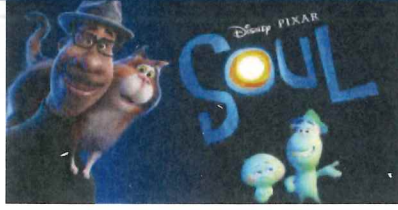


THE GRAND ARMY OF REPORTERS



OPINION EDITORIAL

REVIEWS

FEATURES

GAR TEACHERS SOON TO HAVE ACCESSIBILITY TO VACCINE

TEACHERS CANDIDLY SPEAK ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF RECEIVING VACCINE



Photo by AP

Story by Jason Victoria-Bonilla

The COVID-19 pandemic has been unrelenting in its impact on the world, and oftentimes stories are told about how difficult these times are for teachers and students. In January, 2021, Jennifer Wilson, an English teacher, and David Lapinski, a Math teacher, both from GAR Memorial High School offered to share their thoughts on the most recent news about these most difficult times during Covid.

Amongst concerns, the major one involved safety and the long-term unknowns with the pandemic and vaccine as well.

Wilson expressed about the outbreak, "There are so many people who are having issues with their hearts and lungs months after having recovered. As sad as this new reality is, I guess it just comes down to personal choice as to what scares you more."

When it came to their personal feelings towards planning for the vaccine, Wilson explained how neglecting to get the vaccine will affect her homelife.

"My husband and my youngest daughter have underlying health conditions that would leave them at risk for serious complications if they were to get Covid."

Mrs. Wilson opened up about her responsibilities as a teacher, specifying that because of her role she comes into contact with germs and viruses daily, remarking, "I would not be able to live with myself if I did not take every opportunity that I could to protect my family as well as anyone else that I come into contact with."

Lapinski passionately stated, "I'm getting it since I hope it would allow me to live my life without fear".

Lapinski also provided a new line of thought as it related to the reopening of schools, "Unfortunately there are many teachers that do not feel safe. If a teacher isn't feeling safe, they will not be effective teachers and the system falls apart."

"Many schools that are 'open' are missing students due to quarantine requirements. Ok they are open, but when 100 kids are out is effective teaching taking place?"

As for the recent news on the COVID-19 variant and the many lives being lost, Lapinski lamented, "It's all ugly, but it is what it is, you practice safety everyday and you hope for the best."

Both Wilson and Lapinski hope for the opportunity to see the people they teach everyday behind the screen as soon as possible.

Wilson reminded us all to, "Just BE KIND. That is all."



Dynastie Thomas Tries Her hand at Being a Young Entrepreneur



Mr. James Blaum, English Teacher and Activities Director @ GAR

STUDENT/TEACHER SPOTLIGHT

JUNIOR, DYNASTIE THOMAS AND ENGLISH TEACHER, JAMES BLAUM HIGHLIGHT OUR SPOTLIGHTS

BY ANALA WILLIAMS

Q: Your business is "Lashes By Dynastie", which seems to be doing amazing. How did the idea for it come about?

A: I was sitting with my mom one day after doing a lot of contemplating with myself. I said I want to start a lash line. She responded "Go for it. You're gonna do great."

Q: When did you start your business?

A: I started my business in August 2019. I was 15 years old.

Q: How did you know you had the right idea?

A: I knew I wanted to be an entrepreneur for sure. But after watching a lot of videos and reading up on different kinds of businesses, I picked eyelashes. Then my samples came in and I fell in love!

Q: What did you do to make it all possible?

A: Research! You can never obtain too much knowledge. Especially in entrepreneurship. I watched videos, read articles, etc. I would be lost without research!

Q: How did you handle adversity and doubt?

A: I look back and realize how far I've come. When I see how much support I have and how much work I put in, I see how much people support me & what I have to look forward to. I'm so thankful for everyone that supports me.

Mr. Blaum is a English teacher at GAR High School who also organizes activities at the school. He also runs a Film and Lit elective.

Q What is your favorite movie ever?

A "The original Rocky movie"

Q What is your favorite actor?

A "Bill Murray"

Q What is your news year's resolution for 2021?

A "The Same as every year which is Health & happiness"

Q Do you know if graduation will be taking place as an in person ceremony?

A "I hope it does, but I have zero inside info. Sorry."

Q What made you want to be a teacher?

