banned states from prohibiting same-sex marriage. Additionally, in 2020, the Supreme Court ruled that federal law does protect LGBTQ+ people from discrimination in the workplace. However, many of these positive reforms were made quite recently and with heavy resistance.

While there have been some legal improvements that have greatly benefited, there are still some worrying prejudices that LGBTQ+ have to face. According to a 2019 poll, only about half of people are comfortable or somewhat comfortable with LGBTQ+ people. To combat this more than a quarter of LGBTQ+ people have avoided talking about aspects of their personal or work lives. Although same-sex couples are allowed to get married, there is still stigma and prejudice surrounding this issue, and that is why pride is so necessary. Pride is necessary because the social climate of America does not afford every LGBTQ+ American to be proud of themselves. Additionally, pride is a celebration of the challenges and hardships LGBTQ+ Americans have overcome with the awareness that progress still needs to be made.

# How to Maintain Eco Friendliness in Times of Covid

By Stella Guthrie

Climate-related issues have always been something that I have believed everyone should really care about. Their actions and how aggressively they impact our Earth and the beings residing on it are truly important and crucial for the future of our planet. There will always be those who care more than others in every subject matter, not just climate-wise. Which is why I believe it is good to push myself more than others do to make up for their uncaring actions and their disregard to the issue at hand, and most people should strive to do the same, if they are able.

If you are looking to be more wary of your actions, and I would suggest that you attempt to for the sake of future generations, look no further.

A lot of the everyday actions I do to be more aware of my environmental impact are quite simple. To begin, I always leave a bucket in the shower to collect the cold water as it warms up to water the plants in my backyard to reduce my water consumption. Simple and quick habits like picking up pieces of trash that you find on the sidewalk and bringing them to a trash can is an easy way to clean up your town. Although, it is a bit harder to safely do so with Covid-19 being so active. If you do this, make sure to wash your hands or use some type of disinfectant.

Next- composting! Composting is an easy way to lessen your carbon footprints and be more cautious of how you toss away old food that you are not going to eat instead of just wasting it. "If it can be eaten or grown in a field or garden, it can be composted", as the University of Georgia stated in their article titled "Food Waste Composting: Institutional and Industrial Application". Things like fruits, vegetables, bread, cereal, coffee grounds, dry dog and cat food, old wine, and so on can all be composted.

Bringing your own bags to grocery stores, bringing your own mugs and travel cups to cafes, and bringing your own containers to restaurants to take home leftovers are also easy ways to help you be conscious of your environmental impact. Everyone forgets sometimes, and that's okay! As long as you try to do your best to emit as little waste as possible when able. But, again, most places may not allow this due to Covid restrictions. Another environmentally conscious choice would be to use things like old newspapers or coupons or paper bags to wrap your presents, especially around the holidays. Old Trader Joes or Safeway bags are a good look for presents, if you choose to use their brown side facing up!

Consider things similar to Meatless Mondays. You don't have to be a perfect vegan or vegetarian, but the occasional or, even better, frequent meals without meat have better environmental impacts than you might think. Being vegetarian saves loads of water and reduces your carbon emissions.

Making sure you turn off the lights of rooms that you are not in is another beneficial and minimal attempt to lessen your impact. To add to that, unplugging things that are not in use will drastically change not just your personal impact, but your electricity bill as well. Things like phone or laptop chargers, lamps, guitar amps, televisions and so on you can unplug while not in use. Although it is not easy for many, shopping second hand or shopping from sustainable brands is another great way to change for the better. Thrift stores and eco-friendly stores such as Patagonia, Tradlands, and Levi's are all good options if you're opting to be more environmentally conscious. Fast fashion is incredibly harmful to the environment, so, if you are able, try to steer clear of brands that opt to use it.

Again, capitalism makes it incredibly hard for every person to be absolutely perfect with our environmental choices and how they reflect others as well as the planet as a whole, but every minimal effort made to protect our beautiful Earth and its residents is not gone unseen and has a large impact, whether it be prominent or subtle.

## Sports Came Back Before School Did, But How?

By Meera Narayan

As Covid-19 rates decrease, schools are entering hybrid learning. However, sports came back before preparation for in-person classes began. How was this possible?

The Covid pandemic not only ended school and sports at the end of the 2019-2020 school year, it also canceled the fall 2020 season for all fall sports. Many of the teams still met to practice, with appropriate safety measures, and this continued for much of the semester, despite a few covid outbreaks.

