

May 21, 2021

The White Whale: Parting Advice From A Senior Reader

By Eleanor Roth

“Call me Ishmael.” Perhaps one of the most famous opening lines in literature, Herman Melville’s *Moby Dick* is a rite of passage for the junior class at Altamont. Its length of 589 pages feels understandably overwhelming to tackle in a single semester. Thus, for so many faculty making difficult decisions to adjust curriculum, choosing to consolidate or even altogether drop previously covered works is a challenge.

The question becomes, when examining how to condense a course into a single semester, what changes? One tactic uses a holistic examination of the materials of a class, especially evident in survey courses, to create an image of the larger narrative. Another tactic involves picking fewer works and transferring teaching points into those chosen pieces. Though not an exhaustive and comprehensive list of the possible methods of curriculum, nor accounting for other factors, which may limit a curriculum’s development, the dichotomy of these two issues reflects a common debate in education: breadth or depth?

In pandemic times and beyond, there is no simple answer to this question. However, by understanding the progression of one’s course, one can better utilize time and resources. Speaking as a senior who has been at Altamont since the fifth grade, I have accumulated a few tricks I would like to share with anyone still adjusting to changes in English classes.

1. Write short chapter summaries after you read. They do not need to be fancy nor proper, as long as they communicate the information you want to remember.



Figure 1: Owlcation: *Moby Dick* and the Brutality of Man

2. Don't be afraid to ask for clarification after class! In a course that moves quickly, it can be very helpful to take a moment and ask about a character or theme you do not understand.

The pandemic year has changed how every course is taught. It is a learning process for everyone. I implore you all to think about what you want to take away from your courses—whether a skill, your well-annotated copy of *Moby Dick*, or even an excitement for future classes—and carry that with you through the rest of this year.

Student Thought

A Look Inside the Lunchroom: An Expose

By Margaret Schedler

Throughout our time at The Altamont School, students learn the many ways that Altamont is different from other schools, with one unique aspect being the school lunch. The school lunch at Altamont is

one of our proudest attributes aside from our emphasis on academics and intellect. But as we rush to pile buttery cavatappi on our paper plates, we usually overlook how the food actually got there. How do our favorite dishes even get to us, and what are the stories behind the stuffing? Let's take a look inside the lunchroom.

The lunchroom staff is made up of only five people who do the work of many more. Mrs. Jennifer Grissom credits the quality and quantity of the work to how closely knit the staff is to one another, even describing her colleagues as, "almost like a family". Before Altamont even opens its doors for students and faculty, the lunchroom bustles with sluggish early morning activity. Mr. Brodrick Lane arrives at 6am to wake up the kitchen and start on the hard work for the day. Mrs. Grissom arrives soon after to get the coffee ready for the sleepy faculty and staff. Mrs. Grissom also works hard to plan meals for the school, carefully choosing lunch dishes from a list of 25 delicious meals, which is not an easy task with a school full of picky eaters! Mrs. Malinda James, Mr. Daniel Smith, and Mrs. Penny Lawson begin their day at Altamont from 7:30am to 8:30am. That's when the cooking begins down in Altamont's kitchen. As well as stocking and unpacking grocery deliveries, Mr. Smith also pushes the lunch contraptions upstairs with Mr. Lane, who both serve students lunch in the upstairs gallery. These jobs to get lunch on our plates aren't always easy.



Figure 2 Left to right: Mrs. Grissom, (back) Mrs. Lawson, Mrs. James, Mr. Lane, Mr. Smith

Mrs. Grissom explains the unseen challenges that the staff experiences when preparing lunch, saying, “Depending on the day’s menu, just getting enough food cooked in time to start can also be a significant challenge, especially on days when lunch starts earlier than usual,” not to mention the frustration that everyone feels because school favorite foods, like tater tots, French fries, and ice-cream, can’t be served due to the difficulty transporting them from the kitchen. While it may seem that the staff is all business, they have fun too.

It’s not a surprise at all that students’ and faculty’s favorite school lunches are nachos, chicken fingers, breakfast, and Indian butter chicken, but we bet you didn’t know what the lunchroom staff’s are! Mrs. Grissom loves the Indian butter chicken; Mrs. Lawson likes the turkey and dressing, especially around Thanksgiving (so do we!); and Mrs. James loves the May Day lunch, including the ribs that are barbecued to perfection all morning. Mr. Lane’s favorite lunch remains super burger bar, a meal missed by many students, and Mr. Smith always goes for the classic roast beef. And funny enough, the staff has least favorite school lunches too! Mrs. James dislikes the loaded baked potato soup; Mr. Lane doesn’t like anything simple, like hotdogs or corndogs; and the most shocking is that Mr. Smith HATES the Indian butter chicken!



