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OPEN LATE
In the past year, the world upended itself in disaster and reveled in the transformation that transpired. As we figure out what is to come, we look to the foundations that have changed.

The State Press Magazine revisited past coverage and held it up against the light of current societal paradigms. Students return to their occupations equipped with creative adaptations that were once their last resort. Body modifications become normalized as new problems of their implications arise, and athletes look to the future of what possible certification could bring. Looking back helps us move forward.
All the world's a stage

ASU theater students reflect on the skills and new technology that emerged during quarantine

by Savannah Dagupion

A knock at the door and a box of trinkets prepared theater students in ASU's Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts for their first show of the 2020 season, "Machos."

The single box delivered to the student actors took the place of a green room, a wardrobe and the bustle of backstage and symbolized a conversion to virtual theater. As the theater department returns to in-person performances, the effects of their 2020 virtual season linger. "Machos" was chosen by the ASU theater department two years prior to its production. Intended for a live performance, the switch to an online format posed many obstacles.

Jordan McAuliffe, a third-year Herberger student, said because it was the first show of the pandemic season, the department had to figure out how to build a show in the digital world.

Ultimately, the production was converted into eight monologues performed in front of green screens in the actors' own homes. "It was a disappointing first effort, but everyone was learning along the way," William "Bill" Partlan, artistic director of the theater department, said. Prior to the online season, the theater department was in the middle of production for "The Crucible," one of their largest shows in two years, when the pandemic hit.

The show was already built in every department — set, lighting and sound. The entire set remained in the Galvin Playhouse undisturbed when classes went virtual.

After four virtual plays, the cast of "Heddatron" returned to Galvin Playhouse in March and acted on stage while the performance was live streamed to an audience.
Because “The Crucible” was still set up, the department repurposed the base deck and other materials for “Heddatron.”

“It was very poetic that we literally had to build these new virtual shows on top of the remains of the show that once was,” McAuliffe said.

The show must go on

For students, the shift from the energizing, collaborative theater environment to isolation was grueling. Though the department found ways to live up to the renowned quote “the show must go on,” virtual theater didn’t possess the same weight as live theater.

“[Theater students] really weren’t talking to each other,” McAuliffe said. “We were keeping our Zoom cameras off … because we were just embarrassed at the world and the situation that we were in, and we didn’t know how to process it at the time.”

Navigating rehearsals posed a great challenge. Graduate student Kristina Friedgen directed the virtual show “Light Switch,” and reminisced about the intimacy of online directing.

“Having to rehearse actors via Zoom while they’re in their dorm rooms or bedrooms is a really personal experience, one that requires a tender touch,” she said. “It’s a real challenge directing on Zoom because your actors have to trust you and trust that what they’re contributing makes sense because they can only focus on the camera or a certain focal point.”

Although theater was doable in an online setting, the moments not fit for Zoom brought, it made it a lot easier for them to build those complicated garments without needing the actors,” McAuliffe said.

Even though the online season brought unwanted hardship, the theater department realized untapped possibilities.

“This is the potential of what digital theater can do, and though there is certainly a fatigue about virtual theater as a concept now in the industry, there were some awesome things in terms of media design and the cinematic process that we’re trying to bring more into our art post-covid,” McAuliffe said.

The fourth wall

As the 2020 fall semester crept around, ASU’s pandemic protocols were in full force. For the theater program, this meant no live shows, audience or in-person rehearsals. Aside from simply live-streaming actors in front of green screens, the theater department made technological developments in their curriculum to adapt to and evolve their practice.

In “Light Switch,” Friedgen wanted to create textural moments, directing actors to put a glass of water in front of the camera and talk through it or tap it.

Outside of Zoom, technical directors worked on transporting actors into sets as they acted in front of their green screens. Students printed one-inch models of sets, student scenic artists painted the sets and lighting design students lit them.

Costume designers also found new ways to do fittings for actors. Instead of measuring actors for an extended period and being at risk from direct contact, technicians and designers used LIDAR technology to take 3D scans of actors’ bodies and used them as a reference to cut out foam sculptures. The sculptures were then used as dress forms to pin garments so costumes were accurate to each actor’s body.

Beyond the lack of physical contact that

In the limelight

Aside from crash courses in film and numerous technical innovations, the department gained new perspectives on a subject often outside of the limelight until the pandemic — mental health.

“[The saying] is something kind of idolized, but when you look at the realities of what that means, often that means overworked technicians. Often that means emotionally abused actors, often that means ‘Black Swan’ situations.”

“In the pandemic, we recognized that the ability for a show to go on is not in our control. We don’t have to allow ourselves to be destroyed by the art we create,” he added.

Partlan said everyone in the department has been coming together to work on community agreements to talk about how they can best approach performances. He mentioned how faculty has been honoring students’ other commitments by avoiding adding strain to students’ education.

