SPRING 2021

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art • photography • poetry • social media • hobbies • social justice

MARIN COUNTY FREE LIBRARY TEEN LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE

THE SPIRE / SPRING 2021

TLC (Teen Leadership Crew) is a library volunteer group open to all teens living in Marin County. The members of TLC work on fun and interactive zoom events for students. Some of these events include trivia nights, video game events, and cooking projects.

Additionally, TLC also puts together craft kids for kids to do at home.

Finally, the members of TLC work on THIS Magazine, The Spire, in whatever ways they can, whether that be art, formatting, or editing!

Co-editor in Chief:

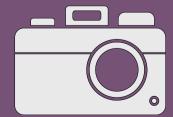
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THESE BEAUTIFUL PHOTOGRAPHS
WERE TAKEN BY LINDY BALLARD. SHE
IS A SOPHOMORE AT TERRA LINDA
HIGH SCHOOL.



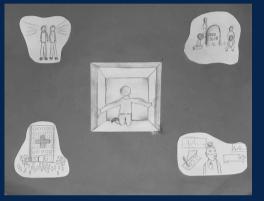


fowers & paint

HIGH SCHOOLERS
THROUGHOUT
MARIN EXPRESSED
THEMSELVES
TROUGH THEIR
PHOTOGRAPHY
AND ART.







Sydney Perkins



Lauren Reid













KYLE WHEELAN, A
SOPHOMORE AT TAM
HIGH SCHOOL, SENT IN
THEIR PHOTOGRAPHS OF
MARIN'S EXTRAORDINARY
SUROUNDINGS.













VERONICA MEAGHER, ALSO A STUDENT AT TAM HIGH, CAPTURED THESE PHOTOGRAPHS.









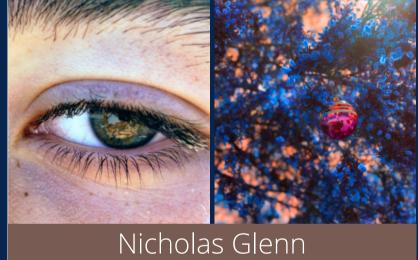
Natalia Betzler







Joslyn Lazzareschi





Jonas Moreno

SIMON SCHEUER'S

POETRY

Agony and Ivory

Shame, and shame of shame.

The twilight world reflects the pale horn sheen of my translucent skin.

A product of oppression, I live in opulence.
A product of abuse, I live in safety.

My life is built on the restless bones of the poor and beaten.

My ideology safe behind my skin, and my coffers

It is wrong to feel shame for a past you did not live,

But it is wronger still to deny the present that you do.

White privilege is not an attack on our lives, It is a plague on society.

A festering wound of inequality, only defeated by its acknowledgement.

All poems were written by Simon Scheuer, a sophomore who goes to CAVA (California Virtual Academies).



Attercop

He is a weaver A spinning attercop She is a tailor Pen and ink drop For needles drop farther They pierce into skin But weaver knows better Than to hide it within A king wears a shawl of great fabric He rules with a wrought iron fist But king's tomb maker soon lays slab brick And kings flesh is gone into mist Memories fade into story Iron grip loosened by death And when scholars claw at the mori Its fabric that now takes new breath For weavers great needles are spinning As sure as the sea and the sky And as sue as the hunter is skinning The scholars ask what, never why

Ode to the night warden

Like butter through knife

O night warden Keeper of truth and protector of fools Savior of youth and destroyer of ghouls Champion of the foppish jester within Defender of the true innocent sin Like charon he guides lost souls Bears with those who are mere parts of wholes Patience beyond measure Propagator of great leisure A true hero of the forgotten times Life is lost without him Foolish mistakes are made But with warden, will becomes whim When guardian watches from shade When mind is awakened Control is asleep For logic is shaken And weak men doth weep But night wardens firm grip Keeps hold on real life And leisure comes easy

Freeform

Astronauts, lost in the vast expanse No current to push them No invisible hand to guide their way Floating in nothingness, they drive their blades into reason Slaying it, casting its awestruck corpse to the astral winds My mind cracks from the pressure No sense to be made, no conclusion to be drawn Like a wine glass in the teeth of an infant She is shattered The shards throb and contort In agonizing ecstasy they transform Like life, reason is applied Like life, it is given and taken away My heart births meaning And pieces become whole. Like a lazy river in a polluted casino No return, only a flowing stream of consciousness We are flying now, glass wings spreading

across the ever widening ocean

Dipping the sheen, tearing the translucent surface, speckled with stars.

