

# THE BASIS SCOTTSDALE GAZETTE

## GOING ONLINE

The *BASIS Scottsdale Gazette* has joined the leagues of many of the world's biggest newspaper publications embracing technological advances with open arms. Yes, that's right. The *BASIS Scottsdale Gazette* is going online.

*BASIS Scottsdale Gazette* will be its "Letters to the Editors" section, whereby readers will be able to ask questions, submit general comments, and provide feedback on the monthly publications. The publication is also looking to resurrect what was once known as the "Dear Abby" column. Through the website, readers may be able to submit questions to this new column in hopes of receiving an answer in the next month's issue.

## The BASIS Scottsdale Gazette

Home    BASIS News    News    Science and Tech    Opinion    Food    Arts and Entertainment    Archives    Letters to the Editors

Vol. X No. IV

Scottsdale, Saturday, April 25, 2015

Brought to you by the BASIS Gazette

Enjoy reading the latest BASIS Scottsdale news online!

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Starting this September, readers will be able to access their favorite monthly news source not only in print but also on the reaches of the World Wide Web at [www.basisscottsdalgazette.com](http://www.basisscottsdalgazette.com).

A long-awaited development, the Gazette Online will bring its audience a new, streamlined approach that makes accessing the newspaper's many different sections simpler.

Articles will be sorted based on genre, and featured columnists (check them out in this issue!) will be highlighted. Another important new addition to the

## SAVE THE DATE

September 21 – 30	September 26
Variety Show Sign-Ups	All-School Cracker Jax
September 25	October 5 – 8, 19 – 22
Upper School Coffeehouse	Variety Show Auditions

## FEATURED

INTERVIEWING NEW STAFF  
MEET MS. CONNER

PAGE 5

COHEN'S COMPLAINTS  
BACK-TO-SCHOOL

PAGE 14

HOROSCOPES  
WHAT'S AHEAD IN YOUR FUTURE?

PAGE 20

SECTIONS	CAMPUS NEWS.....1	OPINIONS.....9	SCIENCE & TECH.....16
FOOD.....17	ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT.....18	CROSSWORD.....23	

CONTINUED  
FROM PAGE 1

No longer will readers be limited to black-and-white pictures. Pictures on the website will be published in full color, and avenues to include other media (audio and video) are currently being investigated.

## THE INTERVIEW: SIBLING EDITION

Recently, I interviewed Mrs. Haag (the Honors Language, AP Research, and AP Seminar teacher) along with her brother Mr. Holt (the new P.E. teacher), to learn more about the dynamics of a sibling relationship in the work place.

*Question:* Let's begin at the beginning: where were you born and raised?

*Mrs. Haag and Mr. Holt:* We were born and raised in Long Island, New York.

*Question:* Who's older, and what's the age difference?

*Mrs. Haag:* I am older, and we're about three-and-a-half years apart.

*Question:* Which expression characterizes your relationship as children: content as peas in a pod or fighting like cats and dogs?

*Mrs. Haag:* Peas in a pod, definitely. We were always very, very close to one another. He has always been, and still is, my best friend.

*Mr. Holt:* Peas in a pod.

*Question:* Has your relationship changed at all since you've matured?

*Mrs. Haag:* No, I think we've just gotten closer as the years have gone by. I probably used to act more like a protector to him when we were younger, but now I just treat him like my best friend.

*Mr. Holt:* No.

*Question:* Did you often pursue common interests?

*Mrs. Haag:* No, we never really did the same things,

The online publication aims, as the *BASIS Scottsdale Gazette* always has, to bring its readership the most up-to-date news about both the school and the community at-large. Go online, take a look, and explore BASIS Scottsdale in a whole new domain.

BY ANUKA UPADHYE



Mrs. Haag and Mr. Holt look back and ahead as students (above) and teachers (below).

and we always had very different interests, so everyone used to say, "I can't believe you two

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

**CONTINUED** come from the same parents!"  
**FROM PAGE 2** I was always very academically focused, more interested in reading and learning. He was always more interested in sports and music, so we always had different passions.

*Mr. Holt:* I don't think so. Maybe a little bit in music and stuff like that.

*Question:* What college did you two attend?

*Mrs. Haag:* I went to SUNY Binghamton University.

*Mr. Holt:* I went to John Jay and then the University of Buffalo.

*Question:* Did you two talk at all about being teachers in the same school? Did you have any concerns or advice?

*Mrs. Haag:* I actually thought it would be a really exciting thing. I taught here first; this is his first year. Knowing my brother as well as I know him—like I said we're best friends—I couldn't think of a better person to teach kids. I know that he's so passionate about exercise, fitness, and wellness that it was never a question of "Oh, can we work together?" It was about "Oh, I think you would do a great job!"

*Mr. Holt:* Yes, she gave me some advice about classroom management and getting to know the staff; she calmed any nerves that I might have had.

## MEET THE TEACHERS



**Mr. Campbell: AP Psychology, Student Support, Peer Tutoring, and Boys' Soccer Coach**

Likes: Country music, camping, and Snickers

Dislikes: Thinking of things that I dislike, soda, and rattlesnakes

Hometown: Denver, CO

College: University of Arizona

Quote to live by: "There was nowhere to go but everywhere." —Jack Kerouac

BY FRIDA GUZMAN &  
CATHERINE O'NEILL

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

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**Mr. Flavin: Physics and AP Statistics**

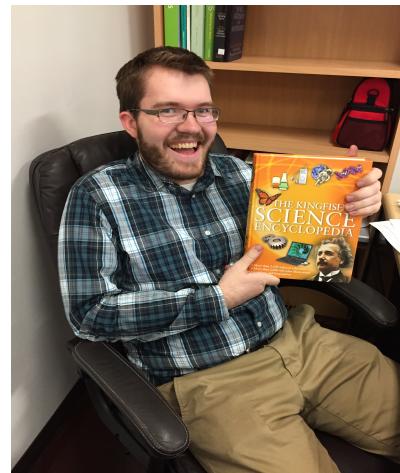
Likes: Guitar, Frisbee, and acoustics

Dislikes: Acid rock, listing things, getting dust stuck in my contacts

Hometown: Gilbert, AZ

College: Wheaton College

Quote to live by: "Every action has an equal and opposite reaction." –Isaac Newton

**Ms. Kaur: Biology and Capstone Genetics**

Likes: Food, traveling to different places, and outings



Dislikes: Very loud music (ex. hard rock)

Hometown: India and Phoenix, AZ

College: University of Arizona

Quote to live by: "I can accept failure. I can't accept not trying." –Michael Jordan

**Mr. Lambert: Latin and Introduction to Philosophy**

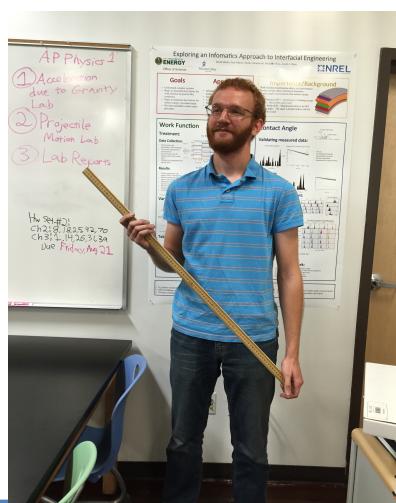
Likes: Chess, novel writing, and working out

Dislikes: Mint chocolate chip ice cream, jellyfish, and dehydration

Hometown: Battle Creek, MI

College: Western Michigan University (graduate) and Spring Arbor University (undergraduate)

Quote to live by: "Never risk something you need to get something you don't need." - Warren Buffet

**Mr. Martin: Physics**

Likes: Piano, biking, and backpacking

Dislikes: Long commutes, complaining, and war

Hometown: Orange County, CA

College: Wheaton College

Quote to live by: "Do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God." –Micah

# NEW COLLEGE COUNSELOR

BY LAUREN APPEL

As the senior class has almost doubled this year at BASIS Scottsdale, the need for college counseling is correspondingly twice as great. Consequently, BASIS Scottsdale has hired a new college counselor, Ms. Conner, to join Ms. Mitrovich to better serve seniors during their college application odysseys.

Enthusiastic about reaching out to students, Ms. Conner graciously agreed to answer a few questions, sharing her story to let us get better acquainted with her background and philosophy as a college counselor.