As an actor with an anxiety disorder, Delgado appreciates how the pandemic helped the theater department take a deeper
look at the treatment of theatrical workers. “It’s changed my outlook on my self-worth as a performer, and it’s changed my outlook on the industry as a whole,” Delgado said. “Some of the biggest and most positive changes can come out of things that are absolutely miserable and chaotic.”

**Showtime**

Now, the theater department is putting on its first in-person shows in a year and is eager to perform for live audiences again — while, of course, still following COVID-19 protocols and ensuring the safety of the department.

Friedgen is currently directing the show “Everybody,” a modern adaptation of the 15th century play “Everyman.” The play covers the meaning of living — a fitting theme as the first show back from the pandemic.

Performers took the stage on Oct. 15-17 and 21-24 for masked live audiences. The actors routinely tested for COVID-19 and wore masks during rehearsals. Masks aren’t required during performances, and many actors found vaccination to be essential to their return.

“We knew that vaccinations were the path to bringing the art form that we love back,” said McAuliffe, who is in the second show of this season, “Healing Wars.”

He said students are not required to be vaccinated to participate. Adhering to policies and making sure students are safe has been of the utmost importance to the department.

The productions aren’t what they were pre-pandemic, but the changes are completely necessary.

“We all have a new appreciation for the work that we do after not having the option to do it in the way that we have done it,” Friedgen said. “We have learned a lot about what was harmful or not by getting to take a break from it and not having to perpetuate these cycles … just because that’s the way it’s always been done.”

As ASU theater returns to in-person shows, the box of trinkets is long gone, but the technological developments, community agreements and masked audience members serve as reminders that theater took on new meanings.

“By the end of last year, a lot of people in the department struggled to find the love that they had for theater,” McAuliffe said.

“What’s beautiful about this year is that all of us are finding it again, and we’re able to find it with the lessons that we learned from last year, which has only made us better artists by the end of the day.”

*Editor’s Note: Noah Delgado is a former State Press employee.*
BEHIND THE SCENES
LEFT PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: performers rehearse for "Light Switch," asu sanitizing station, a light operator's station, box of covid-19 supplies, a script for "Everybody." RIGHT PAGE: Kaitlyn Kief addresses the audience in a monologue during the show "Everybody." Photos by Olivia Dow
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War of foods

Witness my appetite fluctuate as I try to find good food at restaurant staples near ASU's campuses

by Camila Pedrosa

The Phoenix metropolitan area’s incredibly robust food scene ranges from a taco truck with the best carnitas served fresh from a Walmart parking lot, to a “super artsy” spot in Paradise Valley that charges $300 for a smear of artisan quail mayonnaise on an upside down sink faucet.

Tempe and downtown Phoenix are quite popular among ASU students, as they have the largest campuses. Certain restaurants are bound to be frequented more than others. I visited four to see how they compared and assessed them simply off vibes, as these establishments proved too chaotic for a logical rating system.

My first stop was up Mill Avenue to Varsity Tavern, where I could hear music getting louder as I approached from Shady Park three blocks away. Dozens of 30-something ASU alumni were chatting, drinking various shades of amber beer and watching the fourth quarter of a college football game on a Wednesday afternoon.

I walked into the old-looking building and was overwhelmed by the combined odors of warm spilled beer and sweat, with notes of Axe spray layered on that morning. I felt stickier with each step I took.

The environment I witnessed was a far cry from the Instagram posts highlighting wild parties and articles about two, almost three, separate liquor license suspensions and subsequent reinstatements.

Everywhere I looked, there were men wearing mid- to late-2000s fraternity T-shirts. There were more Greek letters in the bar than in the Latin building.

I sat at the least sticky table I could find and a waitress, a bikini-clad girl not much older than me, brought over a food and beer menu. I asked a girl at the table behind me what she’d recommend for someone under 21, handing her the beer menu as I’m only 18. She gave me an understanding look and handed me a cocktail menu instead.

Looking over the wide menu, very few options caught my eye. My appetite sprinted out the door when I saw Cheez-It Chicken Tenders on the appetizer menu, so I just ordered a glass of water.

I looked a bit closer at the football game on the 75-inch TV screen 6 feet from my face and realized it was old — it was the 2020 Territorial Cup. Each time ASU scored, a roar erupted from the sea of Alphas, Phis, Sigmas and Michelobs as if the game was live.

The game ended and instead of finding a newer game or even a livestream of a current game, they started the recording again to the excitement of the crowd.

I asked a waitress about the repeat game. She told me the annual ASU-Arizona game is always played on the TVs whenever a game isn’t live, only being switched out by the following Territorial Cup.

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Being in a drinking establishment without legal access to any drinks, combined with the disgusting taste of sweaty air in my mouth, left me parched, so I headed over to the Dutch Bros on South Rural Road and Lemon Street. I got as close to it as possible, as the line stretched past Apache Boulevard.