Glass fins cup the air, breathing life
She awakes, barely aware.

Soaring through the inky sky.

She doesn't understand, but she doesn't need to.

She is alive now.

And she will not sleep again until she dies.

God I'm bored

Wish there was a hole in my head Bored Termite nest in my brain I'm empty Like a gas tank at the end of the road I'm not whole Miss my boyfriend I'm so tired Miss my best friend Take one for the team Not worth it Trapped by disease Listening to otamatones Shrill and annoying Like me Can't even catch my breath A slow moving train of death Is headed my way And i'm tied to the tracks Nothing i can do but wait Watch it get ever nearer I'm not vibing It's like the dark matter of personality Energy is flowing somewhere

But i'm stuck here Stagnant air and festering water Gestating in me Depression But right now I lied Im vibing I'm feeling Im crying I'm dying Every stroke Is a new beginning Every word is a toothy smile Every note a angels wing I'm on the updraft Flying like davinci Dreams take me higher But i don't know when I'll stop Because i'm falling But i'll never drop I'm a rollercoaster And you can't get off The stock markets a rollercoaster It only hurts if you try to get off Fought in the war Didn't get what i wanted

Spirit prison i want parole Mormonism Rebornism I just wanted to fly To spread my wings To taste untouched air Damn I'm balling















Tap like saw

Maple syrup

Like the train

My whole world is sticky

Sticky, sticky, stuck.

Wanting the open road

To feel the breeze

Writer and Interviewer: Harita Kalvai

Being a teenager is normally hard, between the schoolwork, extracurriculars, sports, and societal pressures. Mix in a global pandemic, civil rights movement, and alarming air quality and temperatures, and suddenly, the normal challenges seem easy! Most teenagers are using the newfound extra time on their hands to catch up on sleep and relax, but some Marin County teenagers are using the time they have to explore new hobbies, start businesses, and create lasting change.

Chiqui Diaz, a sophomore at San Rafael High School, is using the extra time she has to get even more involved in the community than she already is. As an avid Social Justice Advocate, Chiqui feels motivated to use the platform she has to make change, whether that's hosting virtual events in partnership with organizations, or participating in televised interviews, integrating art with advocacy. I interviewed her to get more background on her work!

THE MARIN COUNTY SCENE - INTERVIEWS

Me: Hi Chiqui. It's nice to have you with us today!

Chiqui: Thanks for inviting me to be part of this interview!

Me : So let's start off with a brief introduction. Who are you?

Chiqui: My name is Chiqui Diaz. I'm 15 years old and go to San Rafael High School. I've lived in Marin County my whole life.

Me : So, what organizations are you involved with?

Chiqui : Well, I work mainly with Beyond Differences and the Spahr Center.

Me: Let's start off with Beyond Differences. What kinds of work do you do with this organization?

Chiqui: I'm a part of the Beyond Differences Teen Board. As part of the board, my responsibilities include uplifting unheard voices, participating in national campaigns, and creating inclusive curriculum for schools. Most of all, we do presentations for Middle Schoolers all over the bay area. We talk about social isolation, related to race, sexual orientation, gender, and identity in general. Lately, we've adapted our presentations to be online.

Me: How did you get involved with BD?

Chiqui: I got involved with them through No One Eats Alone day, at Davidson, where I went to middle school. I stepped up to help with No One Eats Alone, and I did a press interview for them. After that, I got involved with the High School teen board.

Me: What inspired you to get involved?

Chiqui: My own experiences with social isolation in middle school made me realize that I don't want anyone to have to go through something like that.

I was inspired by the amount of work Beyond

Differences does, and wanted to help with the cause, you could say.



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Me: Second, let's talk about Spahr. What is Spahr's focus?

Chiqui: Spahr is a Marin centered nonprofit focused on serving the LGBTQ+ community and people living with HIV/AIDS. I did a fellowship with them over the summer, where my job was to support the LGBTQ+ youth in Marin. We do mini projects - creating gardens, doing clothing drives, and hosting events are the main ways we stay connected. We also produced a zine called Mobilize Marin. Our first publication was about explaining police brutality, as well as the term ACAB and what it truly means. Also, similarly to Beyond Differences, we create curriculum focused around LGBTQ+ youth to distribute to schools.

