



# KUNESTONE

June 2020 Special Edition Vol. 4



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## ABOUT THE EDITION

*Letter from the Editor*

Dear Reader,

Although this school year has come to a rather unusual end, this “Special Edition” has largely recapped the most memorable moments that occurred after MHS’ shutdown. Read about the BLM protest initiated by Mendon students, a heart-warming tribute to the Class of 2020, and what BRMS students experienced during quarantine. While our daily lives have been hectic, remember to take a step back and smell the flowers (thank you, bees!). Maybe even consider setting aside time to learn a new language (tips, anyone?) and enjoy some music (I’m feeling some Rock...).

As always, feel free to submit your work here:

**pmhsnewspaper@gmail.com.**

We would love to feature your voice!

~Izzy He

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# A Final Send-Off

By Olivia Harkin

To quote Coach Molinich, “it’s big time.” On either side of the main road cutting through the village—the parade path—were signs for every Pittsford senior, from both Mendon and Sutherland, a rare sight of unity between two schools that boast a bitter rivalry. Graduating senior Carly Cody remarked upon this, stating that what really moved her was the way Mendon and Sutherland came together for this celebration because, “we are *both* Pittsford, and many people from these schools are close friends.” This only further emphasizes the fact that even though the COVID-19 pandemic proves to be an immeasurable tragedy, it’s still possible to come together as one big family.

Stuck inside our houses and “socially distancing,” many of us have formed new friendships by looking out for neighbors, getting reacquainted with old companions via social media, and striking up correspondences with pen pals. However, as New York entered Phase Two of reopening the same weekend, there was a reason to be proud of the Empire State for its phenomenal job of flattening the curve. Like a flower unfurling its petals come spring, the town we call home has slowly begun to rejuvenate, with the Pittsford Starbucks (often frequented by sleep-deprived cramers for numerous AP tests) opening its doors, and many of the clothing stores and yoga studios in the Village opening as well.

Mr. DeCarlo described the residents who flooded the streets to show their support for the seniors as, “one of the biggest casualties of the pandemic.” For them, it was impossible to imagine that that unremarkable day back in March would be their last physical day spent at Mendon High. There would be no senior stampede, no cheering, no tearful hugs, goodbyes, or yearbook signings. Naturally, something had to be done to honor their hard work, dedication, and strength of character as they kept up the legacy of excellence Mendon is known for, so the plan to have a senior parade was quickly formed.



**Pittsford teachers and staff cheer on the Class of 2020.**



**Students sit in their decorated vehicles, eagerly awaiting the start of the parade.**

At first, the idea seemed like nothing but a futile attempt to satiate the graduates who’d been robbed of an actual ceremony, and many feared it would be disorganized, but Carly Cody’s worries were quelled after finding out that the cars were lining up at Sutherland in an orderly fashion. “I think we should make it a tradition,” Carly said, “just refine a couple details and it will probably be one of the best traditions Pittsford has ever come up with.” Mr. DeCarlo agrees, commenting, “the teachers really, really enjoyed it, and the best part was seeing how happy it made the students and their families. We’ve gotta do this every year.”

The creativity and effort put into decorating the cars was palpable: students put their senior pictures on their cars, wrote quotes, thanked

their teachers—some even wrote down every teacher’s name they’d ever had from kindergarten to senior year—and of course showed off what college they’d be attending in the fall. Some took witty approaches, like one colorful car covered in peace signs that said, “Peace out, Mendon!” and another car that stated, “Proud Graduate of Zoom University,” a homage to the way Mendon utilized Zoom, a video-chat site, for their online classes. There were plenty of cool vehicles, convertibles, and jeeps with the tops down, an old-fashioned car from 1939 with a rumble seat where its graduate rode, Teslas, school buses, fire trucks, and even a blow-up pool in the back of a pickup truck. “It was a good closure to high school.”



**The parade stemmed all the way into the Village, where seniors were met with crowds of supporters.**

Arjun Ganesh, another graduating senior, said, “I was glad to see my teacher who I was worried that I might never get to say goodbye to in person.” In addition to Coach Molinich and Mr. DeCarlo, the Math Department, Mr. Yager, Mrs. Anderson, Ms. Naz, Ms. Julian, Mrs. Zielke, and Mrs. Hefner, among many other faculty members, all made an appearance to cheer the seniors on. Even though it was a joyous day, the sadness of a year cut short still lingered in many graduates' minds and weighed heavy on their hearts.