Just like the students and faculty of The Altamont School, the lunchroom staff lead important lives outside of the lunchroom. Mr. Smith and Mr. Lane have been best friends since they were little and now work together every day. Mr. Lane is married to Mrs. James’s daughter, Mrs. Lawson is Mr. Sammy Lawson’s sister, and Mrs. Lawson also recently became a great-grandmother! Mrs. Grissom’s husband is an alum of Altamont, class of ’86, and even serves on the alumni board. Mr. Lane and Mr. Smith love watching sports and spending time with their families. Mrs. Lawson spends her free time playing with her great-grandbaby, soaking up the sun, and being with her family. Mrs. James loves going to church, singing, and getting thrifty by going to yard sales (same!). Mrs. Grissom loves experimenting in the kitchen, reading, playing logic games even though no one in her family will play with her, and she’s addicted to Candy Crush! Planning and preparing the school’s lunch is no easy feat, so we are very lucky to have such a great team keeping us fed. As students and faculty rush to devour dishes at lunchtime, take a second to think about the people who are doing the unseen work. We may think of them as just faculty, but in keeping us nourished and always making time to speak to with us, they are so much more!

A NewGen Peacebuilders Reflection

By Manish Yalamanchili

Recently, I decided to participate in the NewGen Peacebuilders program, and it was an amazing experience. The program expanded my mind to new ideas and perspectives that will always be valuable to me. NewGen peacebuilders is a peace education designed for youth from the ages of 14 to 25. The program utilizes best practices in peace and global education for youth. During this program, we completed a

team peace project, where the focus was on decreasing recidivism rates on our community. Before we got into the peace project, we had to go through peace training by participating in virtual immersion workshops.

There were four four-hour immersion workshops that introduced us to peacebuilding frameworks and tools. These workshops were very educational and opened my eyes to the world of peacebuilding. The most notable idea that I learned is the two types of peace: negative and positive peace. I came into this program thinking that peace meant lack of direct violence and fighting, but I learned that this is called negative peace. Positive peace is when conflict is managed in productive ways and conditions of well-being for all is sought out. Think of negative peace as a band aid but positive peace as an antibiotic. Negative peace manages the symptoms while positive peace helps to solve the root of the issue. This program taught us the skills needed to make positive peace within our community. I also learned about the importance of using your voice. The program gave us opportunities to use our voice and provide our perspective. What I liked is that I was able to share my perspective while also hearing about other's perspectives. The program also gave us a chance to put ourselves in someone else's shoes, to tell their story. This provided me with new perspectives that opened my mind even further.

After the four workshops, we had a peace project planning workshop, which lasted seven hours. In this workshop, we worked through issues that we felt needed to be addressed in our community. We decided we wanted to work on issues with criminal justice system, specifically recidivism rates. We found out that many prisoners are not prepared for re-entry after being released, and recidivism often results from a lack of options due to being underprepared for life after prison. We used this workshop to plan out a prototype for our peace project; we decided to make a bilingual pamphlet of resources and a film on this issue.



Figure 3 Twitter

We spent eight weeks on this project, in which we met every Thursday and Sunday for updates and to work on our presentation. During this time, I learned so much about this issue and I was saddened by how much of an issue recidivism is. Prisoners are released without any resources or guidance to help them re-enter smoothly, and the stigma against former prisoners makes it even harder. The lack of options and opportunities for these people forces them back to their former lives. Also, hearing about other people's stories and reading about them opened my eyes to how much they needed our help. It showed me that this aspect of our criminal justice system is greatly flawed, even more than I thought. In the end, we were able to produce a bilingual (English and Spanish) information pamphlet and a short film that spreads awareness and gives former prisoners the chance to tell their stories.

The whole experience from NewGen peacebuilders taught me so much about our community and peacebuilding. The most important idea that I am taking away from this program is making connections and building relationships. The program showed me how successful peacebuilding can be when talking to people, hearing their stories, and building relationships. Solving the root of an issue and/or conflict requires communication and connections with other people, which I think is the most important I learned. I am also taking away that I should step up, to use my voice. Effective peacebuilding requires voicing one's perspective and ideas to a solution. The program has expanded my mind on peace and the issues in our community. I came into the program with some knowledge of the issues, but now I realize that our community has issues and there are flaws. However, I learned the skills I need to help solve them. I am extremely grateful for having this opportunity to participate in this program, because it has taught me how to build a better future and to help strengthen our community.



Figure 4 Concern Worldwide (US) "Tragedy in Beirut: What Lies Ahead"

Off The Hill

The Beirut Explosion: What Happened?