Me: How did you get involved with Spahr?

Chiqui: I'm part of my school's Gay-Straight Alliance. Through that, I found out about Spahr's LGBTQ+ homecomings. I went to one of those dances, and then connected with them through a friend who was already a part of the nonprofit

.Me: What kind of work do you do for Spahr? Chiqui: I do a number of things – hosting trivia nights and events and helping with drives, such as the clothing drive for gender-affirming clothing we had, a while back. During quarantine, we've been focusing on how being LGBTQ+ in an unaccepting household can impact mental health.

Me: What is your biggest achievement working with both of these organizations? Chiqui: I would definitely say that it's impacting individuals. It might seem small, but it's extremely rewarding to know that you could impact someone's life so much. That's why I do what I do – I like knowing that I can use the platforms I have to make lasting change.

Me: So, I've heard that through Beyond Differences, you interviewed Hudson Yang as part of an Asian-AmericanPacific-Islander initiative. What was that like?

Chiqui: That was really cool. If you don't know, Hudson Yang is part of the ABC hit show, Fresh Off The Boat. He's only a little older than me – it was really inspiring getting to meet someone who's already done so much, if you know what I mean. The interview was about lifting up the voices of BIPOC Youth, and specifically AAPI youth. Just in general, meeting teens making change is awesome.

Me: What have your favorite projects been?

Chiqui: I have two main favorites. First of all, at the beginning of this year, I attended and spoke at a conference at Facebook Headquarters. It was called the Dig Cit Commit Conference. While I was there, I got to meet a bunch of influential teen activists. It's really inspiring to meet such passionate teenagers, and I think the fact that they are doing so many amazing things, so young, is really fantastic. On my own, I am working with CASEL - Collaborative for Social Emotional Learning. They are doing a big virtual conference to lift up Gen Z voices (The Summit, by the way, is called CASEL SEL Virtual Summit: Catalyzing Our Commitment to Youth). I am one of the three featured teen voices, and I'll be presenting a piece of spoken-word poetry that is very vulnerable and close to my heart. I love mixing art with activism, and giving two vastly different mediums a purpose together. For the intro video, I worked with Asalah Youssef, a teen photographer from Canada. She works with people from all over the world, and we worked together on this project called Screenshots of Home. She walks people through the photography process via facetime. Meeting her was incredible.

Me: You're obviously a very involved and talented individual. When you take time off from your activism, what do you enjoy doing?

Chiqui: Well, first off, I play basketball and waterpolo at SR. I also play the Cello with my school orchestra, and enjoy writing. To relax, I like to bike around my neighborhood, watch TV and movies, listen to podcasts and music, and read books. Also, since quarantine started, I've gotten into watching anime. Also, I enjoy making drop earrings with take-apart erasers. One of my favorite shows as of late is Avatar: The Last Airbender. I enjoyed it as a kid, but watching it now, there's so much I didn't pick up on. It's such a universal show, everyone can enjoy it.

Me: Finally, what are some words of advice you have for teens, and even younger?

Chiqui: This is standard, but things get better. Being a teen is very temporary – the problems you have now will fix themselves! It's important to always take a deep breath and remember that "This too, will pass." Also, surround yourself with people you can be yourself around. Don't settle for anything else.

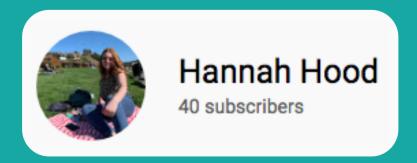
Me : Thank you for letting us interview you! Chiqui : Thank you, it was my pleasure!!

UP NEXT...

Meet Hannah, a 15 year old who over the course of the lockdown has created a YouTube channel to share her hobbies with the world.



CHECK OUT HER CHANNEL:



Me: Well first, tell us a little about yourself.

Hannah: My name is Hannah Hood - I'm a sophomore at Terra Linda High School, specifically the Marin School of Environmental Leadership. I'd like to say I'm an active member of my school's campus - I'm part of the Nicaragua Service Club and Friendship club, and I play water polo and basketball.

Me: What have you been doing over quarantine?

Hannah: Well, I've been focusing a lot on self-improvement and relaxing myself. I've taken up art, specifically painting, and I've continued to exercise and learn new recipes. Additionally, I've started learning the ukulele. Most of all though, I started a YouTube channel where I can share my recipes, song covers, and generally talk about my life!