“If I could tell my younger classmates anything, it’d be that they should do something they’re passionate about before it’s too late,” Dan Zeznick said, “it’s never going to be the ‘right time’ to do something, so you should go for it while you can because you never know what’s going to happen.” One thing all the seniors can agree on though, was how wholeheartedly touching the community was when it came together to send them off with love and enthusiasm. 2020 might not have been the ideal year, but we tackled it with grit, determination, and dignity—in true Viking spirit.

Photo credit: PCSD Facebook

## *Things You Can Do to Save the Bees*

By Ellie VanHouten

### ***~Plant Bee-Friendly Flowers:***

Plant a mini-garden or a full-scale bee oasis! Make sure to include bee-friendly flowers, namely single flower tops (e.g daisies), non-hybridized plants, and year-round blooms to support our friends through spring, summer, and fall.

### ***~Make or Buy a Bee Home:***

Clear out a little patch of your garden for native burrowing bees. A pile of branches or some reeds can suffice for wood nesting bees, and weedy hedgerows with a source of water can attract all kinds of other species. You can also purchase a house for native bees online or make your own!

### ***~Set out a Bee Bath:***

Fill a shallow container with fresh water and add twigs, stones, or corks so the bees can land and drink. Don’t worry if some dirt accumulates in it (bees are often attracted to more mineral-laden sources like ponds and even chlorinated pools), but don’t let it get *too* disgusting.

### ***~Reject the toxic, typical lawn:***

Keep your flowering weeds (especially dandelions and clover) and lose the pesticides. Consider replacing a portion of your lawn with wildflowers that provide valuable food for pollinators.

### ***~Donate:***

Donate to organizations that work to support local pollinators, and thereby local communities and ecosystems as well. Also, buy products from local beekeepers!

### ***~Bee friendly and explore!***

There are so many types of bees, each kind just as fascinating as the last. From a honeybee’s waggle dance to the glistening green armor of a sweat bee, there are countless features of a bee’s life that continue to amaze us. Learning about their essential connection to our lives will push us to take further steps in their conservation.

For more info, head over to: [thehoneybeeconservevancy.com](http://thehoneybeeconservevancy.com)

*Check out Ellie’s article on page 12!*

# Mendon Students Take a Stand

By Sophia Izzo

*Sophia, one of The Runestone's staff writers, attended this protest.*



**MHS Senior Samson Demissie throws a fist in the air—a symbol of the BLM movement.**

On the afternoon of Wednesday, June 10<sup>th</sup>, peaceful protesters—all wearing masks and bearing signs—gathered at Thornell Farm Park. The large crowd included students, teachers, and members of the larger Pittsford community including Town Supervisor Bill Smith and Superintendent Michael Pero. The demonstration was organized by Mendon senior Samari Brown and alumni Christina Mack in support of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement.

A white police officer killed George Floyd, a black man suspected of using counterfeit money, by kneeling on his neck for over eight minutes in Minneapolis on May 25. Floyd's death sparked protests against police brutality in every single US state as well as in other countries. Even though countless other innocent black Americans have been killed by police, Floyd's death seemed to wake America at a crucial time. Increased attention to the problems of systemic racism, not only in the form of police brutality but in all the ways racism is rooted in our country's laws, social order, and history, has come through calls for donations, resources for white people to educate themselves, and social media movements as well as physical demonstrations. Protests have not died down weeks after Floyd's death and have resulted in the Minneapolis City Council promising to defund their police department.

Multiple Mendon students at Wednesday's rally gave moving speeches about how they relate to the issue of racism and racial violence. Many of them called attention to the continued issue of racism at Mendon. Samari decided to hold the protest in Pittsford because she knew that this was the audience who needed to hear these messages most. Kamilah Sobers, who graduated from Mendon last year, pointed out that issues are often only truly addressed, precipitating change, when the media is involved as opposed to listening to Black voices. The speakers also emphasized the need for this movement to go beyond a trend. While social media activism is encouraging, there are more tangible ways to dismantle the systems that discriminate against black Americans. Samari, as well as Samson Demissie and Clyde Williams, expressed to the crowd the anxiety that any black person faces simply leaving the house. It was the hope of the speakers that the messages they talked about on Wednesday stay with the people in attendance far beyond the day of the demonstration.



