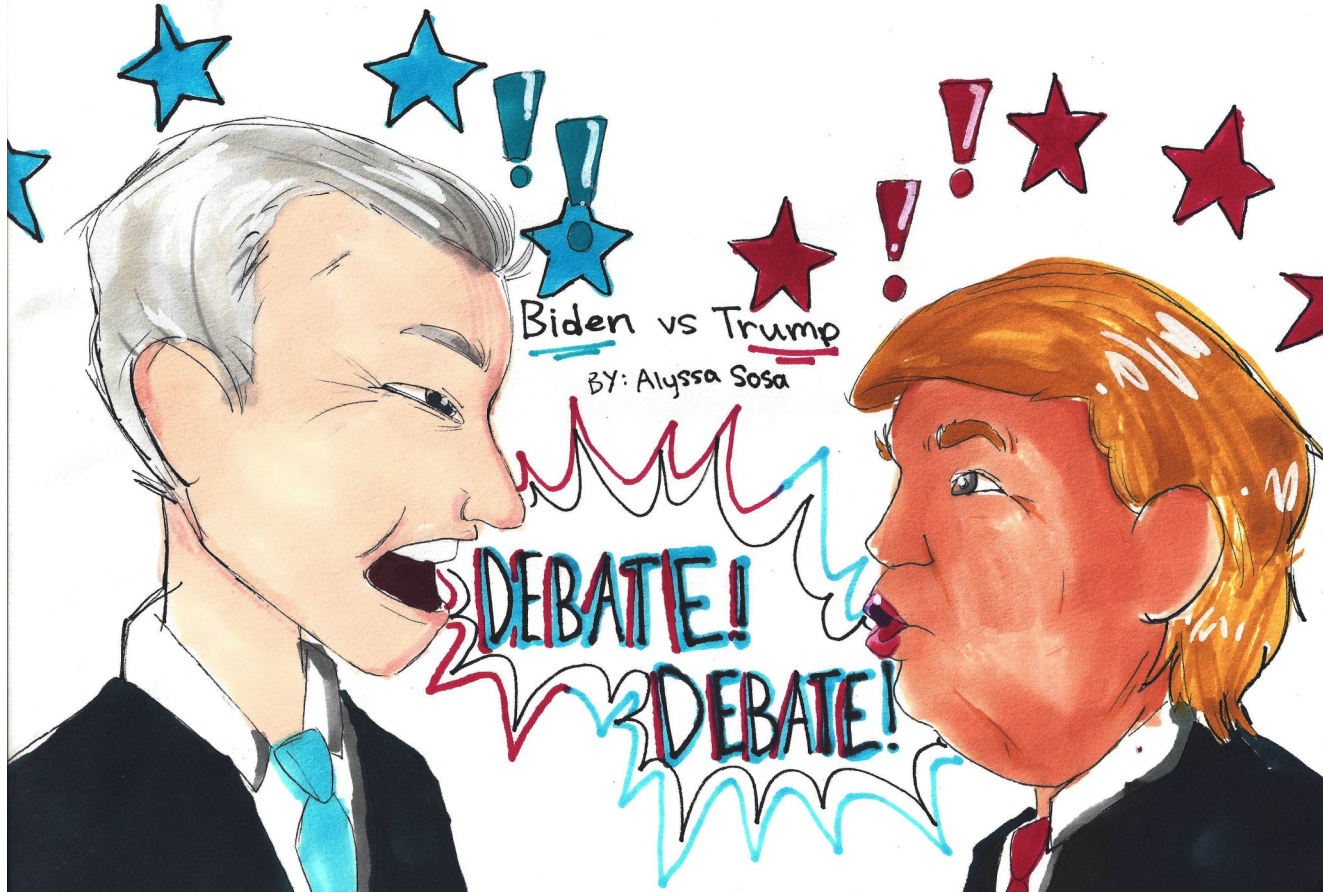


PPAS Voice

Celebrating diversity, promoting unity



One Presidential Debate Was Enough

By: Ellis Rubin

When the Commission on Presidential Debates announced that its second, virtual presidential debate would be cancelled due to President Donald Trump's refusal to take part, it met no public uproar in response. In fact, after the first presidential debate on September 29th, dubbed by ABC News chief anchor George Stephanopolous as "the worst presidential debate I've ever seen," the announcement came as a relief to those frustrated with its chaotic bickering.

