



TRITON VOICE

Triton High School

Triton's Student-Produced Newspaper

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OPINION: A Call for Change Exploring Triton's **CLOSED CAMPUS** Policy

By **Bryant Monaghan**
Staff Writer

In the realm of education, schools such as Newton High School and Winchester High School have embarked on a journey towards innovation by adopting an open campus policy.

The winds of change are blowing, and the question looms at Triton – why not us? The discontent among Triton students increases each day as they grapple with the constraints on their freedom. Even the seemingly simple act of walking to one's car can be seen as hostile, leading to unwarranted detentions.

The Call for Change

We know how much our office staff love giving out detentions, but I would argue they are not deserving for those just trying to get a quick bite during a lunch or study. Our campus remains wide open to the public, refuting any claim that our closed campus is for safety reasons. This editorial delves into the labyrinth of closed-campus policies, details all of the benefits that would stem from a change, and explores the pressing need for a more liberating environment.

Unveiling the Campus Dilemma

The data speaks volumes on the issue at hand. Skipping classes has become an epidemic in Viking life, with a significant number of detentions stemming from students marked absent during study blocks. Assistant Principal Liz Pacheco's revelation about sending detention emails to eighty-one students in a single day last year paints a stark picture. More than half of these students were guilty of skipping a study block. This problem is easily avoidable, simply by opening the campus for these students. An anonymous student shared their firsthand experience, narrating how they navigated the restrictive policies and went to Sonic during a study-lunch block. This student explained that in their 1.5 hour break, they made it to Peabody, ate there, and made it back all in time for their next class period. The realization should dawn – if one student can manage this, why not allow this freedom to begin with? Furthermore, these emails get sent home, notifying the parents of the offense their child has just committed. This could lead to unnecessary trouble at home, and the emails typically go ignored by the students due to the sheer frequency.

The Counterclaim

In fairness, concerns about safety loom large for school leaders, especially in a world grappling with incidents like shootings and threats. The closed-campus approach is, on the surface, an attempt to mitigate these risks, especially with underage students. Teachers, burdened with the responsibility of student safety, fear the unknown when students



Image by Bryant Monaghan/Adobe Express

venture off-campus. The potential for distraction upon return further fuels these reservations.

Mitigating Safety Concerns

Undoubtedly, student safety is paramount, but simple solutions can address the concerns raised. A proposed sign-out sheet in the office could serve as a practical tool. This would work similarly to the sheet for seniors during first and last period when they can leave campus. Additionally, it would require students to specify their location, offering a compromise between freedom and accountability. Newton High School's successful implementation of an open-campus policy for certain grades provides a working model for Triton's consideration, promising a cultural shift and increased student enjoyment. Obviously detentions still exist, but ideally they would only be given to those who do not sign out or do not return.

Redefining Productivity

Granting students freedom is something that our staff seems to be allergic to, but the potential benefits cannot be ignored. A break in the day results in increased productivity. Stepping The refreshment gained from stepping out or taking a break during a study break or lunch is invaluable, contributing to a more dynamic and engaged learning environment. School has always been a place where students are used to hearing that they need to go out and get fresh air. This task is almost impossible for students who fear they will get a detention if they so much as touch the grass prior to the clock striking 2:13. And as far as detentions go, I know it may be hard for the staff to hear, 80-plus detentions per day is brutally unnecessary and simply a misuse of power. Detentions should be given instead to those who fail to sign out or return.

A Plea for Pragmatism

In the quest for a better learning experience, Triton should seriously consider revisiting its closed-campus

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Social Media Detox Day

One Reporter's 24-Hour Journey Without Scrolling

By **Tyler Brosch**
Staff Writer

The use of social media by teens has more than tripled in the last ten years, according to the Social Media Research Center. So in this modern era, it is clear that technology is constantly advancing, and staying connected has become one of the most important aspects of life for many people around the world. With teenagers being so active on social media today, many negative effects on the mental health of teens have emerged.

With numerous popular social media platforms, constant comparison has unfortunately become a norm for many young adults. Since 2016, the percent of students who have said they have stayed home due to cyberbullying has almost doubled according to the Cyberbullying Research Center.

The negative effects of social media aren't just the result of others using the platform though, increased screen time has been known to lead to bad sleep patterns, increased anxiety, and dopamine addiction in teens.

As a teenager myself, I have chosen to embark on a 24-hour break from all social media platforms, not only to find out whether or not I am addicted to social media, but also to determine whether or not a social media detox is something that all teenagers should give a try.

