

THE SPARTAN TIMES

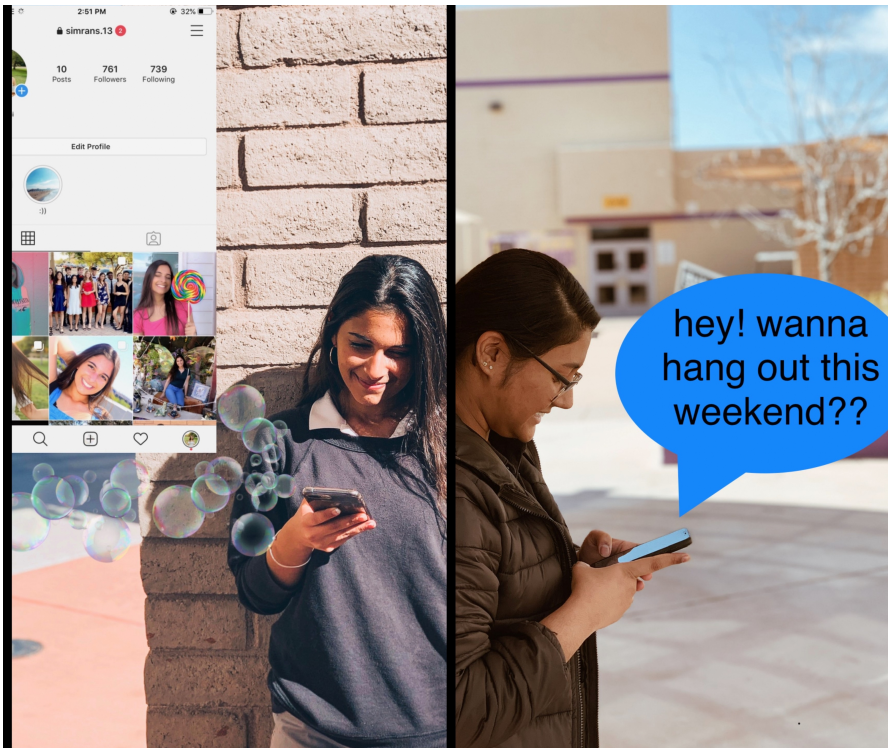


Photo: Alanna Barraza

Change your social media habits? GCA students take up the challenge

By: Alexis Gordon

Whether liking photos on Instagram, recording dances with friends on TikTok, retweeting the latest political drama on Twitter, or seeing what grandma ate for lunch on Facebook, social media consumes our lives.

Most people say they use social media to communicate with friends and family or to keep up with the world, but if so, then why does it have such a bad reputation? Social media is often called toxic and addictive, but is getting rid of it the answer?

This month, I challenged some GCA students to delete social media for a week and many of them felt they were in over their heads. Sophomore Harsi Sodhi was relieved that she had more free time as she didn't need to check her phone as frequently. With

notifications going off for posts, stories, likes, and more on these apps, many teenagers check their phone excessively.

Junior Avery Elowson spent four days without social media and by the end of the week she couldn't stand time away from seeing her friends online.

"Friends would send me pictures or posts or homework questions," said junior Avery Elowson, "and since I couldn't see them I felt guilty."

In Avery's eyes, it was as if she was ignoring a friend by taking time off these apps, but on the other hand it's possible that people could circumvent these feelings that come with getting off social media by texting or other ways of staying in touch.

The pressure to fit the norms on social media can be draining. The need to be

entertaining to get engagement, but without posting excessively, is a headache to balance. Posting something to let your followers know you are planning to be absent for a while could bring you peace of mind about taking time away.

Senior Dani McLenna recently posted on her Instagram story that she would be deleting the app until further notice. She felt comfortable letting go of the app, lowering her desire to impulsively redownload it. Dani decided to limit herself on social media after realizing she wanted more time for herself.

"My church and I talked about what we could give up so that we could gain something else," Dani explained, "such as growing our relationship with others, time spent with God, or just schoolwork."

Dani was very hesitant to leave the senior group chat, but decided, "if there's anything super vital for me to know, I'm certain someone would tell me."

For Dani, using the time limit feature on her iPhone helps her minimize time spent on certain apps. This is one feature that can serve as a reminder and not a punishment since you can simply ignore it if you choose.

"Even though the time limit feature has helped the amount of time I spend on social media, it doesn't cure my absent minded scrolling," Dani admitted.

Freshman Hayden Nguyen also found himself spending excessive amounts of time on social media, specifically YouTube. He spends much of his time with headphones on and a YouTube video playing while he does his homework, but without that distraction his week without social media was much quieter.

"I finished doing homework about three hours earlier than usual," Hayden says. "I could also go to sleep earlier without Instagram to scroll through."

Getting more sleep helped Hayden focus at school and removing social media

continued on page 2

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 3
MARCH 2020

Sophia Warren shares the wild places and ways GCA students get homework done
Read on page 6

VV Hays analyzes the growth of cancel culture in the US and at GCA
Read on page 6

Frances Sinoc shares the story of super senior Risha Das
Read on page 4

Inside the Issue:



Ainsley Snyder explores how GCA squeezes itself into time capsules
Read on page 5



Cindy Zhong shares the story of GCA's girls in tuxes
Read on page 7

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Cell-cultured meat is coming soon: GCA students meet the future

By: Greyson Henry

If you were out for dinner and you were asked, "We only have veggie patties for our burgers here, is that okay?", your reaction may range anywhere from, "It's made of vegetables, it must be inherently bad" to "I've never tried one, so why not?" Unfortunately, most tend to think the former, prompting the question, are we biased by our own conceptions of where our meat comes from?

In the labs of Memphis Meats, a

company based in Berkley, California, a revolutionary change to the future of meat consumption may be underway.

Since 2015, the company has devoted its time to researching and producing an alternative to slaughtering animals for meat, while also maintaining the taste and consistency many desire from their carnivorous meals. Their method of doing this? Cell-cultured meat - meat grown in vitro rather than taken from living animals. Funding by big-name investors like Bill Gates, Memphis Meats

and many companies like it seek to offer another option to those with ethical concerns over where their meat comes from, while also possibly combating prevalent issues like climate change by eliminating a main producer of fossil fuels in the livestock industry.

Lab-grown meat is still far from being implemented into the market due to high production costs, but initial reviewers claim that the faux meat is nearly indistinguishable from the real thing, and tastes equally great. With the possibility of this product eventually being available to the public, the biggest question is: how will consumers react to the idea of

continued on page 2

Social media

continued from page 1

as a distraction made him feel more present in the moment.

However, Hayden, like several others, didn't think that deleting social media forever is the best way to handle the consequences of constantly using it.

"Social media is an option to have in your life, but people forget that," he says, "so getting rid of it for a bit can make a huge difference in our lives."

The reality is that the things we are all obsessed with on these apps are not as time sensitive as we make them out to be. How much of a difference does it make whether you see that photo or that YouTube video right now? Could it wait until tomorrow, next week, next month?

Maybe it's unrealistic for some to cut out social media long term, but getting rid of it isn't the only option. I also asked several GCA students to use social media more actively for a week. To be more active, students commented and posted more often to increase their interaction with people. Passively using social media has been linked with it having a negative influence on people's self-esteem.

Senior Poorva Sharma found commenting on others posts intimidating, especially when she wasn't friends with them in person.

"You have to be aware of what you say," Poorva said, "especially if you don't know the person well but want to tell them how much you like the post or how much you appreciate them."

It's intimidating to push yourself out

of your comfort zone even from behind a screen. Being consciously more active on social media can change your perspective.

Being the politically active person she is, junior Sophia Hammer's feed is full of politics, global affairs, and national news. During her week of using social media more actively, Sophia had difficulty adding her own personal thoughts to something that she had retweeted.

"It was hard to remember to be more active on social media for this challenge," Sophia says, "but if I felt strongly about something I would comment on it."

And she did! Sophia would tweet her excitement for a band's new music, her thoughts on a controversial news story, and she even promoted a podcast she recently started with her dad.

Another junior, Tally Thompson,

found commenting and interacting often to be somewhat easy despite it being a new habit. Tally had undergone her own social media cleanse in the past which made this challenge feel more familiar.

"During sophomore year I got rid of 90% of my followers, leaving only my close friends and family," Tally said.

Having a following of people you care about is much different than having a fan base. In some ways, social media has lost the social aspect for people who use it because they are not truly present online. Perhaps using these apps in a new way, like the students in this story, can bring you new perspective. Consider what you're really missing out on most: not constantly being on and keeping up with social media, or the free time you sacrifice when you overuse social media?

Cell-cultured meat

continued from page 1

artificially created meat?

While it wasn't possible to acquire and have participants taste Memphis Meat's product itself, in the interest of discovering whether an individual's opinion on the taste of meat is affected by preconceptions of the meat's source, four GCA students volunteered to cooperate in a single-blind experiment comparing regular cheeseburgers and vegetarian burgers.

The participants, Sebastian Aleman, Jordann DeLozier, Aaron Hirsh, and Harsha Kotta, were told that they would be trying two cheeseburgers - with no indication that one of these would contain a meatless patty. In an attempt to discover how these individuals would approach and rate the taste of these burgers without being swayed by the commonly held notions of vegetarian burgers being "fake" and "tasteless", the

subjects were asked to try each burger and qualify them based on predicted cost, predicted time to make, predicted quality of the ingredients, the presentation of burger, and the overall enjoyability.

