

# The Howl

## GFHS Student Newspaper

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### **IS THE 87% CAP ON RETAKES HELPING OR HURTING STUDENTS' CONFIDENCE?**

**BY LAMISA HASNAT**

Ever feel like retaking a test doesn't really do much to your grade? Sure, it gives you that small boost in your grade, but is our current policy truly the best system we could have? I mean the highest we can get is 87%, which isn't bad, but it's not great either. In my opinion, I think that the retake policy should allow students to get the highest possible score they are capable of without that cap. Sometimes, taking a test on a unit for the first time feels nerve-racking and too much. But after taking that test once, we understand the format of the test better because we have seen "real" test questions. Learning doesn't all happen at once, it takes time. So why use that cap to limit the students if all our goals are to improve? If a student wants to do better, then they should be able to without having that limit they are constantly trying to chase. Retakes come with extra work, more practice, and more discipline. If the students are putting in that extra work, they should also be fully rewarded, not partially. The cap places pressure on the students to perform "perfectly" the first time. It's especially overwhelming for students that constantly strive for an A. This forces students to lack motivation when doing a retake because at the end of the day, the maximum score is 87%. Fairfax County changed their retake policy in 2024 to allow 100% as the maximum for retake, and academically they are performing incredibly. If we can change our retake policy from the maximum score of 87% to 100%, then it will surely be effective and give our students more room to grow and more opportunities to succeed.

# INFLATION PROBLEMS

JADYN GIBBS

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One of the most concerning issues in our nation today is the rise of inflation. I have seen that change firsthand. Friends having to move because the area has become too expensive, or my family having to cut back on essentials due to the rise in prices for basic needs. Inflation has increased the price of housing, food, clothes, and gas. As of 2025 the consumer price index has increased to 322.3 with a 2.7% increase in rate of inflation. If action is not taken the numbers will only continue to grow. All of these increases in prices have younger generations fearing that they will never be able to purchase a house because they are living paycheck to paycheck. The government could address the issue by first lowering tariffs. Lowering tariffs leads to cheaper imports and lower domestic production costs. That in itself could reduce the consumer price index by 1.0%. Another way the government could combat inflation is to tighten the Fiscal Policy. That means increasing taxes to lower the spending of businesses and consumers, and decreasing the amount of money the government spends. That way the amount of money circling in the economy is limited. I find it very odd that the minimum wage has yet to move despite the cost-of-living skyrocketing. People from Generation Z cannot save for a retirement fund, a rainy-day fund, or even a home fund. That needs to change.

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## WHAT IF? BY OMAR FAIRS

### WHAT IF WE HAD MORE THAN ONE STAR?

A solar system with two stars, known as a binary system, would change the dynamics, climate, and potential for life on Earth significantly. The biggest effect would be on orbital stability. The gravitational pull of a second star creates a "three-body problem," making it hard to predict long-term orbits and stable, circular paths like Earth's in our current system. If the stars were far apart, Earth might orbit one star steadily (an "S-type" orbit), while the second star would shine brightly in the night sky. However, the gravitational influence from this distant star could stretch Earth's orbit into an eccentric (elliptical) path over millions of years, leading to extreme temperature changes that could make life difficult. If Earth orbited both stars (a "P-type" or "circumbinary" orbit), we could face constant daylight or wildly fluctuating (constantly changing) day/night cycles, depending on the stars' movements and the planet's rotation. The habitable zone would become a complex, shifting area, with surface temperatures possibly changing several degrees of Fahrenheit each year, which could be terrible for a stable climate and just straight up leave us so cooked. The famous double sunset from Star Wars' Tatooine might look appealing (said absolutely no one ever), but life under such conditions would not be habitable, marked by gravitational chaos and harsh environments.

