

The Student Union

A compilation of news by and about young people in the Ojai Valley

In cooperation with: Besant Hill School, Nordhoff High School, Oak Grove School, Ojai Valley School, The Thacher School and Villanova Preparatory School

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Seniors are Bound to Make Tough Decisions

Caroline Morrow

Ojai Valley School

As May 1 rolled around, high school seniors all over the country were choosing where they would spend the next four years of their lives.

Life-changing decisions were being made left and right, the stakes extremely high.

However, for Ojai Valley School senior Felix Yen, that fateful Monday was like all the others. Felix had been admitted to Babson College, his top choice school, in mid-December. For a long time, Felix knew that Babson was the right fit for him.

"I only applied to one school," he said. "Babson was my top choice and that's why I applied so early. I am so excited to go next year."

On College Decision



Showing off their college swag on College Decision Day are (from left) Dahee Roh, Maeve Spanier, Evelyn Brokering and Natasha Freudmann.

Photo by Fred Alvarez

Day May 1, Felix and his classmates wore their college swag. T-shirts and sweatshirts were decorated with lions, beavers, ducks and a whole array of other mascots.

College counselor Judy Oberlander smiled in reflecting upon the last class of seniors she'll guide before she retires.

"I'm always really proud

of seniors," Oberlander said. "The list of the places they all got in is very long and every choice was made very carefully."

Gavin Floyd got into the University of Alabama by early decision. Mo Taylor fell in love with the University of Hawaii after visiting earlier this year.

Senior Josh Han is going to college in Canada — he chose to go to the Vancouver Institute of Media Arts to participate in a yearlong professional school program for photography. The school is directly linked to job opportunities, so Josh can jump right into work after he graduates.

This decision didn't come lightly. At first, he had trouble determining which school to attend. His other choice was Langara College, also in Vancouver. These two colleges both harbor some of the

best professional photography programs in Canada, so his decision was tough.

After a lot of back and forth, Han decided to go to Vancouver Institute of Media Arts, as the program was only one year as opposed to four.

"This school has the best photography program I can find and I love the city," Han said. "I'm super pumped to go."

Another senior who struggled to find the perfect fit was Natasha Freudmann.

Originally from Oregon, she had already experienced as an OVS student what life was like outside her state and wanted to continue that into higher education, so she applied all over the country.

However, an interesting offer arose, when she got accepted into the University of Oregon's Clark Honors Col-

lege. It is one of the top-10 honors colleges in the country, and Freudmann was confronted with a hard choice: college out of her home state or one of the nation's most prestigious schools in state.

"I realized that the Honors College was a super good program and the more I learned about it the more I really liked it," Freudmann said. "When I visited, I loved the dorms and the campus, just everything about the college."

With less than two weeks to go until graduation, Freudmann said she is feeling excited about what lies ahead, but also a bit apprehensive.

"I'm scared because I'm being released out into the world — I'm getting this newfound freedom and this newfound responsibility," she said. "But I'm excited to start this new life and be in charge of myself."

Spanish Students Make a Connection

Caroline Morrow

Ojai Valley School

Recently, in a cozy, cubicle-style classroom on the Ojai Valley School's Upper Campus, all nine Spanish 3 Honors students stood huddled around a small, green laptop.

Usually, having a Skype conversation during the school day, would be frowned upon. But not this day.

Sophomore Lilli Trompke broke the ice for the OVS Spanish students, being the first one to have a Skype conversation with Oxnard middle school students.

The OVS students were talking to a sixth-grade class at Ocean View Middle School in Oxnard as part of a new initiative to use technology to help build speaking skills among language students.

Trompke talked to four students about their favorite sports and foods. She was stumped at first, but as the conversation progressed, she started delving into her life and finding similar interests between her and the others.

"I'm usually fine speaking in class, but during the Skype call, I got a little nervous because I'm terrible at small talk," Trompke said. "The kids were really nice and overall it was really fun because I've never done anything like it before."

Junior Peter Weckerle had a conversation with a different group. They all bonded over their mutual love of soccer, but the conversation got a little heated when they talked about their favorite teams, as Weckerle is an avid Bayer-Munich fan while the others

were pro-Barcelona.