*Q: The position of college counselor appears a bit daunting; you deal with seniors at a vulnerable time of transition, channeling their idealistic dreams into manageable realities. What first attracted you to your profession?*

A: I started working with ASU freshmen in a class where they were undecided about what major they wanted to do. I helped them explore their options. I mastered at ASU and found a position at BASIS. Here, I am able to help students in a similar way at a very exciting point in their lives when they are applying to colleges.

*Q: What college did you attend, and what factors persuaded you to make that decision? In retrospect, do you believe it was the correct choice?*



Let us welcome Ms. Michelle Conner, BASIS Scottsdale's newest college counselor.

A: I went to the University of Arizona for undergrad and ASU for my masters. To be honest, at that time in high school, I did not have a college counselor. Instead, I had a guidance counselor that I met maybe once. So I think my regret would be that I did not realize until after the fact how many options there were and how there are so many schools with great things to experience. I would say that I enjoyed my time at an in-state school, especially for financial reasons, but I also would have appreciated having someone show me all the different options that were available to me.

*Q: How has the college application process changed since you were a high school senior?*

A: I did not even know about the Common App. I just went to the U of A and NAU websites and filled out the application, so my experience was very different. There is a lot more to it than I ever knew about at the time.

*Q: Many Arizonian students wrestle with the East Coast/West Coast debate. What are your thoughts on the issue? What type of students would do better on which coast?*

A: It is very much a personal fit question. Because the coasts are so different, visiting gives a great chance to see where you fit better. I think sometimes, if you put aside the types of programs you want, you will often get a gut feeling of which coast makes you feel the most comfortable. Even when you are daydreaming—picturing yourself in college—the type of environment you envision can give a clue. Are you on the beach enjoying the weather or are you bundled up and experiencing all the different seasons? Combining both a personal fit and a gut feeling will tell you where you see yourself.

*Q: In light of George Washington University's recent move to drop its SAT/ACT requirements, joining over twenty other test-optional schools, do you foresee the demise of standardized testing in the near future?*

A: I don't think we will ever be able to get rid of the standardized test. Although I know it is daunting for every high school student, knowing that they have to take those tests, I think the tests are good starting points for colleges when looking at applications. I think they are here to stay.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

**CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5** Q: Not only seniors need pre-college advice. How can juniors and sophomores facing the redesigned SAT in 2016 best prepare?

A: The PSAT that the juniors and sophomores are taking this year reflects the redesigned version of the SAT. Thus, getting a feel from the PSAT will be helpful. Also, Khan Academy offers free online prep for the new PSAT and SAT.

Q: The biggest hurdle to overcome for many seniors blankly staring at the Common App essay prompts on their screen seems to be writers' block. What is the best way to move from paralyzed to productive?

A: It is definitely a personal thing. Sometimes just sitting down and free-writing helps brainstorm ideas. Deliberately sitting down and trying to write your common app essay will often leave you coming up short. Instead, let it be a free and natural process of exploring your thoughts and ideas that arise when sitting quietly. Go back to any ideas or things that you wrote a few days later and re-evaluate. For other students, an outline helps order their thoughts. Come up with multiple ideas and always ask for feedback from many different people. Ask friends, family, teachers, and college counselors—anyone who you trust—to give you honest feedback. You can always ask your friends and family if they recall any salient stories about you to give you ideas as well.

Q: Can you recall the best college essay you ever read? What was its subject? Do you remember its opening line? Was the applicant accepted?

A: Ask me in December and I definitely will have an answer for you!

Q: What do you consider the top three qualities that make an applicant stand out from the crowd?

A: Writing a personal, interesting essay that really reflects who you are is vital to standing out in the crowd. The Letters of Recommendation are important as well, so make sure to establish close relationships with teachers. Finding the school that's the right fit for you, not just the highest rank school is important too.

Q: "Fit" seems to be the current buzzword for the college admissions crowd. How can a senior know if a school supplies the right "fit" if he or she is uncertain about exactly "size" they are? How do you know if a school that fits you at 17 will fit you at 21?

A: (Laughs) It is such a buzzword. If you have a chance to

visit while the school is in session, that will be a great indicator. Do you feel excited when you are on the campus? Do the students seem to be people with whom you would enjoy spending four years? When we had the alumni panel come in, they made a few great points. Check out social media as well—Instagram can show you the type of students and the kinds of activities on campus. That's a great way to find where you will be comfortable. Of course, you will grow from 17 to 21, but try to find a college that will foster that growth.

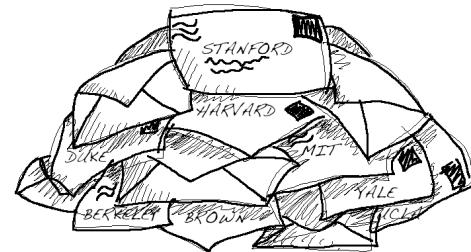
Q: Is it taboo to list "undecided" as your intended major on applications?

A: I don't think so. For example, some schools, like ASU, have undecided programs. I think it is not a taboo at all.

Q: Unfortunately, sometimes a student, despite sacrifice and hard work, fails to secure a coveted spot at their dream college. What is the best way to overcome being rejected by your dream school?

A: I would advise having multiple dream schools and knowing that there's not just one perfect school for you. Also

recognizing that, while it is difficult facing a rejection, it is not always personal. The school might be looking for particular individuals that year.



With the most selective schools, it usually is not any failure on the part of an applicant but rather just a factor of how highly competitive the school is.

Q: The college admissions conundrum seems to, ironically, climax with post-acceptance problems. Imagine: your mailbox bursts with several fat envelopes, a veritable college acceptance cornucopia. It is time to celebrate, right? What, however, happens when you and your parents disagree on which college to accept?

A: That is a tricky situation, one that leads to a couple of difficult conversations. That's when I would absolutely suggest that you and your parents come in to either Ms. Mitrovich or me to have a conversation. You must be respectful and understand where your parents are coming from, while still being honest and really

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**CONTINUED** expressing why you want to attend that school.

**Q:** *On that same note, pulling the trigger and committing to one college on May 1 seems to cause anxiety in even the most confident applicant. One month seems like an awfully short time to decide where to spend the next four years. How can students best prepare to make that final decision with conviction?*

**A:** Applying early action is really helpful for whatever schools you are interested in. That way you get your decision back in December or January and have more time to think about it or visit the school. No matter what, your official decision on which college to attend will cause anxiety because it reflects such a big change. Therefore, try talking to your friends and family for advice.

**Q:** *Mark Twain once noted, “Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn’t do than by the ones you did.” What should every senior strive to accomplish this year?*

**A:** Although it is a stressful time, seniors should strive to make the most of their last year of high school, joining any clubs or extracurriculars, which they always wanted to

## REVENGE OF THE PARKING LOT: PART 18

BASIS Scottsdale students can count on certain things each year as they walk through the double doors of the front office: a myriad of AP classes, messy bathrooms, and mobbed hallways. While we can choose our class schedules, clean up the bathrooms, and teach students to walk appropriately in the hallways, one aspect of the BASIS Scottsdale experience appears unchangeable: our anxiety-evoking parking lot.

Each year, students demand more parking options, more room for backing out, and less traffic blocking students in the afternoon. However, each year, it seems that the issue only worsens. With more students in our current senior class than those of the past two years combined, the administration acknowledged a need for change. Over the summer, the BASIS Scottsdale administration worked endlessly to create a new system for our parking lot. Some may have noticed the new paint job on the asphalt, the stop sign in the middle of the lot, and the designated spots for seniors to park. While these changes are admirable first steps, many still complain of backed up traffic and unfair parking assignments.

To reveal the sentiments of the school regarding

join, and taking advantage of all the opportunities that BASIS has to offer. Seniors should be open to new experiences.

**Q:** *Since seniors are just at the start of their college search saga, could you impart some advice on the best way to make the journey enjoyable?*

**A:** Keeping in mind that you spend 50 minutes every day in a college counseling course—an opportunity most other high school students lack—you have more time to work and meet those deadlines. Thus, students can relax more and enjoy the ride. Encouraging your classmates also helps create a supportive and communal atmosphere. Seniors should look at applying to colleges not as getting accepted or denied but as the opportunity to really discover and explore what you enjoy and where you see yourself.

Speaking with Ms. Conner places the college search into its proper perspective: a time for self-reflection. Seek her out for support, direction, and insight. She definitely is the perfect “fit” for BASIS Scottsdale’s senior class.

