

# Our most pointless debate

## Our writers face off on the question of pi vs. pie

*Forget flavor, pi is far more useful to humanity*

**CJ Ciaramella**

*The Clackamas Print*

Much attention is paid to pie during the Thanksgiving season; apple pie, pumpkin pie, and all other variants. But this is a travesty, for people forget the true and infinitely superior pi.

No, not fruit encased in a baked crust. I speak of the mathematical constant – the ratio of a circle's circumference to its diameter: 3.14 ad infinitum. The list of reasons that pi is more worthy of our adoration than its fruit-filled homonym is almost as long as pi itself, but for the sake of brevity, this argument will only touch on a few.

First, consider the application of pi. Einstein used it in his field equation of general relativity; it also makes an appearance in Euler's identity (called by Richard Feynman "the most remarkable formula in mathematics"), which postulates that  $e^{i\pi} + 1 = 0$ . Notice that it does not read  $e^{i(\text{apple crisp})} + 1 = 0$ .

Second, consider the properties of pi. It is transcendental, irrational and not constructible. Furthermore, pi is not a physical constant and therefore not affected by the shape of the universe, whereas pie will directly affect the shape of your hips.

And third, remember that people have been contemplating the mysteries of pi almost as far back into history as we can trace. Few real-

ize that the earliest known written approximation of pi came from an Egyptian scribe, or that a Chinese mathematician calculated pi to the first three decimal points in 263 AD. How many texts concerning pies date from back then?

It may sound pompous, but pi's just more important than baked goods. There's a reason Martha Stewart never gets research grants, and it's not for lack of trying. It's just a sad fact that there hasn't been a major breakthrough in pie research since the discovery of the "toothpick test."

Perhaps most telling, though, is the fact that pi is infinite, while pie is all too fleeting.

So forget this Thanksgiving pie nonsense. Rather, focus your thanks on the awesome power of pi because, while your mind will expand by its influence, your waist will not.

*Close your math book and give it up for succulent pie*

**Andy Zehrung**

*The Clackamas Print*

Though it's a mathematic abnormality with profound geometric uses, pi is a sad substitute for pie.

On a purely physical basis, pie exists and pi doesn't. As warm or cold as one's preference may dictate, pie can hardly be substituted by a mere numeric representation.

The credit for pi's discovery can only be given to a Greek name forgotten by history. People gather around at the county

fair for a pie contest, not a pi contest. People also won't have their friends asking them how they make such a delicious strawberry pi.

Another quality that pi lacks that pie boasts is variability. Though pi has an endlessly changing numeric representation, it lacks the ability to change that representation to fit tastes. Fractional or decimal, that's hardly variety.

The different personal touches different bakers add to make their pies unique makes the variability of pie not only appealing to a larger variety of people, but its variation is a lot more comprehensible.

The importance of pi is irrefutable. However, to non-mathematical persons pi is simply another fact. Engineers and math instructors use pi for their career; the rest of the world just knows that the first few digits of pie are 3.14. Since that is as far as most people's minds need carry the number, everyone else can enjoy pie while they wait for their mathematician friend to calculate the circumference of the pan.

Pie is not only a delicious treat we can all enjoy, but it is also a dessert to which the country owes its original settler's lives too. After all, had it not been for the pumpkin pie, the Puritans wouldn't have had anything to bring to the table. The lack of sweet, delicious pie might have caused the natives to nip the English phenomenon in the bud, spreading the Croatoan phenomenon beyond Roanoke.

Therefore it is to pie, not pi, that the United States owes its success. Turning one's back on pie would be treason and should be punished by firing squad. Besides, people don't get to see enough firing squads these days.



# Understanding the reviled midterm move

**Kimberly Maier**

*The Clackamas Print*

In the middle of the term, the last thing any student wants is to arrive at class – barely on time – only to discover that the lecture has been moved to another building.

Yes, many of us have become victims of the midterm move, and it can be very inconvenient, especially if the class has been moved to another area of the campus.

The phenomenon of the midterm move is mystifying. It comes without warning, does not discriminate between departments and is a thorn in the side of every student who plans their class schedule with time and location in mind. But the question remains: why does this occur and how can we avoid it?

According to Naomi Sether, Science department secretary, the decision to move classes is sometimes the instructor's preference.

"Sometimes, the instructor's preferred room is not available at the beginning of the term, so when it does become available, due to low enroll-

ment, there can be a room change." Conversely, when enrollment is too high, the class has to be moved to accommodate more people.

Another issue that can cause a class to be moved is the medical condition of an instructor or student.

"In the Barlow building, they have the automotive department; certain folks have sensitivities to the fumes," said Beth Hodgkinson, division secretary for Humanities. "It gives some people headaches."

In addition to instructor's preference and allergen issues, the college has to be sensitive to the needs of disabled students. Clackamas currently employs 'accommodation specialists' who work with students to make sure that all needs are met and a safe environment for learning is provided.

"It would be awful if you have a disability and can't make it to class. We try to be aware of the students' feelings and make the transition as smooth as possible," stated Hodgkinson.

Division secretaries are responsible for arranging classroom changes. But before you go out on

a secretary witch hunt demanding to know why you must now find a new 'magic' seat to sit in during

your psych class, keep in mind that the midterm move is most often employed to benefit the students.

## Letters to the editor

I have just read [Elizabeth Hitz's] thought-provoking editorial on torture. I would like to point out that a recent article in *The Oregonian* also dealt with this topic. As a teacher of the English language, I need to make students aware of the manipulative language involved in definitions of torture. Specifically, I was angry when I read that prisoners of war are considered for torture techniques just by changing their titles from "prisoner of war" to "enemy combatant." This is manipulative language. It allows the executive branch way too much power in determining such cases.

Diane Averill  
English Instructor

I noticed in your most recent edition of *The Clackamas Print* ... the gentleman pictured [on page five] is [not] John Lewis; it is Neil Robbins of Clackamas County Water Environment Services.

Other than that, I enjoyed Megan Koler's comments and hope that you all continue to do a great job on *The Clackamas Print*.

Ginny Van Loo  
Member, Clackamas Community College Budget Committee

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## Student Poll

What do you look forward to at Thanksgiving?



"Dinner with family, all being in one place at the same time, and cooking with my mother."

Rachel Floyd

Going to Sun River and feasting."



Kasey Hall



"Football and turkey!"

Jared Chaney

Actually getting to see my family."



Kimmy Carier



"No school and lots of sleep."

Anna Shkurinsky

This week's poll compiled by Joe Piazzisi



We mistakenly ran the wrong photograph for Ashley Marchi in last week's student poll. We apologize for the error.

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