"The experience was good, because it's a great way to study Spanish," Weckerle said. "It was cool talking to them because they like soccer like me. I'm totally excited for the next time we talk."

Spanish teacher Gretchen Stevens collaborated with Ocean View teacher Esther

Andrews, a former OVS teacher, to stage the Skype conversation, the first of what they hope will be many more to come.

Andrews' middle school students learn in both Spanish and English throughout the day, as this school is participating in a dual-immersion program. Through a rapid-

fire questioning, both sides learned about the others favorite colors, sports and movies. The kids were fascinated by each other's lives, jumping to ask another question.

Stevens and Andrews came up with the idea one day while they were catching up. The two have been trying to forge a line of communication between their two classes, and hit upon the idea of the Skype conversation.

"I think it went really well," Stevens said. "My students understood everything Mrs. Andrew's kids were saying, and it was nice to see them use their vocabulary."

After the call ended, spirits stayed high. Both classes buzzed about the conversations, excited for the next call. Both teachers are collaborating on possibly creating a book club and also keeping the classes in contact throughout the various levels for Spanish.

Andrews was delighted by the way the first Skype conversation went.

This opportunity was especially exciting for her students, as they loved talking to the group of OVS students. She, too, hopes the classes can form a connection, opening more conversations between the groups in later classes and on to next year.

"They had the chance to see the value of knowing a second language and of course meeting fabulous students from other parts of the world," Andrews said. "They don't get to see or talk with people outside of their own neighborhood, so this was a very enlightening experience for them."



Students at Ojai Valley School, with their teacher Gretchen Stevens, conduct a Skype call with students at Ocean View Middle School in Oxnard.

Photo by Fred Alvarez



A laptop shows the students at Ocean View Middle School in Oxnard during the Skype call.

Photo by Fred Alvarez



A group of Ojai Valley School students take on the Kern River and its whitewater rapids.

Photo by Zach Byars

Rafters Rapidly Learn About The Outdoors

Josh Han

Ojai Valley School

If one of the goals of the Ojai Valley School's (OVS) outdoor education program is to teach perspective, then the recent Upper Campus whitewater rafting trip to the Kern River should earn high marks.

Fourteen students and two teachers trekked to the southern side of the Sierra Nevada to tackle the rough water of the Kern and tour the Trail of Giants at Sequoia National Park.

Following years of drought, a combination of heavy winter snow and warm spring temperatures combined this year to produce a roiling Kern River, so much so that students were initially shocked at how much whitewater they would traverse.

"When we were driv-

ing up the canyon to get our campsite we saw these expert runs," said sophomore Clover Griffin. "I think everybody got a little freaked out looking at that ... But once we were in the boat, the guides were really helpful and it never felt overwhelming. It was really fun!"

Indeed, aided by able river guides, the students learned to work as a team, taking three runs down the Kern, each progressively harder than the one before.

Outdoor Education Director Zach Byars, a swift water rescue instructor before coming to OVS, taught the students about river safety, showing them how to read the water and avoid trouble spots.

And he taught them how to have fun, providing a healthy perspective and respect for the waterways in our backyard.



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Weather Changes BHS Students' Plans on Trip to Santa Cruz Island

Han Sung

Besant Hill School

Eight students and two faculty members from the Besant Hill School went to Santa Cruz Island May 12 and May 13 to get a better understanding of the island's wildlife.

They had planned to volunteer doing ecological restoration and bird-nest

checking on Scorpion Rock, but because of the weather they couldn't. Instead, the group observed the island's wildlife.

They started their observations by hiking across the island. During the hike, students observed and learned about the invasive and native plants that grow on the Island. They tried to identify the spe-

cies of the plants they saw.

They also learned about the natural life of Santa Cruz Island in the past and present. For example, some species evolved smaller to survive, especially the pigmy mammoth and Island fox. However, other species evolved bigger body sizes to survive, including the island scrub jay, which is much bigger than jays on

the mainland.

Students who went on the trip presented their experiences to the entire Besant Hill School community.