After purchasing two Big Mac's from McDonald's and two Big Wac's from Green New American Vegetarian, the four participants were gathered in the cafeteria and given one half of each kind of burger. The McDonald's burger was called Burger A, while the vegetarian burger was called Burger B.

As the four tasters sat around the cafeteria table, light spilling in from the windows illuminating the half-burgers in front of them, a hunger appeared in their eyes. There was a general consensus around the table that Burger B appeared to be the superior burger - well put together, sturdy, appealing to the eye - in contrast to Burger A - sloppy, falling apart, and generally plain in appearance. After explaining the process to them, they began with a taste of Burger A.

Silence filled the room as their jaws took on a mechanical motion, their eyes fixated upwards as they focused all their attention inside their mouths, lettuce and sauce dripping from their hands onto the table.

"This definitely tastes like a Big Mac!" exclaims Harsha with certainty, daring anyone to question him.

After several more bites, the tasters submitted their thoughts. Dissatisfaction with the burger was overwhelming, with no more than a 2-3 out of 5 rating in regards to cost, time to make, quality of ingredients, and presentation. Similarly, overall enjoyability was rated in the 2-3 score range, aside from Harsha - who gave it a 5.

Eager to move on, the four each grasped Burger B and took their next bites. Immediately, confliction emerged on their faces, as they seemed to realize they were tasting a much different kind of patty. In cautious curiosity, they continued to eat the burger - not quite enjoying it, but not disgusted either.

"This is weird, but I can't stop eating it," says Jordann between hesitant bites.

Despite being unsure about their enjoyment of the burger itself, all four tasters agreed the quality was much higher than Burger A, rating all categories between a 3-4 out of 5. Harsha, always the outlier, rated the quality of ingredients a 1, already suspicious that he had been deceived with false meat. The tasters returned to their days, left to wonder exactly what it was they had just eaten.

The following day, each taster was sat down individually to reveal what most of had already guessed at - they had been deceived into consuming a veggie patty.

"I knew it!" screamed Jordann, her face triumphant.

Harsha reacted similarly, always proud

of his talented sense of taste, adding, "I was impressed that I couldn't tell which one was a vegetarian burger just by looking at it."

When Sebastian was told, he was appreciative of being left in the dark beforehand. "I would have approached the Big Mac with immediate disapproval if I'd known what it was, and if I'd known the second was a veggie burger, I would have thought, 'How good can a veggie patty really be?'" He thinks for a moment before stating, "I don't really care where the meat comes from as long as the taste is good and it's healthy in quality."

Aaron claimed he would have even been swayed to criticism before even seeing the burger if he'd known it's vegetarian origins. But, at the end of the day he agrees, "It doesn't necessarily matter where the burger comes from, vegetarian, cell cultured, anything, as long as it's an enjoyable meal."

With approximately one in every ten people living some variation of a vegetarian lifestyle, the possibility of avoiding the ethical concerns over animal well-being may be a critical turning point in their diets. Naturally, others will continue to avoid meat simply for health reasons, but cell culture-grown meat introduces a progressive method of including meat in a diet without submitting to a market revolving around taking advantage of animals.

Additionally, as this experiment is intended to show, an individual's perceptions will likely be affected by the various terms they hear, such as "vegetarian" or "cell cultured". But, if these foods are approached with an open mind - and an open mouth to match it - then at the end of the day, maybe all that matters is enjoying a good burger.



Senior Sebastian Aleman (left) and three other GCA students took part in an experiment to test our taste buds, eating both real and fake meat burgers and sharing their honest feelings when they didn't know which was which.

New year, same me?

2020 brings great change, maybe

By: Jocelyn Ju

“3... 2... 1... Happy New Year!” The shouts die down. Life returns to normal. The start of a new year is always a big deal. Fireworks, sparkling cider, new year’s resolutions. This year, 2020, was especially emphasized due to it being the beginning of a new decade. Yet as many people, GCA students included, get older, the appeal of staying up until midnight to watch the clock tick down diminishes, and the shift from 11:59:59 to 12:00:00 is not nearly as exciting.

A large majority of the senior class agrees: the start of 2020 was overhyped. While many do admit that the year itself is a fun, unique experience, especially because they have graduation to look forward to, “it’s just another year,” as senior Ainsley Snyder put it.

“I’m not a new person, just a continuation of who I’ve always been,” she continued. “Everyone always says ‘new year, new me’, but it doesn’t necessarily need to be.”

Often times, people elect to wait for the New Year before making changes to their lives, deciding to call these “New Year’s Resolutions.” Ainsley is among those that dislike this choice, as changes to lives can happen at any point in the year. Waiting for the new year provides a new sense of motivation, but it shouldn’t be the only time that people try to better their lives.

“There’s nothing so wrong with you that you need to be a new person,” says senior Paige Udall. “Just better yourself.”

Senior Paige Udall agrees, stating, “The new year is a good time, but it shouldn’t be the only time you work towards goals. It’s almost limiting-- and besides, there’s nothing so wrong with you that you need to be a new person. Just better yourself.”

New Year’s resolutions are an incentive for some. Alanna Barraza is looking through a new lens, trying to “practice harder, play harder, and be better” this upcoming year. Amanda Allen’s resolution is to be happy. Katerina Stender is trying to procrastinate less.

While it may work for them, putting these goals on hold until the start of another calendar year gives people the excuse to procrastinate more, and some never end up making the resolutions.

Even then, many people that choose to make New Year’s resolutions eventually fail, though not all do.

This is a sentiment largely echoed by the rest of the grades, from the seventh graders to the seniors. Though January 1 does bring a unique opportunity to “start fresh,” being the recognized start to a new era, it is a day like any other.

The buildup and anticipation of the new decade being a fresh start has only made the fall back to reality more drastic. Typically around the holiday season, everyone is enclosed in a “bubble” of sorts, with high hopes for the future. There is barely any homework, it’s the giving season, and most are surrounded by family and friends. However, this bubble happens to pop on January 2.

“We were all thinking ‘oh, this is going to be such a great decade,’ and then everything went wrong immediately,” states senior Ron Hirsh.

“We overhyped 2020 and there was this expectation for it to be amazing, but everything crashed and burned,” said Cindy Zhong.

Sophomore Cindy Zhong agrees, saying, “We overhyped 2020 and there was this expectation for it to be amazing, but everything crashed and burned,” she says. “It made everything feel a lot worse, especially with Australia on fire, the Corona Virus, and impending World War III with Iran.”

Essentially, as both Ron and Cindy expressed, the start of the year heightened the disappointment felt as the months passed. For them, 2020 has been “just another year.” As a senior, Ron will face some large changes this upcoming year, such as graduation from GCA, and as a sophomore, Cindy is focused on her future and selecting classes. However, despite the change that a year can bring, both senior and sophomore currently appear to be focused on the present rather than the future.

Alternatively, when questioned about her views on the start of 2020, freshman Audrey Ju disagreed.

She argues, “No, it wasn’t overhyped. It was depressing.”

For her, January 1 was a letdown overall, without any anticipation. She hoped for fireworks, but her reality was a glass of sparkling cider and a “happy new year!” from her family before heading off

to sleep. Along with her was Khushi Parikh.

“I literally have no opinion,” says sophomore Khushi on the beginning of the decade. To her, the year just means saying goodbye to her senior friends, but the start hasn’t affected her as a person at all. Her motivations are the same, her goals are the same. The only difference is the date.

Despite this, there are some that still look to the new year for a fresh start. Imran Jan, a senior, is one of them, believing that with 2020 comes new opportunities, as well as events to look forward to both politically and socially. “2020 has such a positive connotation,” Imran says. “I think it’s going to be a big

“I think it’s going to be a big year,” says Imran Jan. “It’s like looking through an entirely new lens.”

year, especially with the election coming up.”

While he concedes that the saying “new year, new me” is overused, Imran believes that the year is what the individual makes of it, and hopes to

encourage others to use their voices in the upcoming decade.

In regards to the others who aren’t as optimistic about this year, Imran says “I don’t get it. I would expect everyone to be excited! It’s like looking through an entirely new lens.”

He is one of the people, few and far between among the upperclassmen, at GCA that truly appreciate the spirit and hype of the new year. Most prefer to continually improve themselves over the year rather than waiting for the New Year for motivation, as well as highlighting the devastation the year has brought.

Whether the new year is over-hyped is, ultimately, up to the individual. For some, it presents an opportunity to set and achieve goals, while others attempt to better themselves year-round. In spite of the different outlooks on it, the new decade will bring with it changes, both good and bad

January 1, 2020 has passed. Resolutions have failed, sparkling cider has been drunk, and fireworks have vanished. The start of the new year is over, but 2020, despite being “just another year” is full of opportunity and possibility for everyone.



The new year also brought a new decade this time around, but the GCA community is not entirely sold on it also bringing new positive change to our lives and our country. Some are excited, others are anxious, while a select few are just sad that there won’t be any more fun New Year’s Eve glasses for people to wear with two zero’s for their eyes until the year 2030.

(Photo: Alanna Barraza)

Senior Risha Das: More than just 'the smart kid'

By: Frances Sinoc

As the lunch bell rings, most students rush out of their classrooms to enjoy their lunch in the cafeteria. Yet she, in her signature ponytail and black Honeywell jacket, instead meets her friends in the choir room, more ready for the conversations and laughs than actually eating food.

Her laugh is contagious, and her excited high-pitched squeals are hard to miss, but her character and pureness of heart remain unmatched.