**Protesters hold a moment of silence—8 minutes and 46 seconds—in honor of George Floyd.**



Several hundred students attended the protest organized by two members of the Mendon community.

Despite the heat and sun, the protesters persisted in marching to Barker Road, where they observed an eight minute and forty-six second moment of silence to honor George Floyd. Mendon students, please think about what you can do to help. This is a deep and complex issue, so we need to educate ourselves on racism and privilege. Send our local government emails that urge the movement of funds from the police department into communities that need it. Sign petitions. Give donations. Most importantly, never look the other way or ignore the issue. When you see racism anywhere, but especially at our school, stand up for what is right. Black lives matter today, tomorrow, and every day.

Photo credits (top to bottom): An anonymous MHS teacher, Samari Brown, and *The D&C*

## Tips on Learning a Language Abroad

By *Louis Lemperlé*

Hello Dear Readers,

My name is Louis Lemperlé. I lived in India for about three years. My first language was French, but I had to learn English while I was there for school, and so I could understand people on the streets. In the future, you might move to another country; it could be for your studies, for a job, or simply because you want to immerse yourself in a different culture. I would like to share some tips that could help you learn faster and be better at any language. It doesn't matter what the language is: Spanish, French, Italian, etc. These tips will work with any language you can think of. It will be difficult at first, but it's worth all the pain and trouble to be able to communicate with your new friends.

### Tip 1: Learn the basics

A sentence can be short, but the person you are talking to should be able to understand what you say. You must use a subject, a verb, and an object.

### Tip 2: It is okay to make mistakes

It might be embarrassing in the moment, but conversation is a great way to learn how to sound more fluent. People will often correct you when your sentence is incorrect or tell you what else you can say to make it flow better.

### Tip 3: Talk to somebody!

The most difficult step. It can be scary, but it will improve your accent quickly and give you more confidence—just jump right in!

### Tip 4: Read books

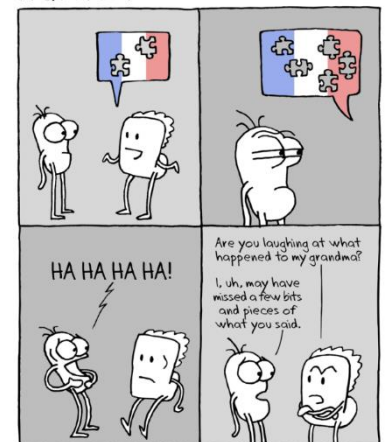
Start simple. It may be a book for children, but reading makes your brain assimilate into the language better.

### Tip 5: Don't be ashamed of your accent or try to copy an accent

The accent shows who you are, and people often like when you have a bit of an accent.

Now, there will be a lot of ups and downs. Sometimes you feel like you are improving, but other times you feel like nothing has changed. Remember that learning takes lots of time and practice. Try learning a word every day to ameliorate your vocabulary and to motivate yourself. Just keep going!

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# Medical Interviews

*Interviewed by Izzy He, Meg Pardee, & Abby Schwartzman*

During the pandemic, our healthcare workers have been at the front of this conflict, enduring long hours, uncomfortable PPE, and the worry that they will be unable to meet the needs of their patients. With many of us quarantining, it can be easy to remain unaware of what is going on inside medical facilities. Below are interviews featuring a variety of different healthcare workers and their take on how life has changed due to COVID-19.

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## **Most difficult situation encountered?**

During the beginning of the pandemic, there were some potential patients already infected with the virus. However, it seemed like the medical administration was hesitant to provide PPE, even though there was already information about COVID-19 surfacing. Many physicians felt there was little we could do to change this at the time.

## **How is work different from usual? Change in protocol?**

When I walk down the hallway to my office, I've noticed that everyone's doors are now closed as a protective barrier. Every day, we have an elevator rush hour (my name for it) since the elevators to the car garage can now only accommodate, at most, 4 people instead of 10. So long lines form. New cleaning protocols have been enforced, such as retraining hospital cleaners to maintain the 37,500 rooms on the clinic campus that must be cleaned daily! And the implementation of UV robots which, studies show, can reduce the hospital-acquired infections by 30%.



