Graduating senior Destiny Rosario celebrates with classmates at graduation on June 10. The graduation was held outside at Tully Stadium with masks and social distancing rules in place. But the mood was joyous and the majority of the Class of 2020 attended.

Celebration time

By Lori Alvarez, Associate Editor

This year has been a rollercoaster and it's taking everyone for a ride whether they were in line or not. Although everyone wants this year to come to an end, 2020 is a significant year for us.

Every ten years since 1790, the U.S. takes a national headcount. This is what is known as the census. The census is crucial for the nation because it gives the government an idea of how many people are residing in the U.S. But there are over 4 million people who may not be represented in the 2020 census.

Participating in the census is in everyone’s best interest. After all, the information on the forms is used by decision-makers to determine which communities, schools, hospitals, and roads need federal funding.

The information that you provide will help your community thrive, have more resources around your neighborhoods, such as police stations, fire departments, etc. It also makes the government work for you. It's a good way to tell our leaders who we are and what we need. The numbers are used to help determine the distribution of hundreds of billions of dollars in federal and state funds. We're talking hospitals, highways, stadiums and school lunch programs.

"Many people don't realize how important the census is," one Alief ISD employee. "They're scared of not participating because they think they don't gain anything from it. I know a lot of parents in the Alief area that have that fear of participating in the census because, like I said, they don't want their information out there. But that's not how the census works, they are not against us."

People are scared to participate in the census for many reasons: lack of trust in the government, they're scared their personal information might get out to the public, and their immi-

Our community can’t afford to be ignored. Complete the census today.

Vote like your future depends on it

By Daphnee Martinez, Editor-in-Chief

The 2020 presidential election has been well underway for the better part of this year and we have been watching both sides unfold from the sidelines. Due to the current pandemic, information about voting and polling places has been up in the air as well as voter sentiment. However, there are many ways one could ensure their participation and stay informed in this upcoming election.

"The importance of it (voting) was never instilled in me," said world geography and economics teacher Richard Harman. "The reason I got involved is, when Reagan was elected, I was in the navy and so I was having a say on who my boss was, which kind of made me more aware."

If you are at least 18 or will be by Nov. 3 and are a United States citizen, you are qualified to participate in this year’s election. To vote you must first register with the state of Texas, and the last day to do so is October 5.

"I'm not able to vote. I do wish I could because this coming election is one for the books and I would like to help make a difference," said senior Caitlyn Pham.

"This election is one that I feel everybody that is eligible to vote should vote, whether you like the person in the White House or don’t," Harman said. "Personally I don't think either candidate is very strong but you know we got to do the best with what we've got."

Still not convinced you should vote? This year Alief ISD has made Nov. 3 a holiday, meaning we won't be attending school that day and that you'll have time to cast your vote. If for some reason you can't make it that day, you can vote through early voting, which in Texas will operate from Oct. 13 through 30. You can also vote...
2020 has been rough, but what will 2021 bring?

By Perla Andrade, The Den Staff

2020 has been rough, but what will 2021 bring?

We can all say that 2020 was not a year we expected to be so full of bad luck. Especially with a virus hitting everywhere, school ending early and going into online classes. At first we were happy because, no school, right?

I am now a senior and if I knew years before that a virus was going to affect my year I would have been more prepared. Now I am more concerned about a lot of things, and this was supposed to be the best year because that’s what senior year is supposed to be. I am concerned that there will be no graduation, no prom, no going back to school, and it’s just scary. I never expected for things to get worse, but I can say I am not the only one with concerns.

Senior Montserrat Serrano said, “One of my concerns is when we will be going back to school or if we even are, what safety precautions will they decide on, and if we will have prom and homecoming.”

Senior Samantha Paz said, “My concern would be the sports, if they get cancelled.”

This year has gone by so fast and we seniors never have the time to think this through, about how this virus thing is real and how it is affecting everything in our lives.

We are all worried about the same things, and wonder how we are going to tell future generations about this and what our senior year will look like. All we can do is hope for the best and stay positive.