Reporting the Effects of Dopamine Detox

On Monday, December 17, I chose to not use any form of social media for 24 hours. I vowed to only use my phone when completely necessary, but I soon found out that without social media, there is rarely a time when the use of my cell-phone is necessary. Other than a few phone calls and texts from family members, I found myself almost in awe at how *little* I needed to use my phone. This made me realize just how much time I must be spending on an average day, needlessly scrolling through TikTok or Instagram.

Due to it being the weekend and quite a gloomy day, I found myself stuck inside, and this made the detox much more challenging. I found no difficulty in surviving without the use of my cell phone up until about noon. It was then when I started to frequently forget about my mission for the day.

Constantly I would unlock my phone casually, and then have to remind myself that opening any social media platform would be breaking the promise I made to myself the night before. I must admit, I did start to get to me by the late afternoon.

I decided that to help myself, I would put my phone face down in another room to extinguish the temptation. But then there would sound a "ding, ding, ding." Every notification I got made me flinch, and I found myself slowly getting more paranoid about what I could possibly be missing out on.

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Grand Theft Auto's Grand Return

GTA Makers Release Trailer for Highly-Anticipated Game, Coming in 2025

By **Hunter Barrington & Carl Tirone**, Staff Writers

The Grand Theft Auto series of games has always had something for everyone. Whether that be causing crime and chaos or just having fun. Recently, an announcement was made debuting the newest game in the series, Grand Theft Auto VI, promising to up the ante and do nothing but expand on the last game. And to no one's surprise, it is shattering records across the board.

Many teens and young adults may be familiar with the action-adventure and crime-heavy franchise that is GTA. Starting in 1997, the world saw the first installment in the series that would become GTA. Many are aware of the hit GTA V, coming out in October of 2013. Since then, GTA V has become the second-highest selling game with 190 million sales, right behind Minecraft with 300 million. The series has been stalled for a decade now with no news of any releases, until two months ago when Take Two Interactive, owner of

Rockstar Games and the GTA Series, released the trailer for GTA VI.

"I'll tell ya, it's addicting. You just, you know, you feel impervious to any punitive measures of the law," said substitute teacher Dave Connolly, better known as 'Silver Fox' by the Triton students, regarding the game.

GTA VI is a big deal for those who have been following the series, mainly due to the long time period in between the release date of GTA V and the teaser trailer for GTA VI. GTA V was released over a decade ago, all the way back in 2013, and has since become the second best selling video game of all time. It's been played for countless hours by countless people around the world and this game has generated excitement since GTA V was first released.

Now that the trailer is finally out, the excitement has far exceeded the anticipated results, becoming the most viewed trailer in 24 hours.

Notions of anticipation and excitement for the game have been seen around Triton by both students and staff. As GTA V was an incredibly popular game, the news of the trailer for the newest installment in the series spread

like wildfire. Incredibly, the trailer became the most viewed video in 24 hours ever. As expected, the news soon got to the Triton students and some of them expressed their excitement.

"GTA 6 is the perfect outlet for young adults who want to explore their wildest fantasies in the world of organized crime," said Senior Cam Neary. Of course there's more than one side of the controversial Grand Theft Auto coin. Many people think it's to blame for lots of issues in our society and causes violence in today's youth. We decided to interview a teacher in the middle school to see if they shared the same beliefs. They had this to say.

"I don't think the game itself can be blamed for societal issues," said Middle School science teacher Patrick Canny. "...I also wouldn't want to play it in front of my daughters."



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Which Holiday is A Nightmare Before Christmas?



By Hudson Murphy
Staff Writer

There has always been a debate over the showing of *The Nightmare Before Christmas* and when to actually watch it. Do you watch it on Halloween or Christmas? Eating Halloween candy or candy canes?

The movie's is about Jack Skellington, the Pumpkin King of Halloweentown. Jack is tired of the year-round devotion to Halloween and wanders into Christmas Town. He decides to recreate Christmas, but makes it spooky and scary. He even kidnaps Santa, all to discover the true spirit of Christmas.

So is it a Halloween movie? The directors released it two days before Halloween, 1999. The main character, Jack, is a skeleton, the town is spooky, and the first song is about the end of Halloween, with ghosts, pumpkins and zombies.

Or is it a Christmas movie? All of the elements of Christmas are there: Santa, snow, and the Christmas spirit. Growing up, I watched this movie the day before Christmas vacation and my brain simply can't convince me it is for Halloween.

