



**TEA TIME
WITH TINA**
Just Be You

TINA CHEN
Opinions Editor

One hour, two hours and the clock continued ticking. For the past months, sitting in front of my laptop while goggling at a blank word document has become part of my routine. I then proceeded to write a masterpiece that would define me in 650 words, but the task seemed arduous as the “backspace” button continued to be my greatest enemy.

High school seniors around the world are finally feeling the pressure to look “good” for colleges. Do I need to raise my SAT scores from 2380 to 2400? Should I self-study for AP Computer Science while juggling four other AP classes? Must I start my own company to stand out within the applicant pool? Being accepted by meeting the requirements doesn’t seem to cut it anymore, but even going the extra mile seems to only be the bare minimum.

“I don’t want to go to college,” I typed. Backspace.

“Please accept me as I am quirky, sarcastic and passionate.” Backspace.

Back to 0/650 word count. It was then I recalled that I’m writing about myself. The one person I am most familiar with, the one I was able to consult within the past 17 years, the one I’ve been living both comfortably and uncomfortably in. Me.

I typed feverishly on my keyboard, trying to keep up with my own thoughts as my mind spat out ideas left and right while my fingers started to strike up a melodic beat. I realized that this was all very simple; there was no formula to being the perfect applicant, but only to being the perfectly imperfect me.

To those writing supplements and personal statements: Be yourself, because who else can be a better you?

Don’t Take Weight Discrimination Lightly

ELTON HO
Staff Writer

“Dear obese PhD applicants: if you don’t have enough willpower to stop eating carbs, you won’t have the willpower to do a dissertation #truth.”

Imagine being a student who graduated at the top of your class despite some struggles with your weight, and then seeing this trending tweet from Dr. Geoffrey Miller, a professor

you admire. Now picture a T.V. reporter who has to worry about getting fired because her above average weight could be repulsive to viewers. Unfortunately, this was the case for Good Morning America correspondent Tory Johnson.

We may not notice it, but we judge a book by its cover far too often, especially when it comes those who are overweight. They are routinely discriminated

against within society, attached to the persistent stigma of being lazy and lacking self-control. Some



may believe that deriding people for their obesity will motivate them to live healthier lifestyles, but shame is hardly an effective catalyst for change. Instead of ridiculing and demeaning the overweight, a more effective way to assist them in becoming healthier individuals would be through words of encouragement and support.

Many believe that obesity is a simple issue that can

be easily resolved through eating fewer calories and exercising more often, however, it is much easier said than done. Being obese is not always a voluntary decision in any shape or form. Even with the utmost devotion, recovering from obesity is an arduous task that involves the maintenance of a meticulously healthy lifestyle where even the smallest slip-up is not tolerated.

In addition, genes can play a role in one’s predisposition to weight gain; such a person may find it much more difficult to substantially lose weight compared to another on the same diet. If one had not personally experienced the struggle of losing weight, it would be sanctioning of one to judge another for being “lazy.”

Moreover, the media do not improve matters concerning the encouragement of people who are

overweight. “Fattertainment” is both popular and a breeding ground for obesity stereotypes, according to Obesity Action Coalition, (OAC). Overweight characters are often portrayed as acceptable targets and the butt of tasteless jokes. Studies show that obese female characters are often mocked by male characters, and even in 40 percent of children’s movies, at least one overweight character is disliked, according to OAC. In addition, “shocking” headlines continuously chide celebrities for gaining a little weight and looking more like an average human being. These tell the public that beauty is unrealistic thinness, which only results in insecurity and unnecessary stress.

Weight discrimination even manifests in the form of workplace bias and medical care. A 2012 study published in the International Journal of Obesity concluded that obese women applicants with the same qualifications as non-obese women applicants receive

lower starting salaries, have fewer perceived leadership qualities and were less likely to be selected for the job.

Also, according to a study published by Wake Forest School of Medicine in May 2013, doctors are less likely to respect obese patients as they assume that the patients will not listen to treatment plans. In some cases, the bosses and doctors were not even aware that they were treating overweight people differently; they just attributed stereotypical traits to them. It is important to be aware of subconscious biases so that people are treated solely on their character and merit.

The pressures to scour the prominent obesity epidemic out of America may be resulting in overzealous, hurtful attitudes. However, compassion and awareness are key in combating this issue. In order for change to occur, overweight people should know that they are being supported and that they have the ability to create a healthier life for themselves.

South Africa in Need for Auxiliary Security

JADE LIEU
Staff Writer

In Johannesburg, South Africa, two missing toddlers were found murdered and hidden in a toilet cubicle. The same incident occurred to a five-year-old girl, who was strangled and dumped around the same location.

President Jacob Zuma condemns these killings and wants to build a stronger community; however, he has not taken action. According to the L.A. Times, South Africa has one of the highest murder rates in the

world, with approximately 16,000 people being killed per year. Although it is proven that South Africa has one of the highest killing rates in the world, nothing has been done about it.

People in the community feel unsafe and frightened by these killings. Action should be taken to protect the people of Johannesburg. The most important place to begin is strengthening security and enforcing new laws. President Zuma could establish a law in which the murderer is sentenced to a lifetime in prison. He, of course,

is not the only person who can take action. The people of South Africa can also strengthen the safety of their homes, by watching their children in an area with close proximity rather than allowing them to play in open areas unsupervised.

Although this may be a tragedy, this also presents an opportunity for the United Nations to help. They could send over armed men to help ensure safety of the community. In order to build a stronger and more secure place for the people of Johannesburg, these actions must be taken.

Littering: What Goes Around Comes Around

BARRY CHEUNG
Staff Writer

What counts as litter? Litter is any kind of substance or object that is thrown out to pollute and ruin anything in the environment, including the inhabitants. Littering is performed countless times, but detrimental effects are caused by such carelessness. However, in order to prevent these negative effects, it is important to be cognizant of one’s responsibilities and stop littering before more health or environmental impacts arise.

In recent years, the environment has been severely damaged from littering. Trash is found lying around, posing harms to animals from inhibiting their natural habitats to food poisoning from food scraps. These trash are not only contaminated, but may also weaken the animal’s health and eventually, our own.

According to the Science Leadership Academy, animals may ingest infectious trash and then animals or humans eat these infected animals. After the 2011 tsunami in Japan, a total of 11 million liters of radioactive water was dumped into the Pacific Ocean by the Japanese government.

This affected the Pacific Bluefin Tuna which began to exhibit signs of radiation poisoning, which harms consumers of these fish. Additionally, plastic has been the object that is littered most into the Pacific Ocean. The plastic absorbs toxic chemicals that cannot be dissolved in the water and are eaten by fish, harming the next predators who eat the fish. This continuous cycle can lead to the poisoning of the whole food chain.

According to the Chintimini Wildlife Center, a huge amount of litter is found in bodies of water. The litter eventually dissolves and releases toxins into the water. This water evaporates, releasing poisonous gases into the air. Diseases that arise from littering include hantavirus and malaria, which involves poisoning from heavy metals and toxic chemicals being thrown out daily.

No good comes from littering; it hurts the environment, wild animals and individuals, including those who littered. In order to maintain sustainability, pick up a soda can, stray newspaper, candy wrapper or even a cigarette butt. Imagine how much cleaner the planet would be!

MOOR graphics by SIMON ZHAO