By Lucine Carsen

On August 4th, 2020, bride-to-be Israa Seblani's face was lit with a bright smile. "I was so happy like all the other girls," she later told BBC¹. "I'm getting married. Are my parents going to be happy seeing me in a white dress?" On that fateful day, she was posing for photographs in her elegant wedding dress in the streets of Beirut, Lebanon, when a gigantic explosion

originated in the nearby port and rippled through the city. “I was shocked, I was wondering what happened. ‘Am I going to die? How am I going to die?’” Seblani said in the interview.

While Israa Seblani was unharmed, the Beirut explosion destroyed hundreds of lives and livelihoods. According to the Thomson Reuters Foundation² and the *Science*³ magazine, over 200 people were killed and another 6,500 were injured. The destruction of 50,000 homes left 300,000 homeless. 640 historic buildings and many hospitals and healthcare centers were damaged by the blast. The explosion, caused by the improper storage of 2,750 tons of ammonium nitrate, along with COVID-19 and the nation’s economic crisis, drove the poverty rate up to 55% from 28% in 2019. In short, the city of Beirut – and the whole of Lebanon – will continue to struggle from the effects of the explosion for a long time.

The *Concern USA* website⁴ writes that one healthcare official stated, “We need everything to hospitalize the victims, and there is an acute shortage of everything.” As the blast damaged many healthcare facilities, large numbers of patients were forced to evacuate to other centers and clinics, which in turn led to the rise in the need for hospital beds and medicines. The explosion and its effects had a dramatic effect on COVID-19 as well, partially because of the homeless situation, in terms of the stay-at-home order. As mentioned before, around 300,000 Beirutis had their homes destroyed, and therefore have no choice but to bend or break the shelter-in-place law. To top this, post-blast Beirut has been suffering from many other catastrophes such as food shortages and mental health crises.

It’s no surprise that Google searches from Lebanon including the word “immigration” have hit a ten-year high². In late August, Al Jazeera⁵ reported that the number of people emigrating each day rose to 41,000. Compared to the average of 31,000 before the explosion, it’s clear that the Beirut blast had a profound impact on the quality of life in the city. However, not everyone even has enough money to leave. It’s also not always easy for those who do.

I actually have a personal connection as well. I have family who lived in Beirut up through the time of the explosion. Luckily, none were severely harmed, but they felt the shock of the blast in more ways than one. Physically, the explosion blew out windows and shook the walls and foundations of their homes. Some of my family have emigrated from Lebanon to Armenia (also known as Hayastan), another country in Western Asia, although the recent war between Armenia and Azerbaijan has made that situation complicated.

Despite how the situation appears, the people of Beirut haven’t given up on their city. According to NBC News⁶, “every aspect of the response to the deadly explosion has been volunteer-led.” In the weeks after the blast, citizens from all over Lebanon poured into the city ready to help, sometimes in such great numbers that some had to be turned away. Amid the lack of government assistance, the people rose up to help clean and heal Beirut. “We live in a parallel world at the moment and have zero trust in anything the government does. We don’t need them, and we don’t care,” stated Afif Ayad of the *My People, My Responsibility* nongovernment organization. Volunteers began cleaning up the rubble and searching for survivors as well as distributing food and medical care. One 26-year-old volunteer said, “Even if this wasn’t about coming and doing a job that the government should be doing instead of us — it’s about feeling like I need to do something about all the injustice that happened.” Due to the Lebanese people’s efforts, citizens who left Beirut after the explosion have been able to return to their newly-restored homes. On the other hand, other citizens began protesting the corruption in

the government that led to the circumstances that allowed the explosion to happen. They took to the streets in order to express their anger with the government that reached a peak in response to the blast. In response to this, Lebanese prime minister Hassan Diab announced that he would be stepping down from his position in late August of 2020.

Diab continued to act as Caretaker Prime Minister since no replacement was ready, and during this time he and three of his former ministers were accused of ignoring warnings before the explosion ever happened about the dangers of the improperly-stored ammonium nitrate⁷. This nitrate had been taken from a Russian ship and is believed to have exploded after being set on fire by welders fixing a warehouse door close by. The storage of the ammonium nitrate had been considered a threat to the public for a while, but the administration failed to act on it due to corruption. In December, Hassan Diab and his ministers were charged in connection with the explosion.

The Beirut explosion of August 4th, 2020, rippled across the nation in more ways than one. Hundreds were killed and injured, and thousands were displaced. The COVID-19 pandemic and the poverty crisis were worsened, all because of the corruption of the Lebanese government. The people were rightly angry and used their voices to call for change while also working hard to help those harmed by the blast. The Beirut blast was a truly harmful event that helped to call much-needed international attention to the corruption already existing in Lebanon.



A Journey to Space and Back!

