

# The Scuttlebutt

Garfield's Student Newspaper

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## End of the Year Issue



**Editor in Chief: Mr. Murchie**

**Senior Editors: Alexis Cruz and Melissa Barales**

### The Truth

**By: Belen Davila**

Many of us can unanimously agree that junior year is by far the most stressful year of our high school careers. We start by choosing the AP's we are most interested in, and then end up regretting all our decisions immediately after a ridiculously difficult test or insane project. Many of us tend to give up, yet somehow, unconsciously, try our best and end up succeeding.

With my own experiences, I can rightfully say that junior year will never be the highlight of high school, as it will most likely be the worst year anyone will have to endure. You have to manage AP's and extracurriculars which can sometimes be overwhelming. I only had TWO AP's and I was completely broken by October, just imagine all the poor souls the had to take more than two AP's (blessings go out to all those who survived). Not only that but along with taking advanced classes, juniors need to keep on track with their other classes because as we've been hearing for the past couple of years, "Colleges mainly look at your junior year." Amidst AP assignments and other exams, we can still hear that phrase echo in our minds like a sick and haunting track. Still, after all this stress and despair we can find a light at the end of this deep dark tunnel.

After endless preparation for the past eight months, we are then met with the task of putting all our knowledge to the test upon taking our AP exams. We can then rest in peace after those exams are finally over! Walking out of that freezing cold gym after the exam and stepping into the warm sun felt like I was being resurrected from the dead. I was finally relieved

and had a moment of realization where I thought to myself "I did it, I ACTUALLY did it."

Now, as the year is coming to the end I still have moments of anxiety, however they were not as bad as those during AP testing season. Many of us still have other exams but we feel more at peace knowing that in a few days it will all be over. And I've realized this year, more than any other year, that high school should be taken one day at a time. Not only that but we all have to chill out sometimes. Yes we can panic and stress, but we just have to remember that it is NOT, under any circumstances, the end of the world. It's just high school.

As Mr. Murchie once said "It's not revolutionary...it's high school." I am relieved and absolutely ecstatic that this year is almost over as we are all going to need our rest because the cycle will start again next year. Hooray for senior year!



# Summer

## Summer Gardening

**By: Rudy Flores**

As the school year comes to an end we are all preparing our goodbyes for the graduating seniors while impatiently waiting for our summer break. Many of us have major plans for the break. Some of us may be working or interning while the rest of us will simply enjoy the break from the dreaded school environment. Some of us may have a lot of time on our hands and not enough things to do to fill all that time we have just acquired. Many will explore LA and hang out with friends while others may enjoy doing nothing and staying home. We may binge watch all our favorite shows along with all the shows we failed to watch because of school responsibilities throughout the year. In the end, we may all get bored or even annoyed when we run out of things to do, so why not enjoy a new hobby or project to keep yourself busy?

One new adventure that you can all embark on during the summer can be gardening. You do not have to be solely limited to vegetables and you can grow a grand array of plants and flowers. You don't have to dig up your backyard to start, either. If you don't have space, using pots should work out just fine. Before gardening you should do your own research on the types of plants you may want and their specific requirements. If it's your first time gardening, I'd rec-

ommend buying succulents since they require minimal effort to take care of and it'll take a lot of work to kill these plants since they are so resilient. Maybe you want to see more of our local wildlife in your backyard and help them thrive, then native Southern California plants, such as California sage bush and California lilacs, can do just the trick. All of these options are great and it can really help beautify your own home and provide a sense of self accomplishment!

## Solitude

**By: Diana Calderon**

As the school year comes to an end, we all begin to wonder what we're going to be up to during summer vacation, that is if we aren't already committed to an internship, pr youth program.

Most of us make plans with our friends during the school year, however most of the time they do not actually go through. This happens either because one of the friends ends up not wanting to go or doesn't have permission to go. Nonetheless, I'm here to tell you that even without a friend to accompany you, it doesn't hurt to go out and adventure alone! Los Angeles, is possibly one of the best cities in the world, and has so much to offer and explore.

While Santa Monica Beach is always accessible by go-

ing on the train, (take the gold line to Union Station and then the Expo Line all the way to Santa Monica), there are many more places to go in Los Angeles. There are many beautiful parks all around Los Angeles which are free of cost! There's Vista Hermosa Natural Park, which has an amazing view of Downtown Los Angeles. The Los Angeles State Historic Park, Griffith Park, and Elysian Park, are also other notable park attractions.

