

The Scuttlebutt

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Valentine's Day then... and now

By: Belen Davila

I can't remember the last time I actually celebrated Valentine's Day. It's been years I'm sure...and that's a little depressing. Still, I'm not sure you necessarily "celebrate" Valentine's, it sort of just...happens, and then it's over.

Most of us probably remember Valentine's as the

time of year when our parents would spend about \$2 dollars buying a box of Marvel Heroes Valentine Cards or Disney Princesses Valentine Cards to give to our friends. Then they would buy a bag of fun sized candy and we would spend most of the afternoon taping the candy on to the card, then securing the card with the red hearts that always came with the Valentine boxes. Sooner or later we would get bored and our parents would have to finish doing the work. And the next day is when the real fun began.

Our teachers would give us half of the day to give each other the same Valentine cards other kids were passing out. The more important thing in our 10 year old minds was the candy. We pushed aside the basic candies like the random red heart lollipops or those candy bracelets and only worried about the good stuff. There were Snickers, Reese's, Kit Kat, Kisses, and so much more. We would go home and give our parents the horribly made letter we made in class and we would giggle with our friends about our crush and now, it all seems so...anticlimactic.

Valentine's Day for a great amount of people in high school, especially people that have a special some-

one, becomes a competition. We all secretly imagine a person giving us something special or having a secret admirer. We secretly compete with our friends to see if they received more gifts than we did. To others, it's just a random day when people can outwardly show their love and brag about it to the world. I used to think that Valentine's Day was...ok. I guess I never really had an opinion on the day even when I was little. I just knew it as Valentine's Day, the day when I get free candy.

But now...I actually feel the same. It's not like anything major has changed but maybe I can understand a little bit of the hype. A lot of people celebrate Valentine's Day simply because they can. We like to feel loved and liked, and there is absolutely nothing wrong with that. Valentine's, as cheesy and corny as this sounds, is actually all about the emotions. We can show our love to a million other people, and I guess that's what Valentine's Day is about or what it should be about. Even then, I know what I'm going to be doing this Valentine's Day: waiting it out so I can buy all the discount candy at CVS.

Cupid's Day

Valentine's Day Yay or Nay?

By: Montse Bautista

Valentine's is a day filled with people exchanging flowers, candy, or cards. A day full of romance and happiness. A day where all the people in relationships make single people feel like they should be in a relationship. So, do people see this annual holiday as the best or more like the worst day ever?

Some people might feel that Valentine's Day is the best thing that ever happened on Earth. People feel this way because they receive extra attention from their loved ones. It's a day where everyone is showing their affection to one another. Everyone loves attention, so having people shower you with it doesn't hurt anybody! And people commonly exchange gifts with each other, typically candy and flowers. So, who wouldn't want to receive presents, right?

Other people have an opposing view towards this holiday. Some people find it unnecessary to follow this cheesy tradition. Why should we celebrate this day by showing love towards the people we care about. Shouldn't we be showing affection towards our loved one's all year round? Furthermore, why should people waste money on unnecessary things such as flowers and stuffed animals. The flowers are just going to end up in the trash can and the stuffed animal is just going to become another chew toy for your dog. Am I right? Plus, what about the people that don't get anything for Valentine's Day? In the end those people end up feeling like crap. Another thing is

that people just end up wasting money that could've been spent on more necessary and important things. And being broke isn't the best!

Are you one of those types of people that goes out of their way to buy the best present for your loved one and that buys the biggest stuffed animal on the shelf along with a huge box of chocolates and a dozen roses? Or are you that person that stays financially stable and doesn't give a care in the world for this cheesy unnecessary holiday.

Valentine's Day Movies

By: Luis Alonso

As we all know Valentine's Day is around the corner and you might want to cuddle up with that "special someone". Of course the other option is being alone. I, myself, plan to spend my Valentine's Day sitting down on a couch with my mom, watching a melodramatic novela. Anyway, these movie suggestions for Valentine's Day might be a good way to spend your time with those you love and adore.