Faculty members and students of Besant Hill School are looking forward to going to Santa Cruz Island in the fall to do the volunteer work they couldn't do on the previous trip.



The weather prevented the group from working on Scorpion Rock during their recent trip to Santa Cruz Island.

Photo by Han Sung

As Visiting Artist, OVS Parent Takes students on a Creative Journey

Joy Campbell

Ojai Valley School

Long sheets of painted acrylic squares are draped over tables in the art room, squares that, once dry, are awash with colors and patterns unique to each maker.

Visiting artist Larry Mullins, father of sophomore Maya Mullins, met Ojai Valley School art teacher Chia Hersk on the first day of school when he dropped his daughter off. Since then, there has been an open channel of communication between the two, and a mutual agreement that Larry should come back as a visiting artist.

The plans were finally set into motion the Monday after spring break.

Mullins is a professional artist by trade. He describes himself as a process artist, who emphasizes the actual process of creating art rather than embarking with a set plan or end goal. He allows

the work to move him along.

"I don't start with drawings, I start with an idea or even just a notion about what it is that I want," Larry said. "Then I start putting things down on the paper or canvas. Most all the work that I do is completely intuitive."

He listens to his art. To him, it is a conversation. His pieces are abstract and combine many elements of design, color and shape.

"It's always a process of looking, thinking, painting, editing, reworking and then painting again," Larry said. "And that process can repeat itself six, seven, eight, nine times. Sometimes everything that gets put down eventually gets submerged in the layer going overtop of it."

His observational and layered style is reflected in the work he did with the art students. Focusing on oil skins, each student layered acrylic patterns onto plastic sheeting and later added more



Sophomore Ryan Simpson applies layers of paint to form an acrylic "skin" as part of an art project orchestrated by visiting artist Larry Mullins.

Photo by Josh Han

layers of paint, thus making acrylic skins.

Larry spent class and elective time with the four students in Hersk's Advanced Studio Art class, helping them build personal complexity in their acrylic skins. Most squares will be part of stu-

dents' individual visions, but some will contribute to a collective, class-wide piece.

While his current professional work and his work with students demonstrates a slower, step-by-step approach to making art, this style has not always been Larry's go-to.

While living in Virginia, he had a following in the

street-art world. Inspired by artists such as Keith Haring, he was attracted to the immediacy and impermanence of street art, and the instant connection he had with people who passed him working.

Larry's time working with the rhythm, flow and fast-paced lifestyle has influenced his personal style. He joins language with the abstract, and he showed the students ways to connect stationary art with freeform movement.

"He encouraged us to see relationships between shape and color and how they can interact with each other," said sophomore Wendy Lazo-Dowdy. "He showed us how to get different flows with different mediums."

Heading into class as a visiting artist, Larry's aim was to open new doors for students to explore, and to give them the tools to do so.

"I focus on principles and elements of design, ways to create depth, and ways to make your picture have motion, quality of line and color," Larry said. "(I was

hoping to) pass on some ideas about technique and approach and most importantly to give them the parts to create a whole."

Hersk had similar goals. "I just wanted the students to get something out of it," she said. "It's always fun to bring in visiting artists, because they get so used to you and then you bring in someone else that has new ideas, a new way of teaching and it totally inspires them."

Within the three-day visit, the students laid down the foundation for their designs and began to make the pieces they would build into their final project. Approximately a week later, their works are almost complete and will be displayed in a collective series. Each student's piece and the class piece are coming together to form a story — a spectrum of unique, creative wavelengths working together.

As Mullins aptly put it, "Painting has a certain kind of wisdom that you develop, you grow, you learn."

Nordhoff Senior Helping Young Dancers Follow in Her Footsteps

Julia Botti

Nordhoff High School

Paola Avila is one of Nordhoff High School's (NHS) many seniors who take it upon themselves to get involved — and to excel in all they do.

Paola is taking integrated mathematics 3, government and economics, environmental field studies, English 12, teachers aide, dance 2 and choreography.

Her favorite class, she said, is choreography by far. Unlike dance 2, choreography is after school on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. In Choreography, students learn to create their own dances that have a deeper meaning rather than just learning a dance.

