

Where NT seniors are headed to next year and their journey of how they got there.

By Sara Kaboudvand 03

Is fashion individuality dead?

By Sophie Ratner 30

The sudden push for a revival of NT's football team.

By Ian Boswell 32

Thursday, April 4, 2024 | Issue III

STUDENT LIFE

Charity week review

Reviewing the philanthropy at NT



Sara Kaboudvand
Editor-In-Chief

‘Tis the season of giving! Well actually, it’s not - because the holidays are long gone. But at North Toronto, our staff and students remain generous to our community for all months of the year. North Toronto’s dedication to its community has been an essential part of its identity for many decades, and arguably the most important event demonstrating this do-gooding and dedication is Charity Week!

Charity Week has been a tradition at NT for over 30 years, making it not only a staple event for the community as a whole, but a fun school event looked forward to by all the students. From baking homemade cookies to serving mouth-watering grilled cheese and showcasing NT’s talent through our very own Charity Week Talent Show (NT’s Got Talent), NT always transforms Charity Week into a spirit event filled with teamwork and collective entertainment. With the goal of raising \$12,000 this year, NT’s homeforms were at it again, bringing the most creative, amusing, and delicious booth ideas to the first floor hallway. Let’s recap and review the booths of this year!

From day one, the hallways were filled with eager students wanting to explore the wonderful booths set up by homeform classes. Cate Atkinson, a grade 12 student who ran Ms. Xherro’s candy amount guessing booth says, “I was actually surprised to see how many people were there, the hallways were completely packed.” Food is undoubtedly the most popular booth option and this year’s grilled cheese, pizza, cookie and cupcake booths were all among the most popular choices. Grade 12 student Laura Tudor describes the grilled cheeses as “melted to perfection,” and Ms. Blackmore’s class’s cookies were said to be the “most delicious cookies period” by grade 12 student Daniel Papachristos. Pizza is always a safe and well-enjoyed option, and Classico’s turned out to be a great choice seeing as how many students in the halls called it “amazing,” “unexpectedly good,” and “great!” The most common sound heard in the halls was “mmm...” so we think it’s safe to say the food booths were a huge success.



A message from the editors

Sara Kaboudvand
Editor-In-Chief

Logan Proulx
Editor-In-Chief

Dear North Toronto,

Happy Issue 3! We hope waiting for another Graffiti hasn't left you wilted like this year's spring flowers... (seriously why did the snow start ON THE FIRST DAY OF SPRING?)

We're only a couple of months away from the end of this school year, and we know the seniors are feeling this the most. Seniors, if you're even here on Graffiti Day, we hope you're hanging on to the last straws of motivation you have. For the rest of the school, if you want to know about all the Grade 12 affairs to come, read about senioritis in Sara's advice column, where NT's grads are going next year in the University then and now article, and whether prom really is worth it.

Sorry for the momentary narcissism; that's obviously not all we have in store for you. We've got Grammy outfit reviews, STEM vs Humanities debates, water bottle rankings, Looksmaxxing explained, *potential* "updates" about football, sudoku, sports recaps and Word on the Street, and so much more (you're going to read ALL the articles anyway, so we'll cut the preview here ;)

Don't forget to test your knowledge with the "Have you read Graffiti" quiz at the end of the paper, and have your future predicted with our horoscopes!

School can be a repetitive drag, we get it, so come on, use this opportunity to drift away from stress and immerse yourself in Graffiti!

We hope you enjoy this issue as much as we loved making it! Stay tuned for even more amazing articles in the next issue, and don't forget to mark the date to sign up to write! We love you all <3

Sincerely,

Sara and Logan

editorial board

EDITORS IN CHIEF

Sara Kaboudvand | Logan Proulx

STAFF ADVISORS

Jessica Bulgutch | David Silver

SECTION EDITORS

Grace Uy | Tai Vaughan
Orson Kyser-Burke | Elsa Scurfield
Clara Proulx | Constantia Pilnitz | Charlotte Shin
Sophie Ratner | Tatiana Takes
Rowan Boswell | Malak Mohamed | Robina Nguyen
Jack Wolkove | Viola Wang
Elizabeth Rosen | Mona Asefzadeh
Salma Kassim-Lakha | Andrei Dan

LAYOUT MANAGER

Jack Cai

HEAD OF VISUALS

Ruby Tucker

BUSINESS MANAGERS

Clara Naini | Andjelina Ilic

COPY EDITORS

Scarlett Yi | Maeve McGuinness | Isis Mullaj
Andrea Dimitriev | Stana Stojsic | Adrina Farzan
Sanjana Coppam | Jasmine Samadi | Livia Sabsay
Niveideeta Cour | Amanda Oliveira | Oliver Jan-Kurrek
Zeda Dobro | Sandra Tauroni Fernandez | Angie Ling
Lily Homenuk | Emma Byrne | Krisha Mittra
Severyn Gomolka | Lola Urosevic
Juliet Chrystman

JUNIOR COPY EDITORS

Defne Guvel
Katherine Jin
Zoe Sergeev
Faye Grief-Albert
Jeonwon Sim
Maya Midvidy
Jocelyn Xia
Kiarash Ashraf

about us

Graffiti is North Toronto C.I.'s award-winning, student-led newspaper. Graffiti aims to amplify and represent the voice of the student body at North Toronto CI. by creating a unified communications platform that allows students to develop their skills in language, design, art, teamwork, and leadership. With every publication, Graffiti strives to maintain the highest integrity and provide readers with honest, relevant journalism that is grounded in truth.

contact us

Have a question, criticism, praise, or comment? Send a letter to the editors, and we'll be happy to respond.

Email: ntcigrffiti@gmail.com

Instagram: [@ntcigrffiti](https://www.instagram.com/ntcigrffiti)

internal

STUDENT LIFE

Charity week review

Reviewing the philanthropy at NT

continued from the cover...

Drink booths were also quite successful with creative ideas like “mocktails,” and NT favourite coffee. Grade 11 student Duncan Blue, who ran the mocktail booth says that “running the stand was a really fun and engaging way to support a good cause. I think I built a lot of teamwork and networking skills.” He also explained the additional benefit of charity week, that it “pushes teens out of their comfort zone and teaches them about dedication.” Charity week booths were not only a hit during lunchtime, but also a staple destination in the mornings. Delaney Marshall

is a grade 10 business student who ran the coffee booth in the morning, and she expressed, “I really enjoyed being a part of this year’s charity week! It was really nice to serve coffee to my friends and meet new students and teachers.” Elsa Scurfield, also in grade 10, agreed and said managing a booth was a “great experience,” and she felt that she was “running [her] own little store while also doing something good for [her] community.”

But charity week would not be the unique event it is without its activity booths. Ms. Xherro’s Calculus students ran a well-fitting candy amount guessing booth, Mr. Peddle’s students ran a trivia game booth, and Mr. Rea’s Global Ed stu-

dents ran a timbit/head shave booth, with their student teacher Mr. Diaz bravely volunteering to have his head shaved if enough money is raised. We’ll add up the funds raised to see in due time whether or not Mr. Diaz is going to lose some locks. NT’s Got Talent was a great hit last year with extravagant dance performances and heavenly singing, and students seem to have very high expectations for this year’s event too. Grade 12 student Krisha Mittra says, “it’s gonna be hard to beat last year’s talent but I’m really excited to see all the amazing performances lined up.”