Known as the school's Flinn Scholarship Finalist and the Honeywell Leadership Camp Academy participant, senior Risha Das has always been committed to her academics. A compassionate and determined student, her curiosity for learning has been fueled by goal-setting and a desire to understand the world around her.

"Everytime I think of the outcome, I get excited and that motivates me in spite of my hardships," Risha says. "I know it's cheesy, but I am in love with learning."

Aside from her love for learning, Risha is a natural leader, taking the initiative to share ideas in classroom discussions.

"She was always the first to raise her hand," Amy Wall, her AP World History teacher and Model UN Advisor, recalls Risha's attentiveness and participation in her class two years ago.

Her leadership continues beyond her classes as she actively recruits members for both Speech and Debate and Model UN. This enables her to connect more with the students at GCA, especially those in younger grades.

"She cares a lot about the people in our club," sophomore Cindy Zhong says, grateful for Risha's guidance in better performing in public forum and other Speech and Debate activities. "She is organized, and a strong leader."

Outside of academics, Risha is a member of GCA's Chorale and Advanced Vocal Ensemble and has been for the past two years. These platforms did not only open opportunities for her to demonstrate her talent in singing, but also for her to meet other passionate singers and guide others in reaching a common goal.

"She's a team player," says senior Sasha Subzwari who, like Risha, is an Alto in Chorale and Advanced Vocal. "She makes you feel comfortable, and that it's okay to make a mistake."

Choir Director Ted Gibson, having witnessed Risha's musical growth in the last three years, appreciates Risha's commitment in making an effort to not only improve herself, but to ensure that others in the ensemble improve as well.

"She is focused, determined, but very kind to her peers," Gibson shares. "She works hard on her own, and that results in

people around her wanting to work hard as well."

At a young age, Risha moved from Arizona to Florida, and from Florida to South Carolina as she started her second semester of ninth grade. While many were kind and friendly to her in Florida, she did not fare the same in South Carolina.

"I was the only freshman in Precalculus, and right of the bat that already set me apart," she recalls.

Because she moved between semesters, her transcript from Florida had not yet carried over as she started school in South Carolina, one keen to class rankings. With her schoolmates recognizing her intelligence between the week of finals and the release of class ranks, they expected to see Risha ranked at the top of her class of 441 students.

"My human geography teacher wrote down blanks for the top ten spots," Risha shared. Her teacher invited students to share the names of who they thought took each spot. "Everyone made a big deal about me being the 'smart kid'."

So it shocked everyone when her teacher announced in front of the class that she was ranked 441.

"Ever since that, there were guys who kept making fun of me. It spread so fast. I found out there was a Snapchat about me being sent to everyone," Risha says.

While Risha did not think much of this ranking, as she was ultimately ranked second, she was hurt by these actions against her.

These experiences not only strengthened her in overcoming trials, but also shaped and solidified her conviction to her beliefs in the face of adversity, beliefs that would stand as the foundation for her character.

"Moving has ultimately helped me grow in empathy," Risha says. "It has helped me understand where other people are coming from."

Risha only spent a semester in South Carolina before moving back to Arizona and coming to GCA at the beginning of tenth grade. With her approachable personality and kind heart, it was not difficult for her closest friends to love and welcome her to GCA.

"We know we can rely on each other," says senior Vishnu Kotta, one of Risha's close friends. "I'm Batman, and she's the Batmobile carrying me through GCA."

"We support each other, both when things are and aren't great," senior Esteban Salas, one of Risha's first friends at GCA, adds. "Our friendship isn't one that a silly argument will break up."

A loving friend, intelligent student, and life-long learner, Risha never fails to touch the lives of all she meets. Her determination to better understand the world around her encourages her to learn more about people, both those close to her and those she hasn't known personally. Long after her time at GCA, she will not only be remembered for her academic recognitions and musical distinctions, but for her effort in making a meaningful difference in others' lives.

Australian wildfires show effects all the way to GCA

By: Aiden Harris

During the start of the 2019-2020 Australian summer (a summer that takes place during our winter), a series of bushfires were started by numerous people, leading to one of the most devastating wildfires in history.

The fire spanned across Australia, with at least 27 million acres of the country being burned. The country has taken a hit in many areas because of the fire, and has affected many, if not all, of the inhabitants of it. While the residents of the devastated country struggle with reconstruction and upcoming rain, the residents of America including us at GCA sit fire-free in our homes and workplaces, reading more about the Australian wildfires everyday.

While we sit, the argument arises on whether America, as well as other first-

world countries, are truly aware of Australia's situation and the numerous effects of it. Many argue that America and other countries do offer plenty of aid in many different forms such as donating and raising large sums of money or spreading awareness about it. Australia resident Nicole Sheppard and GCA parent (of senior David Cody) Christopher Cody are amongst the many who have commented on this.

"Not at all," said Sheppard, when asked if Americans were ignorant to the country's struggle. "From what I can see it was widely covered on all media platforms."

While Nicole and many other Australian residents agree that news of the wildfires have been widely reported and spread amongst many social media and news platforms, there are still many who believe that Americans are not as aware of

the physical and personal effects the wildfires bring.

"Over 1.5 billion animals, insects and other various wildlife have lost their lives. However, the support and generosity of both Australians and internationals towards the situation has lessened the disaster considerably," commented Sheppard, on the enormous loss in

wildlife that the fires caused, along with the 24 people killed, adding onto the losses that the country has suffered.

Sheppard was willing to get more personal with her experience with the fire, talking about how there was "a little scare before Christmas. A bushfire started



The wildfires in Australia are some of the worst in recent memory and have made news across the world. The fires have even affected some from the GCA community, like senior David Cody's father, but some argue the international community has not done enough to help.

continued on page 5

Do NOT open for at least 10 years

By: Ainsley Snyder

“GCA is to me, the physical manifestation of Aristotle’s quote: ‘We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, therefore, is not an act, but a habit.’ GCA, simply is the habit of excellence,” said former GCA teacher Kenneth Melton.

This quote may come as a shock to students, not because it isn’t true, but rather because none of us know who Mr. Melton is, let alone what he taught. That is one of the beauties of time capsules - you don’t need to know the person to identify with them, you just need to hear their words.

In 2017 when GCA moved campuses, we dug up a time capsule that had been created in the first year of GCA’s establishment, 2007. This time capsule was opened at an assembly that included alumni where they revealed a newspaper from the Arizona Republic written in that October, a CD, a flip phone, and personalized notes written from every student and teacher in 2007.

“GCA is a great opportunity. It resembles a chance to go farther than we ever thought we could go,” said one student. Another student said that GCA to him meant “being with my friends, learning cool things, and having fun.” This sentiment is agreed upon by current student, David Cody, who said that “GCA means everything. It’s where all my friends are, where all my best experiences



GCA Class of 2017 graduate Lauren Coleman (left) and current eighth grader Brylie Tucker check out the 2007 and 2020 GCA time capsule boxes. (Photo: Alanna Barraza)

have come from. I’ve laughed a lot and cried a lot, but I love the environment.”

The environment is one of the unique things about GCA and seems to be the main reason a time capsule was created - so that we might know what our school was like when it was small and just an idea rather than a full-fledged, A-rated, Blue Ribbon awarded school.

However, now that GCA is no longer a small school located in portables, it is time to update the time capsule to reflect the new attitude of the school and students 12 years in. In order to accomplish this daunting - yet exciting - task, a new Senate committee was created that has been brainstorming all year how to represent the students of GCA at the turn of the decade.

So far they have decided that in addition to the previous items, the new

time capsule will hold a hydroflask, some popular student-suggested memes, a 3-D printed item, a list of all the Senate praetors names, and cards signed by all the legions.

“I want the students of the future to be provided with the same opportunity that we were. I want them to notice that we were all going through the same things no matter the generation,” said senior and head of the Internal Affairs Senate committee, Nicolette Beaulieu.

Time capsules serve as a link between generations and have been created for hundreds of years, often being buried in corners of buildings or other unique places that will hopefully protect them from the weather. Often, time capsules are said to be created so as to remember what the time period was like, especially for future generations. However, most

time capsules don’t provide much information for future historians and so are often created by people with the intention of being remembered in a certain way in the future.

On the notecards in the old time capsule, there were several examples of this notion, with many students describing how they wanted to be remembered. “I want to be remembered as one of the first 7th graders in Geometry,” said one student.

“I want to be remembered for my expertise in computers,” said another. “Remember me as me,” wrote a third. While this may seem strange since none of the names on the notecards were recognizable, nor the deeds the students wished to be remembered for, it makes sense that the students who helped forge the greatness of GCA would want to be commemorated with the opening of the time capsule.

“I would want to be remembered,” says teacher Jeremy Johnson. “I have given the best years of my teaching life to this school and it has motivated me to be a better person and teacher because students here care and want to learn.”

While a time capsule might seem to satisfy that desire and cement ourselves into the future, it is actually not the future we inspire, but rather the present. The time capsule is regarded as a special moment now because it is our nostalgia that fills it. So in ten or twenty years, remember to open a time capsule of your own, even if it’s just objects and words, it will be flooded with memories.

Australian wildfires

continued from page 4

around 30 km away and within 36 hours it was meters from our house. Thankfully, Australian firefighters are probably the best and most efficient in the world that put out the fire in a matter of days.”