Despite the long line, a “broista” materialized next to my open car window, leaning in to greet me and take my order. All was normal as I ordered, for Dutch Bros at least, until I was about to roll my window back up and the broista interrupted me.
“So, what have you been watching on Netflix recently?” he asked me. I used to work at Dutch Bros, so I know that making small talk is not only encouraged, it’s required. But even this felt odd to me.

The line of cars kept growing behind me, but this guy walked beside my car, asking me questions all the way to the window. Looking in front of me, each car had an employee escort just to keep the conversation going.

His questions became increasingly personal, jumping quickly from “what’s your major?” to “your vibes feel a little off today, is your relationship with your therapist going alright?”

The agonizing crawl to the window took only five minutes but felt like hours. I thought the uncomfortable interrogation would end once the broista ran back to his next car, but I was wrong.

“Hey girl! You ordered an extra sweet Unicorn Blood Rebel? Are you on your period?” the girl at the window asked me. I grabbed my drink and sped off.

My appetite finally returned, so I made my third stop around the corner.

Taco Bell: a staple of broke college students, stoners and those in the intersection. Despite the fast food chain easily blowing its competition out of the water, I felt it was important to come here neutrally and compare it to arguably “better” food.

A cacophony of meat cooking on grills, intoxicated chattering at the tables and a familiar tune playing over the loudspeakers greeted me as I walked into the Rural Road and Apache Boulevard location.

I made eye contact with the cashier, who looked just as, if not more, tired than the man in a far booth with a half-eaten taco in his hand, his head bobbing as he fought off sleep. I ordered the mother lode of all fast food dishes: a Cheesy Gordita Crunch. The combination of soft and hard taco shells with beef and a small kick from the spicy ranch just hits different.

While I waited, I mindlessly watched the affairs of my fellow Taco Bell fans. Some ate quietly, some nursed wobbling friends after an evening out, one group even made the plain teal wall on the far side of the restaurant their personal selfie background. In the corner, two lonesome students, one with a notepad and the other with a camera, appeared to be doing the same as me.

I felt a sense of déjà vu and quickly grabbed my food in fear of plagiarism claims.

Finally, I could dig into my taco, the world fading away as I savored the long-awaited first bite. The trance was quickly broken by the following sounds in succession: a smack, liquid spilling on tile, an expletive being shouted, another expletive in response and the crunch of a fist hitting a nose.

I would’ve been more shocked if it weren’t
for my at the sounds snapping me out of my taco trance.

Two guys in their late teens suddenly made this restaurant their personal WWE ring, pushing tables away in order to have their fight. By the third punch in, I’m sure neither of them remembered the cause.

The employees who witnessed the start of the fight walked away, presumably to find a manager, knowing this was way out of their pay grade. The manager came out shortly on the phone with the police, casually conversing with the dispatcher, an indication the SmackDown nights weren’t uncommon.

Cops arrived quickly, as I’m sure they had a patroller ready for the inevitable fast food restaurant call. They looked over the scene: two teens huddled over different tables trying to stop their noses from bleeding and their eyes from swelling up. With a deep sigh, one of the cops told everyone to leave to secure the scene.

I didn’t need to be told twice. I grabbed what was left of my precious Cheesy Gordita and was the first person out the door.

My culinary excursion in Tempe was over, so I headed back to my home campus in downtown Phoenix and decided to treat myself to a nice breakfast the next morning at Matt’s Big Breakfast.

I left my dorm at 7:30, feeling proud that I was out so early, and walked down the street toward Matt’s where I found out I was the last person in all of Arizona to arrive for breakfast. The bright white and orange building swarmed with waiting patrons.

I elbowed my way to the host podium, which was almost indistinguishable among the densely packed group, and put my name down on the waitlist — the host told me I was lucky to have come alone and could be seated in an hour.

I found the only unoccupied seat, a small corner of a bench, and perched on it. I struck up a conversation with the couple next to me, who had been in line since 5:30 that morning and weren’t expected to be seated until 9, which they said was their record for shortest wait time.

When my name was called, I took the walk of shame over to my table — every group went silent and scowled as someone who only waited an hour sat far before they would.

I was looking over the menu when I saw a hand point to an item on the paper I was holding.

“Definitely get the omelet, their eggs are always amazing,” said a woman who was sitting on the ground right next to my chair. Her two young kids were sitting directly beneath the table, playing with the legs of the unoccupied chairs. I hadn’t noticed them until now, when they asked me if I could order them pancakes with whipped cream and chocolate milk.

Bewildered at the audacity of these children, I looked over at their mother who gave me a blank stare, as if asking a stranger to order their breakfast was a simple request. As an avid conflict hater, I turned back to the menu and hoped they would forget about it once the server came to take my order.

When the time arrived, I anxiously told the server what I wanted, hoping they’d see my discomfort with the situation I was put in and that the mother wouldn’t say anything.