By Claudia Williams

Few students notice that, amidst hallways of paintings and pictures, a case containing an important piece of space history hangs in the science hallway; the case contains one of the tiles from the Space Shuttle Challenger. Its dull exterior looks unremarkable, but without such tiles, the shuttle could never safely return to Earth. They protect the vehicle from the extreme heat created by atmospheric friction during its descent. These thermal protection tiles were produced by Lockheed-Martin¹, an aerospace manufacturing company. Black pieces such as ours were the high-temperature tiles, which

sustained up to 2,300⁰ F of heat² and were used to protect the bottom of the shuttle upon reentry into the

atmosphere. Thousands of these tiles were necessary to coat the whole underside of the shuttle; however, if even one fell off during flight, it would have spelled disaster.

But what is so interesting about our specific tile? As the plaque reads, it is from Challenger – a shuttle well-known for its catastrophic explosion. The Space Shuttle Challenger disaster was an event that shook America and is still remembered today. Millions of people watched, in homes, offices, and schools as the shuttle exploded. Lesser known, however, are the successful Challenger missions that came before – which is where our tile was used. Challenger went on nine missions before its catastrophic end in January of 1986, many of them remain remarkable moments in aerospace history. Sally Ride became the first American woman to travel to space on Challenger’s second mission, STS-7³; the first African-American to go to space, Guion Bluford, was on the third, STS-8⁴; and some of the following missions made developments in the Spacelab program, a predecessor to the modern-day International Space Station.⁵ Had the last mission been successful, it would have been the first time a private citizen flew into orbit as part of the Teacher in Space program.⁶

The tag next to the tile says it is from the STS-24 or Spacelab-3 mission (now known as STS-51-B), which began on April 29, 1985 and lasted for seven days. NASA’s Kennedy Space Center writes of the mission: This was the first operational flight for the Spacelab orbital laboratory series developed by the European Space Agency...The main mission objective with Spacelab-3 was to provide a high quality microgravity environment for delicate materials processing and fluid experiments. Two monkeys and 24 rodents were observed for the effects of weightlessness.⁷

Perhaps the mission wasn’t as glamorous as a moon landing, or as revolutionary as potentially having a teacher give lessons from space, but every experiment takes our understanding of space, and how it affects us, one step further. And perhaps Altamont’s small chunk of black silica fibers isn’t glamorous either; but it went to space and back, went unscathed through unimaginable heat, and—most importantly—kept the astronauts safe in their journey back home.

Athletics

Altamont’s Sports Highlights 2020 – 2021

By Sydney Porter

Despite the many challenges the 2020-2021 school year presented us athletics at Altamont has continued to maintain its excellence and make us proud. Here are some highlights from each sports team:



Varsity Volleyball

Area 9 Champions, Super Regionals Champions, and competed in the state tournament and ended the season with a 24-3 record and ranked 3rd in 2A volleyball.

Cross Country

Both boys and girls were the class 3A section 2 champions- 7 girls and 3 boys placed top 10, placed 5th and 6th in the 3A state championship. Jack Nichols was selected for the 2021 Cross Country All-Stars North Team.

Varsity Girls Basketball

Made it to the sweet sixteen.

Varsity Boys Basketball

Beat Indian Springs 58-53.

Varsity Indoor Track

Carson Hicks is the state champion for the 60m dash. Kaia Todd is the state champion for the 60m hurdles.

Both 4x400 relay teams are state champions. Girls 4x200 and boys 4x800 got silver medals. The girls finished 4th and the boys finished 5th.

Track and Field

Varsity: Kalia Todd placed 1st in triple jump (37') and set a new school record in the high jump (5'2"). Junior

Varsity: Helen Ezelle placed first in javelin. Everyone who participated in track and field set PRs in their respective events. Girls are 2A state champions.

Kaia Todd: 100m hurdles state champion (+ state record), high jump state champion (+ state record), triple jump state champion.

Carson Hicks: 200m state champion. 400m state champion.

Kalia Todd: Long jump state champion.

Amelia Neiman: 300m hurdles state champion.

Boys are 2A runner-up

Varsity Girls Soccer

9-7-1. Won first round of the playoffs.

Varsity Boys Soccer

5-10-1. Made it to the playoffs.

Varsity Girls Tennis

Sectionals Champion with 61/63 points. Finished 2nd overall: State Runner-Up with 55 points. Margarette Berdy won singles state champion at #1. Kaavya Karthikeyan won singles state champion at #3.

Varsity Boys Tennis

Sectionals Champion. Finished 3rd overall. Sid Doppalapudi and Bart Stephens were state champions at #3 doubles.

Baseball

Made the playoffs for the first time in 21 years.



Golf

Placed 4th in 1A-7A Chelsey Oaks Invitational Tournament. Vinay Yerramsetti scored 74 and Davis Reese scored 78. Vinay won Low Medalist and was named to the All-Tournament Team. Sectional's champion.