We have to start off with a big bang and no other movie fits that description better than the classic, *Titanic*, a love story that never gets old and is unforgettable. We all swoon at this love story for the ages. The movie *Titanic*, portrays the love story between Jack (Leonardo DiCaprio) and Rose (Kate Winslett) as they travel to America on the ship. James Cameron, the director of this love epic, develops the suspense building up to the iceberg. This movies depicts a love story that unrolls in the matter of a few days and ends in the unfortunate death of one of the lovers, resulting in the tears of the millions who watch the movie and

a want for unconditional love.

Another movie that you might want to take a look at is an ever-trusty boy meets girl story. *(500) Days of Summer* takes you on a ride as Tom (Joseph Gordon-Levitt) begins to fall for a girl named Summer (Zooey Deschanel). This movie shows you how a certain perspective of a relationship can change how someone perceives romance as a whole. This movie might appear to be a cliché, but it offers much more to the "rom com" genre.

Now, we have to move on to the animated favorites that everyone adores. *Shrek* offers much more to the romance genre as it follows an ogre, Shrek, as he tries to save Princess Fiona. *Shrek* is one of the greatest love and redemption stories ever told and we begin to warm up to the big green ogre as the story progresses. This movie has defined what a good romantic and comedy movie should look like and it's been used as a template for many others. This movie offers something for everyone - from small children to in-love couples.

Finally, the story of a foreign boy named Jamal (Dev Patel) shows us that no length is too great for love. In *Slumdog Millionaire*, Jamal recalls experiences from his past to answer questions on the game show Who Wants to be a Millionaire. As he recalls his past he remembers Latika, his love interest, and hope that she is watching the program. This is a feel-good movie that the whole family can appreciate. From the original plotline to the amazing scenery, *Slumdog Millionaire* is a great movie to watch on Valentine's Day.

These movies are simple suggestions, but I would highly recommend you watch or rewatch them come Valentine's Day. You won't regret it.



Environment

The Scourge of Environmental Racism

By: Yami Velez

In the low-income neighborhoods that surround the worst factories in the United States, smoke fills workers' lungs, clogs the environment, and paints the skies grey. As dystopian as that sounds, harsh factory conditions are a reality in many communities of color.

My own parents moved into East Los Angeles 20 miles north of the Tesoro Oil Refinery, not because it had the cleanest air, but simply because they couldn't afford homes in the "rich areas" of Los Angeles, California. That was their only option, and unbeknownst to them, it was a dangerous one.

Communities of color, which are often home to many people from low-income backgrounds, become homes to these facilities too often. This disparity is known as environmental racism, a condition in which "pollution and the risk of disaster are assigned to black and brown communities through generations of discrimination and political neglect," writes Vann R. Newkirk II of The Atlantic.

This is a life-threatening issue that the government and media seem to be ignoring. Many individuals, including myself, go on with our daily routines, oblivious to the hazardous waste disposal sites or air pollution in our communities. I didn't even know about environmental racism until I attended a protest to prevent the expansion of the Tesoro refinery in Wilmington, California. The company planned to combine the Wilmington and Carson oil operations, which SoCal 350 Climate Action activists predicted would form the largest petroleum refinery on the West Coast.

This would mean an even greater number of pollutants would be disseminated in my low-income community. According to a Government Accountability Office study, three-quarters of the hazardous waste landfill sites in eight southeastern states are in poor, African American and Latino communities. Dirty industrial plants or truck depots are also a common sight in low-income neighborhoods.

In Warren County, North Carolina, the state government's efforts to push a toxic landfill onto a small African American community is an example of racism in the same way as discrimination in housing, education, and employment. The targeting of poor communities as a dumping ground for waste is institutionally racist, but not many of us are even aware it's happening.