Obviously, I didn’t order pancakes for her gremlins, so she got up to find her next target, and I was free to wait for my breakfast and eat it in peace. Or, as much peace as I could find while sardine-packed with seemingly all of downtown Phoenix.

My two-day culinary journey took me far and wide, from one side of the ASU Tempe campus to the other and even to Phoenix. I learned fine dining isn’t about the food you consume — unless it’s Taco Bell — it’s about the unique traditions and quirks of each eatery you visit.

Whether it’s televising the same game for football zombies, getting free ringside tickets to WWE: ASU Edition or forcibly making new friends through invasive questions and hungry children, there’s always a vibe to be checked somewhere.
Modern modifications

The politics and possibilities of body modification are changing faster than we realize

by Alexis Moulton

Photos by Hyeon Jung Yun
In 2004, The State Press published an image of an exposed nipple with an industrial piercing on the cover of its October magazine. The cover story was titled “Sensual Steel,” but would be remembered in The State Press history by a different name: “Nipplegate.”

While the story profiled several community members with other extreme body modifications, it was the explicit cover image that ignited an administrative scandal. Major ASU donors were upset by the magazine, leading to threats from administrators to retract The State Press’ funding and kick the paper off campus.

Today, the legacy of “Sensual Steel” lives on in the pages of journalism textbooks and The State Press’ Wikipedia page. But would the issue have been as controversial if it was published today, 17 years later?

As the prevalence and popularity of body modification grows, new industries and technological possibilities are also rapidly emerging. Navigating these new horizons presents a brand new set of challenges and ethical questions for the next generation.

From subculture to pop culture

In modern American culture, where body modifications have been historically taboo, tattooing and piercing often emerge from subcultural, deviant or marginalized contexts.

Amy Shinabarger, an ASU English professor who studies body modification in public discourse, got her first piercing at 15. She pierced her own nose at home while her parents were away for the weekend.

“At that point there wasn’t really anywhere else I could do it,” Shinabarger said. “There weren’t piercing places all over the place.”

With her new piercing came social stigmas that would follow her for the rest of her life. When she entered academia with multiple piercings and prominent tattoos in 1997, she often experienced what she called the “scornful grandma look.”

In Shinabarger’s opinion, body modification is stigmatized partially because it’s sometimes intended to be highly visible or shocking. But that does not give others the right to treat people with modifications differently, or to harass them, she said.

“It makes your body somehow a public space that people feel like they have a right to at least look at, but also sometimes touch.”

Mark Walters is the owner and founder of Living Canvas, the oldest tattoo shop in downtown Tempe. The State Press magazine featured photos from Living Canvas in “Sensual Steel,” so it was only fitting that we returned for a follow-up shoot and interview to see how the world of body modifications
"In fact, Arizona has some of the most relaxed tattoo laws in the country. The state has no mandatory inspection of shops and no required licensing for tattoo artists."

has changed.

Walters said when he opened the shop in 1993, tattoo culture was the domain of punk rockers, bikers and those “far out in the left.”

“It definitely let me see all the parts of tattooing that this generation will never see,” Walters said.

Walters got into the tattooing industry in the late ’80s when he said tattoos were “still kind of frowned upon.” He had full tattoo sleeves by the ’90s and said whenever he went to a restaurant, he would be seated out of view.

“I would never get a good seat,” Walters said. “Everywhere people were like, ‘oh, that guy’s white trash’ or whatever. But now it’s just not like that. Now everybody has tattoos.”

Walters said this change was in part due to the presence of popular musicians and athletes with tattoos in the ‘90s. Body modifications started to become more acceptable, but it was still “kind of an aggressive crowd.”

Today, though, Walters argues tattoo subculture does not exist any more — in fact, now the reverse may be true.

“I think less tattooed people have the subculture,” he said.

Shinabarger said there is still stigma around body modification, but it presents itself differently. She can’t help but notice her students have a greater interest in piercings and tattoos and are more eager to get them.

“If I were their age now I would probably have a whole lot more piercings than I did,” she said.

**Old traditions and new industries**

While many believe the prevalence of tattoos and piercings are a modern phenomenon, various cultures around the globe have practiced both since ancient times. Often spiritual or symbolic in nature, many Indigenous people wear traditional tattoos today.

For Michael Brogdon, a tattoo artist at Living Canvas, his passion for body art began in another context: his time in prison.

“Tattoos that come out of prison aren’t always the things you see out here,” Brogdon said. “There’s meaning behind it. There’s bloodshed behind it.”

For these reasons, among others, the sudden popularity and acceptance of body modification is often disingenuously removed from its cultural tradition. Both Walters and Brogdon said they have had to dissuade customers from inadvertently getting a tattoo related to gangs, prison politics or cultural appropriation.