So how did what was supposed to be a conversation centered on the state of the country diminish into whether former vice president Joe Biden went to the University of Delaware? Simply put, the lack of fact-checking

during the debate is to blame. While much of the post-debate media coverage examined the claims both of candidates, most of the 73 million Americans who watched the first debate didn't consume any of that. This enabled the candidates, primarily Mr. Trump, to say whatever they wanted during the debate unless challenged by their opponent. When misleading, exaggerated, or completely false statements come as frequently as they do from the president, countering even a fraction of them can prove difficult.

Mr. Biden, wanting to talk about his policy agenda, was flabbergasted by the misinformation Mr. Trump perpetually thrust upon him. Taking a risk that offered little reward, Mr.

Biden engaged Mr. Trump on a lot of his baseless accusations. While Mr. Biden would sometimes assert control on lines like "Will you shut up, man?" and "It's hard to get any word in with this clown," he would oftentimes put himself on the defensive. In doing this, Mr. Biden counterintuitively legitimized Mr. Trump's claims, usually unable to fully disprove one before the next dribbled out. For example, Mr. Trump's untrue claims about Mr. Biden's climate plan and the business deals Mr. Biden's son, Hunter Biden, made abroad may have caused concern with less informed voters.

Debate moderator Chris Wallace exacerbated the truth-stretching by failing to stop the

president's constant interrupting and changing of the topic. (This was also the case for Susan Page, the moderator of the sole vice presidential debate, with Vice President Mike Pence.) At one point, Mr. Wallace even said to Mr. Trump, "I'm gonna ask a question about race, but if you wanna answer about something else, go ahead," allowing Mr. Trump to do exactly that.

Neglecting to fact-check or properly moderate the debates leaves voters brainwashed, not empowered. If the Commission on Presidential Debates wants to better inform voters instead of aiding and abetting their manipulation, it should cancel the third debate scheduled for October 22nd, too.

Vaccine Updates

By: Tanya Jaffe

With the death toll from the coronavirus pandemic topping a million world-wide and 200,000 in the U.S., pressure to produce a vaccine is higher than ever as winter flu season looms.

Many Americans have questions about a vaccine's safety and effectiveness, leading many to wonder whether they would take one. Here are answers to some of the frequently asked questions about a potential vaccine.

What does a vaccine trial entail?



Dr. Anthony Fauci

A clinical trial for a vaccine is a test in which information on the vaccine is withheld from both parties, the volunteer and the doctor, according to uchealth.org. The vaccine is tested through a placebo method, in which some volunteers get the actual vaccine, while others get a placebo, often just an injection of salt water. Neither the volunteer nor the doctor know which is given to the volunteer.

How does a vaccine get tested? Vaccine trials have multiple steps, The New York Times reports, starting with preclinical trials, in which the vaccine is tested on cells, and then animals for an immune response. Phase 1 follows, in which the vaccine is tested on a small number of people to gauge its effectiveness and safety.

In Phase 2, the vaccine is tested on hundreds of people of a wide range of ages. Phase 2 is crucial to see how the vaccine works among a diverse

group.

Phase 3 is when the vaccine is tested on thousands of people. This step is crucial to determining broad safety. Scientists hope to find that fewer people get infected after receiving the vaccine rather than a placebo. In June, the Food And Drug Administration (FDA) said the vaccine should protect about 50% of the people who receive it. Some countries, including China and Russia, have skipped Phase 3 in order to produce a vaccine faster. This is a great risk because this

phase is where scientists can detect side effects they may have not been able to spot earlier on.

Finally, the vaccine is approved across countries and is licensed. Scientists will still track its progress in order to make sure that it is working correctly.

When will a vaccine be ready?

It is unclear, but Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, says it will likely be ready by the end of the year. The Centers for Disease Control has said states should prepare distribution centers by Nov. 1.

Who will be the first people to receive a vaccine?

There is no official protocol on how vaccines will be administered when they are cleared, but the CDC's preliminary plan is to first vaccinate health-care workers, then people with underlying medical conditions and the elderly.

Have there been any side effects in coronavirus-vaccine trials?

"More than half of those receiving early Covid-19 vaccines reported mild, short-term side effects such as fever, headaches, muscle aches, and injection-site reactions," uchealth.org said.

How Long?