Me: Wow! What was the inspiration behind starting a YouTube channel in the first place?

Hannah: Well, I've wanted to start a channel for years, but I was afraid of being judged and besides, I knew it was going to take a lot of work to produce quality content. But over quarantine, I decided why not, and decided to make one for fun! I was inspired by my cousins to start my own platform, and have been having a lot of fun experimenting with my content.

Me: Who do YOU hope to be an inspiration to?

Hannah: Really anyone who needs it - but especially young girls. I want to be a ray of sunshine in people's lives, if that makes sense... and especially be a healthy, positive role model for my viewers. I hope to inspire people to live healthy, active lives and enjoy themselves.

Me: Who has inspired you and helped you keep going?

Hannah: Definitely my parents first of all, who have gone through so much and still manage to look at the positives. In terms of celebrities and big figures, Victoria Garrick for sure – she's an amazing athlete and I love the way she speaks about food and body image. Also, Grace Vanderwaal – who is still just a teenager and has yet achieved so much in the music industry with her uke and singing skills.

Me: So, one of the things you feature on your channel is nature and the environment. What are your favorite parks and hiking trails in Marin County?

Hannah: McInnis Park and Tennessee Valley are my two favorite parks and they both have a lot of great trails as well. I also like beaches, but where the beach is or the type doesn't really matter. Me: Alongside nature and hiking, you also feature a lot of food in your videos! What kinds of foods do you like to cook and eat at home? Hannah: I think eating nutritious food is super important, but I also hate diet culture and the stigma around eating healthy food. So, in terms of food, I like to cook healthy and filling things. Right now, I'm experimenting with meditteranean cuisine, which is very plant based and sustainable. There's lots of hummus, olive oil, and fresh produce involved.

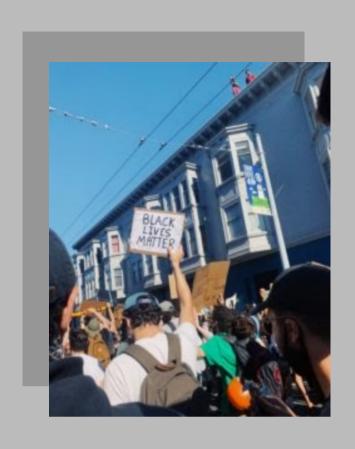
Me: Great! And finally, any words of advice for those who watch your channel, or those reading this article?

Hannah: The person that you are in middle school or high school isn't going to be the person that you are forever. Change will come, but eventually it will be better in the long run. Find hobbies that you enjoy and be yourself!



How Close Are We to Being In The Headlines?

SOPHIA MARTIN, HIGH SCHOOL 1327



A few years ago, my friend told me about a county in the United States where nearly all of the Black and brown residents are pushed into segregated and under-resourced communities. Just down the road from these communities, some of the wealthiest white men and women in the country drive cars that could pay years of their neighbors' rent, and pull up to houses the size of hotels. Every year, stories come out about hate crimes at schools targeting marginalized groups. The N-word is painted on walls, swastikas etched in desks, and Confederate flags fly at sports games. Black and brown children are seen as criminals by white eyes, which is perhaps why all they need to do is glance in a car for the cops to be called. They tremble in fear staring down the barrel of an officer's gun, sweat seeping through their backpacks filled with middle school textbooks. Police storm family homes with weapons and vehicles meant for war. Black and brown youth who speak out against this are spat on and assaulted by white residents.

My friend was talking about Marin County, a county that voted for Obama at seventy-four percent in 2012 and Hillary Clinton at seventy-seven percent in 2016, according to the County of Marin website. It is incredible how complacent we have become in the blatant racism that floods the streets of our towns as we hide behind our politics, as if checking a box on a ballot checks us out of having to engage in any further action. This is why we are no different than Kenosha, Minneapolis, or Louisville. In fact, we are a mere incident away from being the next county or city in the international headlines as a symbol of hatred and white supremacy. It is not "a Black community issue". Saying Marin County is "too safe" is synonymous with saying it is "white enough." Yes, Marin County is eighty percent white. However, Jefferson County, where Breonna Taylor was shot dead in her own home in Louisville, is sixty-eight percent white. Hennepin County in Minnesota, where George Floyd was murdered, is sixty-nine percent white. Kenosha County, where Jacob Blake was shot seven times leaving him paralyzed, is seventy-six percent white.

