



# License to do ...Nothing: A Junior's Dilemma

Serrena Iyer  
Junior Editor

Freedom. Speed. Slight disregard for the rules. Nope, I'm not talking about an episode of "24." Not even "Ferris Bueller's Day Off." I'm talking about getting a driver's license. Or rather, my lack of one, even after 16 and a half years of life.

You may have noticed the flow of my fellow classmates' cars to the junior lot every morning. Sadly though, I find myself casting wistful, forlorn looks in the direction of that mysterious wonderland of SUVs and Starbucks. Okay, I'll admit it, I'm exaggerating a little bit—I never get to school early enough to see the junior parking rush.

And that place is not really an unknown land by any means: I was there on College Night. Driven by my mom. To a meeting on college. Where you go to finally grow up and become an adult. Hmm.

Of course, it's possible that I'm actually better off not driving. I mean, I'm not really a coffee person, and I can watch the news on gas prices without really caring. It also relieves me of multiple dangerous temptations. Put me behind the wheel of a car and I might feel the urge to release my inner rebel—and whip out a cell phone (dun

dun dun).

Speaking of safety, it's also possibly better for the citizens of Greenwich that I don't add more of a threat to their



Photo: Plaidnet  
Can't drive? Try a scooter!

high-risk suburban lifestyles. When I was kid I could barely avoid dogs on my scooter. I feel like the presence of actual humans near a slightly heavier vehicle slightly ups the stakes.

Frankly, I do think I would be pretty good at driving. Sure, I've never actually sat behind the wheel and done so, but I think some of my experiences (in my license-less 16 and a half years of life) could pretty much replace anything in

Tom's Driving School.

For example, "Clueless" taught me that when taking a driving test, staying on the road tends to work towards your advantage. Similarly, "Mean Girls" informed me that at times you may be driving a vehicle down the road (like a large yellow school bus) and you may happen to see girls fighting in the street. At this point, it is preferable to stop said vehicle, rather than hitting the blonde girl and forcing her to wear a spinal halo.

It's not that I think watching a couple of movies would completely help me though—I'm not that dumb. I know that I wouldn't be nearly as ready to hit the road without two other key pieces of experience: playing Mario Kart and using a wheelchair.

Most people have played some version of the multiple Mario Karts, and so they know what I'm talking about when I say that it's basically a harrowing thrill ride, sharpening your road senses more than any driving hour ever could. What else could prepare you more for the mean streets of Greenwich than a speedy "koopas shell"—throwing, banana-avoiding spin

around Bowser's castle in this Nintendo game? I only know all of this terminology because of my younger brother...of course.

And then, there's also the six glorious wheelchair months I had. Now I've never parallel parked an actual car before, but I think backing a wheelchair into a school elevator pretty much matches up. So when the time comes, I'll be skipping over the driver's manual and putting this theory to the test (possibly with a first aid kit in tow).

As you can see, once I do get my license, I will be a pretty spectacular driver (albeit one that makes police sit up in fear). I'm thinking I'll go for my permit sometime around my half birthday in February (when the appearance of happy-half-birthday/good-luck-don't-kill-anyone baked goods in my locker would not be unappreciated).

But until then, I'm not really complaining or anything. I actually happen to be the master of another pretty awesome vehicle that I have not mentioned. It's a kind of purplish-bluish color, with a nice horn, good environment and safety ratings, and solid traction around sharp corners. I think you know what I'm talking about. So when you're speeding your car down Greenwich Avenue, don't worry about me. My bike and I can handle it.

# The 44 Million Dollar Fishbowl: Is it Worth It?

Valerie Boyd  
Staff Writer

Many moons ago, construction crews completed work on the Patsy G. Howard Upper School, releasing rejoicing students from their modular prisons. GA erected the new building to replace the mess of bricks, asbestos and lead paint that constituted the ancient Upper School, and in doing so sought a creative, transparent alternative to the classic, opaque edifice.

While glass may have seemed to some people a crazy, impractical idea for a school, the building is perfectly functional.

And while function is nearly everything it is not everything. Style and feng shui affect people's moods and their effectiveness. That's not just me talking; it's science. And I have some pretty severe bones to pick with the school's design.

Given the otherwise fantastically forward-thinking architecture of the building, the gray paint on all the walls seems an odd choice indeed. It's unlikely that a duller tone could have been used. Our classrooms have the silvery-gray feel most often associated with morgues. Perhaps there are studies that suggest that shades of gray are conducive to diligence, but at the same time, gray is still undoubtedly the

and heat caused by the sun streaming through the infinite windows, the teachers often lower their shades. This feels painfully ironic. A modern, new-age school of glass covered by plain white shades. On any given day they are all raised and lowered to different lengths, giving the field-facing side of the school the appearance of freaky inverted bar-

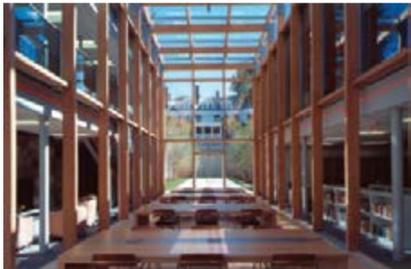


Photo: Anisha Bhatnagar  
Greenwich Academy Upper School

codes.