"We also learn life skills like working with others in the community and how to be representatives of a program," Avila explained.

However, environmental field studies is close behind choreography as a favorite, Avila noted.

For approximately 75 percent of the school year, Avila was in charge of putting the recycling bins in the quad, watering the greenhouse every other day and removing



Senior Paola Avila is Nordhoff High School's female student of the month. Photo by Aliyah Zweig

the weeds in the planters in the quad so the pomegranate trees can grow.

Each Tuesday, she goes to Matilija Junior High School (MJHS) with fellow dance, Stella Moore, and teaches a dance class to eight girls. She said she teaches them a part of a dance that is fun for the students but also gives them an enjoyable experience.

Not only does it give the students at MJHS a good experience, Avila said she wanted to share her experience that she has gotten dancing at NHS and give others the opportunity to learn different dance genres.

"I never get annoyed with the students," she explained.

"They are amazing students who have amazing energy and are very kind. Every student has a different learning ability, but overall they all learned the dance."

Teacher Jon Hoj drives them to MJHS and supervises while there, greeting the dancers as they come in.

"My best memory so far from teaching at Matilija was when one of our students was inspired by us to create her own fun dance," Avila stated. "When she was done choreographing the dance, she showed us it all by herself."

Paola's favorite part of teaching the dance classes is meeting new people and that she gets to teach what she loves to do at Nordhoff.

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The Student Union

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The Student Union is published monthly during the academic school year.

Carnine the Car Man Earns Nordhoff Teaching Honors

Lauren Raymond

Nordhoff High School

This month's Nordhoff High School (NHS) male teacher of the month is Fender Carnine. He can be found teaching auto shop and welding, coaching the NHS wrestling team, checking student's off-campus sticker at lunch and sometimes giving students a lift to their next

class on his golf cart.

Carnine attend Nordhoff High School and graduated in 1993. He was a part of the football team, track-and-field team and the golf team.

He has been teaching at NHS for 17 years.

His favorite part about teaching auto/welding, he explained, is teaching kids a skill they can use for the rest of their life. His favorite part

of coaching is how competitive everything is and he enjoys getting exercise with the students as well.

"Fender is a great coach and is really good at teaching moves to new people in a way that everyone can understand it and he is always a great person to work out with", said junior wrestler Harrison Gregory.

Carnine has many hob-

bies, such as running, riding his bike to school, playing guitar, riding motorcycles, swimming and competing in outrigger canoeing. Outrigger canoeing is an important part of the Polynesian heritage and is very popular in Hawaii, Tahiti and Puerto Rico.

When asked if he could change one thing about Nor-

dhoff he replied, "To have more hands-on electives. It's teaching lifelong skills and teaching individuals things they will need later on in the future that is important."

"It's amazing having him as a coach," explained senior wrestler Mikayla Miles. "He's caring for his athletes and wants you to do your best

and when something knocks you down he is always there to pick you up and put a smile on your face. It was fun having him for welding sophomore year and I caught a couple things on fire. Fender is always a very helpful, giving teacher and it's about the reality of having respect for each other."



Fender Carnine, who has the best name for an auto shop teacher ever, is the Nordhoff High School male teacher of the month.

Photo by Aliyah Zweig

NHS Musical Groups Score Big

Noahm Byle

Nordhoff High School

Nordhoff High School (NHS) Music Department students have been busy in recent weeks, with groups competing in events in San Francisco and Reno.

The string orchestra and combined chamber choir and gold 'n blue singers travelled to the WorldStrides San Francisco Heritage Festival.

The group left April 20 for the five-day spring tour.

Both the string orchestra and combined choir took home a score placing of Gold in their 1A division. They also got to hear others perform along the way.

The Nordhoff string symphony performed "Waltz No.2," "Egyptian Legacy" and "Water Reflections." During their songs, solos were played by Sarah Scott on cello, concertmaster Adrielle Walker on violin, and Adam Woll on viola. Their performance was scored by three adjudicators, giving them a

score between 90 and 100 points, earning them a gold rating.