BY VICTORIA MEYER

the parking lot, I interviewed four people representing different perspectives: Alex Cohen, a senior not selected for a parking spot; Micki Calo, a senior selected for a parking spot; Mrs. Bailey, a math teacher; and Ms. McConaghy, the head of school.

**Q:** What are your opinions on the parking lot selection process for students?

**Alex Cohen:** It's the most efficient way to deal with the large volume of parkers. However, I personally would prefer a “first come, first serve” program for seniors, where, if you get there early in the morning, you can get a spot, but if you come to class later in the day, it's a “you snooze, you lose” situation.

**Micki Calo:** I agree with the school's decision to give priority to those who car pool, or have siblings, but, at the same time, I understand those who are upset that they didn't get a spot, especially the seniors.

**Mrs. Bailey:** I can see the logistics of that selection

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FROM PAGE 7

because you want to bring as many people to school without causing traffic jams, but I understand why people may think it's unfair.

Ms. McConaghy: I was actually a bigger fan of random lottery, but when we ran the parking lot survey, it was the student's lowest preference option. So, we had to honor their preferences and give greater weight to those that carpool more students.

Q: Do you think the changes, such as the new painted lines and stop sign, have made the parking lot more efficient?

Alex Cohen: I think the lot is more efficient. There's a lot less chance of unnecessary risk in the parking lot.

Micki Calo: (long pause) I think that on the surface it looks more organized, but parents are still parking wherever they want. I think that it is overall an attempt to become more efficient, but it's also hard for students to park in their designated spots when the lot is completely backed up.

Mrs. Bailey: It has definitely made it prettier. (laughs) Until they actually assign parking spot numbers to all people parking in the lot, I'm not sure how efficient it's going to be. However, it is possible that the arrows have helped give direction to people who actually pay attention to the arrows and follow those directions.

Ms. McConaghy: Most definitely. We haven't received any parent complaints about the traffic flow, and we've received many compliments on the improved traffic flow. We are also happy to have the overflow parking lot [the lot across the street] as an option to our students this year.

3. Are there any changes that you would make to the parking lot system?

Alex Cohen: I still believe that the "first come, first serve" system, which we did last year, is the best policy. Additionally, students should not be leaving their backpacks in the trunk, especially the ones who need their parents to get out of the car to help them. All of that just makes the traffic worse.

Micki Calo: Honestly, I think seniority is the best option with a "first come, first Serve" policy, because we've waited to have these parking spots, and we won't be here all year. Not that many

seniors are even parking, so I don't think it's a big issue. We should also enforce carpooling more. Finally, parents should try and be more courteous to students when they pull into and out of the parking lot. A lot of the issues come from students not being able to access their spots because parents block them out. If they parents can just be more aware of students in the lot, things should be much smoother.

Mrs. Bailey: Even though this is hard to logically enforce, I would definitely want to find a way to prevent parents from waiting for their students for more than ten minutes out there, as that really causes a backup in the lot. I think it is probably a good idea because, for example, the administration has walkie-talkies during fire drills. So, if we had two or three people walking around both outside and inside with walkie-talkies, they can sweep the hallways and parking lot, ask parents whom they are waiting for, and tell those students that their parents are waiting. This will make it easier to get students and parents out of the lot quickly. Unfortunately, our parking lot is so small that there really isn't much that can be done. The only other idea that I can think of is, now that we're using the parking lot across the street, parents who are waiting for more than five minutes can park over there and walk to school to pick up their children. This will help stop backing it up as much.

Ms. McConaghy: I think it's the best it can be given our current restrictions, and of course I have to remind everyone to use the crosswalks! (laughs)

Although we all attempt to park in the same lot every day, perspectives differ on the efficiency of the lot. For many, the selectivity and backed-up traffic appear to be unfair burdens on students simply trying to get to class on time. However, the underlying benefits of the parking lot, such as less traffic complaints, may only be visible to the administration.

While a parking lot the size of Desert Mountain High School's is not likely in BASIS Scottsdale's future, the senior class of 2017 will be smaller than the current class of 2016. For next year, at least, be hopeful that the traffic will be slightly less hectic. Of course, this does not fix the size problems with our small parking lot, but it does provide time for students to become more creative with new solutions.

# OPINIONS

## ONE-WAY STAIRWAY

Stairs: they have their ups and downs. But what many BASIS Scottsdale students still don't realize after two years is that one of our stairwells only has ups, and the other only has downs. They are even conveniently labeled "Up Stairs" and "Down Stairs." yet somehow students continually go up or down the wrong set of stairs.

Many students simply don't bother following this policy because they don't understand why it is in place. They view their own need to get to their lockers and to get to class as more important than some silly rule. However, there are very good reasons why the stairs should remain one-way only.

Firstly, stairs can be very dangerous. Just ask anyone who has died falling down a flight of stairs. Then ask yourself why you're talking to a corpse. After reassuring yourself that you are totally sane, you'll see why it's much safer without having stairway collisions.

Secondly, this policy is an important step toward reducing hallway traffic. As any student who has consecutive classes on opposite sides of the school knows, BASIS students are very good at creating traffic jams. The two-way traffic in the halls results in a very slow flow of students, especially in hallways with lockers or classrooms. If this hallway chaos was brought into the stairwells, students would be even more inconvenienced than having to walk to the other side of the second floor.

In fact, this system is so effective at reducing traffic that the school is changing its hallway policy. The

BY TREY CONNELLY

*BASIS Gazette* is proud to announce that in order to further reduce hallway traffic, the current stairwell policy will be applied to the entire school. This change will come into effect next month and will apply to the entire school.

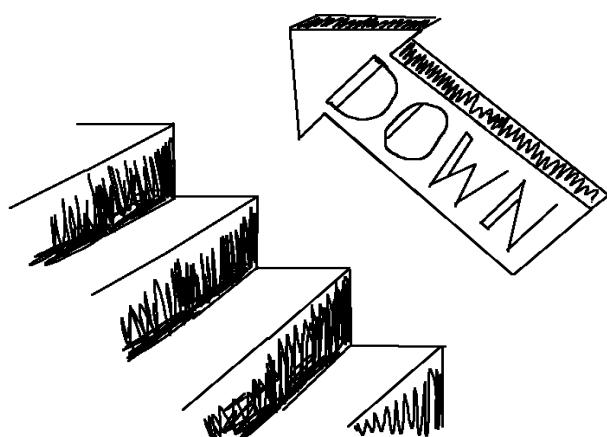
Under this new policy, every hallway in the school will be one-way, greatly reducing congestion and allowing for fast movement between classes. Due to this new unidirectional feature, students entering the North Cafeteria or the southeast hallway will be unable to return the way that they came. Instead, students should exit the building through one of the conveniently located outside-access doors and reenter through the main office.

To further increase the ease of movement, students may only move counterclockwise around open spaces such as classrooms and cafeterias.

Starting next month, the *Gazette* will be showing its support for the new policy by remodeling the crossword puzzle. All future puzzles will have the "down" section removed, so they only contain words that go across. As a result, they will be renamed "acrossword" puzzles.

Additionally, the online version of the *Gazette* will no longer feature bi-directional text support. The unnecessarily multidirectional letters "x" and "z" will also be replaced with the more flow-friendly letters "l" and "o."

Thank you for understanding and supporting the new policy, and keep a lookout for next month's issue of the *Gazette*!



# INTERNET ADVICE ON MAJOR DECISIONS

## BY GEORGE YANG

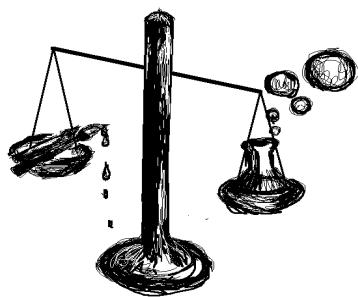
Recently, my family was celebrating my brother's entrance into college. At the end of the buffet, my brother's fortune cookie posed the following ominous warning: "not having a goal is worse than not reaching your goals."

My brother is not the only recipient of this caution; almost every senior hears a thousand times the question, "What are you thinking of majoring in?" While most high school students know that their adult acquaintances are merely attempting to spark conversation, rather than asking for a specific answer, students still feel a strong obligation to reply with something more definite than "I have no idea." Perhaps the pressure to determine a major as a senior or junior in high school is unnecessary, and the indecision of every high school student is warranted.