Mountain Biking (not an Altamont team)

Junior Varsity: Abigail Marshall finished 1st in the first race. Varsity: Noah Warren finished 3rd in the first race. Lillian Rand and Abigail Marshall were crowned state champions at the NICA finale and won the state championship in division 2. Noah Warren was runner-up for varsity.

Fencing (not an Altamont team)

Audrey Williams placed first in the Junior Women's Epee event. Sam Choun tied for 3rd in the Cadet Men's Epee event.

Lower-School Life

How Did Covid-19 Effect Lower- Schoolers?

By McLean Pitts and Aiden Thomas

2020, as we know, was a rough year. We struggled to connect with our friends when online, and the constant flow of stressful events hurt our ability to focus, not only in school but also at home. Because of this, we decided to interview a few lower school students to see how their lives were affected during 2020. We also asked our peers how they found ways to stay positive and push through the year.



Figure 6 Rocket Reach

Aaradhya, an Altamont 5th grader, said, "It was definitely a hard year; we had to go to school from home some days, other days we did not. It was very confusing for me."

"I think the hardest part about 2020 was school," said Paul, another 5th grader. "I didn't really know what to do or how this was going to work with the social distancing and masks and all of that. I just kind of followed along with it." A few other students felt the same way about this.

One student added, "I found it hard to keep my grades up, mostly because of the stuff I wanted to do with my friends after school; sometimes I'd play for hours on end and not even think about my homework because I was having so much fun. Other times I'd try to do the work at school during carpool and such...I wish

we had free time to do our work during lunch or something. If we could like get our work done and have free time after to play with our friends and such, that'd be great because we can't go outside and meet our friends at the park or somewhere."

Half of the students we interviewed agreed with the last student because they also wanted more free time. By giving us more school time to complete assignments, we could complete all our work at school, leaving us with extra time after school to do the things that we want. While 2020 was difficult for everyone, we learned how the past year affected students differently. We hope that 2021 will be better for us and for all the Altamont community.

5th Grade: The Good in Quarantine

By Mr. T and his 5th grade class

It is easy to reflect on the past year and feel overwhelmed by negative feelings and memories. What we have endured is unprecedented and has taken both physical and psychological tolls. But—and I think we all recognize this—the most challenging moments in life often bring about wisdom, hope, and profound goodness. When forced to adapt, we often discover and do incredible things. Our fifth graders reflected on the good that has come out of this past year. For them, it has been a year of discoveries, relationships, and self-awareness. Where has the good shown up for you? What have you learned?

"During this crazy year, the majority of my family called me a couch potato. I think that they are right. But there has been a few things that I have done that I didn't think I was good at! Let me tell you what they are.

First, I started to paint a lot. I mean a lot. I have mostly painted angles. Angles are one of the easiest things to paint. The first angle that I painted was really bad. I got better very slowly. When got a little better I started to give my paintings away to my neighbors and my grandma. They were always very supportive even though they were really bad. I did a few paintings a day, but I took 2 months to get good at it. I was very patient, and I paid off. Now I'm doing an Ombre background. I tried Ombre when I just started, and it was really bad. Now a lot of people want my paintings. They try to pay me, but I say no



Figure 6 Juda's clay sculptures

because its something I love. I even gave it to my brother's girlfriend! She said she loved it, but I don't know if she did.

Second, I started to crochet. I was really bad at first but now I'm doing some advanced things! I started with just making random pieces. Then scrunchies, and now bumble bees! My mom said that I should start a business. I didn't want to because I wanted to do more than just crochet. Crocheting was really hard at first but now it's easy.

Third, I started to sew. I got a sewing machine in 2019 on Christmas. I didn't know what to do with it but when we were stuck in quarantine, I started to use it. I started with scrunchies and bow ties. Those were very easy to make and now I'm making clothes. I'm making dresses, skirts, shorts, and shirts. I enjoy it very much! It's something that I do every day and do it for hours.

Fourth, I started training my dogs. I have 2 dogs. One is still at his breeder, but we get him soon. I have to train him and during this quarantine, I started to train my dog, Fifi. She learned a lot of things. I never thought that I could train a dog. I really enjoyed it and had fun with it. I am determined to train our other dog and do a great job!" **-Tricia**

"Something good I have taken from Covid-19 is I got to spend way more time with my family. Also, we have been playing badminton a lot and I enjoy it very much. I have also discovered that I love Sketching things on paper or digitally. Mostly with pencil. I also have been really enjoying nature more. This is very surprising because I was on more screens during Covid-19 but I guess that made me realize that being outside feels better than sitting inside on a screen." **-Jackson**

"One day in quarantine I started playing F.N.F. I Found out that I was really good at it and I could also draw. I liked F.N.F. a lot so I started playing it daily, I even played some at school. I Shifted my passion to drawing for about a week." **-Aidan**