**Eric He (Physician at Mayo Clinic)**

## **Are patients reacting differently than normal?**

Patients are taking the situation seriously, especially my older patients. Patient volume has drastically decreased as well.

## **Most interesting thing you've witnessed?**

More people using stairs!

## **Any special recognitions/rewards for your work?**

A free digital thermometer! So I can check my temperature before heading to work.

## **In the future, how will this pandemic impact your practice/profession (your predictions)?**

I believe that social distancing and PPE protocols will continue for a longer time. A decrease in patient volume in hospitals may mean an increase towards telemedicine practices, where we can attend to patients through video chat.

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**Jane (Pediatrician at Panorama Pediatrics)  
& Allen Pardee (Neurologist at Ontario  
Neurology Associates)**

### **How is work different from usual? Change in protocol?**

We have quickly learned how to use telemedicine and have also found a “table’s ready” app—which was made for restaurants to notify customers when their table was ready—to incorporate into our practice. Our patients tell us when they get here, and we let them know when their room is ready. Then we have a nurse meet them at the door so they don’t spend any extra time in the waiting room.

### **Are the parents of your patients reacting the way you expected?**

For the most part, yes. I think they’re appropriately concerned. There have been a lot of questions about safety and how the virus presents itself in children. There have been many questions about child-care planning and when it may be safe for their children to return to childcare.

### **Most interesting thing you’ve witnessed?**

One of our nurses volunteered to be a travelling nurse in New York City for a month. It was great for both her and our practice because at the time, we had less work for nurses to do. When she came back, hearing about her experience had everybody invested in encouraging patients and coworkers to practice social distancing and good hygiene.

### **How are your younger patients reacting to the pandemic?**

The toddlers seem a little more frightened when they’re being examined because of the masks, gowns, and other PPE that we need to wear. Some of our older patients have had an increase in anxiety and depression, and we’ve been trying to be mindful of that when screening for those symptoms during this time.

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### **Most difficult situation encountered?**

Fortunately, nobody in my practice has gotten sick, but we took a huge financial hit because we had to stop seeing most patients in the office. We tried to switch to telemedicine, but it was still financially difficult.

### **How is work different from usual? Change in protocol?**

For a while, we were seeing almost no patients in the office, only emergencies. We were doing all of our visits with telemedicine when we could or we’d reschedule people. A lot of the elderly had trouble with that technology, so we ended up contacting them over the phone or rescheduling their appointments.

### **What advice have you given to your older patients on staying safe?**

Just to follow the CDC guidelines. I also told them that if it’s an emergency, they have to go to the hospital. One of my ninety-year-old patients had a stroke, but he was too scared to go to hospital and stayed home for two days not able to move one side of his body. He’s getting better, but if he had gone to the hospital immediately, he could have gotten treatment that would have lessened the damage.

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**Most difficult situation encountered?**

Trying to provide people with a sense of comfort and reassurance even when we are not able to guarantee that we know what will happen.

**How is work different from usual? Change in protocol?**

There are many new protocols, we have safety precautions such as using the Personal Protective Equipment. We wear masks all the time and use gowns + face shields for any patients that potentially have COVID-19. The other difficult task is that patients are not allowed to have as many visitors as we would typically allow. Thankfully our staffing has been adequate, and we have not had many staff get sick.

**Are patients reacting differently than normal?**

Generally, patients have been more scared than usual, especially if they have any sort of cough, fever, or respiratory problems. In addition, patients are much more appreciative of what we are doing during these times which is always nice.



**Jeffrey Schwartzman (ER Doctor at Unity Hospital)**

**How many cases have you seen?**

I have personally seen somewhere around 20 patients and, thankfully, most made full recoveries.

**Most interesting thing you've witnessed?**

Some of the people that you expect to get better don't while people who you didn't think would recover actually do get better.

**Any special recognition for your work?**

We have all gotten recognition from the hospital and community through their thankful words and kind sentiments.

**In the future, how will this pandemic impact your practice/profession (your predictions)?**

Unfortunately, I don't have a lot of answers right now, but the pandemic will force us to make changes and consistently reevaluate how we do things day-to-day. The healthcare system has slowed down considerably compared to what it is usually able to do daily.