Overall, NT students made the most of Charity Week once again this year, showcasing just

what a collaborative and altruistic community we are. Student council SVP Scarlett Yi says that she was “very excited to see how hype the students were going into the week” and her high hopes were well met with us raising over \$8700 within this first week. She is now even more hopeful that with “grade 9-a-thon and the silent auction coming up soon, we will be able to reach our goal of \$12,000.”

Thank you so much to everyone who contributed to making Charity Week a success. Don’t forget to keep donating and participating in the events we have left!

POST-SECONDARY

University: then vs. now

Where NT seniors are headed to next year and their journey of how they got there

Sara Kaboudvand
Editor-in-Chief

If you pay attention to any conversations at all in the hallways of North Toronto, you’ve probably noticed that recently, (more like always), university is one of the biggest topics. Now, I am making great generalizations here since not all students wish to attend university or any post-secondary institute at all, and of course, to each their own. But since NT is quite well-known for its culture of academic excellence and the pursuit of a university pathway, we thought it would be interesting to explore the journeys of current senior students, and how their university journey, from deciding where to go and working towards those goals, has evolved.

In my personal experience, because I’ve always loved school (you have my permission to barf or “boo” me), university has been a natural goal of mine, with a bonus of me choosing what I actually wanted to study; nothing seemed like a better fit. The University of Toronto became a dream of mine when I learned about its exchange opportunities, as well as the wide selection of courses that somehow catered to every. single. one of my interests (and I have, like, a lot). Learning abroad and having the freedom to explore all my interests is what drew me to and solidified my desire to attend UofT. Now I just pray for my acceptance.

Our grade twelves know that academics are not the only thing to consider when choosing a university or college. From exchange opportunities, research, sports, or co-op, here are some of the external factors NT’s seniors considered when choosing their university. Senior student Claire Christie has been swimming since she was six years old, so when it came time to consider university options, she says she mainly explored U.S. schools; “In the beginning of grade 12, I had the opportunity to look at U.S. schools through swimming”, and while she had never decided on a dream school, when she was accepted to the University of Arizona in October, she realized that she “really liked it”. Claire currently HAS an undecided major, an option she was happy to have as she wanted to “see what [she] like[s] before declaring a major after two years”. This freedom of exploration combined with the excellent swimming program are the main reasons Claire explained she chose the University of Arizona. Because she “wants to go as far as possible with swimming,” it was a natural decision. When reflecting on the uncertainties she faced in grade 9 regarding her swimming career due to the pandemic, she feels now, “very happy”, and “[she] wouldn’t have done anything differently” to get to where she is now.

Sometimes, the issue might be that your interests are too broad, or that you simply have too many. For grade 12 student Sebastian Kim,

his interests have transitioned from “either architecture or engineering in grade 9” to physical and geoscience, and geology. Sebastian says that he “had the chance to talk to a geophysicist at U of T in grade 11”, who helped him narrow down his interest in science to a single field. He explained that he has “always loved travel and wanted to do more of it,” and combined with his desire to pursue science in an “application sense”, he currently aspires to be a field geologist. His dream school since grade 9 has been McGill University, but this now includes the University of Waterloo and Queens. While he still waits on all of his offers to come in, he expressed his excitement for university, wherever he may end up, and the prospect of “meeting new people and making new friends.”

As a society, there is sort of a negative connotation towards the prospect of “change”, as it is fear-evoking and unsettling. However, high school is an experience characterized by substantial changes in all areas; just ask Briony Labatte, a senior whose grade 9 self would “call [her] crazy” because of the significant change in university goals she has experienced. Briony recalls that she had been “deadset in going to UofT since [she] was like 7 years old”. Yet in the summer of grade 11 to 12, she had the opportunity to “work full-time out of the city”, and she discovered the diversity in possibilities that lie outside of Toronto, all leading to her conclusion: “Oh my God, I

need to get out of this city”. Briony has committed to the University of Alberta as a commerce major, with a minor in math. She says she was drawn to the “beautiful campus and super close-knit community, which was something [she] always wanted”. The University of Alberta also offers incredible co-op opportunities, domestic and abroad, with exchange program options as well, another factor which led Briony to choose them. Although she decided on a large geographical change, her interests in numbers and mathematics remained unchanged “since [she] was a kid”.

So there you have it, the university journeys of four grade 12 students. No matter what stage of “deciding your future” you may be at (even if your plan looks completely different from the people in this article), this is just a reminder that you still have lots of time - heck, you’ve got your entire life ahead of you. You are free to go through as many changes as you feel you need, and you are completely able to not attend university or any post-secondary institute at all; the only thing you really need to do is listen to yourself and permit yourself to make your own decisions. Whether you’re fulfilling your grade 9 self’s dream or driving them completely insane by doing a 180, you have the liberty to create your own pathway. So, as corny as it is, be yourself, and explore all your options.

STUDENT LIFE

Almost, Maine... or Almost Broadway?

Lights! Camera! Action on NT's stage!

Elsa Scurfield
Section Editor

Tai Vaughan
Section Editor

North Toronto is known to recognize its STEM students, but this play showcased that we are so much more than that. From cute teenage love stories to marital drama, NT's performance of *Almost, Maine* resonated with everyone in the audience. It was the perfect balance of art, music and drama, showcasing another side of North Toronto's talents. However, the credit goes not only to the play itself, but also to the people who made it possible. The unsung hero, piano player Jesse Sol, was the magical touch that tied every scene together. In the shadows, he created a memorable atmosphere, and in the light, Lola Urosevic and Jonathan Mildon made everyone shine. To the backstage crew, your efforts did not go unnoticed. The play would not have been possible without your creative, logistical, and practical contributions. Responsible for making the set and consequently making the play, the Art Council members set the play and stage for success. As an artist himself, Ivan Anand did a wonder-



Photo courtesy of **Dr. Jane A. Lee**

ful job designing the costumes and forging an identity for every character. Last but certainly not least, Ms. Bilmer and her incredible actors truly made this production

come to life, with the special Red and Grey touch. Every member of the cast transformed this preexisting production into an NT original, and we could not be more proud.

For those of you who did not get to see the play, we strongly encourage you to reconsider next year - you might just be surprised at the talent that lies on the first floor!

STUDENT LIFE

Word on the street

Ever wonder what's going on in students' minds? This issue, Kaleigh and Camille get answers to your most pressing questions! Want the full scoop? Head to @ntcigraffiti for even more Word on the street! DM us for any suggestions on what they should ask next!

Kaleigh Kabatoff
Word on the Street

Camille Zafimehy
Word on the Street

What's your favourite charity booth?

Chloe S: grilled cheese
Alex A: chocolate milk
Nehir G: mocktails
Ashley H: pizza
Colin K: grilled cheese
Patrick T: grilled cheese
Kyla S: fortune cookies
Cambell: lollipops
Dylan: staff vs. students basketball game

How much did you spend on charity bucks?

Josh: \$20
Tatiana: \$30
Alessia: \$15
Connor: \$10
Miles: \$5
Brayden: \$8
Sage: \$30
Camille: \$20

COLUMN

Staff profile: Mr. Tallevi

Find out the truths (and one lie) of NT's very own Mr. Tallevi

Tai Vaughan
Section Editor

You know him, you love him, you might even work out with him, but how much do you really know about Mr. Tallevi? As a North Toronto Health and Phys-Ed MVP, Mr. Tallevi has been a hallmark in the typical NT athlete's life for the past 11 years. Whether you first met him in grade 9 gym or have been a player on one of our school teams, it is impossible to not be a fan of Mr. Tallevi. To those who claim that they have never seen him, listen for random shouts in the basement or during sports games and you can rest assured that he is in your vicinity.