By Leo Lescay Valdes, The Den Staff

In memory of Adam Marin

1988 - 2020

Staff and students were shocked and saddened by the unexpected passing on July 20 of teacher, coach and friend Adam Marin.

Marin was a graduate of Alief Taylor High School, and returned to the campus to start his teaching career in 2013. He taught social studies and coached football and baseball, and was well liked by both his students and colleagues.

“I am going to miss Coach Marin’s big goofy smile,” social studies specialist Kydra Hubbard said. “Marin would come to my office and talk for his entire conference period. Sometimes we laughed, sometimes we cried but he always walked out of my door with that big goofy smile. Things won’t be the same without him. He brought truth to our department with a smile and laugh that made everything feel a little lighter.”

Marin leaves behind his wife, Kari and two-year-old son, Henry. His brother, Zach Marin, is an assistant principal at Elsik High School, and his mother, Kathy Marin, is a retired Alief ISD teacher.

“My husband and I worked with Adam at Taylor High School,” Tracy Bonay said. “He was always so kind to me every time he came in my office. He always would stop and say hi to or take the time to wave to me.”

He was a teacher, a coach, but most importantly he was a father and a Lion and an inspiration to his students, athletes, and family.

Seniors Keysi Pineda (above), Samantha Paz (right) and Montserrat Serrano wonder what their senior years will look like.
COVID-19 came home

By Samantha Paz, The Den Staff

COVID-19 is a deadly virus, and that also makes it a scary one. We have all read and heard about it in the news, and some days that’s all they talk about. Each day the cases keep going up, but recently it became personal when my brother became sick.

My brother works in a hospital taking phone calls and stuff like that. One day he came home sneezing and coughing and we thought it was just allergies. Then he got a fever. When he started feeling worse, he kept himself isolated in his bedroom so we would be safe, just in case. We were worried, my family and I. We prayed and hoped that the test results would come out negative.

Then the test results came in and they were both positive. He definitely showed any really horrible symptoms. Finally, after staying isolated at home for a month, he got better.

It was really hard for me and my family because you never know. My family and I quarantined for 14 days and we were good, no signs of anything. So we were safe. What could have happened made it a really scary time, but we kept our faith in God and He got us through this safely.

By Julian Antoury, The Den Staff

Since the coronavirus first hit the U.S. last spring, it has been a baffling experience nationwide, moving quickly through states, impacting schools and shutting down businesses. But how is it affecting the students at our campus? I asked a few friends and they shared some brief responses with me.

“The online learning has been extremely tough and scary on me, not knowing if I’ll be able to adjust right,” senior Justin Valdepena said.

Everything is simply different all around, and that has taken a lot of adjustment by students and staff to get used to. Even though most have adjusted to the changes, many agree that school and life just don’t feel normal.

There are also technology issues, such as problems connecting to the Zoom classes, internet connectivity and other limitations. These problems have led to more frequent absences and some students say they are worries.

“IT’s something different that we have to get use to,” junior John Valdez said. “I just don’t want to fall behind.”

Clearly it’s a scary time for a lot of people. But it’s also a time to stick together as one community and as a family.

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### K-12 School Relative Risk Index

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### Risk Reducing Actions

1. Classes outdoors (e.g., using tents)
2. Maximum class size of 10–15 students
3. Open classroom windows
4. stagger drop-off and pick-up times
5. Pod students in groups
6. Switch teachers between classes, not students
7. Limit shared items
8. Make unused spaces classrooms (e.g., gyms and band rooms)

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SOURCES: University of Arizona/George Mason University, NASEM, CDC, NASEM (https://www.covid19reopen.com)

### Students share their experiences during COVID isolation

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through the mail by requesting an absentee ballot, but there are restrictions for doing this.

“I honestly feel like it (voter turnout) probably won’t change much, because people didn’t vote simply because they didn’t want to and that was it. It was their will and you know it’s really hard to change people’s will,” said Martinez.