*~A huge thank you to our medical professionals for sacrificing their health, time, and energy for our safety~*



# COVID-19: Incarcerated

By Remy Commisso



**Citizens advocate for the release of those among the incarcerated who are the most at-risk for COVID.**

Amidst COVID-19, we are all thinking about how essential workers, such as doctors and grocery store employees, are risking their lives every day. We do our best to social distance and wear our masks in public places. But what if this was impossible? What if you were forced to be physically close in an enclosed and heavily populated facility? For incarcerated people, this is a reality. You may have heard about the concern on social media, as even some celebrities have spoken out about the issue and asked Governor Cuomo to take action. But what exactly are Cuomo and other leaders doing to stop the spread?

In late March, Cuomo released around 1,100 prisoners, including those not convicted of violent crimes, with less than 90 days left on their sentence, or pregnant women with 6 months or less left on their sentence. But this was only a fraction of New York's prison population. Representatives Alexandria Ocasio Cortez and Jerry Nadler wrote Cuomo a letter expressing their concerns that this was not effective enough for everyone's safety. They reminded the governor that barely anyone incarcerated in New York had been tested for the virus. A study at an Ohio federal prison, where every inmate was tested, showed that 80% of the prisoners tested positive. The politicians encouraged Cuomo to have healthcare available for staff and prisoners. They also wrote about the inherently racist prison system and how the majority of incarcerated people are made up of black and Latino people—the same communities that are being affected the most outside of prison by the coronavirus.

Since the pandemic, many prisoners have died or contracted the virus. Jalil Muntaqim is an example. In 1975, Harlem, NY, he was convicted for participating in a shootout between police officers and the black liberation army. Now he's 70 years old and has tested positive for coronavirus. He is now being treated at the Albany Medical Center. His family has asked for medical parole, but the state has not given it to him. Under New York State law, medical parole is only available to people with illnesses that disable them, preventing them from serving as a threat to others; the state has not changed this rule under the pandemic. The family has also asked for temporary freedom, but this was also denied because the state worries that giving one person freedom would cause more families to ask for the same thing.

Hopefully, after the pandemic ends, New York State can begin to change and reform its systems. Until then, you can always donate to your local bail funds and sign petitions demanding freedom for qualifying prisoners.

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**Governor Andrew Cuomo has received criticism for scarce involvement in addressing prison conditions during the pandemic.**

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# Insights from BRMS

*Ft. Haley Sellers (6<sup>th</sup>) and Julia Sun (7<sup>th</sup>)*

Hello, this is Haley Sellers, a current 6<sup>th</sup> grader at Barker Road Middle School, and I would like to share some of my artwork from over quarantine. I mainly draw dragons and have been experimenting with online art. I also have been working on the quality of my sculptures.



And I've figured out the one kind of person I can draw without completely messing up.

As for what I've been doing over quarantine, I've basically sat in my room at my dad's house the entire time, so not much excitement there...

But I feel like this quarantine has affected us all in different ways. We've all found our refuge from boredom, and we all are just doing our own thing. We had to celebrate my birthday over quarantine with my friends and I've got to say, this year will be remembered as the most chaotic birthday in our lives.

We did break out the Slip n' Slide and got thoroughly soaked many times over at my mom's house. My sister sprained her finger on a bad fall though, so that put an end to that. My family has gone on some very long walks. We even walked all the way to the Dairy for ice cream a couple of weeks ago.

Thanks for inviting us to share our experiences and hobbies with the high schoolers!



Normal. What is it anymore? Today, it's almost as if the world is at a standstill. Kind of like if everything had stopped and taken a pause. The cause of it all. The thing that started this worldwide halt. The coronavirus. Even the name brings me shivers. Not knowing exactly when it all started and not being able to tell when it will all stop is certainly frightening to the core. But it is what it is. The days must go on. Everyone has been adjusting to this new environment. An environment in which we have never seen before. An environment we have yet to adapt to. But enough of that, let's get into a day in my life.

I never was a morning person. Let's just get that fact out of the way. When I found out that I could wake up at 8am I was relieved. I mean, waking up at the crack of dawn isn't exactly easy you know? It takes a skill to get up that early in the morning—a skill I was not given. So that puts into perspective just how delighted I was when I could finally wake up “late” and not miss the bus (for once).