By: Dannilynn King

I have a lot to say, but not the words to say what I want to say. I will truly never understand the reason for racism towards black people, how



Credit: Mitch - stock.adobe.com

did we come to a point where we all just thought black people were horrible and less than human, I genuinely don't understand.

The fact that we as a society use words and actions to belittle black people for no reason at all is disgusting. The fact that we're still fighting for black people to have basic human rights says a lot in itself - it shows me that we as a society have not changed. If we don't change now, when will we? It has been 52 years since the last civil rights movement ended, and here we are in the same position, many years later and we haven't changed a bit. So when will we? When

will black people successfully win the silent war of being black in America? When will we break stereotypes of black people? 400+

years of oppression and we still can't treat black people as humans?

I don't know about others, but I know that I have to remind myself that seeing a black person die on TV because of the color of their skin is not normal, yet it happens so often that it feels as if it is, even though it's not.

It seems like the more and more we shout black lives matter the more and more white people try to take the power of those words away. It seems like the more and more we shout black lives matter the more and more white people try to strip the meaning of those words away.

BLUE

By: Elizabeth Serkova



Self-Care Basics

By: Clara Young

This is your periodic reminder to practice some form of self-care! Before I get ahead of myself, let me introduce myself. My name is Clara Young and I am a senior at PPAS who was in the middle school here as well. I would like to start off by saying that I am no expert in self-care but I would like to share my personal experiences as well as some things I find helpful in the hopes that you might find them to be too, or at least be inspired to find out what works for you. Now more than ever, we need to learn how to take care of our minds and bodies in order to practice perseverance.

I used to really struggle with self-care. I thought because my schedule was so packed that I didn't have time for it. There were multiple nights I would go to sleep with my makeup on, I

wouldn't take care of my body after hours of dance, I would get overwhelmed about the future and not know how to calm myself down. Not to say that I don't slip up now and again, but practicing self-care has definitely changed my life for the better.

What even is self-care?

According to google dictionary, self care is the practice of taking action to preserve or improve one's own health.

One thing I would like to point out about this definition is that self-care is an active thing. It is a choice to look out for one's own wellbeing. You may be thinking, okay Clara, that sounds great. But how do I take action? Where do I

start? Unitmentalhealth.com breaks self-care into four categories: the physical, emotional, social, and spiritual. Over the next few articles I release, I will break down each category as well as give a recap of the last one covered.

I will be updating you all on how I myself am doing with my relationship to self-care as I do this research for you all. I think it is important to know that you are not alone in this effort, especially if you have been losing the incentive to do things lately.

To give you all a preview on the next article's topic of physical self-care, I would encourage you to take extra care of your body this week.

Get your eight hours of sleep, even if it means sacrificing binging your favorite Netflix series or scrolling through your "for you" page on tik-tok before falling asleep (I know, I've been there). I

cannot tell you how much sleep impacts my mood on a daily basis, it is extremely important to start the day right. On that note, I would encourage you to eat breakfast!! Now that many students have flexibility regarding when they have lunch, it is vital that they have some breakfast in the morning. Even if it's something small, I feel that food really fuels me to do my best work and it's a way of thanking your body for carrying you. These are just some examples of how practicing self-care can impact one's entire day. I will go more into detail in the next article, covering more examples of this physical care and how it reduces stress.

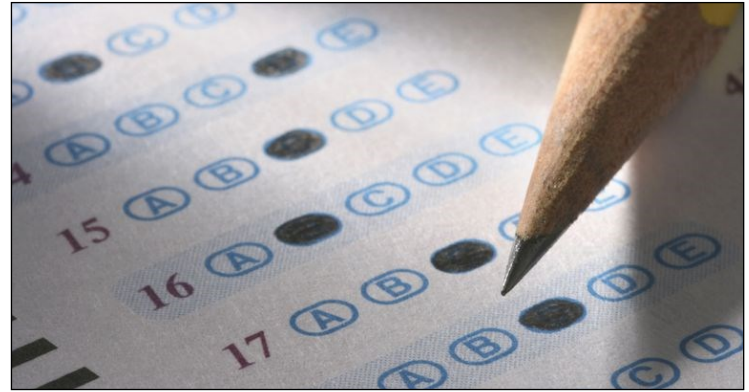


OP-ED: Why the SAT is Still Around

By: Lucian Zanes

The Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) delivers the following mission statement: "The purpose of the SAT is to measure a high school student's readiness for college, and provide colleges with one com-