“I hope that the popular vote matches the vote with the electoral college because if you remember in 2016, Hillary (Clinton) won the popular vote but didn’t win enough delegates to the electoral college, which gave it to her opponent,” said Harman. Harman also hopes his students understand how much their voices can impact history with this one election.

“Voting to me means contributing to your community,” said Pham. “If you help and vote for a representative who shares similar beliefs and ideals, it could help your community become a better place.”

To register one would usually be able to pick up an application from libraries and or are sometimes provided with them through school, but because of the pandemic, it might be safer to find the application online at www.votetexas.gov, print and fill it out and mail it to your county’s election office. You can also request an application that’s already been printed. Your application deadline depends on the type of application, but if by mail it must be postmarked 30 days before Election Day.

Your voter registration certificate will be mailed to you with information about your precinct.

Before Election Day, check your registration status, and update any change regarding your address or other information, especially since your address determines your polling place. You must also be aware of what times the polls open and close, and the kind of equipment used to cast your vote.

“I would tell my peers, though voting can be tedious, it’s worth it in the long run when you have the correct candidate for the job in office,” said Pham.

“Now there’s this question of well ok you’ve convinced me to want to get counted for how do I do it? many families don’t know, are not educated of this,” said an Allen employee.

So how can you be a part of the 2020 census? For 95 percent of households, the first invitation came in the mail around March, but it didn’t include a paper census questionnaire. Instead, households were directed to a web address to complete the census online. Completed census forms were officially due on April 1, 2020, what is known as “Census Day.” Normally, from May through July, hundreds of thousands of census workers go around neighborhoods to collect data from households that failed to respond by mail. But because of the coronavirus pandemic, these operations will be delayed until the beginning of September.

What about homeless or transient people? The Census Bureau tries to localize as many people as it can. According to the Census Bureau, it enlist the help of local experts in finding places where people without housing receive services, such as emergency and transitional shelters, soup kitchens, regularly scheduled mobile food vans, and targeted outdoor locations. Census workers then visit these locations personally to conduct the census.

The Census Bureau needs to get an accurate picture of how many people live in the U.S. to be able to provide for everyone. Think about it like this, every time your parents host a party they know exactly the amount of food they need to get based on how many people they invited. But if they blindly went out to buy food and drinks, they might be at risk of not buying enough. And that is what the U.S. faces, a threat of an undercount.

“All these communities not being represented, we can say, affects them,” said Ms. Alvarez, a teacher at Cummings elementary. “You know by not counting them in the census, our government, state laws, district even won’t want to give them the federal funding they need. Because they say, well you only reported this many people, you only need this much of money. But you have tons of people who weren’t counted, they are seen as invisible, as if they don’t exist, and they do and they also need this money for their communities and schools.”

With roughly $1.5 trillion in federal funding for programs that rely on census data, it is imperative that the census count is as accurate and complete as possible, and that individuals across the United States understand its impact.

As much as we would’ve wanted 2020 to be one of those 60 second rollercoaster rides, we’re barely in its tenth month and you still have time to inform your parents about the importance of being part of the census this year. Remember, no harm is done to anyone by participating in the census. Rather, by completing it you can help your community.

Fun Sized Facts

By Lori Alvarez, Associate Editor

- The heads on Easter Island have bodies.
- The wood frog can hold its pee for up to eight months.
- Your nostrils work one at a time.
- Astronaut Buzz Aldrin was the first man to pee on the moon.
- There are over 200 dead bodies on Mount Everest. Some of them are used by mountain climbers as indicators for direction.
- About 10 percent of the people in the world are lefties.
- The average lead pencil can be used to write a line about 56 km long or around 50,000 English words.
- Earth is the only planet in our solar system not named after a Roman god.
- The eye of an Ostrich is bigger than its brain.
- Pineapples take about two years to grow.
- Human children don’t get knee-cap bones until they’re around three years old.
- Harvard was founded before calculus was created.
Social media project helps freshmen adjust to campus life

By Daiara Garcia, The Den Staff

Over the summer, while most students were fighting boredom, junior Jaslin Wesley got the idea to use social media to help incoming freshmen begin their virtual journey into high school with ease. Wesley took inspiration from popular YouTube videos, sharing advice to incoming students.