Of course, the school isn't always all gray, and we can't always see the shades. At night, the campus is lit up in constantly changing neon colors. Fashioned by the much-celebrated James Turrell and controlled by a secretive computer system, the lights morph their way through the whole spectrum, bathing the grounds in delightful luminous joy.

Though this \$3 million work of art is undoubtedly a captivating sight to behold, it is only visible at night and sometimes when it rains, meaning that most students see the school in its true colors only a few times a year.

Still, you have to give the school credit for the effort. Personally, I love seeing the school lit up like Vegas—it's important for the school to have a strong sense of humor.

At the end of the day, the building does its job, albeit in a slightly frivolous way. In my unesteemed opinion, the frivolity is, in its own right, just as important to the school's reputation. After all, this is Greenwich that we're talking about, and street cred can be built through tasteful opulence. In this town, art is considered invaluable, and it is important for the school to show that they share these values. The school is a working work of art, and at the end of the day, I think, a very well spent \$44 million.

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GAP accepts letters to the editors on all subjects and issues. Letters may be printed unsigned as long as a senior staff member knows the writer's identity.

Furthermore, because of these distractions and with the searing light



# Top Schools Abolish Early Decision

Paige Wolstencroft  
Junior Editor

Recently, Harvard took the lead in changing early decision by removing the option beginning with applicants from the high-school class of 2008; Princeton was quick to follow.

When probed to explain the justification for this decision, Harvard indicated it wanted to promote equality, primarily among social classes, races, and those of varying financial status. They are of the belief that the option of early admissions helps the privileged while discriminating against the poor.

But if one were to delve deeper into their reasoning, she might discover that much of their logic is penetrable.

According to Harvard's analysis of early admission applications are only beneficial for those who come from incredible schools and fortunate backgrounds, i.e. students who come from institutions like Greenwich Academy.

Though it is convenient for students at GA, Brunswick, or other such establishments to be able to apply early to schools, it is not necessarily an unfair advantage

I realize that I am speaking in generalities here, but since the basis of the universities' decision is also linked to similar generalities I do not think it is an unfair approach to assume; students who come from a more supportive school and privileged family life are

usually ready to apply to colleges earlier. It is for this reason that the majority of early applicants come from such environments, not because other students are not given the option.

The majority of these students have been taking A.P. and other high level courses for years, have been prepared enough for their SATs to take the test during their junior spring or at the latest October of their senior fall, are often extremely motivated, and already have a strong sense of where they want to go to college.

Being prepared for applications by the fall of the senior year is not easily accomplished; it seems only just that those who have applied themselves and finished ahead of time should have some reward, if early admissions can even be called a reward. After all, the majority of early applicants are all extremely strong candidates so the selection process is often more difficult to emerge successfully from during this early round.

It is often said that students who

come from affluent backgrounds are held to different standards during the college admissions process; excuses for a poor result are less likely to be made, for it is believed that every resource is available for these students. Though they are not necessarily more intelligent, the platform they begin on is often higher, and thus they are expected to be more successful.

If different standards are to be upheld, then why not allow a natural separation of applicant groups? If the early applicants are privileged, then let them apply early and hold them to a grueling standard before relaxing some of the constraints for those candidates who apply later.

America is supposed to be a place of equality for all ethnic groups, and therefore no one has a lawful advantage because of the color of their skin. Perhaps statistically at many universities the percentage of Caucasian early applicants outweighs the percentage of minorities, but this could just be an extreme reflection of the student body and general admission rates.

Princeton, for example, has a total of 2950 white undergraduates and the sum of all other undergraduate students of minorities (including black and hispanic) is 1388. Yes, the early applicant

pool may be predominantly white but because there is more than a 2:1 ration of whites to other races throughout the student body, the early admissions process cannot be wholly blamed for this.

Financially it is true that early admissions would not be as beneficial for someone who needs substantial aid, but students accepted during early admission are still candidates for financial aid so this reason is not enough to justify removing the policy of early admission.

A final argument has been made that students accepted early would be more inclined to slack off during the spring term, but if the early admissions applicant pool is primarily composed of students from prestigious home environments, then ceasing to work would simply not be possible. Of course a more relaxed outlook would ensue after an early acceptance but teachers would ensure that the students continue to work; after all it is not as if students stop being graded or become exempt from tests once they get into college.