African American student was a 933. According to a statistic performed by Inside Higher Ed, when comparing a white student to an African American student, who have both received the same special tu-



mon data point that can be used to compare all applicants." Does the SAT really measure a student's readiness for college, or does it measure the amount of money in their trust fund? The SAT is one of the most problematic aspects of the college process, but why has it remained unquestioned for so many years? Why have Americans been content with its blatant unethical values? Like most issues in America that remain unquestioned, it links back to systemic racism. The ones who reap the benefits of this test are the ones whose voices will always be amplified, muffling the noise made by those not so fortunate.

The SAT was first created with the intention of sorting incoming groups of immigrants in the early 1900's. They didn't have the intention of testing their intelligence, rather the founders used it as evidence arguing the superiority of white Europeans. Over the last century, those aspects of the test were supposedly abolished. Time and again, America "abolishes" attempts to maintain a racial hierarchy. In 2019, the average score of a white student was an 1114, while the average score of an

toring and achieve equally in an academic regard, the white student will still score higher. Of course a white student is going to score higher on a test that was designed to confirm their alleged superiority. There are many reasons why this test has stuck around for nearly a century, but I believe it all stems from the fact that it is a test designed for white people to thrive. Certain aspects are "abolished", and then white America becomes complacent with whatever sticks around. That is how America has always functioned. If there was more diversity among college heads, perhaps they would find a way to create a test that was genuinely equal, and didn't require expensive tutoring. Unfortunately, admissions offices don't have the ideal amount of representation, and most every school is satisfied using this horrible test, knowing that it excludes the less privileged applicants. This entire system was built on racism, and it should be completely rebuilt. Traces of racism are going to linger, until serious restructuring occurs. It took a pandemic just to make the SAT optional.

The 2020 NBA Bubble brought fans a short, but exciting season ending with a tense series of Lakers v Heat matchups. Without any distractions by fans and celebrities in the stadiums, many players were able to showcase their full potential on the court. Uprising youngsters like Tyler Herro, Jamal Murray, and Luka Doncic made a name for themselves after their impressive performances in the playoffs. Despite what seemed to be a spring in their feet, their teams were not able to plow through to victory and the Los Angeles Lakers were handed the trophy. LeBron James and Anthony Davis led the team through some of the most crucial and challenging wins. James dropped an average of



30 points per game and AD averaged 25 points. The duo assisted each other attacking-

wise but were also poignant defensively. At 6'10", Anthony Davis made some game-winning blocks. In Game 4 with 20 seconds remaining, he blocked Jimmy Butler's layup attempt to turn possession over to the Lakers. Davis also

sank a buzzer-beating three pointer in a semifinals game versus the Denver Nuggets losses affect their gameplay. Butler's performance throughout the series was record-breaking. He was only the third player to ever hit a triple double with 40 points in a finals game in NBA history, but the first to do it and win. He stepped into a captain role and motivated his team, even when fans thought there was no chance of a comeback. Unfortunately, it wasn't enough. The Lakers needed 4 games to win the series and they delivered. LA were expected to win, with big names of LeBron and Caruso, but the Heat still put up a fight. A dramatic season came to an even more dramatic close, but there's more to look forward to with the next NBA season starting already in January.

winning that game, and ultimately pushing his team to a 4-1 series win. Although the Lakers secured the championship, the Miami Heat put up an incredible fight. Forcing a Game 6, Jimmy Butler and co. did not let their

losses affect their gameplay. Butler's performance throughout the series was record-breaking. He was only the third player to ever hit a triple double with 40 points in a finals game in NBA history, but the first to do it and win. He stepped into a captain role and motivated his team, even when fans thought there was no chance of a comeback. Unfortunately, it wasn't enough. The Lakers needed 4 games to win the series and they delivered. LA were expected to win, with big names of LeBron and Caruso, but the Heat still put up a fight. A dramatic season came to an even more dramatic close, but there's more to look forward to with the next NBA season starting already in January.

Perl's Pop Culture Review - The Boys (Amazon Prime Series)

By: Mr. Perlmutter

Warning: This series is intended for mature audiences. Viewer discretion is advised.

