

## CAT'S CRADLE

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Opinions Editor



### Fish Are Friends, Not Food

Lately, the fancy Asian banquets my family likes to drag me to have felt different. The notoriously loud table talk and the suspiciously off-white cloth napkins were still there, but there was definitely something lacking. When I read on the news that California recently banned the sale, trade and possession of shark fins, I had my finger on the missing element.

I'll admit that I think shark fin soup is delicious. And as a person of Chinese descent, I recognize it as just another part of my culture. Yet, once I found out that sharks are caught, get their fins cut off and are thrown back into the ocean—some still alive—giving up shark fin soup seemed a small sacrifice.

Sharks are endangered because of hunting, and "finning" contributes to their decline in numbers as well. The main goal of the ban is to protect sharks and their ecosystems because, as predators, sharks play an important role in maintaining species diversity.

So, I'm glad the Chinese community is taking one for the team. However, I also realized the obvious: Finning is not the only reason why the shark population is in danger. Sharks are also killed for other products, like their cartilage and oil.

If we're really concerned about protecting sharks, it would make sense to ban all shark products. The Bahamas has already taken this step. Honestly, if people of Chinese culture have to stop eating a traditional dish, then tourists should stop buying shark-skin purses and people who want to maintain that "summer glow" should stop using tanning lotion containing shark oil. It's only fair.

## Sad, Awful Test Produces Low Scores

JOYCE LAM  
Editor in Chief

At some point, the typical high school student meets face-to-face with the horrors of the SAT. For many, the SAT is nothing more than a Sad, Awful Test, and it also happens to be on Saturdays. Even now, it continues to remain important and mandatory for those who plan to apply to a wide range of colleges and universities. But unfortunately, these scores prove to be anything but encouraging.

Recent reports have shown that average SAT scores are at a record low of 497 in critical reading and 514 in math. In September, College Board announced that these scores are now at their lowest since 1995. Is there anything surprising about this new low? I'd say no.

Within the last decade, education has suffered devastating budget cuts to growing class sizes. It's no surprise that these SAT scores have come as a product.

After observing peers and classmates, it's evident that not all individuals take the SAT seriously. While some may have the discipline to buy a study book, devote two hours a week to memorizing SAT vocabulary and review old math concepts, others don't feel the need to invest in these study tools. I won't lie—it's so hard to be motivated to study for the SAT, but it's not impossible.