Regardless, it is a logical method for deans of admission to begin the selection process and should not be eliminated. It is only Harvard and Princeton right now but universities who view themselves as being compatible with these two schools will be quick to follow, and it is then that the broad student body will begin to comprehend how greatly the process has changed with the end of early admissions.

# Should Mumming Stay? GA/Wick Language Program Expands

Caroline Francis  
Staff Writer

Mumming has been a tradition at Greenwich Academy for years. Lately, however, there has been a question as to whether or not the tradition should continue.

Some feel as though Mumming excludes non-Christian religions or pressures students into attending when they are not comfortable in doing so. But why should such a celebration be outlawed at Greenwich Academy if it is optional?

Mumming, essentially a carol service, is part of the GA tradition because of the holiday spirit it invokes and because it provides an opportunity to hear the beautiful songs each grade sings. It can hardly be considered an assembly because there are no requirements to attend. It is an optional gathering that the majority of students enjoy attending.

Each student has the right to attend or not attend regardless of her religious beliefs. A reason for an absence is not required, nor is it asked for, and there are no negative side effects of not attending.

If Mumming is to be cancelled, there will undoubtedly be more than a few outraged students, alums, and parents. With the cancellation of Halloween celebrations in the lower and middle schools and the increasing concern for universal inclusiveness, many students

and parents feel that political correctness, which is undeniably necessary, is morphing into an obsession.

Of course political correctness is important and should be a factor in school decisions. However, the School should consider that taking it too far may offend just as many people as not taking it far enough.

Inevitably, all school functions have the potential to arouse controversy in some manner or another, so where should the line be drawn? Canceling a tradition on the basis that not everyone agrees with it will set an impossible standard for GA to live up to in the future. The line should be drawn not when the event does not follow a person's belief, but when it compromises her belief.

Mumming, for example, may not be a ceremony that all people feel comfortable attending. But there is no reason it should be considered a gathering that undermines other religions. It is intended to encourage holiday spirit, not provoke anger.

Therefore, perhaps the focus should not be on whether Mumming should be cancelled or not, but whether or not there should be some changes made. If the carols chosen were more about the holiday season than the religious aspects of Christmas, there would be less controversy. But to cancel Mumming altogether is to bring a valued tradition to a close, a loss the school should not be willing to suffer.

Elizabeth McMillen  
Staff Writer

Greenwich Academy and Brunswick have seen the addition of three languages over the past two years. Italian, Mandarin, and Arabic have expanded our World Languages program to include five modern languages, along with Spanish and French.

Although Arabic and Mandarin are taught only at Brunswick, students from both schools show equal interest in the languages.

Italian is offered at both Brunswick and Greenwich Academy. Vanessa Schept, X, explained her enrollment in Italian: "Italian's such a fun language to learn for me because it differs so much from French, which I also take." Most students enjoy learning about the culture of their language almost as much as they like learning the language.

Students from all grades are excited at these new opportunities and many choose to participate. Because the schools offer such diverse and interesting languages, everyone can find something that they enjoy doing.

Seniors Christie Klauberg and Lucy Arnell, who began studying Mandarin as sophomores, both consider their decision to do so one of their best. Christie simply stated, "I love Ms. Liu," the Mandarin

teacher.

Lucy has decided to major in Mandarin when she goes to college next year. Both of them have embraced the language and its culture with a trip to China. Because of such high levels of interest, Mandarin is available for students to participate in for three years, including honors courses.

Arabic I and II are taught by Mr. Al-Maqtari, who also teaches French III Honors. Brunswick is one of the first high schools in

Connecticut to offer Arabic, and although it is challenging, students enjoy learning such an interesting and unique language. Mr. Al-Maqtari recently took his class to an Arabic restaurant in Brooklyn to help them get a glimpse of and further understand the incredible Arabic culture.

Both schools require students to reach the third level of any language they choose in order to graduate. The addition of Italian, Mandarin, and Arabic helps every student enjoy his or her years of learning a language. Many students choose to begin a new language as freshmen or sophomores, but juniors and seniors have the option of changing languages as well.

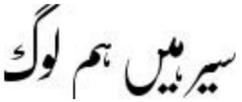
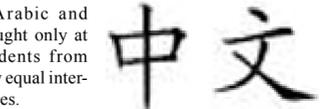
GA and Brunswick both offer the "add" option to students interested in more than one language. Many students do so and take any combination of the five modern languages.



Photo: Internet  
Harvard Coat of Arms



Photo: Plaidnet  
Mumming Tableau



Photos: Internet  
Top: Chinese Characters  
Bottom: Arabic Characters