Sheppard’s testimony not only reveals the devastation inflicted upon Australian residents, but also how the fires affected people emotionally and mentally. During a holiday where many feel at peace and secure, the fire contrasts heavily, changing the plans of many who looked forward to celebrating Christmas safely in their homes. Not only have people been taken out of a place of safety due to the fires’ occurrence during a widely celebrated holiday, but thousands have also been taken out of their homes with “more than 2,000 homes destroyed,” according to the New York Times. Countless families have had to spend their holidays relocating or crowding at one of the numerous shelters that Australia offers to its affected

residents.

GCA parent Christopher Cody and his wife, Vicky O’Leary, who live part-time in Australia have also commented on the results of the fires in Australia. O’Leary who is in Australia at the moment, said that “large sites where school campuses were held were overtaken by fire so all the schools have to cancel or relocate their camp.” With the fires burning down not only the homes of families, but also the workplaces and schools of adults and children, more worries have been placed upon Australia’s residents.

“All we can do now is send good energy their way, and wait for good things to come,” commented Cody. Christopher Cody’s son, David, was initially concerned about his father’s presence in the country, saying that he was “worried when he heard what was going on,” showing the widespread effect of the fires and their expansion beyond Australia.

While the general public seems to be aware of the wildfires, they also seem to be ignorant of the extent of the fires.

“Awareness is crucial,” Nicole asserted, “A lot of the world seems to have forgotten the fires are still burning. After another heat wave across the country last weekend, more than 60% of the fires are still alight, yet social media has gone silent. I’m not too surprised though, the same thing happened with the Amazon rainforest fire.”

Americans also seem to be largely unaware of the threats that still exist to Australia. For instance, the local weather predictions in the country expect rain for a large part of this coming week, which could have severe environmental impacts. Due to the fires weakening the roots of trees and their trunks, the downpour may lead to many trees falling over easily, which could lead to detrimental results. On top of that, there also exists the danger of flooding and potential landslides.

Despite the precautions that Australians have taken in respect to the weather, it has actually proved to be beneficial for the fire-ridden country.

“...preliminary information from the bureau showed that 391.6 millimeters (15.4 inches) of rain fell over the past four days -- the city’s heaviest rainfall since 1990.” stated a CNN article about the rain in Australia. The record-setting heavy rain in Australia has aided the country’s hustling firemen by extinguishing over 30 fires around the country.

As we hear more news about the wildfires everyday, and the debate over the ignorance of Americans continues, many have pointed out the financial aid that people have offered to Australia. Many of America’s celebrities have publicly announced their substantial financial contributions to the cause. However, debate has sparked over the contributions of several wealthy people- including Amazon CEO and the richest man in the world, Jeff Bezos, leading many to question how much he really cares about Australia’s predicament as well as how much Americans really do care in general.

You're cancelled: Cancel culture at GCA

By: VV Hays

Cancel culture—a common phenomenon of boycotting someone over problematic or questionable behavior; but does cancel culture provide a way to hold people accountable, or does it encourage a mob mentality instead?

In the last five years, cancel culture has exploded in popularity. Numerous celebrities, politicians, YouTubers, musicians, and influencers are constantly being “canceled.” Almost every day, a new celebrity gets called out. From R. Kelly, who was convicted of sexual abuse and multiple kidnappings, to James Charles, a YouTuber who lost over one million subscribers overnight. No one is immune to cancel culture, and the students of GCA are no exception.

GCA's small, tight-knit community can be a breeding ground for drama. Nav Singh, a sophomore, comments, “At such a small school, word gets around quickly, so it's easy to start or jump on a hate train. While the person probably did or said something, they often get a lot more backlash than they deserve. We see it everywhere and anyone can be canceled.”

Once that hate train takes off, “every single detail of your life is spread around the whole school,” said Chavi Coy, another sophomore who believes that GCA is prone to drama, but admits that “people are more understanding here.”

“We all have been a victim and we've all increased it. It's really easy to see everyone hating someone or something and join in,” says Coy. To her, cancel culture is inescapable and is a part of her

everyday life at school.

However, junior Eman Massoud would disagree with this assessment, as she believes that “cancel culture isn't as bad at GCA because everyone is so forgiving in situations that could've been much bigger at larger schools.”

As a student who left and then later returned to GCA, she notices it more after coming back.

“I think there's more cancel culture at GCA than at Mesquite,” says Massoud, “but it's more noticeable here because there's no privacy.”

Long-time GCA student, junior Lynette Anaya, sees cancel culture as a way for people to learn and think, saying it's “necessary to be called out to change beliefs and actions because if I ever said something, I would want to be called out”. However, she still makes it clear that it should be taken more seriously when it is talked about in social media and politics, especially in our schools.

“At such a small school, word gets around quickly, so it's easy to start or jump on a hate train . . . but people often get a lot more than they deserve,” says Nav Singh.

One GCA sophomore, who requested anonymity to speak more freely, agrees, insisting that cancel culture is a healthy part of change.

“If someone makes a racist joke, or lies about insensitive topics to manipulate someone, or makes a hateful comment on a group of people based on their race or sexuality, then it's okay to cancel them,” the student said.

This type of negative influence can be a deterrent to destructive actions or statements.

With the rise of cancel culture, people are beginning to question its benefits. Coy believes that calling out is only productive when “we stop being hypocrites if someone does something wrong, we call them out on it, and they hold themselves accountable. Don't go back to them and pretend you're fine”. She believes that calling people out can only go so far and that “it's up to the person to change themselves.”

Many people use their morals and beliefs to determine whether someone should be called out for their actions, but this complicates things more.

“Cancel culture is dehumanizing. Everyone slips up and we need to empathize with their situation,” says Singh. “Being mad or expressing your discontent with someone's actions is one thing, but completely ‘canceling’ someone is another.”

Massoud believes that call-out culture can be justified.

“In the case of someone saying a derogatory term like the n-word or any other word of slander, I think they should be dealt with accordingly,” says Massoud, “and not just a slap on the wrist, but punishment that would make them think about why they chose to say that.”

Cancel culture once started on the internet but has now crossed over into the mainstream. While some believe that it represents the worst of our culture's mob mentality, others believe that it's society's way to check ugly behavior. However, cancel culture isn't going to end anytime soon, as we all find ways to navigate through an ever-increasingly complicated world.

Oh, the places you will do homework

By: Sophia Warren

“I was once eating a sandwich, doing homework, while on the toilet,” says one anonymous GCA senior. “Some days you just don't have the time.”

The aggressive homework loads at GCA often force students to adopt insane study habits. You can see the desperation to simply keep up with the masses of assignments amid jobs, sports, and clubs.

However, one can also witness the panic surrounding blatant procrastination recovery. Regardless of which end of the spectrum one falls upon, there is an undeniable array of absurd ways and places that GCA students do homework.

For some students, after school jobs can dominate life and significantly limit their time to do homework. Forced to cram in time for assignments, some students even do homework while on the clock, mastering the art of multitasking.

“I was once eating a sandwich, doing homework, while on the toilet,” says one anonymous GCA senior. “Some days you just don't have the time.”

“I actually bring my entire backpack to work every single day. I have to shove it in the cabinet in the middle of the host stand,” says senior and Barrio Queen hostess Kenzie Rashford. “My shifts are often from 4-10 and finding time to do homework before or after is basically impossible.”

This struggle to find the time and space for homework is also complicated for

continued on page 7

Where have all the students gone?



By: Venus Kapadia

On a typical high school day, students go from class to class, running to the beat of the bell. In an 8-hour school day when most of the day is planned to the minute, it's where students choose to spend their free time that really builds their high school experience.

Coming onto campus their first day of high school, the freshmen are searching for a place of their own. After they arrive, they look for a place not occupied by upperclassmen and find a spot directly in front of them, Hall C. After spending their precious few minutes before school getting to know others in the hall, it becomes a daily occurrence and soon around 25 freshmen all meet in Hall C

before school to catch up, do homework, and browse YouTube together. This was all last year, and now as sophomores, they have continued their tradition.

“We wanted a place to sit, eat food, and spend time. Now it feels like it's always been that way,” says Katelyn Chu.

While certainly unconventional, the sophomores show how it's the people you're with that matter, not your location. With the support of their classmates, Hall C has become a spot for sophomores to interact before starting their school day.

Hall C isn't the only place where students have found a home on campus. For senior Sophia Warren, the Senate room has become her go-to spot on campus for homework, senate work, and just relaxing after a long day.

continued on page 7

Homework craziness

continued from page 6

student-athletes. Their inconsistent access to online homework while traveling can be challenging, especially during longer trips.

“It’s hard because during the games, you want to watch and be supportive, but you can’t because you have to get all your homework done,” says freshman Varsity Basketball player Kelsey Klauba, “Afterwards it’s even more difficult because you’re in the middle of the desert, it’s dark on the bus, and you have no service.”

This is consistently an issue for countless students who scramble to use someone else’s hotspot while hunched over their notebooks with a flashlight, barely illuminating their calculus homework.

While homework is clearly an issue for athletes, coaches who are familiar with the school try to be accomodating. For swimmers in particular, the coach will occasionally allow them to miss parts of practice for homework, however, the homework must be done at practice itself.

“I used to get in trouble to waking up early, so I would have to do all my homework in my closet with one small light on,” says Emma Stock.

“He just wants to make sure no one is taking advantage of practice time,” says freshman Jana Sinoc.

Understandably, coaches and parents feel the need to check in from time to time to ensure student productivity. It’s no secret that despite aggressive homework loads, many GCA students have an impressive knack for procrastination.

This has led to a variety of entertaining ways that students have gotten their homework done—anywhere from adopting a nocturnal lifestyle to hiding in the bathroom.