Then again, is it both? Jack Skellington himself is a skeleton, all of the spooky things in the movie and the creepy-looking characters put their own spin on the Halloween holiday and try to make it their own spooky time. Ok that's great and all, but it is still a Christmas movie because they are literally making their own Christmas and keeping the same types of traditions and decorations we all know about the December 25 holiday. It has also snowed throughout the entire film.

In the end, I totally think *The Nightmare Before Christmas* is a Christmas movie. Calling it a Halloween film, is like calling *Krampus*, a movie about an anti-Santa who kidnaps children, a Halloween movie, just because it is scary or has a horror element to it doesn't make it a Halloween movie.

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I silenced my phone, but the dull buzz of the vibrating device still sounded seemingly louder every time a notification was sent. Throughout the day, I did find some activities that helped distract me from my phone. Reading, eating, working out, and other activities helped me *almost* forget about my media detox. After dinner though, I was checking the every five minutes or so waiting for the 24 hour mark.

And finally it came! I unlocked my phone quicker than I think I ever have and started dashing from app to app seeing all the notifications I had missed throughout the day. I was quickly met with a fact that made me a bit embarrassed: how excited I was to finally open up my phone again.

Although it was true that I had a lot of missed notifications and messages, just about every one of those messages were pretty meaningless at the end of the day. Snapchat streaks, Instagram memes, none of these things matter enough that someone would need to check their phone every couple of minutes to make sure they didn't miss anything.

Through this experiment, I found that the majority of the time that I spend on my phone is on social media. And the majority of the content I see on social media is pretty useless. Yes, the memes I see are funny, and it's nice to stay connected with friends over the weekend when I don't see them at school. But things like these are not things that anyone should stress, or lose sleep over. And social media is definitely not something that anyone should feel the need to continue to use if they are feeling anxious, or depressed.

The Potential Positives of Social Media

Social media can help teens connect and communicate with family members and friends. Social media can also help teens and youth audiences have better access to information, and be more aware of the things happening around them, and in the world.

Although social media can help teens express themselves, the inevitable comparison that occurs between teens and others on social media platforms is not healthy for the developing brain, and can cause many negative effects on the mental health of young adults.

The increased use of cell phones in teens in recent years has been the root of many serious issues in young adults today. Depression, anxiety, dopamine addiction, and sleep deprivation are all issues that can be the result of not just social media, but also the surplus of screen time that many teenagers have each day. This is why I believe that a media detox is an experiment that all teenagers should give a try. Maybe not even for 24 hours, maybe six hours, maybe even two hours.

No matter how long a teenager chooses to go without social media, after *my* detox, I can almost guarantee that every teenager who tries this experiment will quickly realize how much they rely on social media for entertainment each day.

Tattoos Acceptance

Are Tattoos a Pro or Con for Work & Professional Life?

By Andrew Balkus & William Hight, Staff Writers

A boss of a company is conducting interviews for new employees. A man walks in for his interview and goes to shake the boss's hand. But as he does, the boss sees tattoos covering almost the entire arm and hand of the potential employee. The boss thinks to himself, "Is this man even qualified for this job? Is his look appropriate for this job? Is he even mature enough?"

Some might think like this boss, but is the idea of non-acceptance the truth of how most feel in our world today? Enrica Ruggs, an assistant professor at the University of Houston, thinks not, writing in her article, *Do Tattoos Still Carry a Burden in Today's Workplace*, "In the past, tattoos existed on the edge of society. They were found mostly on outsiders from the mainstream and usually represented individualism, even rebellion. But that has turned around. Many tattoos serve opposite roles now and are designed to depict belonging."

Tattoos in the past have generally been thought of as unprofessional to an extent. Non-visible tattoos such as on the back, ankle, or leg are much more accepted. Some say that what draws the line between professional and unprofessional is how noticeable and distracting



An in-progress tattoo on a former Triton student/file image.

it is. People who are looking for a job can be denied employment just for having a tattoo in some places today. Many employers, such as airlines, medical professionals, and schools may not allow employees to have visible tattoos. There are no laws that protect tattoos and how one is treated in the workplace if you have tattoos is not defined specifically in the law.