“It’s like, f---, I really don’t want to tattoo that on you,” Brogdon said. “How do I tell you, ‘hey, what you want to get is prison politics’?”

However, as body modifications become ubiquitous in fashion and popular culture, so has the prevalence of tattooing and piercing for purely aesthetic purposes, in what Walters describes as a rapidly growing “fad-based” industry.

Of course, the increasing popularity of body modifications has not been all bad — it has allowed artists like Walters and Brogdon to work with a broader range of clientele and grow their business. But even in this industry, growth has its own set of challenges.

According to Walters, the tattoo industry is becoming increasingly decentralized, with many budding artists leaving the world of reputable brick and mortar tattoo shops for private studios.

“This is the biggest problem in the tattoo world,” Walters said. “People start an apprenticeship, they start to learn, they go ‘oh, I can do this!’ and then they leave. But they’re not sterilizing correctly and they’re doing more damage and it hurts the industry as a whole.”

His solution? Regulation.

Walters worked with the city of Tempe in the ’90s to establish health and safety regulations for tattoo shop integrity. However, he said barely any changes in regulations have occurred in Arizona since 2004, when “Sensual Steel” was published.

In fact, Arizona has some of the most relaxed tattoo laws in the country. The state has no mandatory inspection of shops and no required licensing for tattoo artists.
in Society who studies emerging implantable tech, think transhumanist ideas are part of an illusive “technological trajectory” that could be dangerous.

Traditional body modifications have habitually served mainly aesthetic or social purposes, whereas transhumanist modifications are often functional, enhancing and amplifying.

Michael believes implantables are becoming increasingly socially normalized based on her own survey data. In her opinion, this could be related to the growing popularity of traditional body modifications.

“What was anathema in the 2000s may now be not only common talk but plausible,” Michael said.

With the advent of implantable technologies, new “socio-ethical dilemmas begin to arise,” Michael said. Much of her public work ponders the line between medical correction and performance enhancement — a line which, under the influence of big tech companies, may become blurry if “everything biomedical may eventually (also) have an enhancement capacity,” she said.

“It’s going to be very difficult to determine who’s got what for what,” Michael said. “And so we have to be careful, especially around legislation.”

Many states have already implemented “anti-chipping laws,” which prevent employers from coercively microchipping their employees. Meanwhile, tech pioneers often volunteer individually to implant devices in their bodies in attempts to enhance their own lives.

Traditional modifications like tattoos and piercings usually have legal and ethical backing in our society, which generally values bodily autonomy and privacy. Modern modifications could also be protected by privacy rights, but skeptics like Michael wonder how truly autonomous implantable devices can be when connected to global online networks and linked to massive tech companies like Google or Apple.

“We’re at this point where this capability that exists is now starting to create paranoia in people,” Michael said.

Michael said many developers are strongly opposed to regulation of implantable biotechnologies, arguing that it could be pre-emptive or ill-informed. While she remains hesitant around legislation, she believes — much like Walters and Brogdon — the modification industry needs some regulation in order to ensure safety and positive outcomes.

“My view is we’re moving too quickly,” she said. “We haven’t thought about the long-term implications.”

**A transhumanist future?**

As traditional and extreme body art gains social acceptance in America, new horizons of modification are emerging, including implantable technologies. While many of these devices may seem like science fiction fantasies, they are increasingly becoming mainstream realities.

Transhumanism is a philosophical movement that advocates for the use of human enhancement technologies to intentionally override our current biological limitations.

Some, such as Katina Michael, a professor at ASU’s School for the Future of Innovation and Computing, think transhumanist ideas are part of an illusive “technological trajectory” that could be dangerous.
The nights dragged on

As Adderall use increases in young adults, skeptics and advocates reexamine the past and present trajectory of the drug

by Kiera Riley and Sam Ellefson

As Aerika Brantley lay in bed, her mind would race, blinking with continuous surges and sparks of residual energy.

Enough hours staring at the ceiling eventually calmed her thoughts to a soft whirl and allowed her to sleep, but once morning came around again, she'd wake up, take a small white pill and send her mind cyclically sprinting once again.

Brantley started taking Adderall to treat her attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, but found herself using her pills outside of prescription guidelines to keep up with life. Her medication would get her through early shifts at work and a full load of classes but wreaked havoc on her sleep schedule, eating habits and general sense of well-being.

"I was basically spreading myself very thin and thought I was capable of doing it," Brantley said. "Even though my body was giving me a red alert."

Brantley is one of many who have fallen into the adverse effects of Adderall. The medication serves as a miracle drug for some, but for others, the threat of abuse sometimes looms.

"You see a post on social media that says, ‘oh, you know, if you’re restless and inattentive and stressed out, you probably have ADHD,’” Barton said. “[You think], ‘that’s it! That must be it!’ When it might not be.”