Lydia Frank of PayScale, a website which researches average job salaries, notes that 30 percent of students now live with their parents after college because of financial hardship. Moreover, the average student holds \$38,000 of debt. It is hardly a wonder; the Department of Education reports that around 60 percent of undergraduates take six years to graduate, instead of four.

Most BASIS students expect to graduate in less than six years—indeed, cashing in AP scores allows some students to

graduate in three. But most BASIS students' minds are the same as those of their national counterparts when facing



the mammoth of declaring a major: they decide to be "undecided." According to *U.S. News*, 80 percent of undergraduates switch majors at least once. Furthermore, the accredited prep book company the *Princeton Review* finds that the average 20-year-old switches jobs around every three years.

Indecision seems to contaminate all aspects of life. However, though the symptom is indecision, the remedy is not decision. In this case, the urgency of the dilemma does not demand hastiness of action. Indeed, students are probably deciding their major too early, not too late. The statistics are clear, but how to determine a major?

First, one should simulate potential majors. Lynn Jacobs and Jeremy Hyman, authors of numerous books on the college process, explain that one should not decide one's major based on one's love of a single teacher. Eventually, one may encounter a mundane teacher, but the student will still be required to do well in the subject. Rather, one should sample many advanced courses in the potential future major. The authors at *Princeton Review* promote internships—anything to replicate living in the college environment and dedicating the majority of one's time to this discipline. A major, after all, requires a dedication of around 40 hours per week, according to Tori Reid, blogger. To test your dedication to the desired subject, spend 40 hours per week studying that subject over a school break. As Reid explains, sometimes one realizes that "turning a fun pastime into required work makes it just that—work."

Additionally, majors should be manageable. Jacobs & Hyman write that indecision should not translate into a collection of multiple, unrelated majors. Such a shotgun approach multiplies the work; students often feel overwhelmed and sacrifice their grades. As explained on Scholarships.com, the major you choose should compliment your natural abilities—there is a reason you have strengths and weaknesses.

After considering what is manageable, pursue one's desires. As trite as it seems, many individuals major in activities they dislike, gritting their teeth and plowing through to reach the better future centered on an idealized career. Unfortunately, that job often never comes. Brian Burnsed, assistant editor at *NCAA Education Reporter*, explains that it is better to follow the path of your passions, despite uncertainty about where it might lead vocationally. As Israel Wachs, engineering professor at Lehigh University notes, most jobs require far more specific experience than what is taught in even graduate school. He emphasizes that employers want analytical thinking and the ability to learn, rather than a surplus of knowledge. Today, the professions in demand are at the whim of a dynamic economy; the jobs and skills needed now may become obsolete in the future.

Anxiety only clouds making a decision about a major. One should not be anxious in deciding a major. Gianna Sen-Gupta, reporter for the *Huffington Post*, notes that most colleges provide students with ample academic advisers and career counselors to help roadmap students' college life.

But perhaps the most astute observation was made by Bittercookies, on Tumblr: "I'm not afraid to fall in love [with a major]. I'm afraid to fall for the wrong [major] AGAIN."

# ICYMI: OVER THE SUMMER

## BY NITYA AGGARWAL

If you're anything like me, you spent practically your entire summer immersed in the worlds of Netflix and ice cream. However, it has come to my attention that obsessively watching Season 5 of "*Gossip Girl*" all day does not end in much knowledge about anything but Chuck's and Blair's relationship status. While that is a very worthwhile thing to know, Very Important Things apparently happened during my summer of seclusion. Shocker, I know.

Very Important Thing Number One: OBERGEFELL v. HOGES Supreme Court Case. In this Supreme Court ruling, gay and lesbian marriage was legalized. It is now illegal in all 50 states to stop a gay couple from getting married. People across America celebrated at this step towards LGBT rights, waving rainbow flags and chanting happily. Justice Kennedy wrote that the Constitution grants gay couples the right to marry, and the majority of Americans agree.

Very Important Thing Number Two: Hacked! Millions of federal employees were hacked in the largest data breach of federal employees to date, involving both present and past employees. The hackers have been traced to China, and may have begun hacking in late 2014. You may be wondering why this should be important to you. Well, it's scary that hackers can hack federal databases, that's why.

Very Important Thing Number Three: Cuba doesn't hate us anymore! Well, maybe they still hate us, but embassies between Cuba and the U.S. have been opened for the first time since 1961. Cuba's embassy in Washington, D.C. has been reopened, as is the US embassy in Havana. It's a major step towards rebuilding relations with Cuba, which means vacationing in Cuba is suddenly a real possibility.

Very Important Thing Number Four: The U.S Women's Soccer team beat Japan in the World Cup! Okay, maybe not as important, but Carli Lloyd scored the first hat trick in Women's World Cup history. It is the third Women's World Cup for the U.S., although the U.S. women's team was paid significantly less for winning the World Cup than the men's was for losing pretty badly.

Very Important Thing Number Five: Greece is still in the financial doldrums, unfortunately. I would tell you more about it, but it is a lot of technical financial stuff that I do not understand, so let me put it simply: it is bad. Very bad.

Very Important Thing Number Six: Iran agrees to a nuclear deal! Iran's ability to produce nuclear weapons has been limited in a deal that lifted the economic sanctions placed on Iran. Basically, Iran gets a lot of money in exchange for a very restrained capacity to create nuclear bombs. Its uranium stockpile has been reduced by 98 percent.

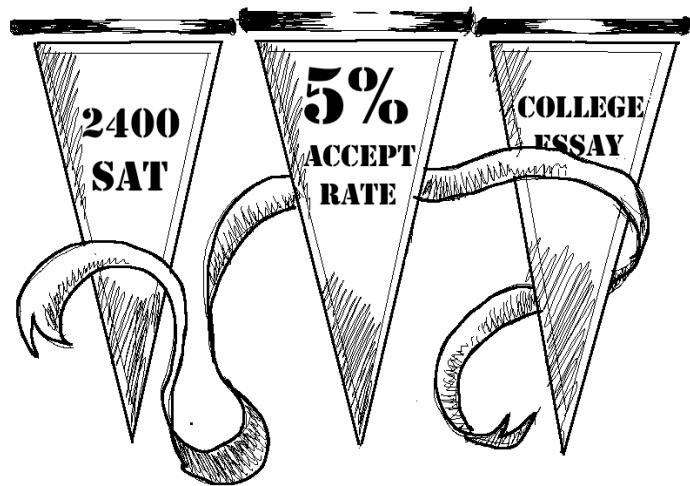
Very Important Thing Number Seven: Apparently, after World War 2, Japan's military was banned from participating in foreign conflicts. That legislation was lifted this summer, allowing Japan to once again fight wars. Parliament's lower house approved this, and the United States supports the bill, along with Japan's Prime Minister. A Chinese military spokesperson spoke out, saying that China hopes Japan sticks to the path of peace even if its ban has been lifted for the sake of Asian security.

And that concludes the list of Very Important Things, which you may have missed over the summer. While I will not fight you on the importance of watching the next season of "*Sherlock*," it is also good to know what is going on in the world.

# COLLEGE THERAPY ?

BASIS Scottsdale does not need a college counselor; it needs a college therapist. Our perception of high school as a four-year hurdle to jump before college is insane.

In a school as competitive as BASIS, excelling in your courses, not to mention goldening your balloon, requires such an immense amount of work that your good grades may not feel like reward enough. However, it is foolish to view getting into a selective college as the payoff for all your work.



The danger of externalizing motivation—what happens when college is the incentive to do things well—is that you will not want to do that thing anymore. In an experiment, psychologists Mark Lepper, Daniel Greene, and Richard Nisbett gave freedom to a large group of preschoolers to choose the activities that they wished to do. Many chose to create art. The researchers devised three experimental groups from the pool of children who enjoyed crafts and motivated each group to continue to choose to make art: the first group was told ahead of time that each of its members would get a prize for making art, the second group was given prizes for making art but was not informed of the potential for rewards, and the third group was uninformed and did not receive any prizes. What were the results? The second and the third group, who made art purely for their own enjoyment, continued making art at the same proficient rate; the first group, however, lost almost all interest in art as soon as they perceived it as a means to an end. At BASIS, we are the artless children, stripped of any intrinsic enjoyment, like learning for learning's sake, by the promise of college.