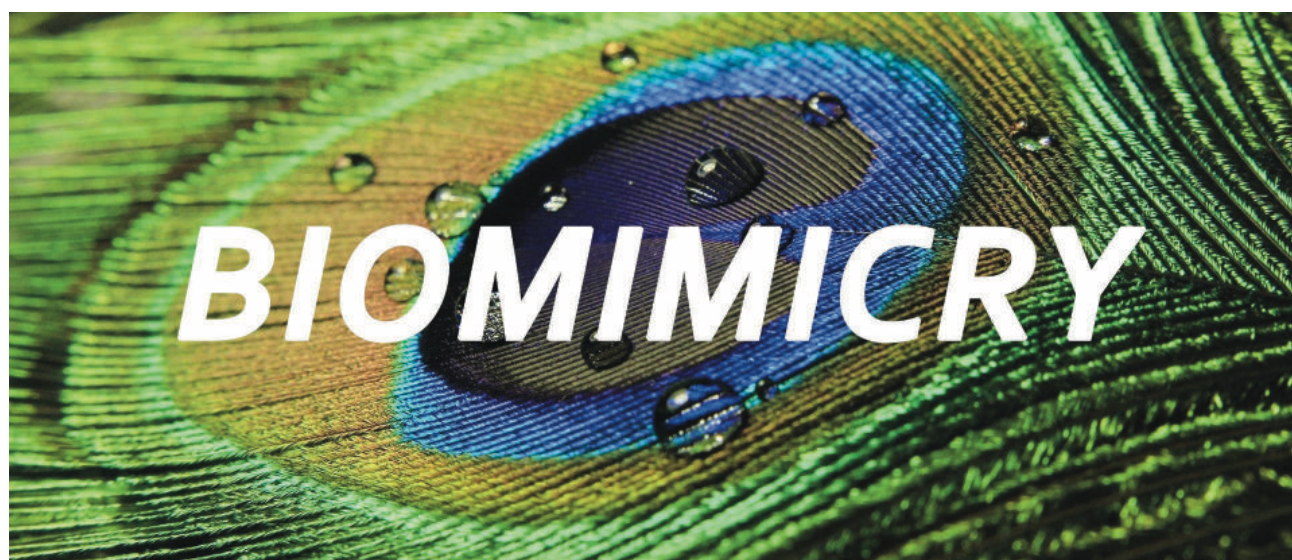
I've grown to love my community and the people in it, and I don't want them to be in the dark. It's crucial for communities that are victims of institutional racism to have access to information about the pollutants in the air.

We cannot combat environmental racism unless we

are aware that our communities are victims of it. We must join the environmental justice movement and prove that regardless of our ethnic or income backgrounds, we deserve a clean and healthy environment.

Join the movement to bring issues of environmental justice and air quality to the forefront at the local and statewide level. Check out <http://eycej.org/> to learn more about East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice, an environmental health and justice nonprofit organization established in 2001 by residents of the Commerce/East Los Angeles area who work towards a safe and healthy environment for communities that are victims of environmental racism and let's start fighting this discrimination.

Biomimicry



By: Rudy Flores

In the efforts of our own human ingenuity to make life easier, we tend to make even more problems for ourselves. Problems that tend to linger and cause trouble for us in the future. Problems that we, as a species, only face. When you think about it, the diversity of life and its organisms were doing an amazing job in surviving before humans stepped into the picture. And now we are riddled with problems that we can't seem to resolve. This is where biomimicry steps in and provides us with an endless array of solutions. The core idea behind biomimicry is that nature has the solutions for the environmental problems we face today. Nature holds the secrets of our survival within its DNA.

To solve the problem of disease, humans made hospitals to treat the sick. The problem with that is that hospitals are a hotbed for bacteria and other diseases to lie in wait for future victims. So we use antibiotics to treat those diseases and bacteria. However, doing so results in superbugs, bacteria that aren't killed by traditional medicine. We can fix this by looking at sharks, particularly the pattern on their skin. According to Popular Science, the rugged diamond shape of shark's skin prevents bacteria from latching onto it. Companies like Sharklet Technologies are using this

idea to develop technology that can be implemented into the walls and floors of hospitals to stop this problem. By stopping bacteria from latching on, we can stop bacteria from spreading and developing into superbugs in the first place. While we are on the topic of medicine, another way that biomimicry may improve your hospital experience is by mimicking the needle of a mosquito. We never notice when a mosquito stings us because their mouth is designed that way. Researchers at Kansai University in Japan have developed a new needle designed after the mosquito and have managed to make injections painless. One day little children won't have to fear the dreaded needle.