Today, many students take SAT prep classes with

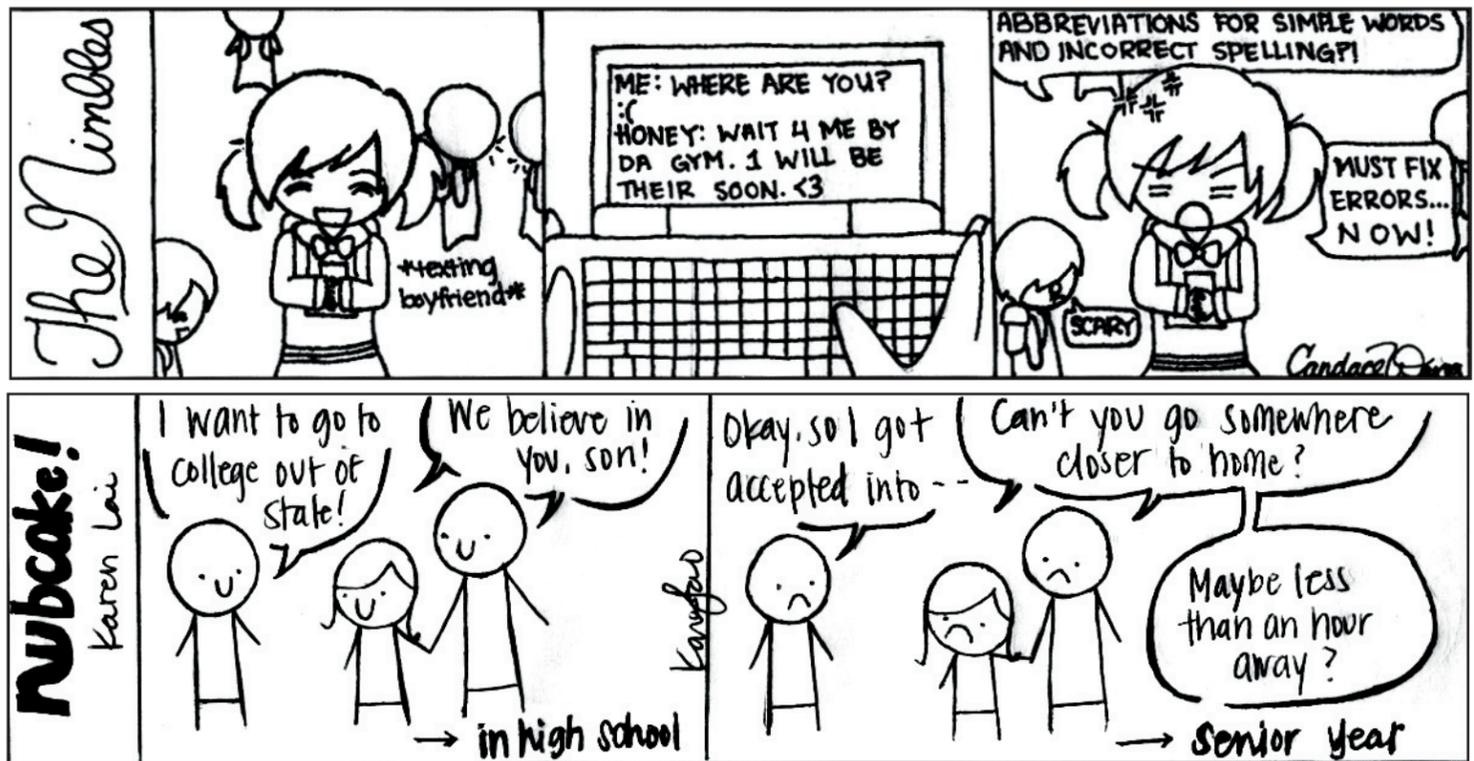


tutoring companies like Princeton Review. Sure, it costs a grand amount just for a few hours of tutoring a week, but like all things in America, nothing comes free. These kinds of classes force students into preparing to do well on these tests.

As a busy student, I can testify to how hard it is to spend time preparing for tests like the SAT. I'll even say that I'm not satisfied with my score, but at least I put in the effort of trying to self-study. Something needs to be done to motivate students

nationwide. We can't just sit here and let a small percentage of students perform well while a handful of students pull down those who are putting in the effort. The low scores reflect how poor our education has become.

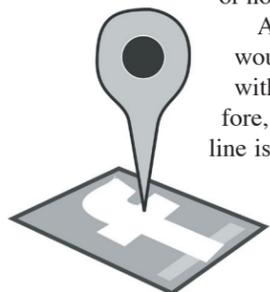
Yes, the scores of the past are irreplaceable, but we can move forward. If our education nationwide sees this as a wake-up call and places more emphasis on the weaknesses of students, then I believe we could be in for a one-hundred eighty degree turn.



## I Know Where You Are

MICHELLE PAULINO  
Staff Writer

Odds are that you are part of the thousands of adolescents who use social networking sites. Notifications, the phrase "tag me," and "liking" are now integrated in your vocabulary. One of the more fairly recent additions to facilitate all of your activities is the "Check-In" or "share your location" option available on Facebook and Twitter. Better yet, on smart phones, one can easily click the location, open maps and download directions, all within a few minutes. Once you make that choice to "Check-In," you surrender your privacy and leave your whereabouts to anyone viewing your page to come and meet you, whether you like it or not.



Aside from the obvious bragging rights, why would you want to openly share your location with everyone? It's been heard many times before, but please be aware that what you put online is always accessible to others, even if it's unintended. Fortunately, there has been a new update that prompts you to control who you want to see your location. Take advantage of the steady regain in privacy and do your homework.

## Why We Can't Have Nice Things

ASTRID TOVAR  
Staff Writer

Compared to some schools, we're pretty well off—we can afford books, supplies, sports and a newspaper, not to mention a new building. Sure, there are plenty of other things we could have—even more reason not to take the things we do have for granted. However much or however little we have, we should still have pride. So why do the restrooms in our new Science Building have to be closed to be kept clean?

The Science Building opened in the beginning of the 2010–2011 school year. Pretty fancy and pretty cold, the new building arrested the curiosity and interest of the student body. It was a marvel for the rest of the year; something to talk about and be proud of. Yet, not even a year later, disrespect rears its ugly



head in the form of a big, red, sloppy hand print on the wall of the girl's bathroom.

It makes you wonder if that is necessary. Maybe some excitement comes along with "marking" your territory on a school bathroom wall, but there should be a limit. In the half-hearted "Susie was here" comes the fact that Susie wants to be there at all. It doesn't take much to allocate that notion in a little bit of mutual respect for your school.

I don't mean to be melodramatic over a case of graffiti, but things like this really reflect how we feel about our school. Some people find it praise-worthy to have an aloof attitude toward your school, or to disrespect it entirely. Nowadays where you came from is not something to be proud of. And why? Why aren't we proud of the places we've been; rich or poor, young or old, alluring or ugly? Take a little time and love where you've grown up.