

STAFF  
EDITORIALSHOULD LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION BE  
REQUIRED FOR COLLEGE ADMISSION?

When November rolls around, college applications and stress come hand-in-hand for millions of seniors. One particularly burdensome component for students is having to ask teachers, advisers and counselors to write letters of recommendation. Though these letters are not required by all colleges and universities, they are among a set of secondary factors that colleges take into account in order to put together a more complete understanding of applicants. However, are they truly a qualified component to consider for college admission? Letters of recommendation can help provide further insight on how a student acts and has over the years, but they can also become a tedious burden. More than anything, the debate over letters of recommendation makes us analyze what the standards for admission even are when it comes to college acceptance.

In the process of applying to college, all students strive to present themselves in the best manner. Letters of recommendation serve the same purpose by attesting to the qualities students exhibit from grades, courses and test scores. Having people advocate on your behalf shows different characteristics of a student than simply statistical and quantitative aspects. A student's unique personality and distinct abilities are able to shine through letter of recommendations, a

more individualized facet to applications. On the contrary, if thousands of letters of recommendation are submitted each year, how individualized can these letters

be? Admission officers are probably no stranger to the cliché phrases and vapid euphemisms found in letters of recommendation. Formulaic letters often spout out information that can be found somewhere else on a student's application and use conventional generalizations that are



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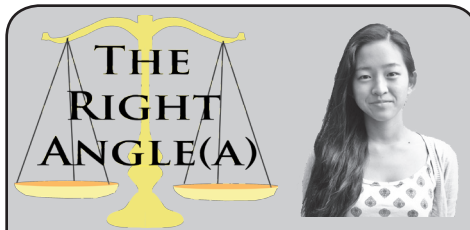
is reduced significantly since information will simply be redundant and bland. Instead of just bragging on behalf of students, letters of recommendation should represent their strengths and struggles honestly. A recommendation letter should depict an accurate portrayal of how a student

performs in a school environment and how they interact with their community. Doing so essentially provides more depth to applications than a student's club involvement, academics and personal statements that may contain manufactured hardship.

After all, a letter of recommendation, when done right, highlights what a student can contribute and accomplish in the future. To truly show what grades and test scores cannot, letters of recommendation need to focus on revealing the personal context and character of students, rather than just listing off compliments.

Whether they are required or not, recommendation letters are an established aspect in the world of college applications. We must accept that, as students, they can ultimately help to further our goals. However, we must also realize that there is a fine line between a letter that truly serves its purpose and one that simply regurgitates the objective information about a student. If applying to a college that does require the submission of recommendation letters, students should be wary of the individuals they ask to write them; students should make sure the people writing their letters of recommendation know them well enough to speak on their more personal attributes.

MOOR graphics by LESLIE HWANG

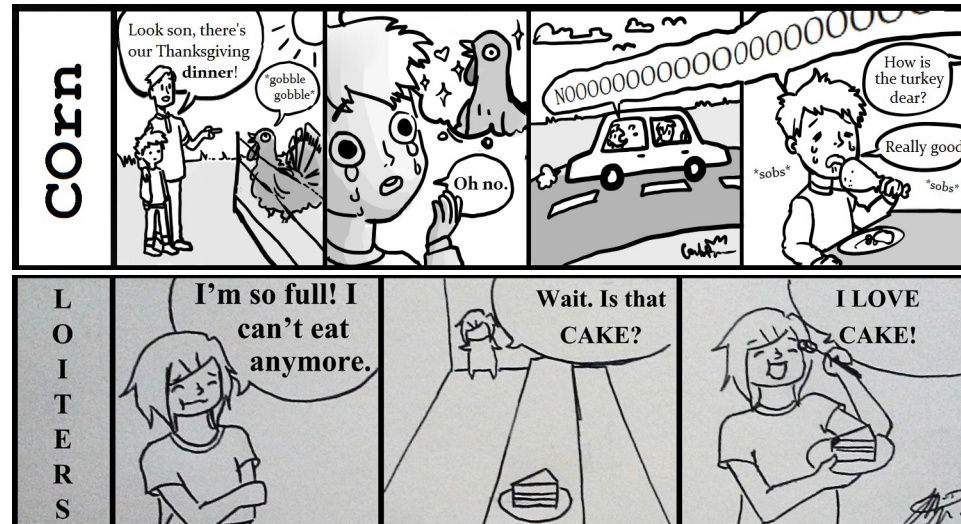
Feminine  
AND Feminist

ANGELA YANG  
Editor in Chief

When I was a little girl, there was a very toxic belief that I held. It was this idea that, somehow, being feminine and liking "girly" things was giving into the role I was expected to play in society. For some reason, media has portrayed femininity as weak, anti-feminist even. Even worse, women on television shows who attempt to attain more power are often portrayed as catty and vindictive, especially in reality TV shows such as "America's Next Top Model," "Keeping Up With the Kardashians" and many others. Even in novels as old as "Pride and Prejudice" does this bias rear its ugly head — Lizzie Bennet constantly looks down on her younger sisters' more frivolous tendencies.