“I’m not necessarily the most adept at managing my homework,” laughs senior Vishnu Kotta. “When some people procrastinate they start homework at 10 or 11pm, but you might as well just sleep at that point. I just sleep and estimate how long it will take me to do homework and then wake up at that time and do it.”

For Vishnu, on a typical night he may wake up at 4:30AM and do homework until school, but on more intense days it can be around 12:30AM.

“It’s a little unorthodox, but I think it is a solid approach,” says Kotta.

Plenty of students get themselves into similar situations which can often be met with resistance from parents.

“I used to get in trouble for waking up early to do homework, so I would have to wake up and do all my homework in my closet with just one small light on to hide it” says junior Emma Stock, “Yeah, some of this is my own procrastination, but sometimes people also don’t understand the genuine homework load we have.”

For students who don’t get homework done before school, attempting to finish becomes an endless cycle of working in the class period before something is due.

“I sometimes bring my homework with me in the bathroom and do it in the stalls in like three minutes” says one desperate junior. “My horrible procrastination started freshman year and it continues.”

While some students attempt to adopt normal homework schedules, for most students, a busy life or consistent procrastination frequently leads to completing work in the wildest ways.

birthday. I remember because Eli got everyone to sign a card and he got me doughnuts.”

The Senate room is one of several places on campus that allow students to spend time with others while being adaptable enough to serve different purposes throughout the day. When the Senate room isn’t a hangout spot, it’s a place to make posters, conduct interviews, talk privately, do homework, or just rest in a quiet space in the middle of a hectic day.

When it comes to building memories, seniors Alphonso Dimaano, Jacob Shannon, and Harsha Kotta share a special story. If you sit outside at lunch, you have certainly seen them playing basketball in the rain or sunshine, a ritual that goes all the way back to their freshman year.



Students like Audrey Coleman (above) have made tuxes a typical sight on female students at GCA.

Suit up, bow on for GCA music

By: Cindy Zhong

You sit in the audience, surrounded by your family and friends. Chatter slowly dies down as the stage lights up. One of the music teachers walks onstage and thanks you for being there. As the director introduces the group, you stare out into the sea of dresses and tuxedos when you notice her, the girl in the back wearing pants.

Going to a GCA music concert, if you pay attention, you’ll probably see Emma Stock, Hannah Kang, Audrey Coleman, and Evelyn DeVos in a suit.

This first started when Mei Li Tachoir, a 2018 graduate of GCA, broke the glass ceiling. Since then, there have been several girls at GCA who said they would

be open to the idea of wearing a tuxedo to the music concerts.

But although Mei Li was the first one to wear a tuxedo, it was never a big deal for her.

“Ever since I was a child, I was never really comfortable with dresses and skirts.” Mei Li says, “Going forward with that mentality, it was never a choice to “switch” to a tux because I never wore a dress for any of the concerts in the first place.”

At the time, Jason Delfing was the director of the band and thankfully had no concerns over her choice not to wear a dress.

Since Michelle Kalo took over the
continued on page 8

Student hiding spots

continued from page 6

Thinking back to sophomore year, Sophia explains how it all started when she met there for the dance committee. She became more involved in the Senate as Junior Counsel and Senate Treasurer and is now one of the many kids who spend their time there.

“It became a space I looked forward to going to and became a space for a lot of people,” she says.

Students looking to do homework, spend time during a free hour, or just catch up with their friends found the red couch and open space inviting.

When the day comes for her to enter the Senate room one last time, Sophia will look back fondly on the memories.

“We painted the room over my 17th

As a new student, Alphonso started to play basketball with the juniors and soon other freshmen began to join him, but in sophomore year when Harsha joined, the crew was formed.

“It is a nice escape from all my classes, and it’s pretty nice when everyone sees you make a shot,” Alphonso chuckles. But these boys aren’t only in it for the lunch-time glory.

“It’s a fun way to release the pent up frustration of school,” Harsha explains.

“If you’re angry, you can talk trash on the basketball court, but it’s important to keep it on the court,” Alphonso adds on.

These games have brought them closer together and given them memories they’ll keep well past high school.

“One of the things I’ll always remember about this school is playing basketball at lunch with these guys and

different people,” Jacob adds.

The commonality between hangout spots isn’t the spot itself, but the people. All of the interviewees discussed the memories they formed in their spot and it’s this memory that builds the character of the space.

For Harsha, Alphonso, and Jacob, their daily basketball games allow them to destress and socialize in the same way as a classroom or hallway can for others.

When dealing with a busy and stressful school day, students look for spaces that allow them to decompress and feel at ease. Whether that be a game with friends during lunch, a club room, or a hallway, each student looks for a space to call their own. It truly is a combination of the physical space and the students themselves that make such locations on campus appealing and inviting.

Girls wearing suits

continued from page 7

band in the 2017 school year, she has continued to allow kids to choose whatever they want to wear. She says that since teaching at GCA, she has changed the way that she talks to students to be more inclusive.

"I am trying to let my students know that this is not an issue for me," she says. "I accept you, and your comfort level. What's important to me is that you're playing music. Not what you're wearing while you're playing."

Kalo expresses her understanding of the situation, saying, "as a female, I can relate to ladies who aren't necessarily the most comfortable wearing a dress for one reason or another."

Or, as Rebecca Joslin, the Orchestra teacher, says, "as an adult, a lot of time I get to choose exactly how I am going to dress for a concert. So similarly, we want to be open to students being comfortable in what they're wearing."

But in band and orchestra, where the groups are co-ed, and the audience does not get a full view of everyone on stage, it's easy for the girls who are not wearing dresses to blend in. Since from the audience, it's truly just a sea of black and white. Some girls are wearing full-length skirts, boys who are wearing tuxedos, and now, girls wearing suits as well.

The gendered uniforms are more notable in the choir, however, where the students are unable to hide behind music stands and instruments. choir director Ted Gibson even commented on how, especially in girls or boys only choirs, it would be difficult for the students to look in place with their peers.

Yet regardless of the slight inconsistency it causes, these girls have Gibson's full support as well.

"People should be comfortable in their own skin, without needing to make an explanation of what they're wearing," says Gibson.

He elaborates, saying that he wants to create a safe and comfortable environment for his students.

"I think that there needs to be room for anyone with any gender identity or no gender identity to feel just as comfortable," he says "They should not have to explain why they don't want to fit into the more stereotypical gender norms."

The yearly state-level conference that is held every year in Arizona has a similar problem in their hands. As in the choir community, this topic has also recently

continued on page 9

'This is what democracy looks like' in 2020

By: Venus Kapadia

Activism is the catalyst behind change. It allows the people to shine a light on issues ignored by society or the government. In addition to traditional methods of protest such as lobbying, campaigning, and more, social media is being used to reach a larger audience of supporters. And, as society is becoming more responsible to recognize and raise awareness for the buried issues of our times, backing up our declarations of support with actions is becoming increasingly difficult.

Activism has evolved greatly throughout time. In addition to protests and marches, people are using the media and modern tools to reach a larger audience, bringing the needed attention to create change. However, as we are employed with more tactics now than ever, the effectiveness of such tactics can be missed.

Repost to save the trees.

I support gun control.

Retweet to save the turtles.

Recycle for our landfills.

#Red4Ed

Social media is an undeniable force in modern activism. However, the ease of a repost is causing activism to fall down a slippery slope, turning activism into Slacktivism (also known as Hashtag Activism): actions performed via the internet in support of a political or social cause but regarded as requiring little time or involvement. This often causes a lot of people to start caring about a cause simply because they heard about it on social media or from their friends. And while they may want to help, they may not know how, or may not want to get too involved. So truly, instead of trying to find out more, they just post about the problem on social media. And once they've posted, they assume they have contributed to the solution of the issue and are now bonafide activists.

Perhaps the desire to always care and constantly raise awareness is inhibiting us from creating actual change. In a time in which it is simple to post about what issues matter to you, this can be substituted for taking action in the world.

"Activism requires effort. It requires constructive engagement in a cause," junior Ben Ash explains. "It's better to pay attention to these posts, but I



Through clubs like Activism for our Lives (seen above at the State Capitol), GCA students are grappling with different ways of creating political change.

wouldn't classify it as activism specifically because the definition of the term can get muddled quickly."

Junior Kris Amerman shares a similar sentiment.

"I think it's important for people to be spreading awareness online, but I don't think it should be the sole form for resolving political and social issues," said Amerman. "It should be a way for people to learn about those issues, and a way for them to become engaged, but they need to take it a step further by going out in the real world."

English teacher and local activist Elise Xocol agrees. "Hashtag activism has a role in activism at large but it is entirely a waste of time if it's not connected to other types of work or action," said Xocol. "If it just stops there then it's not productive enough."

Greta Thunberg, a 17-year-old from Sweden, has used social media not only to convey what she stands for but to share the actions she is taking against climate change. Demanding a change in society, she is using social media to gain awareness and support around the world.

However, while each repost may not truly plant a tree, there's no denying that social media has given the voice directly to the people.

Started by Tarana Burke's use of the phrase "Me Too" on MySpace, later exploding into a hashtag through Alyssa Milano's tweet, "#MeToo" has been tweeted over 19 million times, bringing the seriousness of sexual assault to the forefront of society's eyes.

And in a world with such a large connection to issues of all kinds, staying active and making a change should be easier than ever.

With the resources for creating change only increasing, individuals try to reach a larger audience in any way they can.