A "Well, my initial plan of driving to California to live in my car and pursue a career in screenwriting fell through since I did not own a car. Honestly, there were two factors. One was the film "Dead Poets Society". The other was three summers working at the Higher Achievement Program in Scranton. It was a summer program for students going into 8th grade. Those summers were my first experiences teaching, and the motivation I witnessed in the students and faculty alike was, well, life-changing."

DYNASTIE THOMAS INTERVIEW (CONTINUED)

Q: What are some mistakes you wished you could have avoided?

A: One mistake I wish I would have avoided was rushing into my launch day. When my mom told me I can do it, I felt like I just jumped right into it. I could have done more research, branded myself better, along with many other things. Now I look back at it as a lesson.

Q: What motivates you to keep going?

A: The day I started my business page made me realize to never give up. Sometime in the summer of 2019, I posted that I was going to be starting my business. I had 50+ shares of so many people telling me how happy and excited they were for me. From that day forward, I knew how much support I had behind me and to never give up.

Q: Who or what has inspired you?

A: I would have to say my family definitely inspired me the most. My grandpa owned a restaurant, my uncle caters, my grandma has a baking business. I was surrounded by entrepreneurs since I was born and I knew that if they could do it, so can I.

Q: What has been your most satisfying moment in business?

A: My most satisfying moment would have to be Black Friday 2020. On Black Friday I held a 40% off sale that started at 10 a.m. The moment 10 o'clock hit, I had 3 orders. All day I was getting orders and ended the day with a total of 15 orders! The most Orders I've had at once.

Q: How did you raise funding for your venture?

A: As I mentioned before, my uncle has a catering business. I worked for him all summer in 2019 and at the end of the summer I put all the money I made into my brand.

Q: What piece of advice would you give someone who wants to start a business or wants to become an entrepreneur?

A: If you're thinking about starting a business, absolutely go for it. Don't worry about who already does it and who doesn't want you to do it. If you have a passion for something, never let anyone get in the way of your love for something. No matter what you choose to do, you will be amazing at anything you set your mind to!



MR. BLAUM INTERVIEW (CONTINUED)

Q What do you think is the biggest challenge that students face?

A "This year? Separation. The distance from familiar learning, from interaction with classmates, from relationships with faculty cannot be overcome no matter the bandwidth, wifi speed, etc."

Q What is your favorite TV show?

A "Currently it is, 'Better Call Saul', 'Schitt's Creek', & 'Cobra Kai'. However Of all-time it would have to be, 'Cheers', 'Lost', and 'The West Wing'."

Q Have any of your lesson plans been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic?

A "Umm...ALL OF THEM!"

Q What made you want to teach english?

A "English class was the focus of the film 'Dead Poets Society' and I taught Creative Writing at the Higher Achievement Program. In general, I prefer the subjectivity of literature and writing. Of course, there are rules of grammar and essay writing, but ultimately interpretation and expression are unique to the individual. There are no "wrong" answers when it comes to inspiration and creative expression."

Q How do you feel about the new school?

A "Overall, I am excited for it. A bit intimidated by its size, but enthusiastic for the opportunities for learning and community building that it will provide."

BY Brady Melovitz

FOOD FOR THE "SOUL"