Besides parks, there are also amazing museums like MOCA (Museum of Contemporary Art) and The Last Bookstore, for the book junkies. Although most of these locations are the mainstream "LA scene" sites, it's much more rewarding to explore these places alone to get a true feel of the setting. Of course going out with friends is always nice and fun, but learning how to be by yourself is a good step to take towards independency. Venturing the city by yourself is a great way to begin the road to becoming more independent and adventurous.

My current English teacher was kind enough to share a story with our class, about how he crossed the country alone, and during that time is when he found out the most about himself and learned that he could be alone in such a chaotic world. This was an important step to take in his life because he grew as a person and became more dependent on himself. And we can take a small step towards personal growth here in our own city.





# School Advice

## Junior Year Advice

Junior year is a major year in high school because it is the last year to make any impactful change to your GPA. But don't forget that your GPA isn't the only factor in college acceptances! There is also volunteer work and extracurricular activities that we must keep in mind when applying but don't do something solely to look good for colleges. A big part of me regrets participating in some activities just because I wanted my applications to look better. Instead spend time doing things you enjoy the most because even your personal passions can shine through on your applications.

Junior year is also the year where tests are vital. SAT, ACT, and SAT Subjects are probably the most important tests that must be taken seriously because they are expensive and we're only given two fee waivers (plus who wants to take those tests more than twice?). Studying goes a long way especially when you know your core material. I've come to realize English is the strongest department at Garfield so turn to any English teacher for help on certain topics of the SAT or try to enroll in programs that are provided by the school. If you're a freshman or sophomore you can try to apply to Upward Bound which provides many enrichment opportunities outside of Garfield. It's never too late to look into enrichment programs. TELACU in the college center offers SAT Prep to their students and there it is never too late to apply if you show your motivation to further your studies.

Do not forget to get involved in activities you're genuinely interested in. If you are considering trying out for a sport next year do it! If you want to join a club or try out for band do it! With extracurriculars you increase your chances of making friends who later you will look on and think, "If I hadn't joined, I wouldn't have met you". The worst thing you can possibly do is regret not doing something that you deep down truly wanted to do.



## Tips For Success

**By: Montse Bautista**

As another school year comes to an end. Some students graduate and move on to prosper at other things, while some students stay and continue to battle through high school. Personally as a junior, this year in high school has been one of my toughest years. Struggling through the many extracurricular activities I am in and community work I do has been a challenge. Also, finding the time to study and do homework for the three AP classes I am taking has been difficult. So, what I want to do is help incoming juniors or maybe any high schoolers to succeed next year in school.

- Tip 1: Always put your schoolwork first. By all means, always find time to finish and study all schoolwork. AP classes require more time and dedication than regular classes, so put in the time and effort!
- Tip 2: Take AP and honors classes. By taking AP and honor classes throughout high school, colleges see that as a great thing. Taking challenging courses makes yourself look as competitive as you can be when applying to colleges and universities. Also, be wise when deciding what AP classes to take. Don't just sign up for an AP class just because your friend is. Sign up because the class interests you.
- Tip 3: Manage your time wisely. Keep an agenda. Plan out things so you know what will be happening throughout the weeks. Always manage your time and responsibilities (homework, studying for tests, community service

hours, and clubs).

- Tip 4: Try not to procrastinate. Procrastination is truly a battle with students. So try your hardest not to leave things till the last minute, because in the end you will be paying the price. Always try to be ahead in your readings and homework when it comes to school.
- Tip 5: Get involved in your school. Try to participate in school clubs and sports. When applying for colleges, what you do in high school sets you apart from everyone. So, try your best to explore what your school has to offer.
- Tip 6: Have Fun! Yes, grades are important, but don't forget to take it easy. Hangout with friends and make sure to make time for yourself. Self care is an important thing!

I truly hope these tips help for next year. And good-luck to you all. And lastly I hope all of you have a fantastic summer break.