Whiteness is not an excuse for avoiding discussions of race, nor is it evidence of a lack of racism, and this passivity is what has emboldened those who are the most prejudiced to act upon their beliefs. We see evidence of this in what happened at YEMA, a Black-owned business in Tiburon where police questioned the owners under suspicion of robbing their own store. Or just a few weeks ago in this very spot, where a speaker of color was reportedly assaulted by a woman who told protestors to stop singing the "terrible song" of Black Lives Matter. If this were anywhere else, we would be outraged. We would talk about how stunned we are that there are still people that hateful in this country. There are people that hateful here. To see a microcosm of that, read the posts on the Facebook group "No Name Change for Sir Francis Drake High School or SFD Boulevard!" which has over three hundred members. Nearly every incident of racism we have criticized other counties of allowing has also happened here. That we have not seen Marin County plastered on every Twitter profile, NBC headline, and New York Times article, is mere luck. I don't want it to be luck, because luck runs out. As racism gets bolder and allies get quieter, it is only a matter of time before we are the next worldwide symbol of what's wrong with this country.

It is no longer acceptable to justify these examples of systemic racism in our community by saying it is "the culture" in Marin. The culture of redlining, police bias, and academic discrimination beginning as as early as elementary school is a culture we can't be complacent in any longer. This was a revelation I came to recently, as I always assumed someone else would fix these issues I knew were present. My days were filled with going to board meetings and marches to hear what solutions other people were planning. However, it was in those meetings and on the sidelines of protests that I witnessed the hate still being spewed in my community, which I had excused for its liberal ideology. While many amazing activists of color had been putting blood, sweat, and tears into their work of fighting that bigotry, I heard a common sentiment that they were "tired" because of the lack of support they were receiving. It was then when I realized I could no longer sit if I wanted to see change.

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I thought about how I could help with both the knowledge and resources I had already obtained from my involvement in Marin County Youth Court and the experience of going to both HS 1327 (formerly Sir Francis Drake High School) and Tamalpais High School as a Black student. So after weeks of contemplation, I decided to recruit a group of current students and recent alums from all over the county and called it Youth for Racial Equity (YRE). Many of my personal experiences growing up played a role in the decisions that I have made regarding the group. First, we have recruited youth from all races and levels of knowledge of the racial injustices currently infecting our community. In Youth Court, I have witnessed many teens come into the program with one perspective and leave with a completely new one. It was important to me to implement those same ideas into YRE if I truly wanted it to be an atmosphere of inclusion.

Since the formation of Youth for Racial Equity only a few months ago, so much has changed within the program. YRE was lucky enough to be taken under the wing of Youth Transforming Justice, which is the nonprofit created by the directors of Youth Court. When we had a strong foundation in what our goals were, we began meeting with TUHSD administrators such as Principal Farr of Tamalpais High School and Principal Seabury of HS 1327. In both of these spaces and at public events, we have advocated for reforming the district's curriculum, which often does not equitably represent the history and voices of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), as well as for the removal of punitive punishment as an initial response which disproportionately affects BIPOC students in the district.

Visible change is something that will not happen overnight. This is something I have learned as we've been met with more closed doors than open arms. But giving up because of this resistance is reverting to the culture of complacency. YRE, and many other groups in the community, refusing to step back in the face of conflict has been making a difference. Recently, San Rafael City Schools have removed two of their School Resource Officers, who were disproportionately citing BIPOC students, and many have been advocating for the Tamalpais and Novato districts to follow suit. Overall, many Marin residents have been more receptive to discussing issues that seemed too taboo less than six months ago. But we, as a community, need to ensure that it goes beyond a discussion, because as we've learned, having voted for Obama doesn't exempt anyone from action.

BIRDING

JOSEPH ZENO

Marin County is known for its beautiful weather, wildlife and scenery. Most people take advantage of Marin's nature by going hiking or biking. However, some people, such as Joseph Zeno (Terra Linda), participate in birdwatching and bird photography. Today, I've interviewed him to get the inside scoop on this exciting hobby.



grahed by Joseph



1. What is birding/birdwatching?

There are many different types of birders, but the overall concept remains the same: To learn about birds and how we, as humans, interact in the environment with them. Some "categories" you could put them in are birdwatchers (most birders) who are mainly there to enjoy watching birds either at feeders, on local birding field trips and visit local hotspots. These birders may not be as serious about counting birds or photography.

