

# Politics & Pop

Stories and illustrations:

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## Stacey Dash turns in acting scripts for congressional ballots



Stacey Dash, star of 90s hit film *Clueless*, and more recently a Fox News political commentator, has announced that she will be running for Congress.

"I'm a little shocked, because she is so iconic from *Clueless*, but I guess anything is possible," Anya Dhar (10) said.

Hopeful to represent California's 44th district, Dash began her political career by endorsing Mitt Romney's campaign for president in 2012. The outspoken former actress caught Fox News' attention during this, and they hired her for "cultural and analyses commentary". Dash has been known for her strong, conservative views, yet is running in a district where 83 percent of citizens voted for Democrat Hillary Clinton in the last presidential election. However, she is holding fast to her ideals, including the statement that there is no need for Black History Month, a surprising statement from an influential woman of color.

"I think she has the right to believe whatever she wants. I am a little bit shocked that she is a Republican, however, considering the state of affairs," Dhar said.



## Trump sues porn star Stormy Daniels

Attorneys defending President Trump filed a lawsuit last week against porn star Stormy Daniels for violating a non-disclosure agreement. Daniels has spoken publicly about her supposed affair with Trump "as many as 20 times," says Trump's personal lawyer, Michael Cohen. She has tweeted about the incident, all leading up to her being sued for, at most, \$20 million. Due to the fact that Daniels has earned immense fame from her recent news scandals, and the White House' denial of the incident, many skeptics are saying it is a publicity stunt.



## Bill passed will both allow beginning of border wall construction and block it

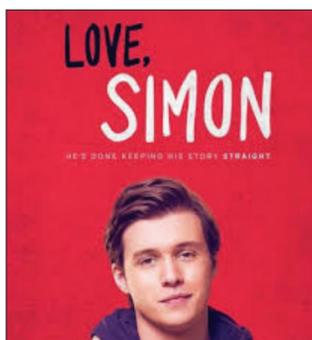


A \$1.3 trillion spending bill, that is supposed to last until September, has been passed to in part to help fund the border wall. However, it includes a provision that would block construction through the Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge. This now off-limits area of the southern border of Texas was in Trump's Department of Homeland Security's original plan to have early stages of the wall constructed in.

Within the bill are restrictions on the type of "wall" that can be put up in the surrounding areas, allowing only a fence to be in place. By including this provision, Democrats feel they are blocking the wall from being built, while Republicans feel they are beginning construction.

Democrats have been protesting for a year since the first rumors about the area being a starting point for the wall's construction began, not only in protest of the entire wall, but also in efforts to protect the wildlife inhabiting this area.

## Love, Simon brings success to box office and attention to LGBTQ community



Released on March 16, *Love, Simon* received raves from around the country. The 20th Century Fox film follows Simon, a teenage boy, as he navigates his early adult life. In the beginning, Simon Spier says to the audience, "I'm just like you, except I have one huge-ass secret—nobody knows I'm gay."

The plot is similar to almost every other rom-com you may have seen, but in a different perspective that allows the audience to view a new type of story that they may not have been exposed to.

Sage Van Alstine (12) saw the film and thought it did a good job of bringing more awareness to Simon's situation.

"A while back people used to be frowned upon if they were gay and now [society] is more accepting and people are supportive of all kinds of love."

Being the first LGBTQ character-centered film made by a major company, the goal for it was to be spread and well received. With an all star cast composed of Jennifer Garner, Josh Duhamel, Katherine Langford and Nick Robinson as the titular character, *Love, Simon* brought in \$11.8 million at its debut.

## Stephen Hawking dies at 76 Versace ditches furs

Stephen Hawking died March 14 at age 76 after a lifelong battle with ALS. Bound to a wheelchair with an automated voice box as his main form of communication, Hawking did not let his diagnosis at age 21 stop him from being one of the greatest physicists of all time.

While he was making the complex subjects like quantum physics and theories of black holes understandable to ordinary people, he was still able to crack jokes, even though they were being said by a computerized voice. Because of this, he was not only a science legend and a medical phenomenon, but also a pop culture icon.



Forty year-old Italian luxury fashion brand Versace has said its final farewell to furs.

The company is leaning toward becoming more environmentally conscious in the future and includes broader plans to become more sustainable.

"Fur? I am out of that," Artistic Director Donatella Versace told *The Economist*.

The first changes made will be in the brand's 2019 collections and onward. Versace is making the change, following in the footsteps of other fine Italian brands including Giorgio Armani and Gucci. As only a minor part of many past collections, the cut will hopefully be better for everyone, says CEO Jonathan Akeroyd.

## Snapchat condemned for ad mocking domestic violence

After Snapchat promoted a new game called "Would You Rather," Rihanna called out the app for promoting domestic violence. The violence was presented by prompting players to slap Rihanna or punch Chris Brown, a rapper who dated and physically abused Rihanna in an incident in 2009. After many users caught the poor reference to violence, Snapchat pulled the ad.

Snapchat also apologized to Rihanna, claiming it should never have been posted in the first place and was an error. Rihanna, however, is refusing to accept the apology. She is more concerned about victims of violence who feel they are being mocked for their situation. Since the incident, many Snapchat users have left the app.



