

## A MUSING To Infinity and Beyond

Every night for the past few months, I would lie in bed looking up at the faint glow-in-the-dark stars on my ceiling, wondering. Where will I be next year? Will I find what I'm looking for? When making decisions, I act impulsively—much to the disdain of my mother, I follow gut instinct instead of thinking methodically. However, I realized that each decision would open a different path that would alter the course of my life. It's an enormous pressure to place on a teenager, especially one whose indecisiveness extends to even the most trivial of matters, including breakfast options and nail polish color.

Seven months ago, I started this column and vented my frustrations about college, mostly about the insecurities I felt with the near future. Perhaps I'd take the biggest risk of my life and board a train to New York, or stay local and come home every weekend. With mere weeks until graduation and some concrete options to consider, I must admit that in the darkness of my bedroom, I still don't really know. I feared regret, but then I started to wonder: How would we ever really know? Wasn't the worst regret of all, knowing that you didn't risk enough to possibly have regrets? How would I know if I would wind up at the right place? Was intuition enough?

These questions befuddled me, as I watched on enviously as friends committed without batting an eyelash as I agonized and waited for "signs"—a cloud in the shape of a college mascot, an advertisement on a passing bus. And then it struck me, like an asteroid crashing through my bedroom universe. There is no guaranteed path to success and no mystical force that will help make these life-changing decisions easier. It's a combination of intuition, comfort, excitement and practicality. By the time this article comes out, I'll be forced to know. Though there are so many factors and occurrences that we do not have any control over, I would like to think that wherever I end up—it's because it was written in the stars and at least we can determine our own attitudes there.

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## Will Do Community Service for Hours

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Community service is the magical term for acts of altruism performed by a human being. For the supposed purpose of furthering that aim, service clubs have been created for the high school student.

Now, take a step back. What does the picture look like? Ideal, right? But what does reality look like? A lot less than ideal, I can tell you that much. These high school service clubs have a second side to them—the selfish side. That's right; community service is not all early morning sunshine and rainbows—it's the ticket most frequently used to get into college.

Not that doing service hours isn't hard work. But the motivation behind doing them is questionable. What is supposed to be a shining example of selflessness in our youth has turned out to be just another means to further their success in life. Well, that's depressing. Why did that happen?

On one hand, colleges do look at community service hours, so it does look nice when applying. But your application isn't really a true testament to your character if that's your only motive for doing hours. Therefore, your character is also at fault here.

Maybe the reason you joined the

service club was not for the hours or the experience at all but because you wanted to be with your friends. So because all your friends are doing it, you will, too. There's only one question that comes to mind when I hear this: What if all your friends jumped off a bridge?

Now, if we look at service clubs as a whole instead of picking apart each member piece by piece, there are a few things that are not quite aligned with the clubs' goal. For example, the Homecoming Floathouse costs hundreds of dollars for a club to make a nice float. Another costly activity involves gifts for senior members from their club as they graduate. (There go the couple hundred bucks I was planning on donating to charity.) Although it is a nice gesture and boosts school spirit, anywhere over a hundred dollars is a tad ridiculous, especially since there are better places to spend that money.

Granted, not everyone in a service club is doing it for their own gain, but how many are really doing it for the sole purpose of helping the community? Yes, there are some well-meaning members, but not enough. So, here's an idea: instead of jumping up at the opportunity to do a service to get into college or to get a free shirt, try think-



ing about the person or group you're working for during the service; it's the thought that counts, after all.

Or, better yet, do something nice when it doesn't count. No, it doesn't do anything for college, but it does prove character. Since we are the future, how we act today is going to affect the world of tomorrow. If we can create a culture of giving and living for the sake of others, the world tomorrow would be so much better.

Yes, that is the idealist inside me talking, but if you even wish for peace or fight for a better life, you are one too. Ideal is simple. It's "I Deal."

My life might not be perfect, but "I Deal" with it while maintaining a positive attitude and striving for improvement.

Service clubs can embody just that. It has the means; it does the works. All it needs now is the right attitude. If members of a service club can really be doing a service for the sake of the community, then that would be a true service club. That doesn't mean you have to banish the thought of college from your mind; it means don't do your hours solely for a selfish purpose. Embrace a larger purpose.

Serve the community.