In rapper Eminem's newly released album "Music to be Murdered By" listeners are jarringly exposed to the sounds of gunshots, crying and screams,

with the rapper even making direct reference to the Ariana Grande Manchester concert bombing in the song "Unaccommodating." Most shocking was his inclusion of real police footage of the Las Vegas shooting in his song "Darkness" and while the lyrics alone can be associated with both a performer or a shooter, the music video leaves no doubt in the scenes from the shooter's POV.

"To see something so real can touch a lot of people," senior Audrey Coleman, president of Activism for Our Lives, comments after viewing the video. "I think art can go very far, I feel like for a long time artists have not been vocal of their beliefs but we are seeing that more and more now."

Tearing up as she watched the music video, Xocol understands that the shock value will gain a lot of attention.

However, the way she views it, shock alone doesn't correlate to direct change. Rather, she references Childish Gambino's "This is America" video for necessitating a stronger reaction to the core issues he's drawing attention to.

While the shocking use of explicit violence drew in attention, at the end of the video his message was clearly written out: "When will this end? When enough people care."

"Too many people live online and it stops there. They take their Instagram pictures at marches and then they go home," says Ms. Xocol.

But Eminem brings the issues right in front of you, forcing you to experience the reality that so many people go through and pushes an uncomfortable question: what are you going to do about it? While a repost or a like may raise awareness, instances like these force us to evaluate if we are really making a difference.

And while the force of support can bring attention to important issues, in our utilization of modern tactics we need to be stepping away from our screens and into the real world, creating change with our actions.



Getting the scoop about girls' hoops

By: Amanda Allen

Though it is a school largely known for its academic achievements, GCA has begun making an effort to change its reputation in regards to sports this past year. Whether it be the Girls' Volleyball team or the Girls' Soccer team, GCA sports teams have overwhelmingly improved since previous years. The most noticeable improvement among the GCA teams? The Girls' Basketball team. In fact, the Girls' Basketball team has achieved more than they thought would ever be possible. While recent changes have played a large factor into these improvements, there are also things that have stayed a constant, including senior Sophia Warren.

The Girls' Basketball team hasn't always been successful, but, this year they earned a steady stream of wins, unlike previous years. For the Girls' Basketball team, winning wasn't something they

were exactly known for, until now. Many wonder how the team has been able to change in just a short amount of time.

"In my senior year, we've won more games than in my past three years of playing," says Sophia, "so it's been a great year for me since we're on track to make regional playoffs."

At the beginning of sophomore year, Sophia was named team captain and has witnessed a lot of the changes to the basketball team. Having played basketball since the third grade, Sophia Warren isn't unfamiliar with the sport. Not only did she start playing when she was young, but her father even played basketball in college. As she grew up, surrounded by the sport, it was only natural that she would have such a passion for the game. Yet, her love for the game has changed after her time at GCA.

"For myself, to be brutally honest, my love for basketball was dwindling," tells Sophia, "but this year has rekindled my

love for basketball. It's a really good feeling to want to be there and I think you can see that even with the other girls."

This new success brings the question of who or what is responsible for this change. Listening to the players talk about their improvements, it always comes back to their new coach, Andres Castro. Many have seen his face around campus, whether it's while he's working alongside the SPED students or having photos of his face plastered along the halls. This same person has played a huge role in the Girls' Basketball team's successful year and is who the players always give credit to.

"He cares so much about the sport itself, that he makes sure that we care more about each other off the court so that we'll be better as a team on the court," explains Sophia, "and we have more fun, it's a lot more like a family, and you can see it. We aren't playing as individuals, we are playing as a team. We play a lot more cohesively."

Not only has the team changed, but students' enthusiasm for the team has shifted as well. Peers have taken an interest in the success of the team and have found ways to support them. Having once had barely any sort of support from the GCA community, there has been an interesting development on how not only the team has changed this year but also their peers' views on the team.

"As a team, we have become more determined to compete," says Sophie Shoemaker, co-captain of Girls Basketball. "Last year, not many people would show up to our games. The crowd came for the varsity boys, but now we have a consistent crowd of support. People seem to come more often."

The noticeable shift with their peers is

yet again another thing that the team thanks Castro for, "The difference, I know for me, is that last year there were many people who expected us to lose," says Alanna Barraza, a sophomore on the Girls Basketball Team, "The previous coach would say, 'just have fun', but this year it's a 'you need to do this to improve', and it's affected us a lot to see a coach who put a lot of effort into it."

Castro doesn't want all the credit though. He takes notice of all the team members and all they contribute. And someone who has fallen into step with this is Sophia Warren. As having been a team captain for a majority of her high school basketball career, Sophia has gone through all the ups and downs firsthand. However, this hasn't stopped her from being a great influence on and off the court for her fellow teammates.

"She's a really good player, and as a senior and a captain, I hold her to a higher standard," says Castro. "If I can work with my team captain and coach her even harder, then the other girls will follow her lead. She understands that she's part of the team. She does a good job getting them together off the court, she makes an effort to get everyone involved."

And the same goes with Coach Castro: "Castro has changed our team in such a positive way," says Shoemaker. "He pushes us to believe in ourselves even when we doubt. The entire team dynamic has changed and we are more confident."

The Girls' Basketball team has made improvements in more ways than one. Not only have they been achieving so much on the court, but also off the court as well. With some extra push from Coach Castro, the players have gone out of their way to become more than just a team but rather, a family.

Girls wearing suits

continued from page 8

become relevant.

"Something that we are trying to do this year is to figure out how to create a gender-neutral safe space," says Gibson.

He elaborates, saying, this means "getting rid of the gendered uniforms, getting rid of repertoire that talks specifically about genders, and trying to not refer to the tenor and bass as the men, and soprano and alto as the women."

This might sound simple, but they are also habits that have been around for tens of years. Music, especially love songs, are very hard to be completely inclusive. But the resources are out there to make all three possible.

"These are just old habits," Gibson sighs, "but they're old habits worth

breaking."

Although nobody has openly complained about these girls going against the social norm, people have not accepted the sight either.

"The first response that people have is surprise; then, it sparks a lot of conversation." Hannah Kang, a senior in both choir and orchestra, says, mainly people asking if she's gay, or if she's making a huge statement.

"None of the girls were ever questioned, but I was questioned. My choice to wear a tux was to dismantle societal standards one tux at a time," says Evelyn DeVos.

Audrey Coleman, also a senior in both choir and orchestra, shares that "when I

wanted to switch to a tux, I think my parents wondered if I was questioning my gender identity and sexuality."

Of course, comfort with one's gender and sexuality is important, but Hannah especially believes that you can wear something that is not traditionally expected of your gender and still identify as either a male or a female.

"The response should be 'that's a nice tux!' or 'She looks comfortable.'"

That's the response we give to other people when they wear nice clothes, why is it different when women wear a tux?" Hannah asks.

Evelyn DeVos is also annoyed by the responses she has gotten. The reason that she wanted to wear a tux in the first place was to experience it and see the difference between the two. But her choice ended up being a political

statement and admitted that her reason was ultimately "out of spite" due to her frustration with the system.

"Before even trying to wear a tux, it was universally accepted that girls could wear a tux, but when I was questioned about my choice, I was surprised," said Evelyn. "None of the girls were ever questioned if we wanted to wear a dress, we never needed parental permission to be a girl and wear a dress, but you need parent permission for being a girl wearing a suit," she continued. "My choice to wear a tux was to dismantle societal standards one tux at a time."

However, despite the reasons that these girls are wearing tuxedos and the unsure future of GCA music uniforms, Gibson promises that "we will always try to give people a choice to wear what they want to wear."



By: Avery Sorensen

The ride from the gym to the parking lot was cold, and Tawmie Berry was escorting an injured player to her van via golf cart. She had only left the gym for 5 minutes; nothing was supposed to happen while she was away.

At least that's what she thought. Then boys basketball coach Jeremy Banks raced out into the parking lot calling her name loudly. While Tawmie had been helping the other player, someone else had dislocated their finger. She immediately transitioned from comforting the player to being the alert athletic trainer.

She was inside her training room within seconds, and the boy who dislocated his finger was on her examination table. She prepared him for the impending pain and *POP!* the boy

Tawmie the trainer: A new face makes herself at home in the GCA sports program

looked up surprised for a moment before realizing that Tawmie had relocated his finger back in its socket almost painlessly. Tawmie took a deep breath before asking the boy to call his mom to pick him up.

Tawmie Berry is the sole Athletic Trainer for GCA, which has been a career objective for her for a long time.

"I've known I wanted to be an athletic trainer since I was a sophomore in high school," she said. "I would do volunteer work after school to get a feel for it."

Through four years of clinicals, interviews, and a few nine hour classes, Tawmie persevered to achieve her goal and graduate Grand Canyon University with her Bachelor's of Science in Athletic Training. She is currently working on her Master's in Sports Rehabilitation.

While Athletic Training doesn't always seem like the most difficult medical

career, Berry rebuked the statement by recounting some injuries she's seen.

"I had this rugby player come to me with a mangled chin. I sent him to get stitches," Berry said, continuing to talk about the Tib-Fib fracture she saw. But one of the injuries she dealt with happened to a 10 year-old girl with a broken radius. "She was such a champ," said Berry. "That was my first injury with a little kid, so it really stuck with me."

Berry has seen plenty of injuries over the years, but her love of sports keeps her motivated to never give up. "I feel like it's not always me doing athletic training. Sometimes it feels like I'm just watching games," said Berry. "But I recognize that I am a first responder for these guys and it's so rewarding."