Of course, this isn't to say that being a "tomboy" is anti-feminist either. It seems too often that there is this divide: femininity is portrayed as giving into gender roles, while tomboyishness is seen as "the cool thing" (Flicka, anyone?). Ultimately it's clear that being feminine or a tomboy doesn't make you anti-feminist; what is anti-feminist, on the other hand, is believing that women can only appear one certain way to be independent. Instead, we need to recognize that appearance does not determine anything more than the way you look; it does not adequately portray one's personality, beliefs, ideals, and especially their independence.

I later came to realize that depriving myself of wearing dresses and skirts was just self-inflicted torture (you'd be hard-pressed to find a pair of jeans in my closet now). Even so, I'll always miss the tomboy side of myself from childhood, all the while remaining secure in the fact that my appearance does not, and will never, take away from my very strong idea of feminism.



## Water They Doing with Our Water?

JENNIFER FAN  
Staff Writer

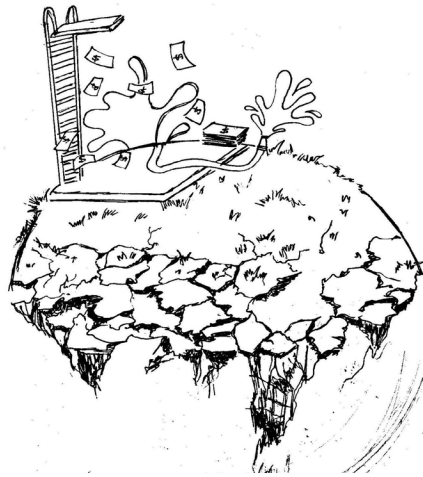
Green forests and blue rivers of California are disappearing — casualties of the historic drought that now encompasses 98 percent of the state. Many homeowners throughout Los Angeles have slashed their water use significantly. The San Gabriel Water Company has reported a 35 percent reduction in their district alone, surpassing Gov. Brown's 25 percent conservation mandate. We are sacrificing our green lawns and long, luxurious showers to conserve water, but the families of Bel-Air and Beverly Hills are certainly not.

Now in the fourth year of the drought, California is as desperate as ever to replenish its water supply. However, the households of LA's wealthiest cities continue to squander water, hosing away an average of 1,300 gallons of water per household every hour, according to LA Times. Gov. Brown announced in April that the state would fine customers who excessively waste water, but his plans never were implemented. Gov. Brown and the Los Angeles De-

partment of Water and Power must take this issue seriously and bring his plan into action. There should be laws to fine households that use past a reasonable amount of water each month.

Some may believe that the households in Bel-Air and Beverly Hills paying over \$90,000 a year for water will be unaffected by the fines because they have the finances to pay them. However, the law would encourage and remind them to keep their water use to a minimum. Even if their water use does not cut back significantly, the money collected could be used to fund our current water filtration systems and pump more fresh water into our supply.

If nothing is done to combat the drought seriously, the remainder of our natural wonders will be reduced to nothing but memories of a once beautiful state, native to the world's tallest trees and beautiful geysers. We must ensure that the future generation of Californians will have the opportunity to witness what the Golden State has to offer.



KENNETH HOU  
Staff Writer

In recent years, Twitter, Facebook and similar websites have grown to be very effective methods of advertisement and promotion. Currently in the 2016 presidential race, candidates and their supporters are aggressively using social media to gain the support of voters. However, the use of social media by presidential candidates negatively affects our elections, as social media possesses the ability to easily spread false information.

On one hand, social media is quick and efficient for reaching out to the voting population. This allows candidates to focus more time on improving the policies they promise, rather than on campaigning. Furthermore, it allows less popular candidates to stay relevant in the race and gain sufficient exposure. Nonetheless, false information will inevitably be spread through social media. Social media lacks regulation; users are allowed to post anything they want. This means that candidates and their supporters are able to easily spread misinformation to gain an advantage in the presidential race. For example, on Facebook, Bernie Sanders supporters fabricated an infographic that incorrectly portrayed the sources of Hillary Clinton's campaign funds. In essence, this tactic turns the presidential race into a personal battle, rather than a battle of policy. And in a matter as significant as the future presidency, professionalism and honesty should be essential.

In the upcoming year, it will be almost impossible to avoid hearing from presidential candidates through social media. Eventually, voters must be able to make their decision based on the merit of the candidate, rather than a series of posts on Facebook. It is our duty to ensure that something as unreliable as social media will not determine political elections.