DISNEY/PIXAR CREATE A MOVIE FOR ALL TO ENJOY

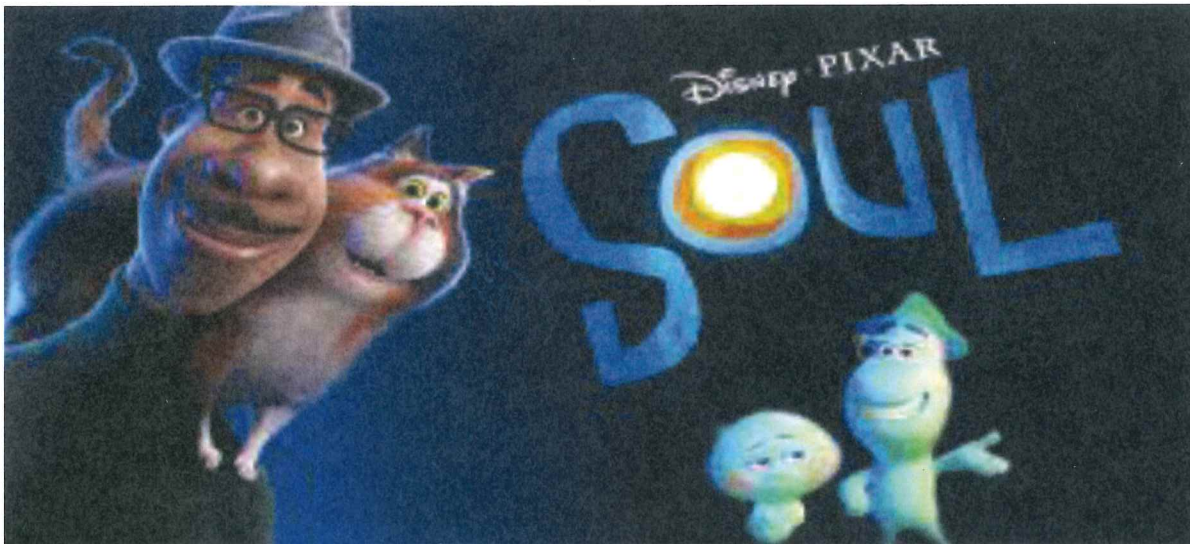


Photo by Disney/Pixar

By Kelsey Bellus

For decades, "Walt Disney Pictures" and "Pixar Animation Studio" have made a huge impact on the world. We've been presented with so many productions, from outstanding amusement parks to iconic movies that you'll never forget. Recently, these two companies released a movie called "Soul." Luckily, I've been able to watch this movie and may I tell you, it is very eye opening.

The story of "Soul" takes place in the "Big Apple," New York City. Joe Gardner, a middle school music teacher, is seeking a permanent gig as a jazz musician. He will encounter many obstacles in order to reunite with his soul. Joe will encounter characters such as "22," Terry, Moonwind, Dorothea Williams, Libba Gardner, Curley, and Jerry. The main roles are Joe and "22." Yet, each character plays a significant role in Joe's journey.

The characters in "Soul" allowed the movie to be brought to life. We are presented with comedy, inspiration, and even sadness. Those characteristics are brought upon by multiple characters.

For example, Joe, who is played by Jamie Foxx, brings the inspiration to the film by being optimistic throughout his journey.

It was as if Jamie was Joe in real life. Whereas "22's" life story is very sad and depressing, although, her comedic ways are humorous and bring excitement to the movie. Tina Fey, who played "22," displayed her character's story amazingly.

The time and effort that was put into the film was shown through the characters, animations, and storyline.

The detail in each character is very on point. The people looked unbelievably real for an animated movie. The one thing that I disliked about the movie was the transition from one story to another. When Joe's life was compromised, there was a switch in the plot. It was very confusing and didn't really make sense initially. Although, you do start to understand where the story is going.

Life is a blessing and no one should ever take it for granted. This film explores the meaning of life. Everyone has a purpose and everyone is special in their own way. Those who watch the movie will realize the importance of holding on to both the good and bad memories. You must live your life to the absolute fullest because you only get one shot at it.

"Soul" is meant for all people with it being rated PG. The storyline targets all crowds, from kids to adults. It would be an amazing movie to watch as a family or in a group. Anyone who wants to be uplifted or inspired would love this film.

With everything considered, I would rate this movie five out of five stars. I chose the five star rating system because I feel as if it fit best with the stature of the film. The stars represent all elements that go into consideration. The actors and actresses brought the movie to life. Both the graphics and theme fit the movie perfectly. It is an ideal movie for the family and kids to enjoy together.

HARTMAN JERK CENTER FOOD REVIEW



JAMAICAN FOOD RESTAURANT ON THE SQUARE LEAVES MUCH TO BE DESIRED

By Yizziyya Ferguson

Hartman Jerk Center is a Jamaican restaurant on the square that sells Jamaican food or Jamaican products.

This restaurant has a variety of Jamaican meals like, Curry Chicken, Curry goat, Oxtails, Jerk Chicken, rice and peas, and anything from the Jamaican culture. It seemed like the perfect spot for me to enjoy this type of food dear to me..

My first time going there, I tried Curry chicken, rice and peas, cabbage, and plantains.

While I was waiting for my food, I noticed the place had a really nice environment.

The restaurant is clean and once you go in it's like you just got off a plane and landed in Jamaica with all the music and the flags.

When I finally got my food I noticed that the portions were really small and I barely had any chicken, just mostly bone.

First I started with the rice and peas and chicken. The chicken didn't have much flavor and not much meat on the bone either. The rice and peas were pretty dry... not the best rice and peas I had.