"I was watching YouTube and all these college kids were making advice videos for the incoming freshmen," Wesley said. "And I was just thinking of our freshmen and how they didn't get any orientation or party on the patio or anything. So I decided to create 'The Roar.'"

After hearing requests from many people, Wesley decided to expand her project from just Taylor freshmen to all the Alief high schools. Thus "The Roar" became "The Alief Insider." Wesley not only took it upon herself to reach out to the class of 2024 but assembled a variety of group chats through the social media platform Instagram, where upperclassmen and other current students from Alief high schools could input their opinions and experiences to inform students of their school's culture.

Through these group chats, she was able to receive much of the information and details needed to inform the public. "This page wouldn't even be possible without all of the kids who helped me gather information on the school," Wesley said. The "Alief Insider" page works through surveys that insider group chats and the public have access to, to help provide the information that goes out.

Junior Erinn Cox said, "We were sent surveys about different things pertaining to school, and our answers would be posted on the page anonymously for the freshmen."

According to multiple sources within "Alief Insider" groups, these surveys were the primary way students were able to anonymously voice their opinion on different topics concerning the environment and customs of their schools. The arrangement of bright colors and bold letters easily entice students to visit the page. The page itself contains information about the way of life in various Alief high schools, opinions and ratings on teachers, schedules, information about counselors, and further details of extra-curricular activities that new freshmen may be interested in.

According to feedback and the comment sections of these posts, many students have verified the information being put out on the Instagram page. Those who have had first-hand experience with the "Alief Insider" page agree that the overall results of the page have been positive.

"I've gotten so much feedback from different people, saying that it really helped them or even asking for more advice on what classes they should take or what faculty they contact for different information," Wesley said.

When asked whether particular page has helped her in any way, incoming Taylor freshman Camila Tirado agreed with Wesley that it has greatly helped and influenced many students on their journey to high school. "It tells me important things like about schedules and more important stuff about Taylor," she said.

Upperclassmen involved with the project have also witnessed the influence it has had, not only on incoming students but on other enrolled Alief students as well.

While the page has had a great outcome, according to those acquainted with the development of this project, it could have added a couple of different elements to take it over the edge. Taylor junior Benjamin Diaz said that adding various pages would make it easier for students to locate more in-depth information about their school. And Kerr Junior Kimberly Nguyen suggested having added highlights of available classes, and more live interactions with students like polls and Q&As.

Wesley said that despite the great success of "Alief Insider," she has no plans to continue the page for the future incoming class of 2025, as the information is general enough to not be repeated. "I think I will use the page as a general Alief page to update people on what's going on around the district," Wesley said.

These may be challenging times, but the Taylor Yearbook Staff is working to make this year's book even more beautiful and filled with memories.
Everyone feels the need to go shopping in a mall for something new once in a while, right? But what happens when malls get shut down? Where do we go?

“This pandemic has affected my life by preventing from going shopping like I used to,” Jose Guerrero said.

We’ve all had that eager feeling to go visit the mall just to get a glimpse of what’s new and sometimes the free food samples in the halls. The thing about a mall is that it makes it easy to access a variety of stores and food choices in just one building.

Some businesses haven’t let this pandemic shut them down so easily. In some business places one can still shop with precaution. COVID policies have gone a long way in protecting customers, such as providing hand sanitizer at the entrance of places and also sanitizing shopping carts between uses. A lot of people like the idea of their favorite places offering curbside pickup, too. Many of these new rules are starting to stick with people, which helps a lot. These are just a few examples of what businesses have done to keep their customers happy and safe.

But if hitting the mall still doesn’t feel right, there’s online shopping. One of the advantages online shopping offers over in person shopping is that you get to browse pretty much everything as you would in a mall. The downside, especially if you’re shopping for clothes or shoes, is not being able to try something on.

“I don’t like it as much because I don’t know how the things I order will fit or if the items look like the picture shown in the website,” Karla Cardenas said. “But it’s also good because I don’t have to interact with anyone and I can take my time deciding what I want without the pressure of feeling awkward.”