The combined chamber choir and gold 'n blue singers performed "Musica Dei," "Homage and Rejoice" and "Sing." They too placed with a score between 90 and 100 points, giving them a Heritage Festival gold rating as well.

As well as performing and competing in the Festival, the combined group attended a performance by the San Francisco Symphony at the Davies Symphony Hall in San Francisco. The symphony performed a Prokofiev's 2nd piano concerto featuring pianist Denis Kozhukhin, as well as a performance of Rachmaninoff's "2nd symphony" conducted by Andrés Orozco-Estrada.

The Nordhoff music department's musicians also got the opportunity of seeing a live comedy show in the San Francisco Playhouse. They also had time to explore historic landmarks around San Francisco including Fisherman's Wharf and the Golden

Gate Bridge.

The jazz band set course for Reno, where they competed in the 55th annual Reno Jazz Festival, with more than 350 performing ensembles from 150 high schools and middle schools from around the country attending.

Although NHS didn't place in its division, it did get a score of Unanimous Superior, meaning that all adjudicators scored the band with point ratings over 90.

As well as performing, the ensemble got to hear big bands, combo groups, jazz choirs and even some college jazz groups.

As well as getting time to listen to other groups compete in the festival, the group went to see the contemporary and avant-garde jazz trio The Bad Plus, with featured saxophonist Joshua Redman at the Lawlor Events Center. They also explored the city of Reno, the Truckee River and got a feel for the Nevada State University, where the Reno Jazz Festival was held.

Competition Shows Nordhoff Has More Than a Few Drama Queens

Devon Patterson

Nordhoff High School

Nordhoff thespians continue to make headlines. This time, it's a pair of upperclassmen, junior Sophia Ehrlich and senior Kirsten Hoj, winning at an annual drama competition.

The pair joined a group of John Hoj's drama class actors at the Drama Teacher's Association of Southern California (DTASC), Southern California's main high school drama competition.

It was held April 22 at Temecula Valley High School.

DTASC is a biannual event held in the fall and spring specifically for Shakespeare dramas.

High school drama students from all over Southern California come together to

showcase their scenes and have them evaluated by other high school drama teachers.

This year, our competitors met at Nordhoff at 4:45 a.m. and were back in Ojai around 2 a.m. the next day — a commitment that came at the end of months of practice and preparation.

Nordhoff had groups participate in categories including Modern Adaptation, Monologues, Theme Collage and Shakespeare Uncut. Three of the four groups made their way to the semi-finals, with Ehrlich and Hoj making it to the finals in the Shakespeare Uncut category.

Neither Ehrlich nor Hoj expected the first-place win.

"It was something I've never done, and it's something we are both proud of and it's difficult to do especially with so many kids

there," said Ehrlich. "So in all sincerity, we thought we were going to get third, but we won. And so it was really nice."

As the judging method is a bit confusing, it can be difficult to advance depending on how well a single judge likes a scene, Ehrlich explained. For the beginning rounds there can be from a single judge to three or four, so how well a group appeals to a single judge can determine whether they move on or not. "For us to move on," she added. "I think is a testimony to how we appeal to a large group of judges."

Ehrlich and Hoj will now turn their attention back to their roles with the "Steel Magnolias" ensemble that is preparing to compete at nationals this summer.

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Student Opinion

Pool Repair Efforts Have Been Shallow, Murky

Morgan Mays & Scout van Houten

Nordhoff High School

If you're indecisive about joining the aquatics programs at Nordhoff High School (NHS), maybe the bacteria-infested, frog-filled, murky waters of the "pool" will help convince you to join ... right?

Have no fear, if you can't swim, you can simply stand up whenever you get tired in the infamous 4-foot shallow end. You'll be able to hear the groans of each team that walks through our hallowed gates, dreading the inevitability of hitting their head on the bottom of the pool, but at least they'll be slightly protected by the abundance of Band-Aids, dead insects and other garbage that

covers the pool floor.

Four-year varsity swimmer Adrianna Bese has had the honor of cranking off the pool covers to find several large rodents floating on the surface of the pool, but the Nordhoff swimmers are tough and are used to this recurring phenomenon after each rain, simply scooping them out to continue on with their workout.