BY BRIAN  
GLUCKSMAN

Even if you have no intrinsic motivation for learning, you stand to lose if college is your motivation. Social psychologist Leon Festinger, famous for his cognitive dissonance theory, found in his experiment that as he gave undergraduates more money to perform an intolerably boring task—like spinning a wheel or stacking spools—they would be less likely to rate the task as engaging and fun. After doing a mind-numbing experience—which school is for many of us, frankly—the brain justifies wasting that time. If it is not given a large external reward then the brain is able to trick you into thinking that boredom was enjoyment. If you are motivated by college, you are less likely to look back at high school and to think that it was fantastic.

Is the carrot of getting into a selective college at the end of the stick of high school compelling enough? Not really. Ten years ago, economists Alan Kruger and Stacy Berg Dale found that there is no short-term or long-term difference in earnings between students who were accepted into a selective university but did not attend compared to those who were accepted and did attend a selective university. Additionally, according to the National Survey of Student Engagement, the difference in how intellectually engaged a student reported to be diverged widely within the same universities and was mostly shaped by other factors.

So what can BASIS do to move away from its focus on college? Unfortunately, taking down the pennants from the North Cafeteria would not be enough. First, BASIS should distance students and parents from the college application processes as long as possible. There is no reason a sophomore should be talking with college representatives or a freshman spending his time at a college informational meeting. Second, BASIS should stop publishing the lists of college acceptances; let us appreciate the hard work and accomplishments of the graduating class without needing them validated by college acceptances. Third, BASIS should remind students to focus on the “here and now” of our school’s unparalleled educational opportunities rather than the “if and when” of college speculation.

We have made the BASIS experience unlike anything else. Should we not enjoy this environment which we have created? Let us retake our high school years back from college.

# SURVIVING BASIS HALLWAYS BY GURSAJAN GILL

A new year at BASIS Scottsdale means new students, new teachers, and new pick-up and drop-off policies that parents never follow. Yet one thing remains the same, year after year: the hallways, those tight corridors that supposedly serve the purpose of allowing the students to seamlessly move from class to class.

The hallways of BASIS Scottsdale feel like a Walmart during Black Friday. These hallways are too narrow to support even our modest student body. To a seasoned veteran of the BASIS hallways, this is everyday life; to our naive, little fifth and sixth graders, this a traumatic experience.

Surviving the hallways is no easy task: it takes years and years to master the stealthy techniques and the fast footwork for navigating the treacherous seas of BASIS students. To those newbies out there, here are a few tips.

First of all, stay on the right side, unless you have to cross the flow of traffic to get to a class. Staying on the right side makes it easier for you and those around you. Secondly, don't push. Pushing will not get you anywhere; it will just annoy the person in front of you. Finally, learn how to dodge others. There will always be those frightened little people who will come charging at you like bulls towards a rodeo clown--just step out of the way.

Even with a mastery of the above skills, the hallways still remain a hassle. The best and most obvious way to get rid of all of this traffic is to build bigger hallways. Since that will not happen anytime soon, here is another solution: vary the times the classes get out. The Upper Schoolers could end class five minutes after the Lower Schoolers. In this way, there will not be a sudden onslaught of students to jam traffic at every turn of a corner. As for now, we will have to keep riding the waves of students to get to our next class.



# COHEN'S COMPLAINTS

## BACK-TO-SCHOOL WOES

Christy puts her hand up for my mother. "Give me five!"

My mom reluctantly obliges, agreeing to become part of the odd and time-consuming Staples ritual.

"Thanks! And while you're at it, you should go online and give me an online high five on our survey! If you do, then my manager will give me a high five, and that's good. For everyone."

Christy looked around at the empty store as if she were surprised that there weren't more people in her line. Well, when you use exclamation points as often as you use vowels, people tend to shy away from you.

It goes without saying that back-to-school season is the single worst time of the year. Strangely enough, the thing that makes this season so bad isn't even going back to school. In fact, the nightmare that kept you up all night when you were in "Cali!" – going back and seeing familiar faces, resigning yourself to find out just what the mitochondrion does for the eight-thousandth time – quickly fades as soon as you find a new friends group or at least find a new garbage can to hide in when the popular kids walk by. No, the back-to-school season is worse for two, more unsettling reasons.

Any student whose classes no longer consist of stickers and spelling quizzes every Friday knows what it's like to go school supply shopping. *Real* school supply shopping. I'm not talking about making a quick stop at Wal-Mart to pick up a package of Barbie pencils; I'm talking about slapped-across-the-face-with-syllabi, gut-wrenching, two-shopping-cart-filling shopping. You get in your car, schlep all the way down to Staples (or Office Max, for those of you with discerning tastes), and force yourself to tell your mother that you *definitely* need the Five-Star binder and not the generic brand. Then you finally get to the line, which is full of people in the grade below you and no one that you know, and you find that your haul is going to cost you two hundred dollars. Two hundred dollars? I could have bought a small country with

that money, but instead I'm spending it on seven binders? Strike one. And if that wasn't bad enough, you have to deal with unctuous and perpetually dazed office supply store workers like Christy, who try to make stress release balls and printer ink sound like tickets to Disneyland. Trust me, Christy, if the store had even one self-checkout, then I doubt you would be getting any high fives.

Once you deal with the school supplies and get back into the swing of school, you're forced to cope with the only thing worse than Fetty Wap's upcoming album – the heat. It's mid-August, and you think that you're going to have a good time at school. You wake up well-rested. You make a lovely breakfast. You did all of your homework, even. You walk out to your car, smile on your face, and you open the door. Ouch, that was a little hot. But no matter, now you're setting your things down and getting ready to start the car. You put the key in the ignition and turn it: smooth sailing from here on out. You touch the wheel OH MY GOD MY FLESH IS BURNING THIS WHEEL IS SO HOT WHY ARE STEERING WHEELS BLACK MY FLESH IS WELDED TO THE WHEEL AND NOW I CAN'T LET GO. After losing all sensation in your hand from touching the wheel, you finally start driving to school over a river of bubbling asphalt to see people putting cookie sheets out on their dashboards, so that they can film the sizzle and be Facebook famous. Then, you park your car and tote your backpack across the street without jaywalking, and your shirt has sweat through the back of it because human beings were not meant to survive when it's 120 degrees Fahrenheit at eight in the morning.

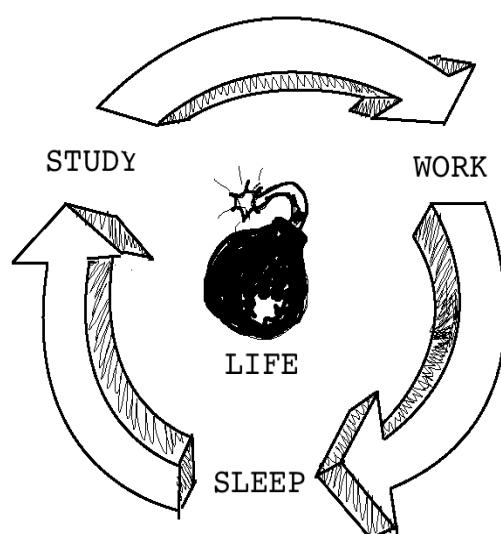
But eventually you get to school, and there's isn't much more to write home about, so you just sit through all of your classes and forget that your school is situated in a lake of fire by talking to your friends or hiding in the aforementioned trashcan. At least, until you have to walk back across the street.

Other than that, there isn't much to complain about.

# MALAVIKA'S MUSINGS

## TIME TO SLOW DOWN

As modern-day high school students, our lives are a never-ending race to the top. Between AP classes, extracurriculars, and the inevitable social preoccupations of our age group, it's a miracle how any of us manages to get enough sleep. Our generation only fuels a vicious societal cycle of constant productivity. We are obsessed with outdoing one another, padding our resumes, and packing every last moment with activity. The prevalence of technology has only made it easier for young people to overload themselves with tasks meant to give them an advantage in an increasingly demanding economy. In fact, we have reached a point where being busy holds a certain social cachet. Among friends and acquaintances, seemingly harmless complaints about one's remaining tasks quickly devolves into a contest over who is the busiest or the most stressed. As Meghan Casserly of *Forbes* eloquently put it in 2012, "If time is money, millennials are broke."