Just like in person shopping, online shopping has its pros and cons. As both an online and in person shopper myself I’d say that in person shopping is obviously not the best decision during a pandemic, and moving to online shopping would be better for your own well-being. With online shopping your package has to travel to you, which means any virus that may be present at the warehouse may be less likely to survive over the days or weeks it takes to get to you. Many people also turned to online grocery shopping when the pandemic started, because their local stores were being emptied out fast.

So while in person shopping is fun, it’s definitely riskier and more of a hassle during these pandemic times. Honestly it is just better and safer to shop online during this time because it’s easier, safer and minimizes social contact.

“It’s more efficient,” Yadira Sanchez said. “For example, wanting a certain something to announce it had a vaccine for COVID-19. Russian president Vladimir Putin said the vaccine, “works quite effectively, helps to develop strong immunity, and has gone through all the necessary tests.” Putin even said his own daughter has been given the vaccine. But can a vaccine developed so quickly really be safe and effective? Many medical experts are skeptical since the vaccine has not even gone through the critical phase 3 clinical trials.

So when can we get this vaccine? It might not be until then.

The Centers for Disease Control says it will probably be the end of the year or early next year before an approved COVID-19 vaccine is available.

How soon can we expect a vaccine?

By Daniel Espino, The Den Staff

W e’ve been living with COVID-19 since early this year, and there’s no sign of it going away any time soon. It came as a surprise to everyone, even the school. In less than a week everything was closed because of it. Weeks went by as people had to quarantine themselves and spend all our time inside.

Some people thought it was going to go away quickly, but it didn’t. Months later we’re still here, hoping for a vaccine that will allow us to get back to normal. But how soon can we expect one?

On August 11, Russia became the first country to announce it had a vaccine for COVID-19. Russian president Vladimir Putin said the vaccine, “works quite effectively, helps to develop strong immunity, and has gone through all the necessary tests.” Putin even said his own daughter has been given the vaccine. But can a vaccine developed so quickly really be safe and effective? Many medical experts are skeptical since the vaccine has not even gone through the critical phase 3 clinical trials.

So what if people start getting the Russian vaccine before we know if it will work? It might not protect us from COVID-19. It might even cause serious side effects we don’t know about yet.

Marc Montoya at first said he would feel comfortable getting a vaccine shot even if it had not yet passed the phase 3 trials. “I don’t care as long as I can do my stuff without having to worry about people getting me sick. Yeah, I am down for it,” he said. But after learning the downsides of an untested vaccine, Montoya said he would wait.

Registered nurse Nora Espino said, “I wouldn’t want to get a vaccine that hasn’t even passed stage 3. A lot could go wrong with it. If I had to choose between getting a vaccine that probably won’t help or wait until they make one I will probably wait until then.”

The Centers for Disease Control says it will probably be the end of the year or early next year before an approved COVID-19 vaccine is available.
Looking forward to some

Just Ask Allie

By Kimberly Bermudez, The Den Staff

Sports is something students look forward to each school year, but the risk of athletes, coaches and fans being exposed to COVID-19 has put this season into serious question. This virus that has spread like wildfire has affected every sports league in the country, from professionals to college and high school programs.

“I’m honestly really bummed out that cross country might be cancelled,” sophomore Jamir Guerrero said. “This summer I trained really hard and now I feel like it was for no reason.”

The UIL, which governs all high school sports and extracurricular activities in Texas, originally told us that high school sports would begin Sept. 7. But Scott Moehlig, director of athletics for Alief ISD, said, “Sports will start when in person learning begins.”

Football and volleyball athletes, and coaching staffs were back on campus for practice starting on Sept. 14, but cheerleaders, the dance team and band members have not begun practicing in person.

At the time of publication there are still more questions than answers about the state of fall athletics. But Moehlig reminds all UIL athletes and performance groups to stay active and focus on academics by keeping up with assignments and attending all virtual classes. “If students are not attending their classes and they are not getting a passing grade, the UIL rules are still going to be in place,” he said.