While his students appreciate his friendly demeanor, who is Tallevi's best friend? To this question, he shared that "the phys-ed department are [his] people", showcasing just how good of a team the NT athletics department is. Being considered somewhat of a staff celebrity, there are a few things that students are curious about. For one, what is Tallevi's Tim's order? While he stays traditional with his coffee (one milk, one sugar), he occasionally switches it up with a carrot muffin and apple cruller. Still convinced you know him?

When asked what was one thing we students

do not know about him, Tallevi shared that when he is not teaching, he doubles as somewhat of a Gordon Ramsay. As well as his love for cooking for his loved ones, he expressed that "the Food Network and other cooking shows are [his] go-to daytime entertainment in the summertime". Maybe, just maybe, NT will get to try his creations one day.

As a hallmark of this column, words of wisdom from the NT staff are what make it worth the read. When asked what his were, Tallevi advises students to "own your actions and decisions and learn from them", adding that, "perseverance and hard work will have the greatest impact on your future success". While we as students have likely said 'work smart, not hard' at least once in our lives, it is important to learn the value of hard work and determination. It is teachers like Mr. Tallevi that remind us of this, and help us achieve the level of success we strive for. Before I leave you with yet another staff profile, here are two truths and a lie, Tallevi's version:

1. Soccer is the sport he played at the highest level.
2. He is of Italian heritage.
3. He has had surgery twice in two different countries.

Have fun decoding these fun facts, and stay tuned for next issue's profile!



Photo courtesy of **Tai Vaughan**

COLUMN

Advice column

Niner Encyclopedia: Tips on how to survive the "almost-finish line" stretch

Sara Kaboudvand
Editor-In-Chief

Dear Niners,

You've survived and most probably forgotten about your first exams (our talks together are very spaced out, I know), so congratulations! I hope you're enjoying your second semester, and I hope your course selections went well. We are moving into what I would say are the best months of school; in April, May and June (just ignore semester 2 final exams...) we've got fun school events (Maytime Melodies), actual sunshine, and overall the smell of summer getting closer. Take in every moment. Think about it: doesn't it feel like just yesterday I was welcoming you to this school? Now I'm just one step away from saying goodbye.

A fun thing you may notice from now on is that I, along with my entire grade, will be nowhere to be found. This phenomenon of seniors suddenly poofing into disappearance is commonly referred to as "senioritis".

Sen • ior • i • tis
noun

a colloquial term to describe the sudden decrease or loss of motivation felt by senior students who are THIS CLOSE to the finish line and realize that universities don't care about their grades after April so there is actually no point in doing anything anymore

"Hey, you coming to class?"
"Ew. No."
"Senioritis?"
"Duh."

You may ridicule, or even look down on us, but just remember that I warned you about this first, so when you're in April of grade 12 and are lying down in the hallway 4 meters away from your actual classroom, think of me. (If you're a teacher reading this, no, I'm totally not skipping your class! Look for me, I can almost guarantee you I'm there).

Sorry for getting so off track but my point is, whatever is stressing your cute little grade 9 self out, don't dwell on it too much. Even the most life-crushing crises I faced in grade 12 have all fizzled out now and I feel lighter than a cloud. You will not feel as bad as you fear you will in the next hour, week, month, or if it comes down to it, in three years. Life is so beautiful in grade 9, and it took me until grade 12 to see that. So please, go out, be with your friends and your family, play, watch tv, play video games; be a kid. Sorry to call you one, but having turned 18 I have the right to call you all kids. Hehe. Kiddos. (Subtle flex).

Now advice: adhere to basic school rules? Please? The people who really need to hear this advice (realistically) probably don't read the paper, but if you have any friends you know that do this, please pass on the word. The hall-

ways, originally designed to be a passage-way where you transition from place to place, are now, believe it or not, STILL MEANT FOR THE SAME THING. But it's awfully hard to transition with your sweet GINORMOUS friend groups barricading all the most-used hallways. What is that thing called? Oh right, field. Go to the field and play tag there kiddos. Clear the halls please.

The stairs serve similar purposes to the hallway with the incredible bonus of taking its users to a higher or lower floor (magical). And again, they are becoming increasingly difficult to use with you all conversing, dapping up, and yelling to "meet you after school" in them. We are a society used to conforming, and while yes, we do sometimes break out of the traditions and be rebels and all that, I personally like the rule of staying to the right side of the stairs and hallways. Like, I think that that is reasonable. If walking on the left and making me drop my bag like that one time (I'm still looking for you) makes you feel like the cool kid, um, that's sad. Stay on the right side.

Last thing for this issue. Take these next few months to explore your hobbies and interests a bit more. I'm acting like a true NT senior preaching clubs to you right now but, as my time at NT comes to an end, I'm realizing now more than ever the impact that the clubs I took part in had on me. You'll notice student council elections happening around you. Vote! Exercise your right in our democratic society (I get to actually vote but since you are all kiddos, at least vote here). Always stay curious and don't be afraid to ask questions and talk to random people. Club friends, hallway friends, and stairwell friends are all gems, I'm telling you. Go put yourself out there.

Alrighty, I think that's enough of my senior voice for you guys to hear. Stay cute kiddos (yes I will tease the fudge out of you with this nickname). 'Till next issue, our last one if you can believe.

Love,

Sara



Photo courtesy of **Sara Kaboudvand**

ACADEMICS

A letter to students dropping science

The only real advice you need to listen to

Sara Kaboudvand
Editor-in-Chief

Dear all NT students who are thinking of dropping or have already dropped science courses,

NO! Don't do it!

Are you trying to throw away your entire future?

What are you going to do with a general arts degree?

Welp, there goes your life.

How's clown college?...

... Are some common things you may have heard from the people around you when you mentioned the decision, or even thought of dropping STEM courses at NT. I apologize on behalf of our entire school – we have a bit of an issue. Surprisingly enough, I was once a person who counted down the days until grade 11 when I knew I had the liberty of dropping all sciences and living out my happy and free high schooler days, pretty set on the idea that I would study political science and be content. Spoiler alert for this letter, I, in fact, still took grade 12 biology, advanced functions, and calculus, and am heading into Life Sciences next year. Grade 9 me would cry, or scream, or both. But, NT's stigma aside, I wanted to take this opportunity to share some reasons for why you might want to reconsider your decision to drop, but also reassure you that it is okay to drop. Super contradicting advice, I know, but let's get on with it and see where we go.

You probably have many people in your life, parents, friends, family, and teachers, who are directly or indirectly pressuring you in the direction of science, but the first and most important thing I want to say is, that it is not their decision. These active advice-givers will not live our lives for us, so why do we (even me) let every single thing they say affect us so much?