The ongoing issue of whether to spend bond money to replace the deteriorating puddle that the Nordhoff swim and water polo teams call a pool has become more of a problem as the years go by.

Branded as the worst pool in the Tri-Valley League, the Nordhoff High School varsity girl's swim team, four-year league champions,

have been unable to host Tri-Valley League prelims and finals, as is accustomed after winning the previous year. Our shallow end, one of the only two in the entire Ventura County, raises issues for every team, ours included. Swimmers are too tempted to rest, with the simplicity of just being able to stand if they get a little tired, which is not beneficial as they will lose the endurance and skill necessary to succeed. Ask any swimmer or water-polo player at Nordhoff, and they will inform you of the many injuries and disadvantages of having a shallow-ended pool. Many of these athletes get sick very easily from the constant inhalation of the bacteria that infests the shallow waters. If we also had a

working cleaning filter system, the obvious lack of sanitation would not be so prominent. Not only is being forced to practice in these conditions a disadvantage, our team is also set back by the extreme differences of swimming at pools that were actually funded by their district's bond money. Swimming in deep end pools allows for a difference in resistance, temperature and most importantly, time.

Our district is currently sitting on a \$37 million dollar bond, ready and waiting to serve Nordhoff some justice. Yet, news recently arose that much of this money will be spent on repairing the entire gym roof and re-doing the library. Neither of these "problems" are as much of a danger

to a student's health as the real issue of the pool.

Contrary to popular belief, athletic director Rene Nakao does not hold the authority to choose where this money goes, and she is "bummed" about the situation that has been an ongoing issue ever since Coach Jermaine Britton was a high school swimmer here himself.

The irony of this situation is that while the debate over spending the available bond money towards a new pool has been ongoing for more than 30 years, as soon as the library or gym starts to look a little rundown, the administration rushes to fix it, putting aside the health of their student-athletes for new roof tiles and reading chairs that spin.

Journalists' Efforts to Provide 'Real News' More Important Than Ever

Devon Patterson

Nordhoff High School

Journalism is known as both the activity and product of gathering, assessing, creating and presenting news and information. It keeps people informed of changing events and issues, and can even be considered a source of entertainment for some people. It is a vital media that people take from and use daily.

However important journalism is, unfortunately there has been a steady decline in the industry. In 2015, newspaper circulation dropped 7 percent on weekdays and 4 percent on Sundays.

Between 2009 and 2014-15, ad revenue fell 8 percent while digital advertising also fell a surprising 2 percent.

As interest in traditional journalism shrinks, funding for such journalism does as well, and with less funds, companies are forced to downsize; meaning job and department cuts at the very least.

A more recent factor in the decrease of journalism popularity could be thanks to our current president calling it "fake news." Trump has called news organizations and their reporters many uncouth names, such as "pathetic," "failing," and even "a pile of

garbage."

While past presidents have had less-than-favorable relationships with the media, those men realized that free press holds an irreplaceable role in American democracy. However, despite being in many ways a product of the media, Trump called journalists "among the most dishonest human beings on earth" on his very first day in office and from then on has continued to slander reporters and news organizations. His administration has also blocked The Times and other mainstream news networks from briefings.

By calling news "fake" and journalists "liars," he is

muddling the facts so that when he values something as the truth, Americans might be more susceptible to believing it, even if it is just a far-fetched lie.

This decline in the belief of journalism goes hand in hand with the dwindling industry.

With this decrease however, journalism and news remains as important and successful as ever at uncovering the truth. On March 29, at Pittsburgh High School in Kansas, student journalists of the school paper, The Booster Redux, published an article about the truths of their new principal's resume.

The new principal had claimed to have a master's and doctorate degree from Corllins University, a bachelor's degree from the University of Tulsa, as well as a teaching degree from the University of Cambridge. The students said that they were surprised at how little they were told about their new principal and decided to take a closer look at her resume.

With a little digging, the student reporters found out that Corllins University had closed far before she had said to have gotten her degree, and the principal was "unable" to provide evidence confirming her degree at the University

of Tulsa. It was on April 4 that Principal Amy Robertson resigned from her position.