Adderall misuse among college students is fairly prevalent; a 2018 study conducted by the National Institute on Drug Abuse found nearly 15% of male college students included in the study reported misusing Adderall in the past year. Comparatively, the study found 8.8% of female college students interviewed for the study reported the same.

This gender disparity is commonly reflected in surveys related to college Adderall abuse, which in part could be attributed to the variance of ADHD symptoms across gender lines and the explosion of prescriptions written for adult women in the past couple decades.

According to a 2018 CDC report, Adderall prescriptions for women aged 15-to-44 increased by 344% from 2003 to 2015. Prescription stimulants can alleviate an array of ADHD or ADD symptoms, but they are also used habitually as study drugs.

Adderall’s reputation as a foolproof study aide is not new by any means, said Benjamin Fong, a faculty fellow in Barrett, The Honors College, who has seen ADHD diagnoses grow steadily over the years. Amphetamines have “been a staple of the American cultural diet since the post-war period,” Fong explained, with Benzedrine marketed as the first of its kind in ’30s America.

Origins and growth

The American pharmaceutical company Smith, Kline and French first unleashed Benzedrine on the public as a decongestant in the early ’30s. The medication came in a small plastic tube inhaler containing a cotton ball soaked in amphetamine oil.

The inhaler, available over the counter, evolved from a sniff to clear sinuses to a quick crack of plastic and ingestion of saturated amphetamines. As an easily acquired and relatively inexpensive high, recreational use of amphetamines took root and blossomed in subcul-
Harboring the bulk of the world pharmaceutical market, the absence of a universal public health care system, sky high drug prices and a social ethic prioritizing productivity — the very effects of amphetamines — it comes as no surprise domestic sales make pharmaceutical companies millions.

Fong also points to American cultural and institutional demands when it comes to amphetamines' continuous popularity. It's not complicated, Fong said; there are few drugs that can mimic amphetamines' ability to lift your mood, keep you awake and help you lose weight as effectively. Although amphetamines can have intense side effects, the societal value of these three effects outweighs the potential danger for many, he said.

**Depictions and discoveries**

Fong doesn’t see the trends ending anytime soon, nor does he see anyone causing an uproar over them. “We're still focused more on opioids and fentanyl, but I don't really see much about amphetamines,” Fong said. “They have serious side effects, especially for prolonged use, but they're extremely effective at meeting the strict cultural imperatives of American society.”

As someone who was diagnosed with ADHD, Rowan Alper, a junior studying history and anthropology who uses she/they pronouns, first began exploring the possibility of medication with their psychiatrist.

After a few weeks on Adderall, Alper found it to help them, and she's now been taking it for a couple months.

Alper believes college culture romanticizes and abuses Adderall.

“The is that kind of this neurotypical way of looking at Adderall, when in reality it’s something that helps me with my basic daily functions.”

It's not that they wouldn't be able to function without it, but, for Alper, Adderall helps them with the simple tasks, “like getting from place A to place B and making sure I eat breakfast.”

- Tures like bebop jazz, beatnik culture and the written reign of the beat poets.
- The American Medical Association approved advertising for Benzedrine as a treatment for narcolepsy and minor depression, and later it found its footing as a weight-loss drug.
- By 1945, SKF’s civilian amphetamine tablet sales had grown to $2 million and showed no signs of slowing, but eventually dipped in the ’70s and ’80s when other stimulant drugs filled their place and pharmaceutical industry regulation became more commonplace, Fong said.
- During the ’60s, Americans faced an epidemic of abuse, coming to terms with the size, scope and consequences of prolonged amphetamine use. Amphetamine psychosis became more common, and health organizations recognized the widespread onslaught of dependence and addiction.
- Nicolas Rasmussen, author of “On Speed: From Benzedrine to Adderall,” the definitive history of amphetamines, notes current amphetamine use quietly matched and surpassed the height of the 1960s amphetamine epidemic about a decade and a half ago.
- Considering the context of the first amphetamine epidemic, Rasmussen only sees the same pitfalls ahead.
- “It’s bound to fall from grace,” he said.
- He described the U.S. as a sitting duck.

- Harboring the bulk of the world pharmaceutical market, the absence of a universal public health care system, sky high drug prices and a social ethic prioritizing productivity — the very effects of amphetamines — it comes as no surprise domestic sales make pharmaceutical companies millions.
- Fong also points to American cultural and institutional demands when it comes to amphetamines’ continuous popularity.
- It’s not complicated, Fong said; there are few drugs that can mimic amphetamines’ ability to lift your mood, keep you awake and help you lose weight as effectively. Although amphetamines can have intense side effects, the societal value of these three effects outweighs the potential danger for many, he said.
Prior to beginning medication, Alper talked to two friends who were both diagnosed with ADHD. One said Adderall helped him immensely, while the other said the drug did nothing for her symptoms; this made Alper realize for herself, and for many others, trying a new mental health drug is largely a process of trial and error.