The usefulness of biomimicry doesn't stop at medicine. Another field that benefits from biomimicry is transportation, particularly trains. The Shinkansen Bullet Train in Japan is one of the fastest trains in the world, traveling 200 miles per hour. The problem with

the train is that when it went through a tunnel the pressure that it would build up would result in a loud sonic boom on the other end.

Thankfully, the lead engineer happened to be a bird watcher. He redesigned the head of the train to resemble that of the head of a kingfisher. Kingfishers are birds that eat small fish by plunging into the surface of water without breaking it. Eiji Nakatsu, the chief engineer, used the kingfisher to improve upon the bullet train that resulted not only in a quieter train, but 15% less electricity use even while the train travels 10% faster.

Biomimicry is clearly extremely useful in dealing with today's flawed man-made designs. Janine Benyus, the woman who coined the term "biomimicry," has gone as far as to say that all meetings with engineers should have at least one biologist as well. Hopefully, more and more designs can come from the natural world. A leaf can lead to the best water distribution system or to a better improved solar cell. A caterpillar can save the world from the horror of non-biodegradable plastic, and whales can lead to more efficient wind power energy. The possibilities are endless!

Student Op-Ed

Physical Education in High School

By: Diana Calderon

As we all know, high school curriculum requires students to take at least 2 years of physical education in order to graduate. Students usually take this class their freshman and sophomore years. Now, while this may help students physically for a short while, most students don't need or want to take physical education for several reasons.

On one hand, we can argue that P.E. should be required. It promotes a healthy lifestyle and is a great way for students to take a break from academics. Students go from studying all day and learning difficult material in math or English to being able to socialize all while exercising. Promoting healthy living for children is important because it can help them in the long run. While this may be true, not all students see the point in having to take this course.

The main reason why students don't generally enjoy having P.E. is because it limits them from taking a course that actually benefits them and increases their chances of getting into a university of their choice. P.E. is perceived by many as a burden and as nothing more than a school mandate that has to be completed. P.E. takes time away from other academic subjects that, quite frankly, matter much more when applying to universities. For example, several people I know have had to end up taking P.E. their senior year because they took several AP courses during their previous school years and didn't have room in their schedule to fit in P.E. Cases like these show that requiring physical education can become a hassle for

students trying to get the most out of their education.

Also, taking P.E. can potentially hurt their GPA because most P.E. teachers base their grading on mile time, and some students just can't run as fast as they wish they could. Typically, to receive an A, you would have to run an 8 or 9 minute mile, and most students in P.E. are not athletes.

P.E. should become an optional class for students in high school. This could help improve not only a student's GPA, but also push them to take other courses that are more challenging and that will prepare them for what's to come in college.

I Hate English

By: Cesar Becerra

In middle school, I loved to read. I usually read whatever I wanted to read. It may not seem like it today with my dropping English grade, but one of my favorite hobbies was reading. But that completely changed when I entered high school. I was continuously forced to read the "classics", books that I held no interest in. Eventually, I began to hate reading and despised the books I was being assigned. Who cares about a man who has two love interests in two different cities during the French Revolution? English class ironically made me detest reading. I did read every single book assigned to me, but a good amount of my classmates didn't. They chose to not read the books assigned to us because they were "boring in plot" and "totally non-relatable". Personally, I have lost all and any motivation to read but I'm writing this now to try to convince myself and others like me that we should be reading all the classics we're being forced

to read for a grade.