Moehlig also reminds students that staying safe by wearing masks in public, washing your hands often and maintaining social distancing will help our sports seasons start as soon as possible. “The best thing to do at the moment is to follow CDC guidelines and keep social distancing,” he said.

How can I deal with the stress of online school? Don’t stress! Take time for yourself to breathe and think about things such as homework, grades and personal issues in a calm way. Don’t overthink things, it’s not going to help at all. Your teachers understand if you’re not able to join their Zooms or log into Schoology but try to take one thing at a time.

Do you think it’s important to be involved in school? Yes, it’s important because, not only does it look good on your college applications, but you also gain so much from being in sports and clubs. You get cords, you get out of your comfort zone and, as a bonus, you make new friends.

What’s your advice for incoming freshmen on how to be successful during online school? I’m new to online learning too, so from one newbie to another, always check Schoology! Teachers communicate everything they have for you for online learning through there. But hey, you have three more years of high school, so don’t stress.

What should we do at the end of junior year and summer going into senior year? During this time you should really find out what you’re passionate about and see if you can make a career out of it.

Should/do you treat yourself better than others? Yes, because if you don’t treat yourself well then how can you expect others to treat you? Don’t make yourself vulnerable to the manipulations of others. Your own happiness is more important than what others may think of you.

How do you overcome fears of doing new activities, hobbies, etc? You should sit down and ask yourself if this is something you’ll be able to commit to. Research it and put the things you found out into practice.

What is your favorite part about being a part of the newspaper? My favorite part about being part of the newspaper is that we get to explore the truth as well as deliver it. By being part of the newspaper, we learn how to find the facts, how to understand them, and how to handle them, something that social platforms only begin to scratch the surface of.

Do you think getting married at 18 is a good idea? It all depends on the state of the relationship, especially from an objective standpoint. If marriage is something you want at 18, then think about if you’ll want that person as your partner 15 years from now. Are they someone you can grow with? Are they someone you can learn from? Are they someone who is dependable, and will you be able to hold them accountable if they aren’t? Marriage is fickle nowadays, and sometimes marriages don’t even last as long as just being a couple.

How can you deal with your personal life, like breakups, and still manage to deal with the stress of applying to colleges? And the most important thing is, how do you get accepted into the college that you want? If continuing your education is something you really want, then you should definitely prioritize it.

In terms of a certain school, you should research their admission criteria and you can even reach out to past and current students to hear their stories. Now that’s not to say that breakups or personal events aren’t hard because they are, and you should prioritize exploring healthy ways to react to these events in the future so that when they happen again, it’ll be second nature to get back up more times than you fall down.

Editor-in-Chief
Daphnee Martinez

Associate Editor, Business Manager
Lori Alvarez

Staff reporters
Perla Andrade, Julian Antouny, Bryan Balz, Kimberly Bermudez, Adriana Castro-Mayes, Johanna Cortez, Daniel Espino, Daiara Garcia, Mildred Godinez, Samantha Paz, Leo Lescay Valdes

Kevin Roberts, adviser
The Den newspaper at Alief Taylor High School seeks to provide a forum for the ideas and opinions of its readers. The opinions that appear in the columns of The Den do not necessarily reflect those of the entire staff, the school administration or the adviser. The staff encourages letters to the editors as an avenue for public expression.

The Den online

Just Ask Allie

Dear Allie:

Lion sports

Dear Allie:

During this time you should re-
Entering the fantastic world of anime

By Midred Godinez, The Den Staff

From our manga, the pages of Japanese drawings come to life on either a phone, laptop or computer screen. Anime has become a popular source of entertainment for viewers to enjoy with friends and family. The colorful and unique animation and character expressions catch the eyes of both children and adults. Here you will find the most recommendable animes that will make you fall in love with art style. Without spoilers.