## **The Black Tower**

I woke upon that midnight hour  
To see a black crow upon the tower  
The once red tower, painted black  
With crimson lining its every crack  
The bird stood on the window sill  
I lied frozen completely still  
And through that window moonlight shone  
On a room to me unknown  
Through the window a rope hung tight  
On that dark and brumal night  
The trees would rustle, my screams were silent  
The birds would cackle but the room stayed quiet  
The crow flew outcast into the void  
I was in a torment I could not avoid  
On that night I was hexed by a spell of death  
A nightmare spelling my last breath

# Testing

## Testing is Flawed

By: Kevin Hernandez

Tests are one of the most flawed things ever created by humanity. Students hate them and adults are misled by them. As an important metric used to judge the future of America, or any country for that matter, tests should be evaluated. Indeed, an evaluation of the evaluation process is in order. It must be examined whether tests are actually serving their intended purpose. That being said, what exactly is their intended purpose? Tests obviously are used as metrics, but for what?

There are different kinds of tests. Obviously there is a difference between a basic vocabulary test, a history test, and the standardized tests students take. You don't have to go far to see the flaw in a vocabulary test. The intended purpose is to have people expand their vocabulary and test to see if they know the material. Seems simple enough, right? Well, it's not. As ideal as it seems, reality shows otherwise. More often than not, it just leads students to memorize a group of words for the test and forgetting them the next day. With that in mind, it seems like these tests have failed the intended purpose to help students expand their vocabulary. To make things worse, most people know the flaw in vocabulary tests yet these types of tests are still being conducted. Something must be done.

History tests and math tests are slightly better. You actually have to learn something in history to excel at it. Memorization is still an issue of course. For example, it is not fair that Billy with picture perfect memory is deemed smarter than John who took more time to properly comprehend and analyze the material. Such instances like these are based on genes and they're just not fair. As for math, it is actually different. Memorizing formulas is part of it, but incorporating these formulas is what math is really about. Many issues exist in math tests, specifically, multiple choice tests. When it is possible to get a perfect score

on a test with absolutely no preparation, there is a problem. Yes, it is rare but even having the possibility is absurd.

Even with all these flaws in mind, standardized tests continue to determine so much of one's future, particularly when it comes to applying for college. What exactly do standardized tests measure? We are told they measure our test taking ability, which in actuality offers no practical skills in the real world. Even if it shows one's strengths and weaknesses it isn't going to change the fact that no one wants to hire a dispassionate doctor who is a great test taker. People should pursue what they want because that is where they would work best. Moreover, we should take the results of tests with a grain of salt.

Ultimately tests fail. While they are intended to measure specific things, they're usually ill defined. In the end in the most important test of all, there are no grades. And that test is life! There will never be an alternative to learning from experience.

## Interview: Is Testing Worth It?

By: Jeanette Hernandez

To test is to "take measures to check the quality, performance, or reliability of something especially before putting it into widespread use or practice." For 12-year-old-student Karla Serrano, however, a student who has been taking state tests for a quite a while, tests as "sickening, draining, and scary." But regardless of her age, Karla takes extreme measures when it comes to preparing for a school test, to the point that it worries her parents. I decided to interview her in order to comprehend how a straight A student's mindset functions during testing season.

I began by asking, "What's your opinion on tests?", to which she openly explained that although tests aren't her favorite thing in the world, she's still forced to

take them in order to succeed in her school. I empathized with Karla, knowing well that, as students, we are accountable for our education, which is why parents often push their children to not only take these tests, but exceed in them.

I then asked, "How does testing make you feel?"

She replied, "I have actually had a horrific experience in the past last year during a state test. I threw up the morning of testing all over my breakfast. But that whole week in general was a nightmare. It was mostly reviewing worksheets that my teacher had given us in order to receive a high score on the test, and no matter how much I told myself that I'd be okay and that I'd get a good score, I still got nightmares every night about ruining my career in the future just by failing these tests."

While Karla's experience with state tests certainly is unfortunate, it's sadly a grim reality for many students pressured by state tests. It's saddening to know that every test you take builds your profile as a student; you are categorized and now seen as a statistic. My conversation with Kayla caused me to think deeply on how this testing season is hurting students all around the world. Not only do students have to focus on their education, but they also have to worry about knowing what answer to bubble in correctly.