In the midst of all this stress, have we lost what it truly means to be human? Many argue that the cycle of productivity is a trap--work more at a job you don't like to make money you don't have time to spend or you use to feed yourself so you can work more. The old adage, "life is short," ironically rings truer for Millennials than it has for any other generation preceding us. Although our life spans

BY MALAVIKA KRISHNAN

have increased by incredible numbers, the amount of time we spend on leisure seems to be steadily decreasing. The craze starts young, but it lasts well into adulthood if it is fueled. Everything, even hobbies, is expected to have a productive end goal. Unfortunately, the mania of busyness is detracting from our quality of life--and even decreasing our productivity in the long term. In fact, 45 percent of 17-year-olds, *TIME* reports, admit they only read by choice once or twice a year, a substantial decline from years past. No longer do we take the time to read, play sports, or reflect. Instead, we are expected to be available via technology and social media 24/7, checking our email for requests and updating Twitter to make sure we are caught up on the latest news story.

Disengagement may seem like an easy way to fall behind in our chaotic, frenzied world, but it can actually give us many personal advantages. The National Institute of Health finds that just a short period of time spent meditating each day can help develop positive social connections. Activities such as reading, or even just spending some time alone engaging in a stimulating hobby, can have similar effects on one's daily interactions.

At BASIS Scottsdale, it is easy to get caught up in the vicious cycle. Our school expects a certain academic standard from us that is in itself a full-time commitment for students, and coupled with extracurricular activities and study time, we are left with little to no free time to engage in activities we truly enjoy. Despite the roadblocks, we as students must make the effort to devote time to ourselves each and every day, simply for our own sanity and well-being.

If we can manage to disconnect from the daily monotony of our high school routines and take some time to explore ourselves and the world around us, then we will be happier, and even more productive, as a result.

# SCIENCE & TECH

## THE CURE TO A TECHNOLOGICAL EPIDEMIC

BY DIVYA VATSA

Bam! My heart slams against my ribs as my precious phone slams against the harsh, unforgiving ground. In some strange way, time itself seems to stop. And yet I cannot seem to move in time to rescue my phone from its tragic demise. Now, every time I look at my screen, those delicate cracks glare back at me, and I am overcome with that same sense of defeat yet again.

Just yesterday, it seemed as though I would have to live with those cracks until my next iPhone upgrade. But it seems as if the world of science has taken pity on us clumsy phone users. This past year, French materials scientist Ludwik Leibler from the ECSPi Institute in Paris has created a new class of plastics called vitrimers or self-healing plastics. Earning him the European Patent Office's 2015 Inventor Award, Leibler's research pioneers a future for everlasting plastics.

So what is the science behind this new technology? Leibler first decided to embark on this research after being inspired by T-1000 in *Transformers 2*. He began to study two existing families of plastics: thermoplastics and thermosets. The former has properties that allow it to change shape when heated. However, the limitations are that once cooled, its new shape become permanent. Thermosets, on the other hand, are unique in that their shape cannot be changed in heat.

Using this contrast as his foundation, Leibler set out to combine certain properties of each family while adding his own features. Leibler was able to capture the qualities of the plastics to be reheated and reshaped an infinite number of times. Then he added other important properties, such as durability and dimensional stability.

The result? Leibler's vitrimers.

When asked about the potential of vitrimers, the French scientist shared the endless possibilities and predicted a very bright future. He aims to release this new product to cars, planes, and other gadgets that are susceptible to damage and cracks. And while it will be a few years before we get to see this revolutionary technology in the market, I am looking forward to a future where my anxiety will not be due to dropping my phone.



Two cracked iPhones, a heart wrenching sight for iPhone users everywhere

# FOOD

## BASIS LUNCH MENUS

Remember the soggy food and over-cheesy macaroni from middle school? Next time that you start complaining about your lunch in the Upper School Cafeteria, just remember: it could be much worse.

Every year in elementary school, we were forced to listen to adults talking about how children need to make healthier food choices in and out of school. We never really listened to them. All we wanted was to get to recess and play tag. We never went for the apples and oranges they put out; cookies and ice cream were the obvious choice.

Despite all that, the cafeteria food was still, to say the least, disgusting. The cheese on the pizza tasted like rubber; the tater tots, burnt cardboard balls. Children would concoct theories—whispering that the hamburgers actually contained horse meat and shriveled-up worms.

This brings us to our main point: aren't we lucky for this plethora of more-than-decent food in our cafeteria? The diverse BASIS population prompts diverse

BY ANUKA UPADHYE &  
ANYA WAHAL

food options as well. On Mondays, students can savor the flavor of Indian food from Marigold Maison, where the Chicken Tikka Masala rules the land. And for those who do not like Indian food, there is always Subway, our trusty sandwich shop. Tuesdays offer Chick-fil-A and Jamba Juice—all-time classics devoured by the BASIS population. Verbal fights over uneaten chicken tenders are common. Students, forgetting that germs exist, greedily take large slurps of their friend's Jamba Juice. Fragrant wafts of Panda Express fill the hallways of BASIS on Wednesdays, as students tackle chopsticks in a feeble attempt to capture the coveted orange chicken. Thursday's menu presents options new to BASIS: Señor Taco and Freshbox (organic). Fridays feature another favorite: Redendos. BASIS students eagerly anticipate pizza and pasta on Fridays.

Here's to a new year full of exciting food choices and friends with whom to share them.



Subway lunch menu, courtesy of the Boosters

# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

## SCHOOL SUPPLIES

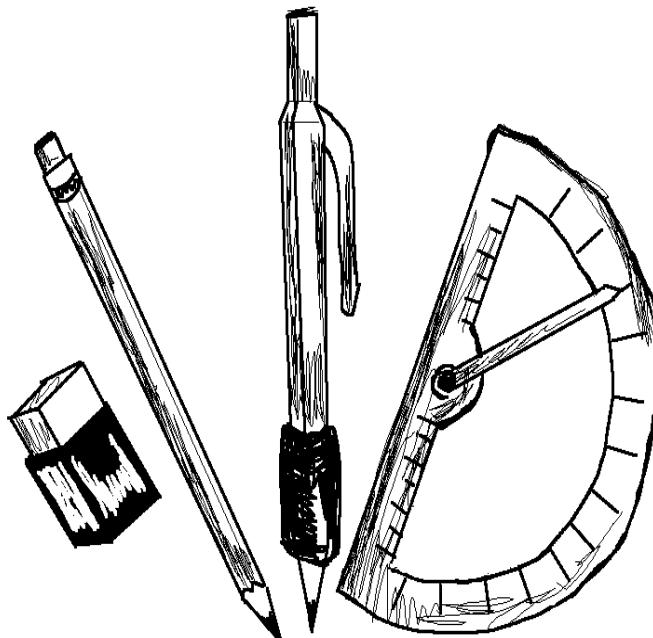
BY EVE FABRE

Similar to the recycling of fashion styles over the decades—something I learned after unwittingly borrowing my friend's mom's shirt—the popularity of school supplies also ebbs and flows. Although BASIS Scottsdale may not have as intense of a "fashion radar" as other schools, fashion still dictates certain preferences for our essential academic accouterments. To go back to school in style, you must know which trends are in and which are out.

### Pencil Cases:

These little pouches can pack a big punch (style-wise). A handy (literally) outlet for creativity, a pencil case can advertise every student's individuality. This year, floral prints dominate almost every female student's desks. However, wacky designs and geometric shapes are co-ed favorites. The famous monster zipper pencil case epitomizes the unisex trend—I even saw a striped, four-limbed, one-eyed monster case the other day in Spanish. Then there are those who rebel against any fashion statement: the half attempted, Ziploc pencil case, which can be viewed alternatively as the ultimate in utilitarianism or a sophisticated post-postmodernist critique of materialism.

**Folders and CJs:** Look at the desks on either side of you—accordion folders are making a comeback. Easily portable, they can handle more than a trimester's worth of handouts for those classes that do not require a



binder. Fewer binders lessen the weight that we have to haul daily. It is a win-win!

As far as school supplies go, CJs remain the old standbys. The difference between our official school CJs and other store-bought planners is simply a matter of personal preference. CJs as always perennially "hot"—a lesson everyone learns by losing the precious scrap of paper used to scribble down upcoming tests and homework.

**Backpacks:** Backpacks share a lot in common with pencil cases. Simple and sturdy does the trick, but many students would rather show off something with a little spunk to it. Crisp sailor stripes and lacy, flowery themes have been "hot" for the last couple years, but solid colors have held their own, probably ever since I was in the 5th grade. One can never go wrong with an old classic.