Brantley found her way to the same conclusion. After receiving her diagnosis and starting medication, she initially revelled in the sudden increase in confidence, engagement and efficiency.

But error eventually struck. And after enough bodily red flags and some skepticism, she quit cold turkey.

“It was hard,” Brantley said. “Everything was mundane.”

When Alper was growing up, they knew they were always different, but it wasn’t until she found online communities discussing problems she had experienced that she recognized the reality of her situation.

“Social media is a really, really positive outlet for figuring out what exactly is going on,” Alper said. “Hearing the experiences of so many diverse people and their experiences with ADHD, because no two experiences are exactly alike, everyone is going to have different symptoms.”

Destigmatization through online communities and discourse has allowed individuals to better understand their psychological needs, Fong said, adding that this destigmatization is implicitly coupled with the bottom line for pharmaceutical companies.

“It’s good, it can be insulating in all the ways social media is, but the actual destigmatization … it’s really important, and it’s one, sort of, virtue to those kinds of spaces.”

Self-diagnosing can be extremely helpful to understanding and grappling with mental health, Alper said, especially because of how difficult the medical industrial complex is to navigate as a young adult.

“An immediate pro is that it’s much cheaper than going to a doctor and getting a formal diagnosis,” she said. “It can be really stressful to go through the testing. The whole process of getting tested for ADHD takes, like, four hours and you have to do all these absurd tests and it’s not fun.”

One con to self-diagnosis however is its inherent barrier to medication. You’re also likely to diagnose yourself incorrectly, Alper noted; they suggested participating in studies that offer informal diagnoses but stressed self-diagnosis is not an inherently “evil concept.”

While the internet is becoming an oasis for mental health awareness, pharmaceutical companies are raking in profit from the influx of individuals looking for prescription medications.

What's to gain?

Pharmaceutical companies producing Adderall have a massive stake in normalization via social platforms, Fong said. “That’s the inherent difficulty of talking about diagnoses and ADHD, and rising Adderall and Ritalin prescriptions, that the pharmaceutical companies are pushing it as well.”

The U.S. is one of two countries in the world where direct-to-consumer drug advertisements are legal. This niche advertising field gives pharma companies a lot of leeway; when drugs are marketed as a product, rather than solely as a medical solution, the end goal can be more about getting as many new patients as possible than about getting patients who need the drug.

“Most countries realize that having extremely powerful corporations advertise very
powerful prescription medication on TV is not a good idea,” Fong said. “They want to sell a lot of pills. I mean, it’s not rocket science.”

Akin to Barton’s sentiment that overlapping symptoms can cause diagnostic confusions, Fong noted how murky drug advertisements can capitalize on general anxieties and prodromes.

Pharmaceutical companies are engaging in awareness campaigns in extremely vague ways, he said, and they employ “descriptions of problems that almost every human being has” to make their product applicable to a broader population.

“It’s definitely a tricky relationship because you never want pharmaceutical companies to have any more money than they already do,” Alper said.

“It sucks, but you have to bite the bullet and continue that prescription because your mental health matters more than some corporation getting a billion more dollars. As much as it sucks, you have to put yourself first.”

All they do is win

ASU’s triathlon team looks to parlay a historic run into a major advancement for the sport

by Ike Everard

A

su’s triathlon team has been making a name for itself deep in the heart of Tempe. With four consecutive national titles, the team boasts the most of any ASU program since 2015. The yearly trophy has become as much a tradition as the whitewashing of “A” mountain prior to football season.

“It’s a lot of pressure, but at the same time we all bring our best to our practices and to the team,” graduate student Kyla Roy said. “We’re confident that what we’re doing is enough, and if we all do that then maybe the outcome will be what we want.”

That success, though, has largely gone unnoticed outside the ASU community. For all of its accolades, the team hasn’t built the same following as other sports.

“I don’t think the team has a chip on their shoulder,” head coach Cliff English said. “They are well aware that we are an emerging sport, but they also know that they are a big part of driving the sport forward. It certainly drives them.”

English hopes the sport and its recognition will grow through an NCAA certification process years in the making. Currently, USA Triathlon is the governing body for the 37 schools competing for the national title in Tempe. In order for the sport to be officially recognized by the NCAA, there must be 40 schools.

“It sounds like we should be able to get to 40 soon,” English said. He added that the NCAA process can take up to 12 months, but he’s hopeful the sport will be adopted by the governing body within the next few years. Once that happens, they’ll take over planning for Keystone events, like the national championship.

“We’d love to see the national championship stay in Tempe forever,” assistant coach
Nicole Welling said, “But honestly, just seeing the sport continue to grow and really come into its own is good enough for us.”

That national championship event is a personal cause to Welling as she oversees the planning committee. After the race was canceled last season due to COVID-19, Welling doubled down on preparing this year’s competition.