There are generally two prominent perspectives in the debate about whether standardized testing is a service to students. Advocates see it as a valuable indicator in a student's retainment of knowledge, while opponents see it as an insufficient display of a student's abilities, adding further unnecessary stress on them. Ultimately, it is up to you on how much you value a test. Yet, for students like Karla, who is at an age where she should be exploring and learning new things, testing has undoubtedly affected her childhood, and not in a positive way.





# Gun Control

**By: Guadalupe Andrade**

Do we have to rely on gun shootings in schools worldwide in order to lead to stronger restrictions on firearms? I'm definitely not the only one asking myself this absurd question. In fact, I feel that the majority of people are asking themselves the same question due to the overwhelming rate of gun violence in schools lately.

According to the latest statistic from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "there were more than 36,200 deaths from firearms in the United States in 2015, with guns killing more people than motor vehicle crashes." In other words, this issue has become a public emergency that many officials don't know how to prevent. Everyday in the United States, 100 people on average die from gun violence, suicides, and domestic violence. Mass shootings undoubtedly garner the most media attention compared to people who take their own lives with a gun, which actually amounts to nearly two thirds of gun deaths in the U.S. each year according to a study published in JAMA Internal Medicine.

Moreover, the journal JAMA also mentions that "strong firearm laws in a state were associated with lower rates of suicide by guns and lower suicide overall, suggesting that people did not just find another way to kill themselves." If we have more restrictions on guns, it's likely suicide rates will decrease overall. To illustrate, David Hemenway, a professor of health policy at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health Inquiry Control Research Center, states, "Many suicides are impulsive, and the urge to die fades away. Firearms are a swift and lethal method of suicide with a high case-fatality rate." Guns are weapons that could end someone's life with a pull of a trigger, especially if that person is not thinking straight. Thus, we

should have much more gun control so that we could prevent this from happening.

We may disagree that stricter gun control laws would make a difference in the number of suicides and mass shootings around the world but we should all at least try to inform ourselves and be more aware that gun abuse is a public emergency that deserves much more attention from everyone, especially from policy makers and the public. Therefore, more regulations on firearms are what's needed to help prevent these weapons from hurting others.

## College Options

**By: Laura Martinez**

For all seniors, high school is coming to an end. Seniors are now held responsible for finding a college to attend in the fall, if they choose to continue their education. There are many colleges around the world that we have the opportunity to select as the "one" for us. In this way, college becomes a big step in someone's life; it is a stepping stone towards a hopefully fulfilling career. Yet, anxiety follows the application process because we are diving into the unknown. Not only do we face the rejections, but also what the acceptance letters mean for our future. College is something all students and parents should think about, especially when it comes to answering the biggest question: how am I going to pay for my education?

Every parent wants their children to apply to colleges in order for them to have an education and to have a better future. Applying to college is easy. It's the "getting-accepted" part that can be quite difficult because you are competing with thousands of students just like you. In order to get accepted into any one college, students have to do their best during their four years of high school. Instead of the 4.0 student of the past, now colleges expect a "well-rounded" appli-

cant. This means that a student doesn't necessarily have to have stellar grades, but has shown success in other fields, ranging from community orientedness to athletic ability. This makes getting accepted into your dream college quite exciting, and all the more challenging. But, there are always great success stories to keep us grounded. A 17 year old student from Texas didn't expect to get accepted to his dream college. For example, a CNN article written by Isabella Gomez and Christina Zdanowicz states, "Michael Brown applied to the 20 best colleges and got a full ride to all of them." This shows how putting all your effort into high school can pay off by getting accepted to any college you want to go to.

Yes, getting accepted to a college can be exciting but knowing the cost can bring conflicting emotions regarding your decision. The income of your household and your GPA can determine the amount of money you'll receive from the government. Apart from federal aid though, most of the time your parents might need to pay out of pocket as well. This is where scholarships and grants come in. Applying for scholarships can cover some of the costs that some colleges require. This is why it's important to discuss the college cost with your parents and try to apply to as many scholarships as you can.

On another note, college is not for everyone and it's important to think about this and talk to your parents about your decision too. If you decided to go to college you should be committed and make the money you spend worth it. If you decided that college is not where to go after high school then think what your next step is because it will impact your future.

Overall, college is something that we should all think about. Applying for colleges and getting accepted can help you achieve the career you want to study. Scholarships can help you out with the cost of school payments. As students, we should talk to our parents about it and make sure we are choosing what most benefits us because it is a momentous decision.