We live in a world that is rapidly changing, and we're dealing with struggles no one has ever even imagined having to deal with, an example being, being replaced by AI and robots. We now not only have to think about how to make money, sustain a potential family, and enjoy life, but also how to survive in a world where living costs are skyrocketing at the same rate that new technology is coming out. It is difficult to keep up. Jobs in the STEM field, such as engineering, medicine, and now even computer science have always been respected, and let us not forget, they make BANK. So naturally, you might be swayed in that direction. But the influence isn't always blatant, and the circumstances in which you choose

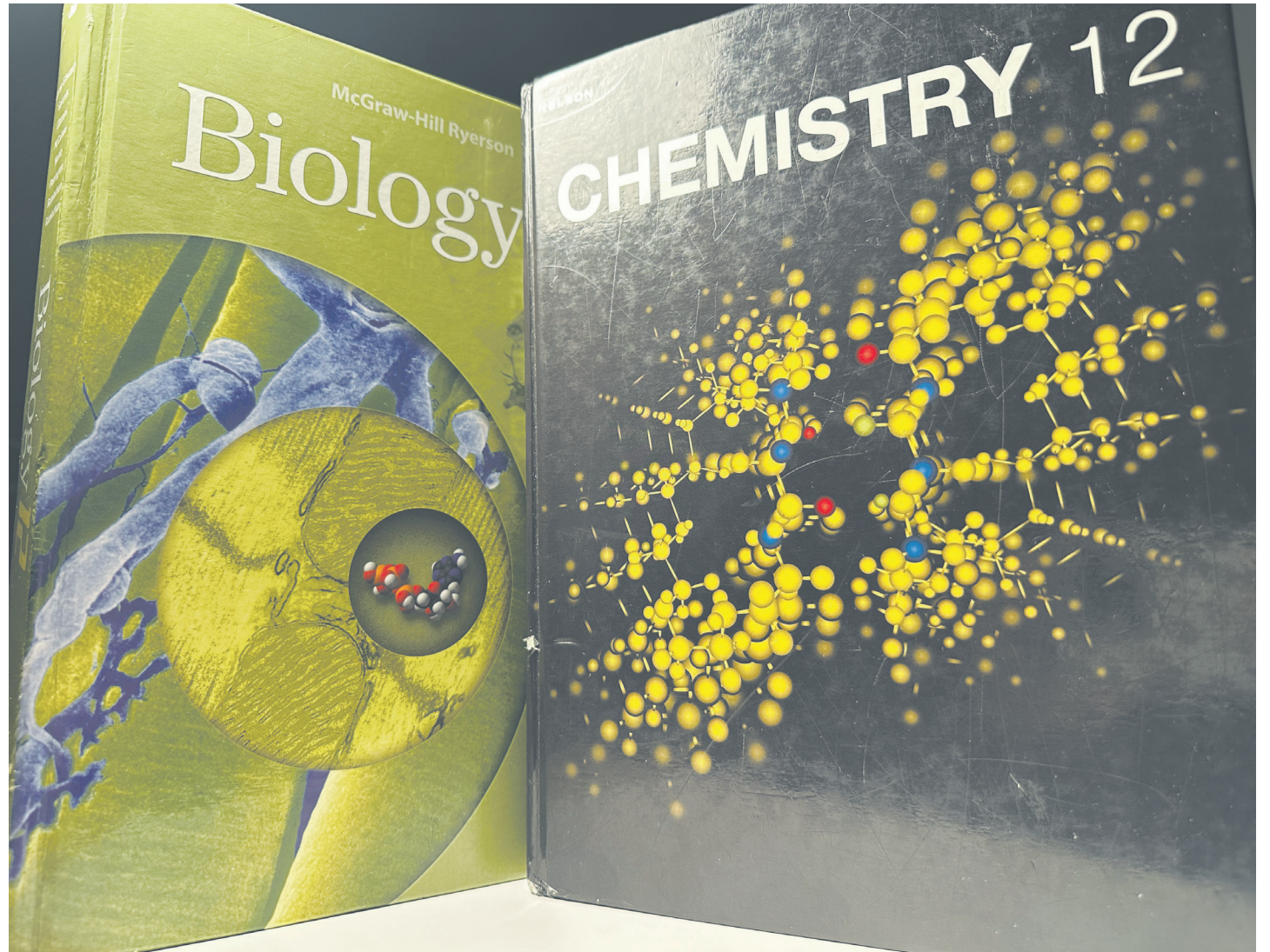


Photo courtesy of **Jack Cai**

your future career are probably very different from the next person; maybe you're from an immigrant family, which comes with its own set of expectations; maybe you come from a background of poverty (no one knows); maybe your parents all serve in those careers so you've had the pressure from birth; but in all of these circumstances, there is one key factor missing: you. It is your decision and your true passion.

Now, you may not even know your passion yet, granted, you might be in grade 9 reading this. I don't even know my future goals now, and I'm headed to university in 6 months. A large part of how we discover the things we love is through the people and places around us, leading us to them. But the pressure to pursue STEM, especially coming from our school, is not the influential factor you should be swayed by. Even if you always thought you were going to be a doctor – and no, this has nothing to do with the fact that both your parents are doctors – if you're falling asleep, skipping or getting 60s in chemistry or biology... ahem... maybe this isn't your path? Struggling in a STEM course is natural so it doesn't automatically mean the path isn't right for you, but you will see yourself putting more effort into the courses you actually love, and it's rare to not see results if you do this. I know it's difficult for our generation to prioritize interest and passion over practicality but think about it, we are going to live in an ever-advancing world where we probably live past 100, so we

need to choose a job that doesn't make us miserable.

That being said, you should also consider this: you can always change your job. You can always change anything, actually. No decision is ever final. Use that phrase in whichever way you want but whichever stream you choose to study, whichever occupation you choose, you can always change. And this is probably the main reason the adults in the school recommend so strongly against dropping the STEM courses. "Closing doors," "opening new doors," NTCI has an obsession with the "doors" expression; but it's true. It is significantly easier to switch out of a STEM pathway into an arts, business and humanities pathway than it is the other way around. Also, you'd be surprised to see how many universities require math, even though the program seems so unrelated to it. So in a way, dropping math or science is "closing the door" to a potential STEM, business, economic, or even political science pathway! Unfair world. Of course, if you have a life-changing realization of wanting to pursue STEM, you can always catch up. But the flip side of the coin, the "arts" let's call them, is that it's usually easier to catch up because they are so subjective and interpretation-based. STEM requires a build-up in knowledge, and I hate to break it to you, but dropping it in grade 11 or 12 would be denying yourself the opportunity to build up knowledge for your potential future.

This is a lot of rambling,

but the point I'm trying to make is that the only person who gets to make decisions about your future is yourself. Pleasing your parents, your peers, and your teachers, believe it or not, is temporary. While the common pressure around you to become a doctor or a lawyer is birthed from the belief that they are the "best" jobs, they might not be meant for you. Something we seem to forget these days is the concept of a "spectrum". Our society emphasizes a binary in every aspect; in this case, you're either a science brain or an arts brain. But we've forgotten sports, technical skills, trades and an abundance of alternative pathways, all wonderfully fulfilling and diverse. The reality is, that everything in our world is connected. You cannot have one field without the other. It is science that leads to innovation but the arts that lead to humanity and understanding; both of these are equally important.

If you take away only one thing from this, again, it's to choose for yourself. Find what makes you happy. And while you can always change, make sure you consider all factors before arriving at a definitive decision.

And with that, I sign off,

Sincerely, Sara Kaboudvand (Political Science turned Law turned Life Sciences and Psychology student)

STUDENT LIFE

The Swiftie epidemic at NT

The ever-expanding empire of Taylor Swift

Meredith Lee
Contributor

Taylor Swift's announcement of her brand new album titled *The Tortured Poets Department* which is set to release on April 19th has somehow led to the rise in Swifties. The colossal number of Swifties is ever-increasing, especially at NT

More times than not, Taylor Swift's music is played before the *William Tell Overture*. Most people will say it is a fun and enjoyable way to start their day, although there are few who will have opposing opinions. In many of your classes, I'm sure you have heard someone incorporate Swift's empire into their work; whether it be her massive cultural impact, her poetic lyricism, or even her business savvy.