There is, however, one type of backpack that will never be in style, will never be welcomed, and will never be tolerated. It does not matter who you are, what grade you are in, what school you go to. Rolling backpacks truly deserve a place in hell. Does BASIS Scottsdale's five-foot-wide hallway, cramped with students, who almost overflow into adjacent hallways, seriously look like an airport terminal to you?

# SNIGLETS

Have you ever stumbled upon a scenario or object that isn't defined by Merriam-Webster? Rich Hall certainly has. A popular actor and comedian in the 80s, Hall ingeniously discovered a solution to this pestering problem. His theory was simple: why not create your own word? Hall then coined the term 'sniglet' and defined it as "any word that doesn't appear in the dictionary, but should." Hall's beloved sniglets became so much of a comedic sensation they were featured as a main skit on his hit comedy show on HBO, "*Not Necessarily the News.*" Sniglets provide a humorous twist to neologisms, and a relatable affiliation with those reading them.

Who knows, if Merriam-Webster can slip the word earworm in their latest dictionary—the song or melody that repeats in one's head—then maybe one of these sniglets is next.

**Mistext** (mɪs tekst) v. - Sending a text to the wrong person on your iPhone while texting with two people at the same time

**Pseudogesture** ('sudou 'dʒesfər ) n. - the familiar act of not knowing an answer in class but raising one's hand anyway (after determining that a sufficient number of other classmates have also raised their hands, therefore reducing the likelihood of actually being called on) just for the beloved participation points

**Roadster-roaster** ('roodstər 'roustər) n.- The act of entering a vehicle that had been sitting out in the direct

sun and immediately getting bombarded with an overbearing wave of heat

**Omnischool** ('amni skul) n.- An overwhelming feeling of slight depression and hopelessness that occurs seasonally at the end of summer when one becomes aware of the forthcoming school year

**Mocksoon** (mak sun) n. - A monsoon that appears to bring comfortable weather, but with a temperature still above one hundred degrees

**Toastigram** ('touəs ti græm) n. -The daring and always-regretful mistake of walking outside on the hot pavement with bare feet

**Aeropalm** ('erou pam) v. - Extending your arm out the moving car window and cupping your hand to catch the wind

**Malumdrious** (mæl ʌm drɔɪ uz) adj. - When even customarily entertaining activities become humdrum when you have absolutely nothing to do over the summer

**Epihemocorp** (ipiai 'himou kɔrp) adj. - Someone with very unflattering tan lines from a myriad of different swim suits and constant exposure to the sun

**Officemaximize** ('ɔfəs 'mæksə maiz) v. - The routinely exciting act of buying an excess of school supplies

# HOROSCOPES

BY MOLLY ONO

## **Virgo** (August 23-September 22)

Feeling stressed out already? Remember to keep long-term goals in mind, and be aware of when you may be burning out – you’re too special to be burnt to a crisp.

## **Libra** (September 23-October 22)

You’re probably not getting enough sleep. Like, come on.

## **Scorpio** (October 23-November 21)

Your love life is a little lacking right now, but only you can fix it. Or, you can just focus on grades, an easy substitute.

## **Sagittarius** (November 22-December 21)

You’re too preoccupied with the things to come. Remember to be in the now, or the now will eat you up like a Chipotle burrito bowl.

## **Capricorn** (December 23-January 19)

Don’t neglect your friends! Being alone can have awesome health benefits, but you really shouldn’t be alone with your own thoughts.

## **Aquarius** (January 20-February 18)

You should definitely try something new. A sport, maybe, or a type of food. Definitely food. This is an excuse to eat more food.

## **Pisces** (February 19-March 20)

This is the month that you quit procrastinating. Hopefully. Maybe. Heck, maybe do it next month.

## **Aries** (March 21-April 19)

You know, sometimes you can just get yourself into a little *too* much trouble. Formulate back-up plans and complicated excuses now to give your future self a break.

## **Taurus** (April 20-May 20)

Reach out to that person you kind-of know, but not really. They might just be the perfect match for your brand of weird.

## **Gemini** (May 21-June 21)

They say cleanliness is next to godliness. You should probably get on that.

## **Cancer** (June 22-July 22)

Chill. Chilllllllll.

## **Leo** (July 23-August 22)

A tall, dark, (possibly) handsome stranger will soon enter your life. Do not forget the baseball bat.



# BOOKS, ANYONE?

“Speak friend, and enter.” -*Lord of the Rings*

Whether you’re a dedicated member of a fandom or just an all-around book lover, we welcome you to our little slice of fangirl insanity. For those of you who are just as crazy as we are and spent your summer attached to a library’s worth of books, here is a few of the summer’s best that you may have missed. For all of you who have decided that books are not for you and summer is not for reading, how do you function? Honestly, we do not get it. Please, teach us your ways. We would get way more sleep.

## Top Summer Reads

### 1. *Go Set a Watchman* by Harper Lee

Rating: 3.5/5

When we heard Harper Lee had come out with a sequel, we were ready to drop everything and read it. While many people raved, critics had their doubts. We cannot deny Harper Lee always swore she’d never write a sequel, and critics say it reads a lot like a first draft of *To Kill A Mockingbird*. Sigh.

### 2. *Red Queen* by Victoria Aveyard

Rating: 4.5/5

While some find this book as stereotypical, others place it in the category of “Oh my gosh, it’s so good!” The love triangle honestly was not as annoying as most, and we think it was done pretty well.

### 3. *I Was Here* by Gayle Forman

Rating: 4/5

A dark and emotionally haunting piece, this novel displays the aftereffects of suicide in a very real way—no one saw it coming, and everyone blames themselves.

### 4. *The Girl on the Train* by Paula Hawkins

Rating: 3.5/5

A thriller version of *Gone Girl*, none of the characters in this book can be trusted, not even the narrators. It made for a very interesting read, and the plot twist was insane.

### 5. *P.S. I Still Love You* by Jenny Hankins

Rating: 4/5

BY NITYA AGGARWAL &  
ANYALEE WAHAL

Well, it wasn’t as good as the first book *To All the Boys I’ve Loved Before*, but Jenny Han knows how to make you fall in love with her characters. They are so cute!

### 6. *Saint Anything* by Sarah Dessen

Rating: 4.5/5

I know, I know, everyone says Sarah Dessen books are all the same, but they are all really good, and this one has a bit less romance and a bit more real life. It really captures the feeling of living in a sibling’s shadow.

### 7. *A Court of Roses and Thorns* by Sarah J. Maas

Rating: 4.5/5

If you love a story about romance, danger, mystical creatures, and a brave heroine, we suggest this book. It’s not one you’ll want to miss, and you will likely enjoy it.

### 8. *The Heir* by Kiera Cass

Rating: 4/5

I must admit, I am not the biggest fan of *The Selection* series, but this one has fairly good ratings. We have not read it yet, but it is definitely on our to-do list.

## Book of the Month: *Island of the Blue Dolphins* by Scott O’Dell

Rating: 4/5

In the Pacific Ocean lies an island shaped like a giant fish. It’s called Island of the Blue Dolphins, and it was inhabited by Native Americans. Until they left, that is. And when they did, they accidentally left behind one of their own—a young girl named Karana and her brother Ramo, leaving the two to fend for themselves. This book is based on the true story of a woman who had to live alone on an island for 20 years. All alone. By herself. The book was an inspiring and empowering, if not sad, read and won a Newberry Award. I shed more than a few tears when I read it, although my fourth-grade-self was way too excited to go get stranded on an island afterwards. Nevertheless, if you have not read it yet, then we highly suggest you do so, even if it is a children’s novel.

# JAYDEN'S JAMS

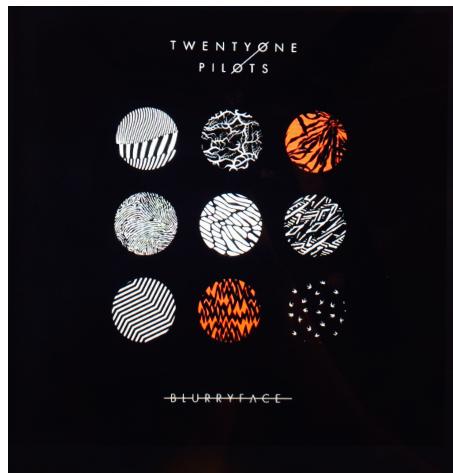
## BLURRYFACE- TWENTY ONE PILOTS

BY JAYDEN SONI

After bursting onto the scene with their official debut record, *Vessel*, Twenty One Pilots enjoyed even more success with the release of their sophomore effort last May. *Blurryface* debuted at No. 1 on the U.S. Billboard charts, no small feat for the unique duo from Cleveland, Ohio.