"This experience showed us that we need to hold certain people in power accountable for telling the truth, and that even though we are students and teenagers, journalism matters," said Trina, high school senior and editor of the newspaper. "We simply report the facts, and that can be very powerful."

While the young journalists said they never meant for anyone to be fired or resign, victories like these can be used to remind us how important journalism is for unveiling and presenting the truth.

Being Taught To Let Others Decide For Us Can be Dangerous

Caroline Marrow

Ojai Valley School

We let people change us.

From the moment we are born, our lives have a certain path dictated by others, whether you're premature and in need of immediate surgery or cozily wrapped in a pink or blue blanket. After you go home from

the cold hospital, you were placed in a crib and kissed on the head. The people who brought you home soon tell you what to wear and how to act. This is only reinforced when your teacher tells you to raise your hand and to ask politely to use the restroom.

After you outgrow the brightly colored chairs at kindergarten table to a desk at a high school, you start

letting your peers decide certain parts of you. They decide where you sit at lunch and who your biology partner is.

And after that, you start letting one person decide. This person is commonly known as a spouse, partner or significant other. You share deep-night conversations filled with painful memories or happy ones.

What they do with this informa-

tion is up to them, and you're allowing them to decide that for themselves. What if they pull the trigger, let go of your darkness over dinner cocktails or lunch sandwiches? So what if your leg got bruised when I pushed you around, sweetie? Don't worry, I'm sure a haircut will cover up that broken jaw or that black eye. When you go home, make sure to wear a little more makeup there so

your mom won't notice.

You listen to them, curl your hair that way or stop hanging out with that friend.

No wonder 25 percent of women and one-in-seven men will be victims of domestic abuse. If you're shocked, don't be. We train people from birth how to change for others, but some don't learn to change for themselves.

With a Limited Amount of 'Unwind' Time, Should Homework be Such a Big Part of Summer?

Jacob Mejia

Nordhoff High School

Sixty six days, nine and a half weeks, 1,584 hours.

These numbers represent the length of our upcoming summer break, which seems relatively short for the amount of school we must endure for the majority of the year.

Shouldn't this time be focused towards de-stressing from the school year without any focus on school whatsoever until the first day back in August? Well, don't we all wish.

For AP students, summers represent "school at your own pace and leisure" especially if that student is enrolled in multiple AP courses that like to pack your only free time of the year with homework.

Here at Nordhoff High School, most if not all AP courses assign some sort of summer assignments that aim to "prepare you for the curriculum" of the course work. Students who are only enrolled in one AP class the next year still feel the drag of having to do summer homework at a time that is supposed to

be geared toward relaxation.

Now imagine ambitious students, those who take three or more AP courses; they feel their summers significantly affected by the amount of homework they receive. The work for one class during the summer is pretty substantial in terms of the amount of time it takes to complete, throw in a few more classes and you have homework representing a large chunk of your summer.

Of course there is always the other side of the debate; AP teachers argue that with-

out their summer assignments, students would not be as prepared for the class because they wouldn't have really done anything academically intensive over the summer that prepares them for the course work that comes with the onset of the new school year. While this may hold true, teachers should remember that students spend a total of 10 months of the year in school focused on completing their work and maintaining grades for six different courses that bring about challenges and periods of stress.

Perhaps we deserve a

break during the short time we call summer?

In addition, the 66 days we will have for this upcoming summer does not comprise solely days where students are free to just do homework. Many students go on vacation, have jobs, spend certain days with family and friends, and do other related things. With all of these subtracted out, students really only have between 30 and 40 days to complete homework for the classes in which they are enrolled. With this, we dedicate that free time towards homework as opposed

to spending time with our peers.

Unfortunately, we students do not have much say in the fairness of summer homework. We receive the work, and do it without arguing for fear it may affect our grades, no matter how unfair it may feel that our free time is being invaded by work that seems unnecessary.

It is important to remind teachers here at Nordhoff that we as students work hard for almost an entire year and only get 66 days off for compensation. So, don't we deserve even a small break?

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