I am sure you have heard the saying "You should never meet your heroes." In the public eye, they are usually perceived as bold and admired figures with good social and moral characteristics. They may be your inspiration and somebody to look up to. Or you may turn to them for hope when you are struggling. But do we really know everything happening in the depths of a hero's mind? What are a hero's true intentions? What if you knew something about a hero that could turn society against them in an instant if you were to expose them?

Amazon's *The Boys* engages its audience into discovering the answers to the aforementioned questions. Based on a comic book series, it takes place in a world full of super powered

individuals. Seven of these individuals ("The Seven") work for the Vought Corporation and are recognized by the general public as superheroes. Behind the heroic acts however, most of them exhibit immoral traits, whether for

motley crew of vigilantes working together to take down Vought and The Seven.

Within the first few minutes of watching the series, you will realize this is not your typical superhero show, hence your opinion may head in one of

disturbing scenes, and dark humor throughout. If you can get past the latter, you may appreciate the satirical moments parodying what we have been dealing with in our society, that being continual political, economic, and social struggles. Without getting into spoilery details, there is a lot of symbolism in the show that is salient for our times. It definitely does not hold back from getting its point across.

Additionally, the series checks off a lot of boxes in the "excellent" column with its character development and performances (be on the lookout for PPAS alumna and actor Colby Minifie), its visuals, and its shocking twists. It will not be for everyone with its dark moments, but if you feel that you can handle it, it is definitely worth a watch! Two seasons of *The Boys* have been released so far, with a third hopefully to premiere by the end of 2021, if not 2022.



Homelander (Anthony Starr) in a tense moment with Ashley (Colby Minifie, PPAS 2010)

their own personal gain or as puppets for Vought's monetary gain. Very few are aware of the corruption among them, and that includes William "Billy" Butcher (played by Karl Urban), who is the leader of a

two directions. Either it will be a breath of fresh air from the usual Marvel and DC universes we've been accustomed to over the last decade, or you'll find it disconcerting with the abundance of over the top violence,

Finding Peace and Comfort in Troubled Times

By: Mr. Vassallo

When we first went into remote learning, last March 16, thoughts of self-care were far from my mind. My first thoughts were for my own self-preservation and that of my husband and my 17-year-old tomcat, Buster. What was this virus that, although it looked beautiful under the microscope that my gene-splicing sister uses at work every day, had a potency heretofore unknown and a virility untested. And it was killing people – quickly. I recall asking Rosemary (my sister) “How can something so small and so colorful be so deadly?” She didn’t know. Neither did I. And I was very scared.

Thankfully, I was able to escape the city for a period of time with both husband and cat, and we settled into close quarters with weak internet, static-riddled phone lines, and no television. In retrospect, it might have been to the good. We carved out our respective work quarters and found a rhythm to our days (breakfast together at 7am, lunch somewhere in the middle of the day, time TBD each day, and a quitting time that varied but

led to two things: tea time, and a fire in the fireplace.) We were well stocked with seasoned wood and Buster loved the warmth that the fire brought to the room, when



Buster in the autumn leaves.

days were still only growing and the spring air was chilly with rain and wind. Spring eventually came to our surroundings and I knew that I needed to keep moving. I needed to clear my head of the noise that was coming

from the news on NPR that brought only grim numbers of the daily dead. And I needed to heal my heart of a lot of the pain it was holding, as a result of so much devastation

and loss. So, I resumed my walking regimen. This was the best thing I could do for myself. It has been a mainstay of my life for the past couple years when I first began working to bring some weight issues under control. It also is

an amazingly easy way for me to celebrate the world around me. City walking, country walking, beach walking, mountain walking – all of it – has provided me with a gentle yet effective way to take care of myself and to re-center.

Sometimes I listen to music. Sometimes I walk in silence. Sometimes I walk on busy streets. Sometimes I walk on sparsely traveled county roads, where the only traffic is that of the occasional chipmunk that crosses the road somewhere up ahead of me. I have taken in the fun and funk that is the bass line of a Chaka Kahn tune. I have heard trees whispering to each other in ghostly tones, in woods that are better suited to coyote and black bear. I have heard the rushing of a chicken truck speeding past me at 70 mph, as I navigate the local state highway. And I have heard...the sound of my own heart. I think that is the sound I know and need to hear the most. And I am grateful, every time I go for a walk. Sometimes, life is that simple.



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