Regardless of one's preferred genre, all 14 tracks are worth a listen. Known for their emotional studio recordings and electrifying live sets, the band put out what was an expected continuation of their previous work with a few surprises that have further expanded their fan base.

From the first moments of the opening track, "Heavydirty soul," the positive growth is clear. Opening with electronic static, the track features fast-paced drumming, powerful vocals, and an overall bigger sound. They stay true to their roots, however, when it comes to Tyler Joseph's thoughtful lyrics, a huge element of the band's appeal.



drummer Josh Dun kicks things up a notch with fast and interesting rhythms in "Lane Boy" and "Message Man."

The band branches out completely on "Ride," which features a reggae sound, with offbeat synth and heavy bass. Also new is Dun's trumpeting, highlighted on a couple of the songs, but Joseph's piano, which serves as the foundation of "Hometown," brings long-time listeners back to the beginning.

As far as lyrics go, there is more variety. Ranging from the playful "I'm driving, here I sit, cursing my government for not using my taxes to fill holes with more cement" in "Tear in My Heart" to the more serious "Who would you live for? Who would you die for? And would you ever kill?" in "Ride," each phrase seems carefully crafted to convey or provoke as much thought as possible.

Fans of wordplay and symbolism will not be disappointed. Within the songs, there are phrases like "Out of student loans and treehouse homes we all would take the latter" in "Stressed Out."

Then of course, the album as a whole is based around the character of Blurryface, who Joseph describes as a manifestation of his fears and insecurities. He goes so far as to paint his neck and hands black in music videos, to represent a resulting restriction of both speech and action.

The story begins with songs like "Fairly Local," where Blurryface appears in the form of a low pitch-shift effect on Joseph's voice. It then ends with tracks like "Not Today," which features lyrics that continue to question, but ultimately voice self-confidence.

The record's final song, "Goner" provides perhaps the most interesting story on the album. Its first two minutes were written three years ago on an old accordion, which produced an ominous noose-like creak, disturbing given the depressing lyrics.

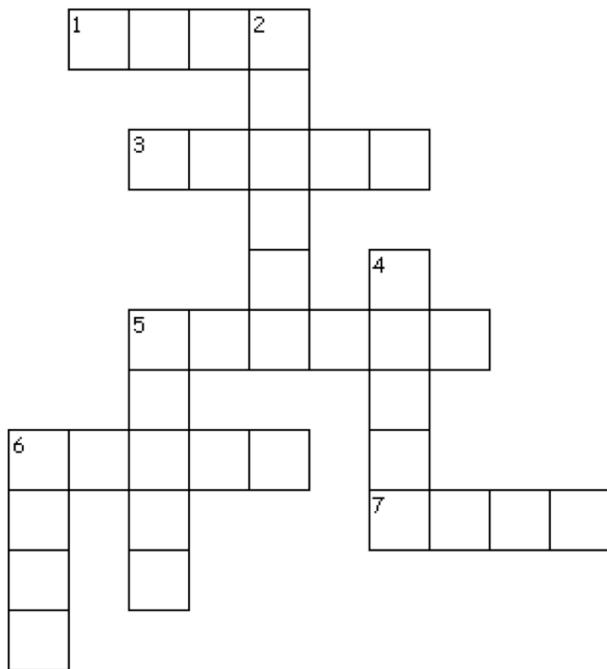
The song was left off of *Vessel*, but it was chosen to serve as the finale of *Blurryface*. In doing so, Joseph and Dun added another two minutes to the song, ending both the album and song with what appears to be part continued struggle and part triumphant defeat of Blurryface himself.

I could write more, but I do not have the space, desire, or knowledge to reveal all the record has to offer. All that keeps this from being a five-star album is that I see no sense in limiting what these two can continue to produce. The future looks bright, with much more to come.

Rating: 4.5 stars

# ACRONYMS

BY TREY CONNELLY



## Across

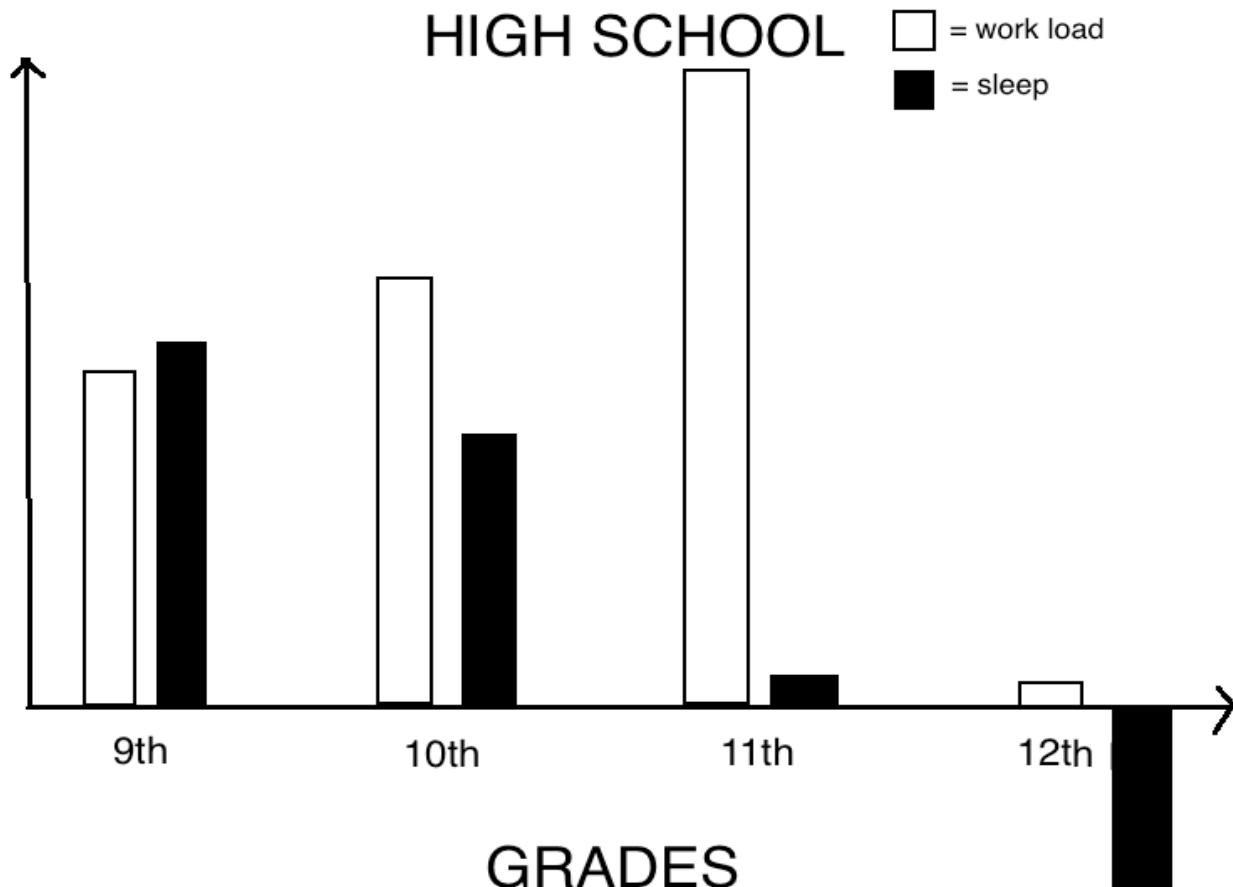
1. French for “please reply”
3. Do it anywhere else
5. Racing group
6. Limits disclosure of test scores
7. Without a moment’s hesitation

## Down

2. Order of operations
4. Western hemisphere commerce pact
5. US/Canada air defense
6. Inventory tracking method

Down: 2. PEMDAS; 4. NAFTA; 5. NORAD; 6. FIFO

Across: 1. RSVP; 3. NIMBY; 5. NASCAR; 6. FERPA; 7. ASAP

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