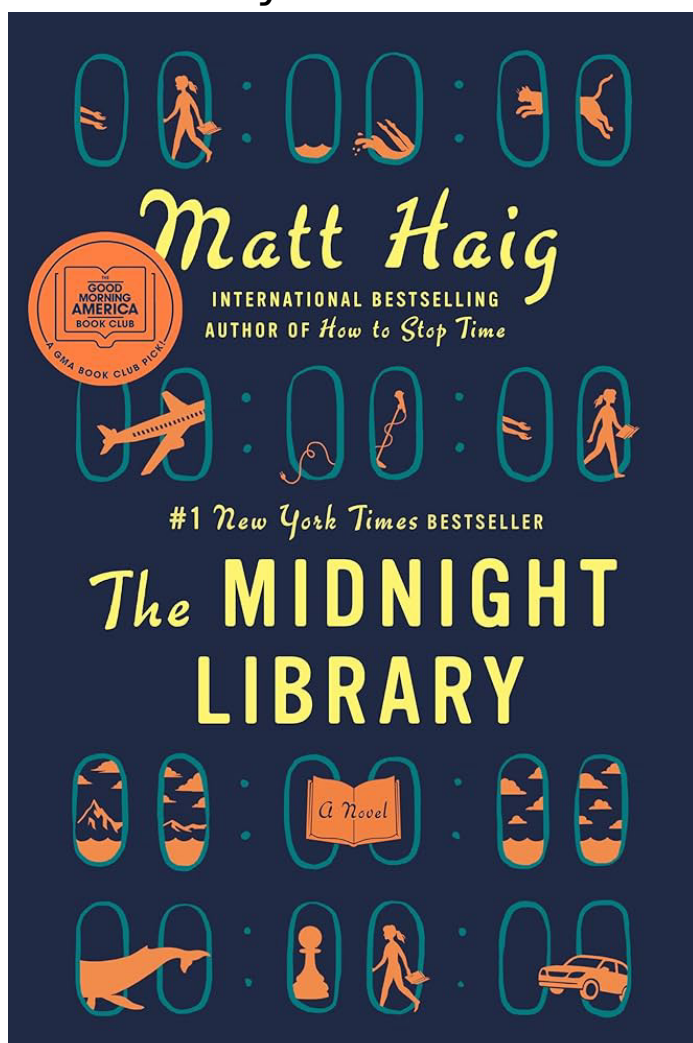
# MEDIA OF THE MONTH

ARWA ZINDDINE

Just a few days into December and we've already had snow. I'm currently HEAVILY praying for enough snow later on for a three week winter break again. Not just to focus on the dreaded college applications but also to watch some more movies on my list. For this month, I'm recommending movies that feel like purpose and passion. Especially when we get this sudden urge to reconstruct our lives in time for the New Years, even if those goals don't last long. As always, if you have any comments about the media or suggestions, you can email me at [Zinddiam26@pwcs-edu.org](mailto:Zinddiam26@pwcs-edu.org) and make the subject line Media of the Month.

## THE MIDNIGHT LIBRARY

In terms of interesting and unique plots, this one wins. The story is about a woman, Nora Seed, and her regrets in life. One day as it feels too much, she decides she'll commit suicide. But after her attempt, she wakes up in front of a library, one that she has never seen before. Each book within the library represents a story of her life if she had made different decisions. In it she is given the ability to visit these other versions of her life and after a day she will be able to keep that life forever if she is happy. She cycles through many variations of her life, but she is never able to land on one she feels completely satisfied with, even when it was the kind of life she was previously looking for. This has a very deep message in terms of gratitude and satisfaction. 10/10 read, I would heavily recommend.



## WHISPER OF THE HEART

This is another underrated Studio Ghibli movie (you might start to see a pattern in my recs) but oh my god is it good. It focuses on Shizuku who meets a classmate through constantly seeing his name in the library books she checks out. The film later centers on their individual development as teenagers being expected to know what they want at such a young age and the love they feel for each other. I'm not the biggest fan of romance unless it's written really well, but this, this is romance. I'm in love with the way the characters interact and motivate each other, and the art style, it's just always amazing in that Studio Ghibli fantastical way. I highly recommend taking the time to watch this, particularly if you're feeling the pressures of society upon you.