In the beginning of the spring semester, actual seasons for all of the sports teams began. This included both spring sports, and the fall sports that had their seasons taken away from them. For example, both girl's tennis and football have fall seasons, but the seasons were moved to the spring so that the players had an opportunity to compete.

There is a clear trend in covid guidelines for sports: masks are taken off for playing, and kept on at all other times. For example, track athletes were required to wear masks while waiting to start and while warming up to compete, but were allowed to remove them while actually competing, and the same rules were applied for tennis. Swim had the same guidelines as well. Obviously, swimmers cannot wear masks while swimming, even the idea is ludicrous. The athletes kept their masks on while removing covers and waiting, then removed them to compete.

Football took a different approach. While coaches and spectators were all required to wear masks, the players were maskless for the entire game. While playing on the field and also while doing team huddles during time outs, there wasn't a mask in sight. The players were getting tested for covid regularly, and the discrepancy may have been because other sports do not have helmets, but it was still an unexpected decision.

Overall, most of the sports teams have had safe seasons with no covid cases, and this is likely because of the standards set for covid safety in the school district, which are higher than many other schools in the country.

# The Santa Cruz-topia Effect

By Sophie Stone

I've lived in Santa Cruz practically my entire life- I moved here with my family when I was a toddler, and ever since, I've been a proud Santa Cruz kid. And as I've gotten older, I've begun to notice some unique patterns within our community- a shared love of the environment, a fondness for sustainability, and a surprising amount of hipsters. But putting aside the more trivial commonalities, there is one alarmingly popular belief that I've noticed in so many Santa Cruz inhabitants, from teachers to adults to teenagers- the idea that our town is some sort of "liberal utopia" or "safe haven" for minorities.

The definition of "utopia" as defined by Oxford dictionary is "an imagined place or state of things in which everything is perfect". On the surface, to someone who isn't affected by prejudice, Santa Cruz could appear as the progressive utopia that so many believe it to be, if the Black Lives Matter mural by the library or the pride flags hanging downtown are any indication. But if one were to really examine how Santa Cruz treats minorities, they would find that many of the ways in which Santa Cruz appears to be welcoming are performative, and run no deeper than a mission statement. As junior Maya Moore stated, "You don't have to be not liberal to be racist,"- but too many Santa Cruzians believe that their "acceptance of all" automatically absolves them of their implicit bias, which in many cases can be a deadly mindset to have. "In my opinion, Santa Cruz has a white savior complex... most of the people who are successful in voicing their opinions are white, when we should really be boosting POC's voices, opinions, and needs." (Ruby Higgins, '23).

Even within our smaller school community, this harmful belief is prevalent. I can't count how many times I've been told I'm overreacting when I bring up how uncomfortable it makes me when those who claim to be "activists" make Holocaust jokes or use derogatory LGBTQ+ terms right in front of me. And I'm not alone in this, either- many other minority students have voiced similar experiences. Whether it was comments like "Wow you're so pretty for an Indian girl." (Shivani Patel, '21) or feeling pressure to change parts of yourself to fit in, it's clear that again, SCHS is not quite the accepting haven that many believe it to be. "I think something that's really common for Asian people is to get made fun of for their eyes, which happened to me last year, and it's so hard to stand up for yourself in front of the whole class. You pretty much feel defeated at that point. That kind of stuff cannot just be swept under the mat- the SCHS community needs to know that is not okay. " (Maya Moore, '22).

So what do we do? Well, change starts with the individual, and there are plenty of things that you can do to both begin to dismantle this harmful belief and also simply become a better ally. Acknowledge your implicit biases and begin to work through them. Petition for change within both SCHS and our larger Santa Cruz community, if you can. And most of all, listen to and amplify those voices who have something to say- a lot of us have been yelling for a while without anyone hearing. I think it's long been time for us to be heard.

# About the Authors

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# About the SCHS Literary Society

We are a group of students that admire literature, and writing, As well as members of the literary society club, meeting Wednesdays at lunch.

If you are interested in joining us, please contact Otto at [oredlien56@sccs-stu.net](mailto:oredlien56@sccs-stu.net) or Veronica at [veronicazaleha@sccs.net](mailto:veronicazaleha@sccs.net).