For starters, reading advanced books helps you become a better reader. Reading the classics can help you enlarge your vocabulary and improve on everything from syntax to grammar. Additionally, according to the article "Reading Literary Fiction Improves Theory of Mind" by David Comer Kidd and Emanuele Castano, reading the classics can actually help improve your ethics by building upon other characters that you read about and learn from. Also, pop culture consistently alludes to the classics - everything from George Orwell and his "Big Brother" to Shakespeare and his number of endless sonnets. By reading, you can better understand these references. Just imagine how embarrassing it would be if everyone in the room understands the reference and you're left without a clue.

However, it is also possible that the books you're currently reading will prove to be useless in the future. I want to pursue a career as a veterinarian and I doubt that I will be referencing Shakespeare when I'm checking the temperature of a dog. My friend wants to be an OB-GYN and I can only imagine her referencing F. Scott Fitzgerald's "The Great Gatsby" and saying "It takes two to make an accident," while speaking to a family and their newborn child.

Ultimately, it's all up to you if you want to read the school-mandated books or not. You may find it useful to read these books or you may not. But always remember that we are being graded on our understanding of these books so it's best to just read them. Now go thank Mr. Murchie, Mrs. Ulivi, Mrs. Cardona, Mrs. Loeb, and any other English teacher you have had for making you read these books, that's if you read them.



Current Events

TIME'STM

==UP

In Solidarity

By: Elizabeth Meza

Much like historical reforms in the past, there have been numerous movements in the last year in support of dismantling inequality for all women. Recently, viral movements such as "#MeToo" and "Time's Up" have inspired celebrities to use their platforms to support survivors of sexual assault and violence in the workplace. These movements have inspired award shows like The Golden Globes and The Grammy's to participate in combatting sexual harassment in the entertainment industry. The initial purpose of this movement was to encourage women to speak up against sexual harassment and empower them through empathy. Not long after though did the phrase develop a new meaning. It's expanded to support women of color in marginalized communities and show male support with other hashtags like "#IHave" and "#IWill".

Why does it matter?

A poll done by ABC News found that at least 54% of American women have reported 'unwanted and inappropriate' sexual advances in their workplaces and 95% of them said that the behavior goes unnoticed. The general agreement is that lack of reporting options plays a role in sexual misconduct being dismissed in the workplace. Another component is the power imbalance in government, media, and academia. Women often don't report incidents due to fear of being dismissed, fired, or having to relive their traumatic experiences. It takes a lot of courage for women to speak against someone and the possibility of not being listened to or even facing penalties is too much to handle. Victim blaming has forced women to stay quiet and has ultimately caused sexual allegations to go unnoticed. However, the time to end the cycle of humiliation and fear is now. The "Me Too" movement acknowledges assault victims and encourages them to speak against behavior that objectifies

them. It has highlighted the magnitude of the problem and allowed victims a plan to heal.

What can we do?

With movements like these, the intended result is to provide the necessary resources for women to feel safe. For this to happen there needs to be a change in sexual harassment policies and an establishment of laws that'll guarantee sexual assault reports will be taken seriously. The objective of this movement is to stand in solidarity with those who have been affected and ignored. The hashtag will essentially allow men and women to condemn sexual abuse and behavior in the workplace and hold perpetrators accountable. By empathizing with victims, we can move towards a future where sexual education advises young men and women to talk about consent and report demeaning behavior when they see it.

Times Up

As a result, the "Time's Up" campaign has erupted everywhere. It's a unified call for change in women to become leaders in the workplace. It addresses the systematic inequality in the workplace for underrepresented groups that keeps them from reaching their full potential. It's a call to action for everyone to be intolerant of discrimination, abuse, and harassment.

Ajit Pai

By: Ivan Hernandez

On December 14, 2017, a vote by the FCC (Federal Communications Commission) was held to repeal net neutrality, with a 3-2 vote in favor of the plan. With this result, came a seemingly infinite production of memes from the internet that attempted to demonize Ajit Pai. Some of these memes were downright atrocious, personally attacking the FCC chairman Ajit Pai himself, while others - though much more mild - also attempted to deliver the same message of their

distress at the thought of losing net neutrality.