Berry loves being able to be there for all kinds of injured athletes, and the team she gets to work with. Despite all the positives that come with her job, she still has obstacles to face. She is the only athletic trainer on campus, which means that she is the only responder for an incident that occurs in the gym or field.

"I struggle with my confidence," she said. "This is my first year as a certified athletic trainer and I am alone. If I have an injury, I don't have anyone else to verify things with a second opinion. I have to be confident because it is just me taking care of that person."

Even with some odds stacked against

This division is especially evident among the Sophomores, who seem to be the peak of separation among classmates at GCA. Sophomore Sal Subzwari characterizes his grade as having very distinct groups.

"We have names for each other's cliques, the 'Line Boys' for example because they literally walk through the halls in a straight line," he says. "I'd love if there weren't such separate groups, but there's underlying tension, an awkward ice we can't seem to break through."

Interestingly, this disconnect seems to fade progressively over the years. Junior Avery Elowson describes her class as having groups, but not to the extent that they are defined by them.

"Of course we all stick to our closest friends, but there's also a good level of communication between us all," she says. "Things like Breadbowl, Homecoming, even AP exams help bring us together, to understand one another better."

Senior Jocelyn Ju left GCA at the beginning of her Junior year to experience something different from the GCA environment; however, she returned a year later to finish high school at GCA.

"I didn't love the big school feel. I was missing my friends and the closeness of

her, a lot of athletes and coaches have a lot of faith in her and her abilities. "When someone is down, she'll run to you in heels," says basketball player Alanna Barazza. "As soon as you meet her, you know that she'll be there for you."

Volleyball player Jordann DeLozier attests to this.

"We're not a super active school, but it's important to have someone there with your best care in mind," said DeLozier. "We may be playing, but Tawmie is the glue. She fills in everything."

Coach Kerry of the volleyball team said that Tawmie made her feel more confident as a coach. When a lot of her girls went down with injuries during the season, Tawmie was the woman who picked them up again.

"I consider her a co-worker, but even more so a friend," says Kerry. "I think a lot of our injuries this season would have lasted a lot longer without her."

Coach RC Pettit also says that Berry works incredibly well with the coaches. "She is a great asset for progressing sports further," he says.

Tawmie truly enjoys her job at GCA and all the interactions she has had with the people she works with. She believes that the future is looking very bright. "I can't wait to see the athletic program grow," she says. "And I am also excited to get some more experience myself."

GCA classes seek out stronger bonds

By: Greyson Henry

It's the final assembly of the school year, and students flood the gymnasium to assume their grade's assigned section of the bleachers. As the students congregate and find their seats, many immediately note the differences in the demeanors of different grades. The underclassmen walk in inclusive clumps, circles of four to five people joking and laughing in their own worlds, while the Seniors bounce from place to place, smiling, inviting, appreciative of everyone around them. Perhaps most striking, the Junior class arrives to their designated area, and immediately splits into two groups; the first take up the first few rows, while the second half leaves an empty row between the front before claiming their spots in the back half.

One student observes this with disappointment, wondering how these divided Juniors are supposed to become a community with unbreakable bonds in a matter of months - to surround themselves with each other's company and enjoy the nostalgic, bittersweet moments of Senior year together.

"It's my last year, and I'm really

trying to just enjoy myself, enjoy these people around me that I've known for the last six years," says Jacob Shannon, a Senior who has made the long haul of GCA from 7th to 12th grade. "I want everyone to have that, and it makes me upset when I see people who don't care about one another and just let these fleeting moments slip away."

Over the course of two years of junior high and four years of high school, students develop immensely, both individually and in their relationships with one another. Mr. Johnson is one of the few teachers who has had the opportunity to teach this year's graduating class both in 7th grade and now in their 12th grade year, offering a unique perspective of the student's evolution.

"In junior high, these kids' roles were developing, but they still knew a lot about each other and understood how to function with one another," he explains. "There's definitely a level of divisiveness in a small environment like this where everybody has something to prove, but I can see that everyone has truly gained the ability to work cohesively and closely with those around them at GCA."

GCA," she says. "I've found GCA really has a place for everyone."

Alexis Gordon, a GCA student from 8th grade to her Senior year, removed herself from many aspects of the campus social life during her Sophomore year after not finding a true place for herself.

"I was content to just sit in Mr. Dodt's room everyday and have that be my place. But at the end of my Junior year, I began to realize I was sad to not be as close to my own grade as I would have liked."

Eager for others to prevent themselves from becoming alienated, she advises people to focus on the little things they can do to build stronger relationships: "Anything from simply saying, 'Hi!' in the hallway to commenting on a person's good mood makes a difference."

With a few months left in this school year, most Seniors are looking forward to getting the most from their time together at upcoming events like the Senior BBQ and the Senior Retreat. Jacob Shannon offers a final piece of advice, both to his classmates and to those in the grades below: "Enjoy the moment. Don't waste time on arguments that won't matter in a week, or worrying about what other people think. Just be you, and make some memories you'll never forget."

Breaking news: A new Armageddon event!

By: Ainsley Snyder

Attention all students, we will be unveiling a new Armageddon event this year so we recommend sending your most agile and strong students to the cafeteria (further known as the combat arena). This new event is a high skill event not for the faint of heart as there will be intense battling all afternoon. Fortunately, due to last year’s maiming of a seventh grader by a particularly nasty dodgeball, an eighth grader becoming incapacitated after a vengeful volleyball spike, and a

ninth grader being crippled after being dunked on by a monstrously tall senior, we have decided to eliminate those events and replace them with something far more competitive (and safe). Introducing, in its first ever appearance at Armageddon: Beyblade Battle!

So bring your excitement and meet us at the arena for the competition that will determine the winner of Armageddon.

And if that flops (or Mrs. Maas doesn’t win) then our backup events are fidget spinner contests and nano-bug races. May the best Spartan (or Magical Moss) win!

Johnson's heart of (Mountain) Dew-ness

By: Greyson Henry

If you’ve ever been a student of Mr. Johnson, or even just seen him around campus, you’ve likely noticed something about him. And no, it’s not the fact that he kind of looks like Matt Damon from a certain angle. Not the BYU shirts either, though that’s a close second. No, there’s one thing that sticks out above all others - when you see Mr. Johnson, there’s a 99% chance that within his 10-foot vicinity, there exists a 44-oz Polar Pop filled to the brim with fizzing, ice-cold Diet Mountain Dew.

Walking into his classroom, you’ll notice a stack growing to the ceiling of used Polar Pop cups, his trophies of conquered diet soda. Currently, twenty-five such cups are scattered around his desk, but with students seeking a little something extra on their next test bringing him a new one almost every day, it wouldn’t be too much of a stretch to say the room will soon be overflowing with the signature Circle K styrofoam.

“He treats his Polar Pop’s like Gollum treats the ring - he’s obsessed,” a student close to the spiraling soda addict remarked in confidence. “Honestly, we’re worried about him. Sometimes we’ll even fill the cup halfway with water before putting in the soda just to make sure he’s getting some sort of hydration during the day. He can’t survive like this.”

A student close to Johnson (some

would even say he’s like a “son” to him) commented, “His fridge at home is just cluttered with Polar Pop’s and discarded soda cans. Sometimes he goes shopping and forgets to get any real food. He comes home with bags and bags of just Diet Mountain Dew.”

This past February, Johnson accompanied Chorale on their retreat to Flagstaff for the Jazz Mad Festival. Some concerned students hoped that without a gas station in sight, this would be a good opportunity to suggest a detox. However, those dreams were dashed as his backpack unzipped and nearly a dozen soda cans tumbled to the floor while climbing the steps of the bus.

We attempted to get a comment from Mr. Johnson himself during his free period earlier this week, but all we found was a note on his desk: “Gone to Circle K, be back soon.”



Mr. Johnson at his high school graduation.

SATIRE SECTION:

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Help Mr. Dodt not be sad and alone next year

By: Jordann DeLozier

One application or recommendation can help one poor soul from falling into an abyss of loneliness. Do you want Mr. Dodt to fill out his cry board by himself every week? Watch the tick marks pile up? No, nobody wants that. He’ll have no one next year, all his favorite seniors who sit in his room at lunch are graduating. He will have no one to show his latest skills of throwing his trash across the room into the garbage can, or to brag about that one time he (allegedly) made the white-board marker onto the ledge in one try. No one to rate his weekends with every Monday at lunch. No one to laugh with. No one to make sarcastic jokes at. No one to argue with over the smallest matters (yes, you should brush your teeth in the shower). No one. You think you got what it takes? Then apply.

Some qualifications include:

- Being able to close the door once you enter the room (cause who likes open doors? No one, exactly).
- Be able to make Kraft Mac N Cheese in a microwave without it overflowing or burning.

- Not be allergic to peanut butter (PB&Js are essential to lunches).
- Be able to have groundbreaking conversations over the pronunciations of various fruits.
- Be able to handle sarcastic criticism (and throw it back)
- Go to all of his Dead Poets’ and Thoreau meetings so he’s not lonely
- Beat him out as the ultimate Edgelord

If you think you have what it takes, contact Jordann DeLozier directly for an application for the throne chair next to the man himself. If considered, you will have an interview with Mr. Dodt. Yes, we’re taking this seriously, you’d have some pretty big shoes to fill (seriously Brystal is a size 11). Thank you (seriously please we’re scared no one will want to sit with him).