When asked his opinion about tattoos, math teacher, Mr. Joseph Galante, said, "I don't like tattoos at all, my body is a temple." Tattoos remain a controversial topic here in the United States. There are a lot of mixed opinions about them and some people either think they are a horrible decision that you should never make or that they are a way to express yourself. But, just like other arts, it's hard to categorize tattoos as a whole and they mean something different to everyone.

A mother of a student at Triton High School who asked to remain anonymous said of tattoos, "The artwork that is behind tattoos by far blows me away, but personally I do not believe in permanently putting something on your body."

In today's day and age, tattoos appear to be far more accepted than decades ago. Many get tattoos that have meaning behind them, such as the date that a loved one passed away. As time goes on it seems tattoos are beginning to be more respected. There are still many that disagree with the use of tattoos but the younger generations is beginning to have more acceptance over the idea of tattoos.

McDonald's Breakfast Favorites

A Guide to a Tasty and Balanced McDonalds Breakfast

By Lucas Bistany & Weston Murphy
Staff Writers

With its quick breakfast for a busy family, McDonald's by far is the staple of fast morning food. Putting out meals for all ages, it is easy for the whole family to start the day with McDonald's, and although it may taste good, a few breakfast items on their menu have been said to take a toll on how you feel and your health.

The *Triton Voice* decided to try some of these popular McDonald's breakfast items with the mission of finding the most balanced snack. These four items anonymously picked by staff from the *Voice* were rated on taste, price, looks, and most importantly, how you feel after eating the item. All our numerical data was scored by a survey taken by the *Triton Voice* staff.

We started with the basics: the most common breakfast sandwich ordered at McDonald's, the sausage & egg McMuffin. This costs \$5.19, but can be reduced to \$2 by using the McDonald's app. The first bite is always the crispiest. The crispy English muffin pairs well with the cheese that melts to the top bun. The egg and sausage tastes good but also gives volume to the sandwich making it almost identical to the advertisements.

The looks and taste is complimented by the amount of grease, but would you want to consume it in the morning? In the morning you want to feel good but after eating this sandwich, you feel pretty gross. The final score of the Sausage & Egg McMuffin comes out at a below average 6.5.

Taste: 7.5 Price: 4.5 Looks: 8 After effects: 6 Total: 6.5

Commonly found in the "Big Breakfast," which is a favorite for some, but overall a lot of food. So some eaters settle with just the hotcakes, also known as McDonald's pancakes. They are \$5 for 3 pancakes. They are usually only good with syrup so if they forget it, well your stuck with eating a dry pancake. They look pretty bland without the big breakfast next to them. With the calories being jacked up to almost 600 calories for only 3 pancakes is not the best breakfast to start your day. Pancakes are pancakes but these make you feel way too full depending on the person but still not the best feeling to start the day.

Taste: 6 Price: 7 Looks: 7 After Affects: 5: 5.25

One of the most loved breakfasts on the menu is the "Mcgriddle". The mcgriddle is hand crafted to perfection being made up of a mini pancake stamped with their trademark M. Then comes the bacon or sausage,



Adobe Express/Bistany/Murphy

scrambled egg flap, then two slices of american cheese. And then the final pancake holding it together like a sandwich. The mcgriddle is probably the best tasting thing on the Dons menu. To get that satisfaction of the mcgriddle you will have to cough up 5 bucks and 59 cents but it is said to be worth every penny. But after eating the maple syrup caked sandwich it really isn't the best thing to start your day off with.

Taste: 9.8 Price: 7 Looks: 8.5 After Affects: 4.5 Total: 7.25

At mc donalds one of the lapels for breakfast is their hash browns. They go perfectly with every other breakfast item and even if you don't want anything else than the hash brown it still might just work. The mc donalds shredded potato hash brown patties are served fluffy and warm on the inside and crispy and toasty on the outside. Coming in at \$2.39 which is a pretty hefty price for such a small item. As it tastes amazing, it's a perfect snack from mc donalds. But is it a good breakfast food to fuel that day...probably not. Most people interviewed by the *Triton Voice* made comments on how bad it makes you feel.

Taste: 9.5 Price: 6 Looks: 9 After Affects: 4.5 Total: 7.5

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policies. The proposal of a sign-out sheet provides a feasible compromise that addresses safety concerns while affording students the freedom they crave and deserve. As a student, I know firsthand how difficult it can be to sit in the stale school air for six hours per day. It's time to shift the narrative, acknowledging that an excessive number of detentions is counterproductive. Triton has the opportunity to lead by example, embracing change and creating an environment where students can thrive without unnecessary constraints.