“It’s super exciting to have them back,” Welling said. “We love racing in Tempe. There’s nothing better than being able to have the crowds on the Mill Bridge.”

**Growth with pride**

While most of the meetings for the host committee have taken place on Zoom, Welling said the energy and passion they have for triathlon shines through.

It’s the passion driving those involved to push for NCAA recognition. English hopes with an official NCAA designation and the attention brought by becoming a Division I sport, the triathlon team could receive some of the attention typically reserved for programs like football and basketball.

“I think within our own institution, once we become an (NCAA) championship sport, those 100 points toward the Directors’ Cup will go a long way and put us well within the top 15,” English said. “I’ve always been someone that sees myself as a team player and a contributor and I personally cannot wait to be able to do that for ASU.”

The Directors’ Cup is a yearly ranking of Division 1 schools by Learfield IMG which accounts for all NCAA programs and their success. Last year, ASU finished 20th, but English hopes with the addition of the triathlon points, it could push the school upward in ranking.

Even for graduating athletes like Roy, an NCAA designation is appealing.

“I think it’s pretty cool to be a part of it,” Roy said. “Even though I won’t be here, I will have been part of an emerging sport, which is pretty cool.”

For now, though, Roy is locked in on what will be her final season. A team leader and one of the top racers, she’s ready to make the most of the opportunity to win gold one final time.

“It’s exciting,” Roy said. “It’s a little nerve-wracking because we haven’t raced in so long, but when we were training last year we had [this year’s national championships] in the back of our minds the whole time.”

The team as a whole has benefited from that mindset of persistence and dedication. Coming off a year where they couldn’t compete in any events, English said it’s been a revelation to finally test their skills again.

“It’s really cool to be back doing what we’re here to do, which is to compete,” English said. “It’s nice to be able to train but after a while you need to see where you’re at.”

The return to a regular schedule has been cathartic for most, but for some it’s even more meaningful. Roy and fellow graduate student Hannah Henry were seniors when the 2020 season was canceled, and they believed they may never don the Sun Devil uniform again.

Now, they return to pursue master’s degrees while competing for one last national title.

**Back to work**

English says both women are in the midst of their toughest semesters yet in terms of academics, but they haven’t let it stop them from pushing forward on and off the course.

“They were here training all summer long,” English said. “They’re really excited about it.”

The devotion and competitive spirit permeates the Sun Devil team. A full-scale return has come naturally to a program which has won four straight national titles,
but that doesn’t mean there haven’t been some hiccups along the way.

Roy said returning to full team practices was “weird-good” after a year of training in pods. She said during the stretch she missed her friends — training without them was a challenge. Now, her biggest hurdle is helping the current sophomores and freshmen assimilate into the team environment.

“They’re just so excited to finally get to compete,” Roy said. “They bring a good vibe to the team.”

The pandemic also provided the coaching staff with some extra time to pursue other projects. One such venture for English and Welling was setting up a coaching certification process English felt could help grow the sport.

The fifth-year coach brought his coaching family together for a clinic, educating his fellows on the intricacies of coaching triathlon and “filling in the gaps” left by other coaching certification programs.

It’s this desire for growth and the betterment of everyone involved in the sport that makes English and Welling such respected leaders within their program. During the pandemic, when schools around the country were furloughing employees and cutting programs, English said they never felt threatened.

“It’s one of those things that comes down to economics and we’re all old enough to know that we’re very lucky to have the leadership we do,” English said. “Ray [Anderson, ASU’s athletic director] maintained that he was never going to drop programs or have furloughs.”

English said he realized just how fortunate he was when his fiancée, who works as an IT specialist at the Mayo Clinic, was furloughed for a few weeks.

“We never went through that [at ASU], and we’re quite grateful for that,” English said.

This sense of security allowed the team to continue working and evolving, creating an atmosphere where winning isn’t just expected, it’s part of the culture.

While this marks the final season for Roy, it’s also the culmination of everything English and Welling have worked for. Should they win their fifth consecutive national championship, it will put them in rarified air.

Only 12 programs across all NCAA Division I sports have won five or more championships in a row since 1990. Should the NCAA bid be approved by next season, which is English’s hope, it will mark the end of the triathlon team’s status as an uncertified sport.

When the athletes cross over the Mill Bridge on Nov. 13, they will carry five years of hard work and dedication with them.

More than a race, this year’s competition will stand for resilience and the payoff of a year’s worth of work. And hopefully, a new beginning.

ACCOMPLISHED ATHLETES

BOTTOM LEFT: ASU now-graduate student Hannah Henry leads the Sun Devil triathlon team to its third consecutive national championship in Tempe on Sunday, Nov. 4th, 2018.

TOP RIGHT: Hannah Henry, Charlotte Ahrens and Katie Gorczyca accept trophies as they win Sun Devil triathlon its third consecutive championship.

Photos by Kevin Hurley
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