For the past 18 years, Swift has been an incomparable force. With influence that stretches over continents and generations, Swift truly is one of the most influential people of our time. NT students find new ways to incorporate Swift into their everyday lives, making the school into somewhat of a "Taylor Nation". This happens through blasting "Red" on repeat during Red and Grey Day or referencing her in class. Even teachers declare themselves as Swifties as a way to

connect with their students. Taylor Swift merch can be seen adorned on the shoulders of many staff and students walking the hallways, including her highly sought-after cardigans. Swift's inadvertent influence at NT creates a feeling that seems to only be ascertained by rural American high schools in works of fiction. Almost everyone who walks the halls of NT knows who Taylor Swift is and at least one of her songs.

People are quick to judge who you are based on your views of Swift. The most recent example of this is the discourse surrounding Taylor and the NFL as her relationship with Travis Kelce has shattered the internet and become a very public display of affection. While both sides of the argument can be justified, the fact is that people are talking about her, propelling her further into the mainstream. There will always be discourse and scrutiny over everything she does; that does not seem to stop the Swifties from taking the world by storm one cardigan at a time.

Something Swift is amazing at is allusion, as she has - intentionally or not - associated herself with a plethora of things; cardigans, the number 13, red lipstick, snakes, and cats, just to name a few. People can see Taylor Swift at any place or time, demonstrating the extent of her massive empire. Whether you



Photo courtesy of **Pinterest**

like it or not, Taylor Swift is on top of the world and all over the halls of NT. She has given many women the confidence she yearns to find and inspired them to change their out-

look on life. She doesn't appear to be going anywhere anytime soon; her success is stable, if exponential, as she has shown during her nearly 20-year career.

STUDENT LIFE

The mystery trip to Spain

So, is it happening or not?

Livia Sabsay
Copy Editor

Earlier on in the year, did you notice posters around the school advertising a school trip to Spain for March break, but have heard nothing since? Out of curiosity, I asked Miss Elliot, NTCI's only Spanish teacher and trip organizer, what had happened to this mystery trip.

Why did the trip get cancelled?

Not enough enrollment is the answer. But I think part of the problem for low enrollment was that we started advertising later in the year while the Italy trip started last year, so by the time we started advertising, anyone who wanted to go on a trip was on that trip.

Why are all the posters still up?

The posters are still up because nobody has taken them down yet. Every time I see one I take it down but there are just so many all around the school and nobody has gotten around to taking every single one down yet.

What was the difference between this year's trip's cancellation vs the previous year's success?

"I have been doing trips for twenty years and approval depends on what the board's requirements are. We used to be able to do homestays so exchanges were amazing. We went together and did activities all day but stayed with a host family and now we can't do that. I did an exchange with Costa Rica when we had a trip every year. We had a deal with a school in Copenhagen, so every year we did a trip there until the board cancelled homestays."

During COVID, there were no trips, but in the first year when trips were back, there were two.

However, now people have spent all the money they saved during COVID-19, so not as many families have the money to throw around.

What departments were involved in this trip?

This trip would have involved three different departments; the Science department, the Geography department and the Language department.

If things turned out differently what would the trip have been like?

It would have been similar to the France and Spain trip last year, except we would be in Spain

Will there be a trip next year?

"I do plan to offer the Spain trip. The announcement for it will be most likely around April to avoid this year's problem. We will also do more announcements in September

to remind everyone of the trip and to get grade nines on board."

What are your feelings on this trip not happening?

"I have mixed feelings about it. It's not the trip I wanted to offer - I mean it is good but not the one I wanted to offer. Right now, the board is limiting options so initially we wanted a trip to the Galapagos Islands, but regulations on swimming prevented that. We then asked about Puerto Rico but all the hotels had pools so TDSB denied it. Eventually, they agreed to a Europe trip."

Anything else you want to add?

I think travel is very important and all students should experience it.

So, there you have it.

STUDENT LIFE

Black History Month assembly

The hard work and dedication that went in to making it a reality

Mona Asefzadeh
Section Editor

The aisle lights turn on, and as you walk out of the auditorium, you feel invigorated and engaged. Maybe you did not expect such stellar performances of “Lift Every Voice” this early in the morning or you found the speeches and Dr. Jill Andrews’ amazing crowd-work really help wake you up from that first period funk. You leave feeling educated on an occasion as significant and meaningful as Black History Month in a memorable way and maybe you’re thinking, “so, how was it done”?

“I can tell you that in 2020, Mr. Hobson and I were well on the way to putting together a fantastic assembly...”; a quote from a beloved and staple staff member, Mr. Reid, about the previous attempts at getting this event - which was to be the VERY FIRST assembly for the occasion at NT - off the ground. However, in 2020, due to unforeseen circumstances, all black history assemblies at TDSB were canceled at the last minute for the entire month, including what was to be a start to a yearly tradition of BHM assemblies. And, as you may be able to tell by the date in the quote, a certain global pandemic led to further postponement of what had the potential to be a truly amazing event. Even so, since then and even before, there had been some featured and smaller events that Ms. Biondic recalls, including featuring prominent black artists on hot air, books displays in the library, and poster displays, but no assemblies (yet!).

Plans started to take off again due to the leadership and



Photo courtesy of **Mona Asefzadeh**

planning of the Black Heritage Club and the Black Student’s Association. If one thing was for certain, it was that bringing this assembly to life was not an easy feat. Beyond the administrative and planning aspect of getting approval from Dr. Lee for the assembly itself and even superintendent approval for the speaker, it took months of planning to notify the choir and have them ready. This student-run event took no less than three rehearsals to make sure it went off the right way!

Years of planning and jumping through hoops and the final product is fantastic, but why an assembly? For you! Time and time again, full community engagement has proven to lead to events being commemorated and celebrated the way they should. Specifically, the BSA hopes that Black students at NT came away from the assembly

“feeling a bit more included”, especially new students coming from schools where the importance of Black History Month and the heritage behind it simply weren’t acknowledged.

In the next few years, the BSA plans to perform at local middle schools nearby that lack this sort of engagement. Expect to see workshops, performances, and a guest speakers series at lunch throughout Black History Month from now on, and remember to keep an eye out for next year’s theme! A spoiler that the BSA has provided is in the form of “the color purple”...Be sure to expect many more aspects of the arts communities to be involved from now on; from dance to music to art!

Some final words from all those interviewed and involved in pulling together this striking event

include a big thank you to the audience and those behind the scenes who helped run the event from the BSA. The student organizers hope it resonated with you, and that “you realize that there is a strong, brilliant community of black students and staff at NT.” If you find yourself wanting to know more about the significance and history behind Black History Month, then take some quality time to review the significant contributions that people of African and Caribbean descent have made to societies all over the world. This means not always highlighting the same leaders in the community that everyone already knows about, and doing your own research into some less known yet still pivotal people and what they have accomplished.

STUDENT LIFE

Soda Pop Shop

Join us on April 11th at 7 PM for NT’s annual arts collaboration

Grace Uy
Section Editor

NTCI is known for being a school strong in the sciences, while also having great sports teams. But did you know that NTCI is also strong in the arts? Offering a variety of courses, from music to drama to visual arts, NTCI is home to many creative, artistic, and imaginative students. With only a couple of performances a year where they can showcase all their talent, many NT students aren’t aware of the amazing artistic talents at NTCI. Enter Soda Pop Shop, a casual night to showcase the arts. It is the perfect place to take a look at NT’s artistic talents.