"During Quarantine, I discovered that I have become way closer with my friends that live in Miami. At first I usually played outside with my friends, but then because of quarantine I could not play with my friends, so I started playing video games with my friends that live in Miami. It was also nice to talk with friends that I did not talk with or see for a long time. I became super close friends with my friends back in Miami." **-Paul**

"During quarantine I played video games and slept. But when video games became boring, I needed something else to fill the empty void in my mind. That's when I started playing board games. I discovered that I really like board games. I also discovered that I really liked playing with plastic army men!" **-Thomas**

"During Quarantine I figured out that I was really good a Photography. Over the summer one of the merit badges I wanted to take was Photography. My aunt taught me the basics, ISO, aperture, and shutter

speed. For some of the requirements, I had to take photos of wildlife. The first photo I took was of a frog which turned out kind of bad then I took some more, and I got one really good one. I also had to take stop action photos. I took photos of my aunt popping water balloons over her head. It was one of my favorite photo taking experiences.” **-Robert**

“I started writing the house news 2! I started writing the newspaper for my house like my mother before me and my sister helped to she wrote the comics and funny articles and I wrote/drew the rest. Every Sunday it would come out and my parents would read it instead of the New York Times. There were 6 sections: #1 was the funny article (shouts and murmurs) #2 was the interview #3 was about the cover #4 was the mystery article #5 was the food article and #6 was poll on something!” **-Lola**

“Quarantine might have upset us but there is several specks of goodness, like how several million people probably found new hobbies and learned more about the outdoors and got off of devices like me. I also had more exercise in the world and some people actually learned more, working from home, like me also, and practiced more learning. We also became more creative and found new ways for movies and TV shows for all who did not go outdoors and could do nothing. I also read a lot and found out that reading is awesome and that is really like TV but increasing.” **-Natalia**

“I feel that not many people have enjoyed quarantine. But, I feel that it isn't really that bad, and it is definitely coming back to real life. During quarantine, I have noticed the love that I have for a lot of sports. I used to do competitive swimming, but then quit. I now feel I want to join again. Also, I have a love for tennis, (also, because I know how to play it now). Like tennis, I like bad mitten. Also, I love soccer even more, and actually like running now. I love to paint sunsets, but, I not that good at sunsets. That's my quarantine, what's your quarantine.” **-Marie**

“Quarantine was bad in many ways, but it was also good. I have learned much about myself and found new hobbies. I have learned that I like being in nature, and I do it more often now that there are fewer things that I can do at a given moment. I spend at least a few minutes after school in my backyard with the birds (we have birdfeeders) and my sister. I have also learned that I love art more than I used to. I love to draw on paper or a computer, and I love to paint as well. art has given me a new perspective and let me capture moments in my life, even if I'm not good at it.” **-Mayri**

“Over in the time of quarantine, I found that I could skateboard. The first time when I tried to skateboard, I fell and had to apply band aids on my elbow. I stopped for a few years and in 2021 when I went to the park, I skateboard with holding on to my dad or mom and stand on the board. Then I started to kick off the board and ride. I broke my board and went to buy a new one. I continued skateboarding and sit down on the board and slide down a huge slope. Then I started to stand on the board on the board and skateboard and

slide down on the slope. Now I like skateboarding and ride down slopes. I also watched a BUNCH more of Jackie Chan movies and have a bigger Lego Display.” -Kevin

“One day in quarantine, I picked up a soccer ball and decided to spin the ball on my finger. After a while I got pretty good. In my opinion I was not good enough. So I practiced, I watched tutorials, and I asked my peers for assistance. One day everything that you need in spinning the ball on your finger clicked for me. I did not move, talk, or give up. But that, is my story on how I learned how to spin the ball on my finger in the middle of quarantine.” -Arman

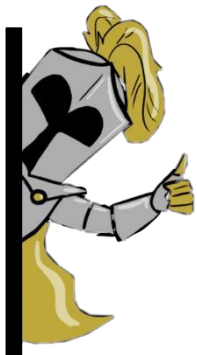
“There was somethings that were bad in quarantine but also a lot of thing good turned out of it.

One thing that I learned about myself in quarantine, is that I love to make and edit videos. I really enjoy it and I am pretty good at it. I like directing iMovie's with my neighbors and love to film them. I have made so many videos and I have learned about lighting and editing.

Another thing I learned is that I love to sing! I used to take voice lessons, but I didn't really like it so much. I love to sing to songs that I know and like, and love doing it. When we listen to the radio I love to sing along and, I think I am pretty good at it. My mom said I am good at singing so maybe I will do something with it!