To slowly walk into the world of anime, viewers should watch classic anime:

Ouran High School Host Club is set at a rich and private Japanese high school where teenagers from wealthy families come together to study and enjoy life’s wonders. Protagonist Haruhi Fujioka, a 15-year-old girl comedian, who is able to attend this elite school from a full scholarship begins her first year with an odd start. Adjusting to the school, she comes across Music Room 3 and opens the door to reveal seven boys. Introducing themselves as the notorious Ouran Host Club, where the “handsomest boys with too much time on their hands entertain young ladies who also have way too much time on their hands.” From there she hides her identity in order to participate in the club and pay her debt since she broke one of their vases. In each episode we learn who these boys are and why they chose to be involved in the club. The once shallow show characters develop and show how their loving friendship keeps them together. Little by little she slowly starts inspiring her friends to be better people.

Rascal Does Not Dream of a Dreaming Girl is another anime that’s worth exploring. Teenager Sakuta Azusagawa helps his friends solve a mystery called Adolescent syndrome while falling more in love with the first person he helped, Mai Sakurajima. Adolescent syndrome is a term to describe abnormal experiences in teenagers’ lives due to physiological outlooks. Throughout the episode each character experiences this eerie disorder related to their own issues such as confidence, jealousy and existence.

Silent Voice opens to a group of elementary kids having a blast one day meeting Shōko Nishimiya who is deaf and communicates through her notebook. As the children found it odd they began bullying her, yet she keeps up a smile and kindness to all. Fast forward to protagonist Shōya Ishida who struggles to forgive himself for bullying sweet Shōko Nishimiya since he lost friends and respect. This leads him to attempt suicide, but he finds himself at her doorstep and eventually enjoys his time with her and even becomes her friend. The movie takes a wild turn toward the end, and he is able to accept his mistakes and live a life at peace.

How to bring your own sounds to life

By Bryan Batz, The Den Staff

What is someone supposed to do during these dire times? We are incarcerated within four walls, and some people start to binge-watch their favorite shows, while others are keeping up with their car, or even starting to work out. What is one supposed to do inside? There aren’t any bad answers. As we have more time for ourselves, we have many things we can take upon. Art is a viable option, drawing and making artworks, maybe writing some poetry. But if you like playing a guitar, or recording vocals, making your own music isn’t that complicated to do.

First you need to set up a home studio. All you need is a portable vocal booth with a condenser microphone, a pop filter and some studio headphones. The prices vary with your budget, but you can find a middle point where you can afford them all.

For a song, you might need to create an instrumental or beat before you write lyrics, but some people can write lyrics without any instrumental. The creative process that comes with making music is different for everyone, some people can write lyrics anytime, others have to be in the mood for it. You could even use old poetry rewritten as a song. You make the melody in your head so that you know how you’re going to flow in a song. Take your time to make something catchy that will get your listeners hooked. Play with your voice experiment and have fun, and you will find a style that suits you best.

When you record you should choose a good spot where there isn’t much echo and vocals go through. As a beginner you won’t be able to afford expensive acoustic panels for your wall, but you can start off in a closet. The clothes will absorb any echo.

After you record everything, you can mix and master. This can involve some pretty expensive equipment and software, but you can skip this step. You would usually need to send your music to a sound engineer. He will then mix the vocals with the instrumental, polish it with an EQ and any other thing the song might need to give it a professional studio quality sound or do whatever your preference might be.

Now it’s time to upload what you’ve created. Choose any of your preferred distributors, but if you can’t pay for a distributor there are free options if you don’t mind a catch. The catch is they might require a small percentage of your royalties, and could possibly be more in control of the music you put out. So read thoroughly the terms and services each distributor has.

Your last step will be promoting. It is better when you have a snippet (a part of the song) in your promotion, have something animated or a video to capture the audience’s attention. Don’t use phrases like, “Out Now” or “Listen To.” These are overused and people usually shrug it off. Have a small description to describe what you’ve made, or how you felt when you made it, so that the person viewing the ad can have something more to relate to. Now enjoy your music, and share it with the world.
COVID self-portraits
from the art students of Mr. Jeffrey Jacobitz

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Adriana Castro
Jose Baez
Joanna Nguyen
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