## Pre-sales Prevail

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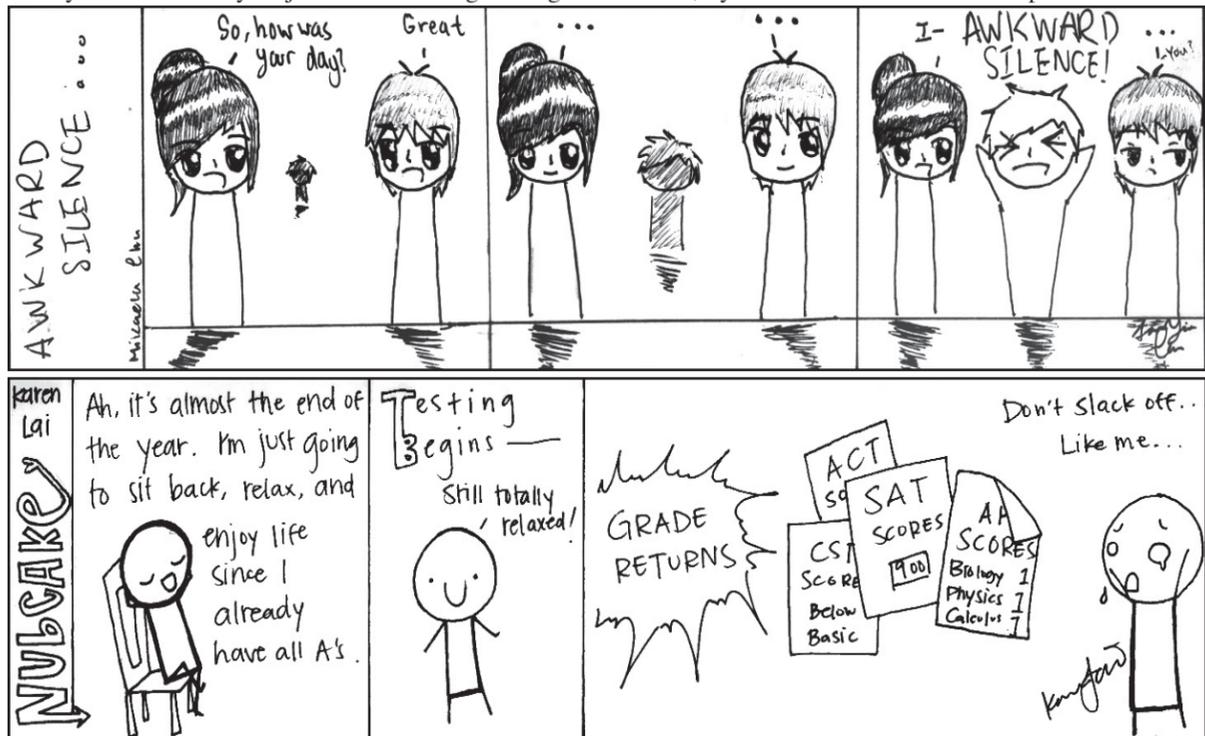
There are only so many ways a club can fundraise, and inevitably it comes down to candy sales. Well, "pre-selling" candy, in case anyone from Executive is reading this. But honestly, I don't see pre-sale sheets getting much action. After all, it's hard enough trying to sell snacks to someone without asking them to wait a few weeks for their food to arrive. Hungry now? Too bad.

So pre-sales are inconvenient and unrealistic—but administration needs some regulation over selling items on campus, not to mention that pre-sales in schools are mandated by the state of California.

Fundraising for a club is hardly worth violating a state regulation. Yes, pre-selling is difficult, but that's probably the point. It's harder for people who want to sell for personal profit—yes, I'm talking to the kid who sells candy to buy the new Pokemon game—to actually make any money. This way, the state can rest assured that no one is selling illegally.

As hard as it may seem, we have to follow the law. It will require sacrifice, hard work and precious time; but despite the laziness and reluctance we may face, we have to pre-sell that candy.

Badger your friends until they realize that one dollar is a small payment in exchange for peace and quiet. Start paying attention in class so your teachers will want to buy candy from their star student. And yes, wait a week for your candy bar. Your metabolism will thank you.



## Staff Editorial: Drug-Induced Attention Span?

At one time or another in our lives, we are told, perhaps in a classroom with a friendly police officer and a stuffed Daren the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) lion doll, to say "no" to drugs in spite of any circumstances. Since then, we've seen how successful that has turned out. With the ever-mounting pressures to succeed academically, some students choose to rely on drugs.

Ritalin, a prescription drug for people diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), has found its way into the exhausted, sleep-deprived hands of college students since its release to the public in the 1960s. Since Ritalin has the ability to transform students into focused studying machines, it has become the miracle pill for the twenty percent who have used it to boost their grades, many of whom are not diagnosed with ADHD. For the "unlucky" ones with-

out the disorder, they rely on faking symptoms to a medical professional for a prescription or buying leftover pills from their afflicted friends.

This reliance is a whole different resort than the classic in-class cheating or plagiarism to pass college; and with Ritalin pills, it shows effort and that they are striving for a source of energy when they need to study. On top of that, the medication is relatively inexpensive, ranging from free with medical co-pay to two dollars per pill; it is more economical and potent than a cup of coffee. As this drug brings someone uphill in the academic mountain, it sure looks a lot better than the other drugs everyone else is getting high off of and still not

benefiting from. Yet, since its usage is not completely natural nor does it promote self-discipline, it is not the most trustworthy solution. Ritalin should only be legitimately used and best serve students who truly have ADHD.

Ritalin may seem to be a wonderful nougat fallen from the gods above like Ferrero Rocher, but it has its limits. There are reasons why the drug cannot be used over the counter and why it is illegal without a prescription. Ritalin is prescribed to a patient in graduated doses, the correct effective dosage is meant for the individual ADHD patient and may change in repeated usage. This little orange pill can bring on irregular heart and

respiratory functions, restlessness, loss of sanity or, worse, death. This other side of Ritalin cannot beat its benefits.

Ritalin is not an appropriate solution to any personal inadequacies, especially given its negative effects. It is not designed for students without ADHD. There are actual people affected by real symptoms, and this drug is not just a luxury or a quick-fix to mere laziness.

The use of Ritalin among non-ADHD students is comparable to steroids among athletes. It is a boost that is not completely necessary, and may be replaced by healthier alternatives. It is also questionable whether taking Ritalin actually demonstrates a good work ethic compared to their sober peers, who do not use drugs for an unfair advantage. It is essential to develop good work habits and integrity, instead of relying on a miracle drug.

Should college students without ADHD be allowed to use Ritalin to boost their academic performance?

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