I also learned that I love doing creative things! In the early part of quarantine, I took an art class by a professional artist via zoom. She taught me a lot of things and so I started to do more art. I stopped doing that, but I love to do art on my own. I am learning to get better at art in multiple forms. I also started to love to make things. I like to construct things and do projects. One thing I did was I made a pulley system out of the window! Sadly it had to get taken down...

All in all, quarantine was bad in some ways but a great learning experience in other parts.” -Zayna



“Some things that I have noticed over the pandemic we are in is that I have found out that I like different sports except soccer! I love cross country and also tennis! I'm good at it too!

I have also noticed I have become more out going to my sister (Camille T. Eberle) and we have been hanging out way more than before quarantine. I'm starting to like her I have seen that my dog is more happy than before. Its amazing how much this pandemic has changed my life!” -

Autumn

“During quarantine I learned how to get along with my sister better, being with her so much I have realized things about her that I didn't know before. I think there have been less fights. We have been outside together more too. Also, I learned that I love the birds (we have a bird nest on the deck.) when I look at the little birds and their mohawks and big beaks.” - Grace

"Before quarantine started, I was in love with sports and I always played them. After quarantine, I couldn't play sports anymore and I was upset. At that time, I played volleyball and basketball. Then, my dad decided to sign me up for tennis but not for a team or school. I went to the classes and I really liked it. I have played tennis before but I didn't really focus on it. After I only took tennis, I loved the sport and now I go to tennis class every single week. I'm really glad I got to discover this sport even though I already played it before. This is the sport that I am currently learning in quarantine." **-Yashika**

"Something that I discovered in quarantine is chess. I learned chess in kindergarten. I then quit for a few years and came back to it during quarantine because I had no other hobby. I then helped Altamont win the Alabama state chess championship this year!" **-Aadi**

"The best thing about quarantine was getting to play with my dog all she does is lay in Wanting someone to play with her. from quarantine I have the time to take her on walks play with her go and git her new toys like a tennis ball, next thing I know it is gone and she looks at me with that big smile on her face." **-Bishop**

"During the COVID 19- Pandemic, I've discovered many things I like about it (I still hate it). Frist of all, I get to spend more time with my family, I have also discovered that my dogs are happier because I am at home all the time. I've also picked up some new hobbies, such as, playing tennis, playing basketball, and being with my dogs all the time, sometimes I spend 3hrs with my dogs a day. I'm also doing a movie marathon of all the Disney movies, I'm about halfway through." **-Aradhya**

"Stuff I learned:

- Coding
- I am lucky

"During this pandemic, I learned that my brother and I are very similar. Before my brother would not talk to me that much, but now we have spent more time together than ever. He's still my brother and he'll still annoy me, but we talk and we laugh together. He has been more positive to me and is giving me compliments like 'that was really funny' to me." **-Nicolas**

"During quarantine I discovered that I need to be alone sometimes. I remember I would hang out with my family all day, and then getting to just listen to music in my room while I cleaned up, which made me feel good. Another thing I liked to do while I was alone was to draw and do origami. I realized that it was nice to be able to do my own thing and not have anyone judge me." **-Margaret**

“During quarantine, something I did a lot to spent time is work with clay. I made mostly ACNH and Cuphead Sculptures.” -Juda

Faculty Focus

What are you listening to?

What music do you keep coming back to, something that you never tire of and that always interests you? It can be an album, an artist, a song, a streaming station etc.

Full disclosure: I suggested and hate this question.

Contrary to my current English students theories, I actually like songs with lyrics! I never tire of Radiohead or LCD Soundsystem. Bela

Fleck, Mark O'Connor, and Edgar Meyer show up weekly. I listen to Tycho to ease into the day. I've also curated several streaming stations that are daily listens. One favorite is a folk/acoustic fusion thing based on the song "Appalachia Waltz." And my "Lark Ascending" station is perfect for a Sunday morning. Others on regular circulation: Queens of the Stone Age, Belle and Sebastian, Weezer's *Pinkerton*, Underworld, Sea and Cake's *Oui*, of course Zeppelin and the Beatles, Indigo Girls, Grandaddy, Head and the Heart, Steely Dan, Flaming Lips, Broken Social Scene, Them Crooked Vultures, Joy Formidable's *The Big Roar*...

-Mr. T

My husband once said that I was a Led Zeppelin girl in a Dierks Bentley world, and that's pretty much true! I can listen to country music if I'm driving south, but I do love 70s rock. Recently I've been obsessing over groups like Traffic and The Band, stuff that came out around when I was born. But I was raised on show tunes! Also love sacred choral music, especially German and Russian.

-Mrs. Grissom

I'm old-ish now, so I can't really keep up with the pace and aggression and attitude anymore, but my heart will always belong to D.C. hardcore. Bad Brains and Minor Threat are the GOATs, and changed everything.