NO JUNIOR HIGH APPLICATIONS WHATSOEVER
NO FRESHMEN EITHER, HE ALREADY HAS TO TEACH YOU LOGIC
NO CAT LOVERS ONLY DOG LOVERS
NO RED APPLE LOVERS

The rise and reign of hall monitor Murphy

By: Greyson Henry

First-hour tardies have soared in recent weeks as a new hall monitor has emerged on the scene to lay down the law. After years of seeing students waltz into classes thirty seconds after the bell has rung with no regard for their lack of punctuality, Mr. Murphy has volunteered himself to defeat this foe with no mercy.

As the first bell rings to signal the gradual procession to the first class of the day, fear emerges on the faces of all the students still arriving. Some hear the bell while still driving down Burk, speeding into the parking lot to grab a spot - like a high stakes game of musical chairs where the punishment for losing is a tardy contract. Those already with their feet on the ground stuff their papers, books, lunchboxes, and anything else in reach into their bag, practically tripping over themselves in the sprint towards the front gate (Ms. Fron has been seen scouting new talent for the track team based on these early morning 200 Meter sprints). Chaos ensues across campus. Even teachers go pale in fear of

encountering Murphy in the hall after 7:30, and being sent to the office for a tardy pass to their own class.

Students flood the courtyard, the seconds ticking by at an impossible rate, and scan their surroundings. Here’s where the games begin. Will he be lurking outside Hall C today? Prowling Hall B in hunt of stragglers? Waiting on the roof in a Spider-Man crouch? Nobody can predict it. Not even him. It wouldn’t be a surprise if he showed up in spandex one day and claimed his official title as the GCA tardy vigilante. Some students have developed escape strategies fit for those lazy yet smart GCA students who will do anything for an extra five minutes of sleep; one unnamed Senior has begun a tardy pass black market, allowing students to flash a forged pass at Murphy as they pass by in the hopes he won’t look too closely. Others just raise their hoods and sprint past him. Some simply accept defeat, and allow themselves to be dragged into the office to greet Ms. Scarlett’s face of disappointment.

One source, who has asked to be kept anonymous, trembled as he said: “We just keep trying, trying to escape. But he’s always there. He’s always watching.”

Find out more about these stories in our next issue:

Health tips for those who were "sick" during the Gold Summit	Exclusive interview with Coach Rhoads about his career as a ballerina
Southwest Airlines sues GCA for stealing its "seatbelt sign" sound	I left for my science fair interview three weeks ago. Where am I? Send help, please.

The dress code has become too popular

By: Greyson Henry

Purple! Yellow! White! Khakis! Belts! The same three uniform hoodies! Everywhere you turn, everyone’s wearing the exact same outfit. It’s getting out of hand. The entire point of the dress code was to strip the students of their individuality, their joy, their happiness - but people are actually beginning to conform. And they’re enjoying it! The blatant insolence is alarming.

“I love the dress code, I wake up in the morning and I don’t even have to question what I’m going to put on. My ironed shorts and dull, black, roly backpack are waiting for me in the corner,” one enthusiastic dress code supporter shares, “Life is simple. It’s sweet. I couldn’t ask for anything more. Except for fewer dress down days, I can’t handle that kind of stress too often.”

A recent poll shows 100% approval for the uniform, with only one additional comment from Jacob Shannon: “Please stop dress coding me

for my socks.”

With such revolutionary upheaval from the student body, many staff members are becoming quite alarmed. One teacher exclaimed in an anonymous interview, “The horror! I’m seeing way too many kids smiling on campus,” he continues exasperatedly, “What’s next? They’re going to thank me for giving them four hours of homework a night? Ask me to stop curving their tests? Start showing up to class on time? Tell me what a great teacher I am? It’s absurd. This contentment is spreading around campus like a wildfire, and it’s totally unacceptable.”

Hopefully, some sort of action is taken soon. Recent rumblings from “the room where it happens” seem to suggest that a total retraction of the dress code may be all but imminent.

“I can’t wait to see this place turn into a madhouse as everyone scrambles to figure out what actual fashion looks like,” says another administrator (who asked to be put into the paper under the codename “Mr. Good”), “they’ll regret the day they ever agreed with my policies.”

Changes to the alma mater's lyrics that you must memorize and memorize well!

In a bit of news totally unrelated to the ongoing takeover of the school orchestrated by Mr. Johnson and the Social Studies department, the Alma Mater’s lyrics have recently been changed.

For the few who did not already know, the Alma Mater used to go as follows:

*To our Alma Mater raise,
Voices filled with Joy and Praise,
Our Covenant with Her shall be
Undying loyalty. (Bum, bum, bum)
Wearing purple, wearing gold
Her sons and daughters shall uphold
The GCA!
Her glorious name,
Her honor ever proclaim!*

It will not be necessary for everyone to do the difficult work of forgetting all those words we have all memorized so well. However, we are pleased to announce that the new Alma Mater will be simple to remember. Its lyrics are as follows:

All hail Johnson!

The new alma mater is to be performed by members of the GCA community while they bow in the direction of any nearby social studies department member (or, if none are present, then bow in the direction of the social studies department building). The three words of the new alma mater are to be repeated while doing the "stomp-stomp-clap" move from "We Will Rock You" by Queen.

Dear teachers...

Next week several GCA students will be attending a field trip and have to be excused from class as a result. The field trip they will be attending is a field trip about field trips. It will be a wonderful learning opportunity and all students have expressed great excitement about going though they are deeply disappointed they’ll have to miss school. On this field trip, students will learn about field trips, the history of field trips, examples of field trips, and they will also be able to sign up for more field trips while they are on this

field trip about field trips. This field trip (the one about field trips, not the other ones) will take place for the whole month of March and students will miss periods 1-9, Monday through Friday, and will also not have internet while they are gone, so don’t expect them to do any work, they basically don’t attend this school anymore. A list of all students attending this field trip field trip will be sent out soon but if you’re curious who will be missing from class just print out a roster of all students with last names starting with letters A through Z.

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In a landmark decision, the GCA Supreme Court rules that the Cybrary is a hallway

In a controversial decision guaranteed to fundamentally alter the way students get to class, the GCA Supreme Court ruled, in a narrow 5-4 decision, that the Cybrary does indeed meet the legal parameters of a hallway. The decision is expected to open the Cybrary to unrestricted student movement next

week. By Saturday night, seventh graders were already lined up from the Cybrary’s doors all the way back to Merrill’s room, waiting in anticipation for the Cybrary to open Monday morning. In a dissenting opinion, Justice Candy Spearow decried the Court’s tyrannical ruling, writing: “Noooooooooooooooooooooooooooo!!!!!!”

President Hood signs law reaffirming that Cybrary may not be used to get to class

President Hood signed a law last night reaffirming that students cannot pass through the Cybrary to get to class. Following the Supreme Court’s ruling last week that defined the Cybrary as a hallway, this now means that no hallways can be legally used to get to class.

However, all classes will continue as planned. For classes that occur in interior hallways, students are expected to treat the hallway tile as though it were lava like

that one game you played when you were a kid on the playground and the sand was like lava and you couldn't touch or it OH MY GOD YOU'RE OUT NOW YEAH YOU ARE I SAW IT YOU'RE OUT! Students will be expected to chart new pathways to their classes, up to and including using the airducts or parachuting in from holes in the roofs. In related news, the new law also reduces passing periods to 23 seconds.

Senior thesis? Who's she?

By: Greyson Henry

It’s Senior Thesis season! After “working hard” all year to take a strong, well-researched stance on an issue, channeling each student’s individual passions and beliefs into a 5000-word argument, the final deadlines are just around the corner. With the last few additions being made to their papers before the formal defense in April, the Seniors seem to be on track for a fitting conclusion to the climactic project of their entire high school career.

To capture a look at the scholarly creativity flowing through the Senior class, we visited the 7th and 8th Hour Service Learning classes, where the concluding details were being added - like Michaelangelo painting the last, miniscule details into the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, these students would definitely be scanning every sentence looking for room to add research, qualifiers, more concise word choices, and all the other cherries-on-top to take a monumental project to the next level.

Upon entering the room, the most striking observation was the absolute lack of Chromebooks present in front of a single student. That, and the cacophony of students laughing, shouting over each other, and accomplishing essentially nothing. Ms. Hines sat in surrender at her desk, all

but defeated from her endless attempts to quiet her students and convince them to focus on their writing. A quick trip to the adjoining room revealed nearly a dozen Seniors dozing off in dark corners, using backpacks as pillows and printed thesis rough drafts as blankets. Those who were awake were playing Super Smash Bros. on a Nintendo Switch, or hangman on the whiteboard. The entire scene was reminiscent of a 2nd grade playground, or perhaps more accurately, a zoo.

Surely these students must all be done with their theses if they’re spending their time like this. After asking a nearby student how prepared he feels to turn in the completed draft next week, he responded, “Wait, the second half is due in a week?”

Well, not everyone is always on top of their workload, that’s okay. Confident he was just an anomaly, we approached another student with the same inquiry.

“To be honest with you, I haven’t started writing yet. I uploaded my outline as my rough draft and my mentor didn’t even read it. I’ll probably end up writing it the morning it’s due.”

Another pulled out one of their air pods and said, “I haven’t actually chosen my topic yet. I should probably do that soon.”

What a bunch of comedians. It’s GCA, there’s no way they haven’t all already finished their theses to perfection. Way to go, Seniors - and finish strong!