Ajit Pai's response was not surprising, but far from professional. He quickly responded with his own "meme" video titled "7 Things You Can Still Do On The Internet After Net Neutrality", showing 7 mocking internet cliches, such as how "you can still 'gram' your food" as the FCC chairman proceeds to sprinkle hot cheetos on a mix of questionable ingredients, then coating it in hot sauce, calling his creation "quality" and taking a selfie with it. He then also states that you can still "take photos of cute animals, like puppies". You can watch his full response in the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LFh-T6H6pRWg>

The video, however, soon becomes increasingly mocking, with each new "thing you can still do" featuring viral objects from 2017 like fidget spinners, eclipse glasses, and a Game of Thrones clip in the background of him "binge watching his favorite shows". However, it is the last 2 examples that truly set fire to the flame. With a mocking "You can still drive memes right into the ground" statement, Ajit proceeds to do the Harlem Shake as the music plays in an obnoxious trend from years ago, causing the internet to become enraged.

Not only was the video poor in addressing the actual issues that people have with the repeal of net neutrality, but it also turned their concerns into a joke. It's no wonder that Harry Rodrigues, the creator of the song used for The Harlem Shake, is trying to "take action" against the FCC chairman for his offensive trivialization of the issue and his use of the song.

Ajit Pai has made it clear that he does not care about the people's opinions and what they want, instead pushing their opinions aside as he tramples on them. Though the vote still has to go through Congress, there is little to no doubt that the repeal will pass and that Ajit Pai will continue his life with little to no consequence over his childish mishandling of the situation.



Let's Taco'bout Nacho Fries

By: Adrian Aviles

January 25th, 2018, started out like any other day. The sun peeked its head out from behind the blue mountains at approximately 6:00 in the morning, just as the birds began to sing their melodious morning song. Somewhere, off in the distance, engines softly

hummed as thousands of city dwellers made their morning commute to work. The day appeared to be playing out just as your average Thursday would. It would appear to be your average Thursday, that is, if you were maliciously misinformed of the bombshell being dropped this morning as nearly 6,000 Taco Bell fast food restaurants opened up for service. All across the nation, mile-long lines began to form at local Taco Bell entrances as hungry and eager customers awaited the company's newest release: the Nacho Fries.

One of the world's biggest unsolved mysteries, perhaps, is why a Mexican oriented fast food restaurant like Taco Bell would decide to sell an American delicacy such as fries. The most popular theory suggests that the new Nacho Fries were made to compete against other fast food restaurants' value menus. McDonald's recent advertising for their "\$1 \$2 \$3 Dollar Menu" has definitely added pressure towards other food chains regarding how much bang you can get for your buck. The Taco Bell Nacho fries come in three varying sizes, with their respective prices: Nacho Fries for \$1, Nacho Fries Supreme for \$2.49, and Nacho Fries Grande for \$3.49. Additionally, some extra tension can be felt between Taco Bell and McDonald's, since McDonald's is infamously known for removing french fries from their own value menu.

As far as selection and thematics go, the Nacho Fries aren't that far fetched for a restaurant like Taco Bell. Certainly, Taco Bell has been known for experimenting with some wild (yet popular) foods in the past: the Waffle Taco and Kit Kat Quesadilla come to mind. The actual fries are your average french fries but made with Taco Bell's signature taco seasoning. All orders of Nacho Fries come with warm nacho cheese to compliment your fries. Ordering your fries "Supreme" adds pico de gallo, sour cream, and beef onto your fries. The "Grande" order is the same as "Supreme" except larger.

The general consensus on Taco Bell's Nacho Fries seems to be that they taste heavenly. Esteemed food critics on sites from Buzzfeed to Youtube are catching onto the craze, with many positive things to say. But you can't really be sure unless you try it yourself, though! Whether it is a hit or miss, these Nacho Fries from Taco Bell are available for only a limited time (and for very cheap), so don't miss it.



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