Soda Pop Shop has been a highlight for NT students for many years. After a pause over COVID, Soda Pop Shop was back last year and once again, the halls were filled with students, parents and teachers all taking in the arts at NT. This year will be no different. Whether you want to drop by the drama room to catch some amazing performances, wander the halls to check out some of the outstanding visual arts created by our students, or pop by and listen to some amazing music featuring a variety of instruments, voices, and styles, there will be something for everyone!

Be sure not to miss this exciting event, and show up on April 11th at 7 PM!

local news

FINANCE

Exploring the city through the eyes of a broke Norsemen

Budget-friendly adventures in Toronto

Isis Mulaij
Copy Editor

Ever felt like your wallet's on a diet and your bank account's doing intermittent fasting? You're not alone. If you're a high schooler in Toronto, you know the struggle of wanting to have fun without breaking the bank. We are living in a city where every single hangout seems to require spending money. From grabbing a cup of coffee at a trendy café (Istanbul Café for the corner store) to catching a movie at the cinema, it feels like there's a price tag attached to every activity. But don't worry, I've scoured the city for the best freebies that'll keep your spirits high and your pockets light. Whether you don't have a job or have one but just spent all your money on the Taylor Swift or Travis Scott concert ticket, you definitely want to unlock the secrets of Toronto without spending a dime.

So, what's on the agenda for today?

First, how about a leisurely stroll through Trinity Bellwoods Park with your squad? Pack a picnic, grab a frisbee, and spend the day soaking up the sun. Feeling artsy? Head down to Graffiti Alley and explore the street art scene that Toronto is famous for. Snap some Instagram-worthy pics, strike a pose, and show off your inner Banksy to the world. But wait, there's more! Did you know that many of Toronto's museums offer free admission on certain days of the week? That's right – you can get your culture fix without spending a single loonie. Whether you're into art, history, or science, there's a museum for everyone in this city.

1. Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA): Located in the heart of the city, MOCA offers free admission every day for visitors under 18. You can go for a day and keep lying to yourself that that makes you 'artsy' for years.

2. Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO): Did you know that the AGO offers free admission to all under 25, and any ages every Wednesday evening from 6-9 pm? If you like learning new artistic views such as Indigenous, African, and Canadian modern and contemporary artists and photographers, definitely give it a visit.

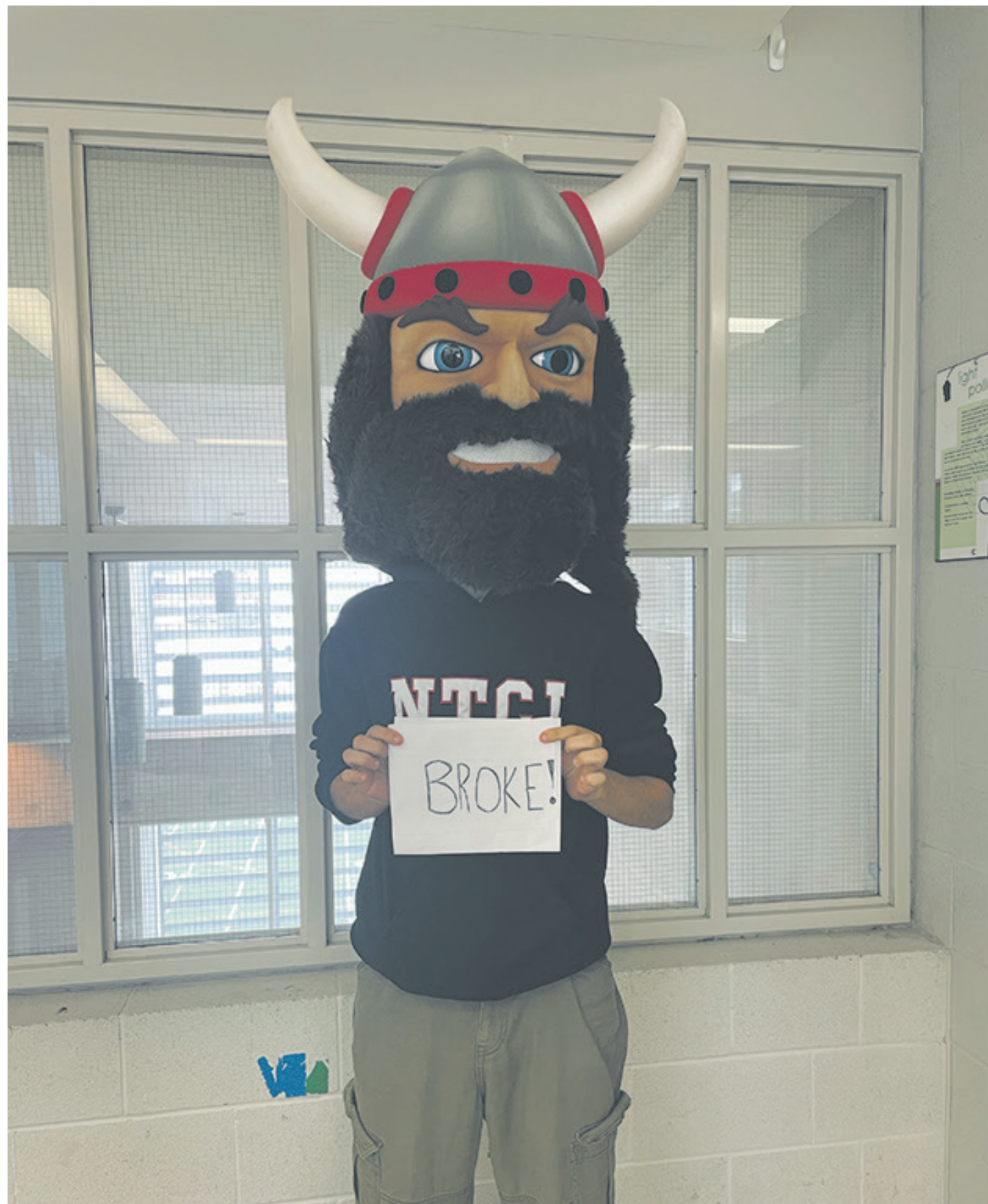


Photo courtesy of **Ruby Tucker**

Moving on, if you're a classical music fan, don't miss the Canadian Opera Company's Free Concert Series at the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre. You will see artists from around the world sharing their talent and passion in one of Toronto's most musical spaces; just for a change from the NT music maytime melody performances.

These are some of the lesser-known freebie activities. Let's hear some of the free activities NT students do for fun!

Elsa Scurfield: "Going for soccer-mom walks with homemade

coffee!"

Franklin Cappadocia and Noah Beijer: "Sunset walks at Sherwood park"

Molly Touching: "Visiting Toronto's Beaches for sunrises."
Audrey Gilson: "Going biking at the beach."

Brooke Stemmler: "Going skating with your friends."

Adam Spagnolo : "Playing Frisbee, all you need is a disc and some friends."

Gabriel Grant-Clavijo: "Soccer!"

Toronto may seem like a city built for big spenders, but for us budget-conscious Norsemen, there's no shortage of thrifty thrills to be had. The possibilities for adventure are endless – and all without breaking the bank. For the Norsemen that don't want to look into freebie activities but want to get a job ASAP, stay tuned for the next article.