Then there are the bird photographers and illustrators, who mostly look for birds to capture their beauty with a camera or a sketch pad and either use it for a personal collection, upload it to a scientific database (like eBird), or post it on social media as either a documenting shot or sketch of a rare bird, or showcasing the birder's artistic abilities.

Another type of birding that many birders partake in is listing, which can have a quite a few categories within it. For example, county listing, state listing, yard listing, patch listing, life listing or the famed Big Year, where a birder tries to see as many species as possible in a certain area in one year, are all different types of listing.

The last main category of birding are the ornithologists. These are the birders that go to specific locations to collect data for research and conservation. Some examples of this are point counts or nest searches in a certain area to monitor bird populations. These ornithologists are some of the best at identifying and counting different species, and for a lot of them it is their main profession. These are some of the most widely respected birders and many ornithologists lead local birding trips or teach birding classes. Most people, including myself, participate in all of these aspects and are not limited to an individual birding type, however some may specialize in certain areas.

2. How long have you been doing this for?

I have been birding since I was twelve years old, so almost four years now - since early 2017.

3. How did you develop an interest in it?

I have always had a passion for learning about nature, but being friends with people that I went to school with and becoming part of clubs and going on birding field trips pushed me to learn as much as I could about birds. The amazing thing about birding is that, the more that you learn, the more you realize what you don't know. This pushed and pushes me to keep getting better at identifying them, learning the bird's evolution and life history, as well as teaching others when I can on Marin Audubon field trips, and when I go out into nature with my friends and family.

4. How often do you go, and what are you looking for on your trips?

I always wish I could go birding more often but right now, with COVID and everything going on, I go birding mostly on the weekends and sometimes after my zoom classes on the weekdays, so about three

5. What are the best places to go birdwatching in Marin/CA?

One of the most fun parts about birding in my opinion is that you can discover new places that host an amazing diversity of bird life. Some of the best local places in Marin County include Point Reyes National Seashore, Abbotts Lagoon, Rodeo Lagoon, Bolinas Lagoon, and the Las Gallinas sewage ponds just to name a few.

6. What is your favorite kind of bird? My favorite kind of bird seems to be always changing but right now it is probably the White-tailed Tropicbird, which has a tail longer than its body and is one of the most majestic birds I have ever seen.

- 7. What is one rare bird you've been looking for and are yet to find?
 One bird that I have really wanted to see for a long time has been a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, and unfortunately, they are a rare migrant from Mexico that sometimes shows up in Southern California.
- 8. What is some advice you have for people who want to get into birding? Don't let all of the different types of species, sounds, and other birders intimidate you. The best way to learn how to identify birds is to go out into the field and go birding with other people that know how to. Covid 19 has made all of our lives a lot more difficult so be careful when interacting with other people and stay safe.

times a week.

Ignon bombs

With more time to get creative, Georgia Stahl-Ricco, a 7th grader at Live Oak Charter School, has been keeping busy by baking! A recipe simple enough to do with your little siblings, these lemon bombs are crispy, chewy, and sweet - with a punch of sour! Needless to say, there will be no leftovers.

1) In a large bowl, cream 1 cup of softened butter and 1/2 a cup of sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in 3 egg yolks (save the whites for later) and 2 teaspoons of lemon zest. Gradually, beat in 2 and 1/2 cups of flour. Refrigerate, covered, 1 hour or until firm enough to shape.

Ingredients:

1 cup softened sweet butter
½ cup of sugar
2 teaspoons lemon zest
2 ½ cups all-purpose flour
Sugar (To top cookies)

2) Preheat oven to 350°. Roll dough out on a floured surface and cut into desired shapes. Place 2 in. apart on ungreased baking sheets. Whisk egg whites; brush over cookies. Then, sprinkle with way more sugar than you think they need. Bake until bottoms are brown, 12-14 minutes. Remove from pans to wire racks to cool.

A message from the co-editors in chief of "The Spire"

Dear readers,

Thank you so much for reading the first edition of our new magazine, "The Spire." We want to give a big thank you to everyone you sent in their amazing work. If you are a teenager who lives in Marin and would like to send in your work for our next issue, contact us at christiannagattiegmail.com or hkalvaiegmail.com. If you are interested in taking part in the Marin County Teen Leadership Committee, contact our advisor April Hayley at ahayleyemarincounty.org Thank You!