The rest of my day is chill. Everything that I would usually do at school I do at home, just online. Classes on zoom are quite different then the real ones though, that's for sure. Most of the kids don't even open their camera. They could be watching Netflix on their TV for all I know.

Workloads are much smaller now, making the days longer. I have more “me time.” I can play piano at home instead of going to band. I can eat a snack instead of going to enrichment. Heck, I could take a nap if I felt like it (that is, only if I get all my work done first—no naps until my work is done).

I miss my friends, though. I try to FaceTime and text them every day to keep in touch with them. In all the years I have known them we have always been there for each other, and we are not going to let a virus stop us from talking to one another. Even if teachers thought that we talked way too much to begin with.

Yes, things are different now. But that doesn't mean everything has to stop. Our lives continue to be lived. Our days pass. And our hours are used for moiling over schoolwork. But I know this will end soon. The discovery of a vaccine will be made, everyone will go about their day like they once had, and things will all go back to “normal.”

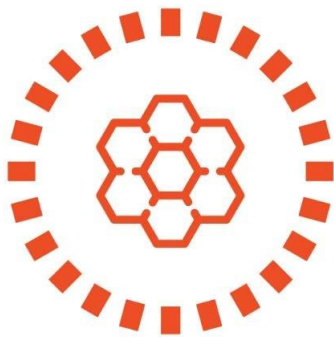
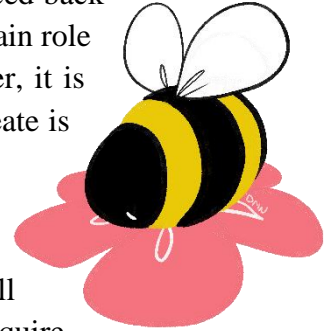
~Julia Sun

# A Broken Bee Base

By Ellie VanHouten

Crisp apples, sour limes, the aroma of a freshly peeled orange—all can be traced back to one organism: the bee. Dubbed either a flying thorn or a fuzzy honey-producer, the main role of a bee is largely forgotten, a faint buzzing in our ears that we swat away. However, it is becoming more and more crucial that we listen. The base of our survival that bees create is teetering, and all that lies upon it is in danger of falling off.

It is our destructive tendency to choose quantity over quality that causes the thirty-percent annual decrease of bees in the US. By relentlessly plowing large tracts of land—only to install a single type of crop—we create monocultures, or expanses null of the flowering plants that bees need to survive. And the few monocultures that do require pollination? Promptly doused with copious amounts of pesticides, herbicides, and insecticides: lethal chemicals that leave bees dying in droves. Yet, these chemicals continue to hack away at our bee base; in 2016, the Environmental Protection Agency reauthorized the use of the “very highly toxic” insecticide sulfoxaflor, which is now being sprayed on over 200 million acres of American farmland.



The logo of the World Bee Project, founded in 2014.

In short, the complete decimation of the bee population would result in a stark and starving globe. We would shamefully resort to mimicking Nature’s pollinators through hand-pollination, a costly and laborious procedure that would render generic crops—which we rely on to feed ourselves and our livestock—commodities, worsening the already dwindling accessibility of food in impoverished nations. Not to mention, the worldwide economy would be sent spiraling, as the annual contribution of bees is \$15 billion in America and more than \$100 billion globally.

In 2018, bee experts created the World Bee Project Hive Network, a program that uses cloud technology as well as artificial intelligence to give governments and beekeepers the information they need to help protect pollinators. With a three-hundred percent increase in crop production that requires pollination, conservation measures like the Hive Network are even more urgent. So why don’t we add a little color to the picture, encouraging diversity instead of barren monocultures? By offering incentives for farmers who grow an array of chemical-free crops, who plant wildflowers and hedge rows, we will not only be able to sustain our food supply but boost the productivity of our farmers, increase biodiversity, and reduce poverty and famine. For “when you’re talking about saving the bumblebees, what you’re really talking about is saving the community,” emphasizes bee expert Dennis vanEngelsdorp.

Like how each honeybee contributes to its hive, all of us must take action—even if it is just as simple as planting a pot of wildflowers. Only together will we be able to build up our broken bee base.



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During quarantine, many of us have turned to music as an escape from reality. Mina Stevens, the creator of this comic, recommends that you listen to David Bowie's *Space Oddity* while reading.