-Dr. Melonas

Black Crowes, Cash, Dre& Snoop on 2001 specifically, Paco de Lucia, Rodrigo y Gabriella, The Clash, Paul Simon, Pyx Lax, Carter Laney don't forget about the Credence. -Crowe



Figure 7 Bryan Johnson Studios

I go through music phases, but I always come back to the artists that my father introduced me to: Stevie Wonder, Bill Withers, Sam Cooke; and the music I introduced him to: Whitney Houston, Anita Baker, En Vogue. I'm not that old, but my music age is.

-Mrs. W-A

Apologies for a very cliché answer, but I can always listen to The Beatles. There is a breadth and depth and joy there that always lifts my heart and has kept my interest for decades. Also, growing up in the 90s, I heard some really fantastic video game music, and I still love that genre. Nobuo Uematsu, who scored the first twelve or so *Final Fantasy* games, is one of my favorites.

-Mr. Rogan

The Con by Tegan and Sara and *By the Way, I Forgive You* by Brandi Carlile are two albums I never seem to get tired of, and PVRIS and Jason Isbell are general all-around favorites. Somehow, my love of The Decemberists outlasted my pretentious freshman year English major phase. Also, I almost always listen to lo-fi when I need to focus, and the *Growing Up* series by A L E X is my go-to.

-Ms. Dodson

James Taylor, Carly Simon, Bonnie Raitt, Sheryl Crow, Carol King, Buckingham Nicks, Katie Perry, Kristy Lee (a bit irreverent). Dated, yet timeless, as anything worthwhile.

-Ms. Dean

I grew up on singer-songwriters while learning to play guitar, so I tend to gravitate to that genre when I'm feeling nostalgic: Joni Mitchell, Patty Griffin, Shawn Colvin, David Wilcox, Lyle Lovett, and the Indigo Girls—to name a few. Tom Petty will always be one of my first loves, and I stand by the fact that there is never a bad time for the Grateful Dead. More recently, I'm into the Texans like Leon Bridges and Black Pumas.

-Mrs. Heine

I grew up on a weird mix of early, socially conscious New York underground hip-hop (Eric B. & Rakim, KRS-1, Public Enemy, A Tribe Called Quest, De La Soul, Jehru the Damaga, Pete Rock & CL Smooth) and classic rock (Led Zeppelin, Eric Clapton/CREAM, Traffic, Jimi Hendrix), and I still love all of that. It still hypes me up when I need it, like coffee but better. As I've gotten older, I've come to deeply love the blues (Muddy Waters, John Lee Hooker) reggae (Marley, Peter Tosh, and especially Burning Spear), and the classical my musically-trained father was always playing in the car. But the essence of what I love about most of that music can be found in one type: funk. That's probably my overall favorite genre now. James Brown, and his off-shoot Maceo Parker, The Meters, Orgone, the Budos Band, JD and the Evils Dynamite Band, the Mighty Imperials, and – you simply have to hear this album – *Good Food* by the Soul Investigators. Legal, healthful stimulants.

-Mr. Carsen

Letter from the Editor

Dear Reader,

As this school year comes to a close, so shall the work of *The Acta Diurna*. This year has been one of the most interesting and challenging years yet for me. Starting *The Acta Diurna* up again was no easy feat but with the help of so many enthusiastic writers and artists, we did it. If this year taught me anything, it's that teamwork is essential to success. I have found that people like me, perfectionists, tend to stay to themselves because we struggle to trust other people. During the first few weeks of being Editor-in-chief, I tried to do the work all by myself but what that taught me is that nothing can get done that way.

Like any newsroom, you need everyone's help to get the task done. You have the editors, writers, planners, approvers, and artists. And that is what I have come to love about *The Acta Diurna*: the call for teamwork. By working together, we were able to put out three issues for the paper. We had articles from the middle-schoolers' struggle to adapt to a Covid world to athletics to political life at Altamont. But one of my favorite things about *The Acta Diurna* is the desire to write about topics outside the school. The diversity of topics and thoughts makes our paper who we are. Though *The Acta Diurna* may change form and style throughout the years, it will remain the one thing that is most important: an example of who Altamont students are and the bond that we share.

It has been an honor to be *The Acta Diurna's* Editor-In-Chief this past year, and I hope that I have made Altamont proud. Without the support of our talented writers: Tyler Walley, Madeleine Beckwith, Sydney Porter, Claudia Williams, Lucine Carsen, Eleanor Roth, and Priya Soni; my fellow Editors: Claudia Williams and Lucine Carsen; our artist and cartoonist: Ingrid Smyer; or our club sponsor: Mr. Tsivourakis, *The Acta Diurna* would not be here today. Thank you, staff and readers, for being the support that the newspaper needed for success!

This is Margaret Schedler, Editor-in-chief, signing off for the last time in the 2020-'21 season. We'll see you next year!