## Retailers take action toward gun control

Sophie Alegi  
Staff Reporter

In the wake of the deadly Parkland High massacre, two of America's largest gun retailers, Walmart and Dick's Sporting Goods, have made unprecedented moves to limit their sales of firearms.

Walmart will no longer sell guns to anyone under the age of 21 or sell any product resembling an "assault rifle", including toys and air rifles.

Dick's also will no longer sell "assault style" rifles in stores or "high capacity" magazines, and will require anyone purchasing a gun to be over 21 years of age.

High capacity magazines are usually defined as magazines capable of holding more than the standard number of rounds provided by the designer. This means that the definition of "high capacity" varies from firearm to firearm, as a Colt 1911 pistol obviously holds fewer rounds than an M4 carbine.

American federal law decrees that a person must be at least 21 to buy a handgun, but 18-year-olds can buy semi automatic rifles and other firearms.

Dick's CEO and Chairman Edward Stack reportedly made the decision to enact these sweeping decisions in his company's stores after he found out that the Parkland High shooter, Nikolas Cruz, bought a gun from a Dick's

in 2017. Though it was not the weapon used in the shooting, the purchase disturbed Stack, according to an open letter he wrote to customers.

"We're staunch supporters of the Second Amendment. I'm a gun owner myself," Stack said on Good Morning America. "We've just decided that based on what's happened with these guns, we don't want to be a part of this story and we've eliminated these guns permanently."

In an open letter to customers, Stack further clarified his position by saying, "We recognize and appreciate that the vast majority of gun owners in this country are responsible, law-abiding citizens. But we have to help solve the problem that's in front of us. Gun violence is an epidemic that's taking the lives of ... our kids." Dick's is not alone in renouncing the sale of assault rifles at its locations. Walmart, the world's biggest retailer, has raised the minimum age for purchasing firearms at its stores to 21 and has banned the sale of any product resembling an "assault style" rifle, including harmless toys.

"We take seriously our obligation to be a responsible seller of firearms

and go beyond Federal law by requiring customers to pass a background check before purchasing any firearm," Walmart said in its public statement over the installment of its new gun regulations.

Walmart has also made clear its continuing support for law-abiding gun owners as well.

"We will continue [to serve sportsmen and hunters] in a responsible way," the company said.

These corporate gun control measures are significant because Walmart was America's biggest gun seller up to this point, and Dick's is one of the largest sporting good retailers in the country. Therefore, the effects of these new policies will be widely felt by the American populace.

But what exactly is an AR-15?

The original AR-15 was a select fire air-cooled, gas-operated, box-magazine-fed assault rifle chambered for the .223 Remington cartridge. The rifle was originally manufactured by the American arms company ArmaLite and created by the legendary firearms designer Eugene Stoner for the US military as a

semi-automatic service rifle to replace outdated service rifles from WWII, including the venerable M1 Garand.

The arms company Colt acquired the AR-15 design from ArmaLite and developed it into two products: 1) the legendary M16 rifle, which would become standard-issue in the US military, and 2) the modern day AR-15 rifle, the civilian semi-automatic variant of the M16.

Today, the main difference between the civilian AR-15 rifle and the military's M16 rifle and M4 carbine (aside from slight variations in the caliber of the round fired) is the "three round burst" mode found on the military models.

While some military rifles have a full automatic feature, standard US military training has conventionally stressed the use of semi-automatic mode—one shot per trigger pull—to conserve ammunition, improve accuracy, and enhance lethality.

As gun policies continue to be an issue on the national stage with events like March for Our Lives, it is likely that we will see additional retailers taking issues like this into their own hands.



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## Setting the Groundwork for Financial Well-Being

Henry Washburn  
Guest Writer

For all stages in life, money is an important thing to have. It allows you buy food, provide for your family, have a roof over your head and it allows you to go to fun places for vacation.

As high schoolers, many of us probably have some knowledge of what it is like to be financially responsible for ourselves, but others may have little idea what to do when it comes to personal finance. It is imperative that we learn to save and manage our money in a way that sets us on the right path to success.

The best and most efficient way to start managing your money is to create a budget. I would suggest starting with a "Zero Sum Budget." A Zero Sum Budget is designed in such a way that the difference between your income and expenses is always equal to zero. For example, if your income is \$1,000 per month and your expenses are \$800 for the month you have \$200 left over. You have to put the \$200 somewhere like a savings account, investment account or to debt repayment. This way, every dollar is accounted for.

When it comes to making a budget, prioritize your expenditures by determining what's needed vs what's

wanted. For example, you want to make sure you have enough money for food, gas and rent before you start putting away money for going to the amusement park.

Tools such as spreadsheets or software like Mint or Quicken are available to help manage budgets, track your finances and analyze your financial picture.

Avoiding debt is also important. One strategy is to buy things with cash instead of using a credit card. When you buy something with credit, you run this risk of taking on debt if you can't pay the entire credit card bill all at once. The credit card company will happily let you make small, interest only payments on the balance which sets many people in trouble financially. However, if you wait and save to buy something with cash, you can remain debt free, and the product will end up costing you less than if you bought it with credit.

The importance of creating good financial habits early on in life cannot be overstated. Because once you begin making good financial decisions, you can reduce the amount of stress in your life significantly by avoiding debt. Okemos High School's Personal Finance teacher, Mr. Backus, is an excellent resource for any questions students might have concerning financial planning.