Love you all,
Isis Mullaj

SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

NT study spots

3 popular spots to study or do anything but

Emma Byrne
Copy Editor

Have you ever felt that it is difficult to study at home? If you have, you should check out NT students' favourite study spots:

NT's Library

The library is a great place to study before school, during a spare, at lunch, or after school! Its printer is a lifesaver when you

forget to print an assignment for a class or a script for a presentation. Rishan Roy likes to study here when he is looking for some peace and quiet: "I do sometimes study in the library with my friends, especially when we have a test or quiz the period after lunch. I also really like the comfy chairs in the back corner." Those NT Library chairs really are super comfy and a great place to review some notes!

The Toronto Public Library

This wonderful study spot is just across the street from NT

and has many perks for students! It has a computer lab and free wifi for research, a large seating area for doing homework or reading, and it goes without saying that it has many books to check out on various subjects. Tuana Yuksek feels "[during] the days leading up to exam season [as well as] after school, there can be more kids than usual, but it's always quiet [and has] seats to sit down and study.". If you're looking for a calm and quiet place to read, the Toronto Public Library is the place for you!

Starbucks

This establishment is an ideal spot to do some great group studying. With their wide selection of \$7 drinks and friendly employees who always spell your name wrong, Starbucks is a great place to bury yourself in a book, or quiz friends for an upcoming test. Alix Daveau says, "[she] like[s] the ambiance and the drinks at Starbucks, but it's always so loud and sometimes distracting [when] study[ing]". Starbucks is a very busy cafe, but she agrees that it is a very fun place to study with friends.

ENVIRONMENT

Local parks review

Reconnecting with your childhood roots

Stana Stojic
Copy Editor

As kids we all enjoyed going to the park. Whether it was to see our friends, walk our dog, or play sports, some of our favorite childhood memories were made from spending our time outside. Finding time to go to the park becomes difficult as we grow older due to the workload we receive; however, it is crucial to maintain a balance between our academic responsibilities and personal life to not get burnt out. It's also important to explore other parks beyond those in proximity to your home to help you potentially discover a favourite, as different parks are potential spaces where you can return to your youth and enjoy your spare time!

Eglinton Park:

Eglinton Park is very popular amongst NT students. It is well-known for its community center which offers various amenities such

as a basketball and tennis court, an indoor and outdoor skating rink, and several pools. Outside there is a large field with two baseball diamonds and soccer nets for those who enjoy playing sports. Eglinton park also has many hills which are perfect for sledding during the winter time, and a large playground equipped with many accessories such as swings and slides. It's also a short distance from the school, making it easily accessible for people who live nearby. "I like to take a short break for my schoolwork and walk my dog at Eglinton Park since it's so close to my house." says NT student Brynn McGuinness. The spacious field makes this park an ideal space for playing with your dog off-leash, giving them plenty of space to run around and exercise. Overall, this park is the perfect place to spend time with your friends and family. It offers many resources allowing you to choose different ways to spend your time during the cooler and warmer months!

Oriole Park:

Another great place near NT is Oriole Park. Although it's smaller than Eglinton park, it still has many features which attract a diverse crowd. People often enjoy using the tennis courts, ping pong tables or the splash park during the summertime. There is also a play structure for younger kids, and many benches people often use for having picnics. Unfortunately, the winter season offers fewer activities in the area, but the Green Belt trail is connected to Oriole providing a path for people to enjoy during colder weather.

The Ravine:

The Ravine, located a bit further from North Toronto, is known for its beautiful scenery and long trails. The ravine follows a small stream and is surrounded by trees making it best for visiting in autumn when the leaves are different colours. This isn't a typical children's park with swings and soccer fields, it's where people go to get away from the busy city of Toronto by surrounding themselves with nature.

Time in the ravine is best spent listening to music and walking your dog, but it's also the perfect spot to play-capture-the-flag or hide-and-seek with your friends. This park could be an excellent addition to your bucket list. Although going to the Ravine with a friend is better to be safe, if you are an introvert or simply prefer spending time alone, I highly recommend visiting this park.

Every park possesses its own distinct and special qualities. Some parks offer more during the summer, while others are better during colder seasons. Exploring these parks might even lead you to discover a new favourite spot where you can truly savour your time. There are numerous ways to enjoy your time outdoors, whether you are by yourself or with a group. Regardless of whether or not you choose to explore these places, it is very important to allocate time for yourself, and maintain a steady work-life balance to boost your personal well-being.



Photo courtesy of Eglinton Park Residents Association

LAW AND POLICY

International student cap

Another harmful policy?

Orson Kyser-Burke
Section Editor

The federal government has implemented yet another policy -- in addition to the provincial government's tuition freeze -- regarding Canadian universities; one that will undoubtedly have further serious impacts on the revenue of Canadian universities and, consequently, their educational capabilities.

On January 22, 2024, the federal government implemented a two-year cap on the number of international study permits that can be accepted in Canadian universities. The new cap is such that Canadian universities will accept approximately 360,000 new international students in 2024; a 35 percent decrease from 2023 (the exact number of permits that will be accepted in 2025 has not yet been decided and will be chosen later this year). However, each province and territory will be given its own cap based on its population, mean-

ing that some universities will be affected more than others. This means that provinces with exceptionally large international student populations -- such as Ontario and B.C. -- will be affected the most by this new policy. In fact, it is estimated that Ontario will see a 50 percent decrease in international students.

The federal government claims it implemented this cap to fight exploitative "diploma mills", which take advantage of international students by charging exceptionally high tuition fees, while at the same time offering a sub-par education.

Immigration Minister Marc Miller specifically stated that "these measures are not against individual international students. They are to ensure that as future students arrive in Canada, they receive the quality of education that they signed up for and the hope that they were provided in their home countries."

This permit cap has come at a time where Ontario universities are already in serious financial turmoil due to an ongoing post-secondary tuition freeze. This freeze

has cost Ontario's universities over \$1.2 billion dollars since 2019. On account of the freeze, universities relied heavily -- and, indeed, for some universities, almost entirely -- on international students to fund their operating budget, as they can be charged with higher tuition fees. However, in light of this new policy, it is hard to see how universities will be able to sustain the same level of education and the same variety of courses.

This permit cap will create an even larger hole in an already struggling sector, with universities that were already considering, and executing, cuts throughout their courses. Now, universities will experience greater losses of revenue, and will no doubt be forced to lay-off staff, lose quality of education throughout their classes, and may even be forced to drop entire programs.

Due to the fact that -- rightly or wrongly -- in Ontario we generally tend to value STEM and business courses more than our arts and humanities, universities are considering cutting these latter programs

first.

And while it is true that STEM and business have their place, if we cut the arts and humanities programs, we will be jeopardizing a large aspect of our ability to create, to think, and to question -- some of the very traits that define us as humans.

This is not the way to get rid of so-called diploma mills. Perhaps the federal government has put an end to that issue, but in the act of doing so it will amount to even greater problems. Put simply, our federal government should not be putting our universities in a position where they have to jeopardize students' education in order to stay afloat.

This is not the time for a cap; not while Canadian universities are already drowning in debt. If the goal is to eliminate exploitative diploma mills, then eliminate them, but eliminate them without cutting down our post-secondary education system in the process.

TRANSPORTATION

Commutes to NT

The different ways to get to school -- even if you don't want to

Lily Homenuk
Copy Editor

We may not always want to get to school, but we have to, and, whether you're taking the subway or the bus, driving, walking, or biking, each way has its advantages and its disadvantages.

Subway (\$2.75)

A lot of NT students take the subway to school. Eglinton Station is just a 3-minute walk from school, and the subway usually comes every couple of minutes, so students never have to worry about waiting. It also protects riders from unfriendly weather and is good for the environment. Unfortunately, the subway is known to be very crowded, especially during rush hour and when the weather is bad. It can also be dangerous and sometimes people can act in a way that is uncomfortable for other passengers, which can cause students to avoid taking the subway. It's important to consider these points when taking the subway.