Then I finally worked my way to the cabbage and plantains and in all honesty the best thing on my plate were the plantains. The cabbage tasted like it had dishwater in it and they were the worst carrots I tried in my life! At least I enjoyed my plantains.

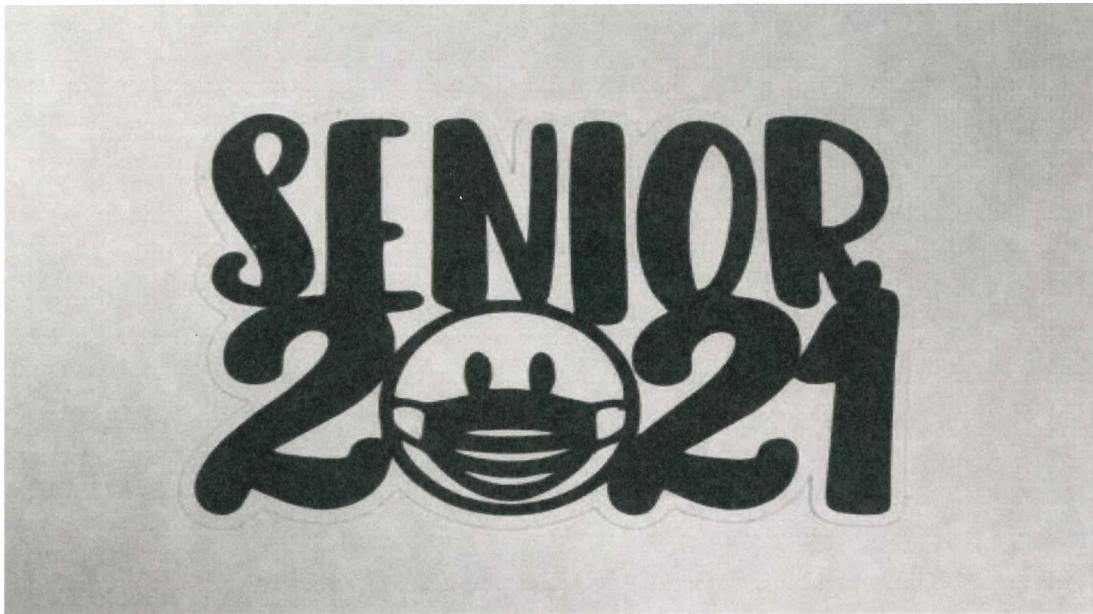
The overall meal was utterly disappointing. I was not suspecting for this to go so wrong.

After the lackluster meal, I was pretty much ready to go so I walked up to the counter to pay for my food. I was highly upset with the pricing. My food came up to 35 dollars just for some Curry Chicken and I didn't even get a drink.

Then when I asked why my food was so pricy, the owner looked at me like I did something wrong. That was my first and last time eating from this Restaurant. Plus, I went home with a stomach ache.

Never again... 1 of 5 stars for me!

Opinion Editorial: Making the Most out of the Moment



We can all agree that the past year has been nothing but horrible. One thing for sure being the school year for our beloved seniors.

Personally, I vividly remember being that seventh grader who sat among the upperclassmen on class day thinking — one day that will be me on that stage.

From then on, I wished for nothing more than to have the perfect senior year.

I wanted to be a part of every last memory of high school from the senior tea to graduation itself.

However, nothing comes without disappointment.

As the school year closes in, us seniors have yet to gain anything special from it.

Not only have we missed out on some of the last memories of being a teenager but also some of the last times of seeing our childhood friends.

Our senior year was supposed to be filled with events, happiness, and most of all goodbyes.

The senior trip would have one of the last times that I would see the people that I grew up with.

I've waited until senior year to attend the semi-formal and prom. Prom may still be possible whereas semi was not. Still, knowing that I will never be able to have that experience is heartbreaking.

While others may disagree with my emotions toward these monumental events, others agree.

Some may think that they are "overrated" or "not important," which is not the case. We will never get those experiences back as we are entering the real world.

With graduation being just around the corner, we have to make the best of the situation.

COVID has been unkind to the entire world. Yet, that does not make our feelings toward what he has lost any less important.

We thank our school for doing as much as they possibly can but that doesn't change the fact that we will never have those experiences.

Senior year was so rudely torn away from us by COVID. Now all we can do is hope for a better future.

Good luck and much success to GAR's last class of 2021. We will never forget and we cannot be forgotten.

By Kelsey Bellus