Bus (\$2.75)

Another public transportation option that students use to get to school is the bus. There is a bus stop just a 5-minute walk from school. The bus lines in Toronto

reach more areas than the subway, but the buses come less frequently. So, sometimes if you miss just one bus, you could end up late for school. Buses can also get stuck in the traffic on Toronto's busy streets and can be cramped, leaving riders standing or in tight situations. That said, the bus is similar to the subway in that it is better for the environment than driving and more comfortable than walking.

Driving

A preferred way of commuting to school for NT students is being driven -- typically by their parents. If you live far, taking a car is usually the quickest way to get to school. A car keeps your school

commute easy and protects you from the weather. Another benefit of taking the car is being able to chat, listen to music, or chill on your phone. On the other hand, the busy streets surrounding NT (Yonge, Mt. Pleasant, and Eglinton), can make it hard for commuters to reach the school. Sitting in traffic is painful, especially when you are just 4 minutes away and the time is nearing 9 am. Also, once you finally arrive, there is often a lack of parking. Emma Cooligan, a grade 10 student said that "[d]riving to school is good when you live far and you're late but with all the construction there's so much traffic that it's probably better to just walk." Of all the ways to get to school, driving is

the worst for the environment. So next time you're thinking of driving, do your part and consider walking.

Walking/Biking

The most popular way for students to commute to school is by walking. A lot of NT students live around school, so walking is very convenient for them. Walking with friends or by yourself is a good way to relax before a stressful day at school and it is a great source of exercise. Isobel Coulthard, a grade 10 student at NT said, "[s]tarting my day with light exercise helps wake me up and feel prepared for the [rest of the] day." Biking is also a good way to keep fit and is quicker than walking. Walking and biking to school are good for the environment and have no cost (apart from the bike, obviously). However, walking and biking can be a worrying experience when trying to get to school on time as they can take longer, and there are a limited amount of bike racks. The weather can either make walking and biking enjoyable or a pain. Walking and biking are two types of transportation that will never get old, even if you get tired of doing them.

Whether you commute to school via the TTC, car, biking, or walking, as long as the way you use gets you to school on time, it is great.



Photo courtesy of Lily Homenuk

opinion

SOCIAL TRENDS

Forget psychology and statistics and personal experience, here's why youngest siblings have it the hardest

An unbiased analysis from the youngest child.

Jesse Sol
Contributor

Hear me out, alright? I know what it sounds like, I know. But FOR ONCE in your ever so slightly older life, lend an ear of equal ground to a youngest child. To an extent, I get it. Yes, you're right, it's true, that last digit of your birth year is smaller and therefore more powerful than mine. Yes, it's true that despite my younger self's ambitions, I will never pass you in age. And sure, maybe you've known me longer than I've known me, but I come to you today on behalf of all babies of the family and little spoiled brats to say that everyone's got it all backwards! It is us youngest who struggle more than you olders and middles. Allow me to explain.

It's common knowledge that oldest children end up being the most successful in life. Business Insider says that CEOs and company founders are most commonly firstborns. They also tend to have higher-IQs and earn higher salaries (Greenwood). Well guess what, my dear first borns? You know some prime examples of this? Jeff Bezos! Elon Musk! Are these the faces on the flag that you choose to stand under?

And you! You middle children! That whole "we're all friends here" attitude? It's getting old! We can see that the reason you only get to pull that off is because you and oldest sib are forever bonded for being there before I came around, like I'm a natural disaster or something, and you can reason with me because at least you once knew the hardships a youngest carries daily.

On the subject of sibling stereotyping, I'm tired of you pretending like you worked hard for these benefits that fell into your lap. There was not a single say that you squeaked out to determine your birth order. It might as well have been your height, which of course, you oldests tend to excel in the most too (MedPsych). Have you ever wondered, really wondered, why the older siblings are more successful? Is it because you're forced to be more independent? Is it because you have the experience of responsibility over another? Perhaps because the folks who raised you weren't tired of the pro-



Photo courtesy of **Jesse Sol**

cess yet? Most importantly, does it matter? Sure, you can look down at my coddled competitions and life free of pressure, but when it comes down to it, it's these opportunities, or lack thereof, that prevent us "babies" from being as successful in life.

"When I was growing up, my brother and sister both had really clear identities," Bianca, a fellow youngest child states. "My sister was incredibly popular (she was prom queen) and my brother was gifted and incredibly well-read." In addition to us youngest siblings not receiving the tools to reach our full potential, Bianca reflects on the pressures many youngest children face in their youth. Now she studies architecture at the University of Toronto, but in high school, she remembers the teachers all having preconceived notions based on who her older siblings were. I myself have had to deal with expectations from teachers because of the successes and failures of the Sols that came before me. Staring down at me every day, pinned to the wall of my Writer's Craft class is an article and illustration my oldest brother Avishai made in his senior year. When I told him of his lingering fame, he was more than happy to indulge in the glory:

Avishai: "That's the article that won me the Toronto Star Award!"

Avishai: "Yeah, I won two awards for the Toronto Star for my work in Graffiti, not to flex or anything."

Avishai: "I had a comic strip there that won runner-up in 2018 for Best Comic in Strip, in... I don't know, is it Toronto, or Ontario?"

Avishai: "Then the next year, I moved away from the illustration side and more towards a sports column, and I had an article win Best Sports Article for their Toronto Star High School Journalism thing." You see what I mean? I suppose it's my own fault for reminding him of his days during his self-proclaimed "peak of [his] life." It's easy to see, especially in a Writer's Craft class (my middle brother also wrote for Graffiti some, and this is not mentioning my poet and English professor of a father), how anything but dominance in the subject would be frowned upon due to my Sol-ness.

However, it's not just the last name that binds us to our elders. Often one's extracurriculars are repeats of their older siblings'. Some of these we stick with. In my case, I still play basketball and piano. Others were not for me. I spent quite a bit of time, paper, and marker ink on drawing before I realised I wasn't all that great at it, and more importantly, I just wasn't enjoying it. But because my brothers were into it, I felt like I was supposed to be too. Bianca found a way to turn

this around. Like me, she had many of the same extracurriculars as her older siblings, but around age ten, she attended dance classes, the first of the siblings to do so. This new activity gave her an avenue to pursue far from the ones her elders had already traversed. But this is not specific to extracurriculars either.

Bianca says that about 90% percent of her wardrobe is hand-me-downs, but in high school, she used her hand-me-downs to form her own identity. "I dressed a lot like Kurt Cobain in plaid pjs and striped sweaters and mis-matched everything. I think it was a way of making all my hand-me-downs my own." With these changes, Bianca is proud of her "baby" status, and wouldn't have it any other way. As a matter of fact, I think I'm the same way. It is our struggle for independence that makes each of our own purchases so special. I remember the Hawkeye action figure I bought from the Silver Snail. I remember the desk we bought for my room, fresh for me. Still sits there today. Most recently, I remember choosing to take an Advanced Functions class I will not need for post-secondary. Perhaps the only reason I did so was for the sake of trekking further in the subject than any Sol child had done before. That alone should prove the torment a youngest sibling endures.

STUDENT LIFE

Is prom worth it?

Tati's elaborate prom experience plus Malak

Malak Mohamed
Section Editor**Tatiana Takes**
Section Editor

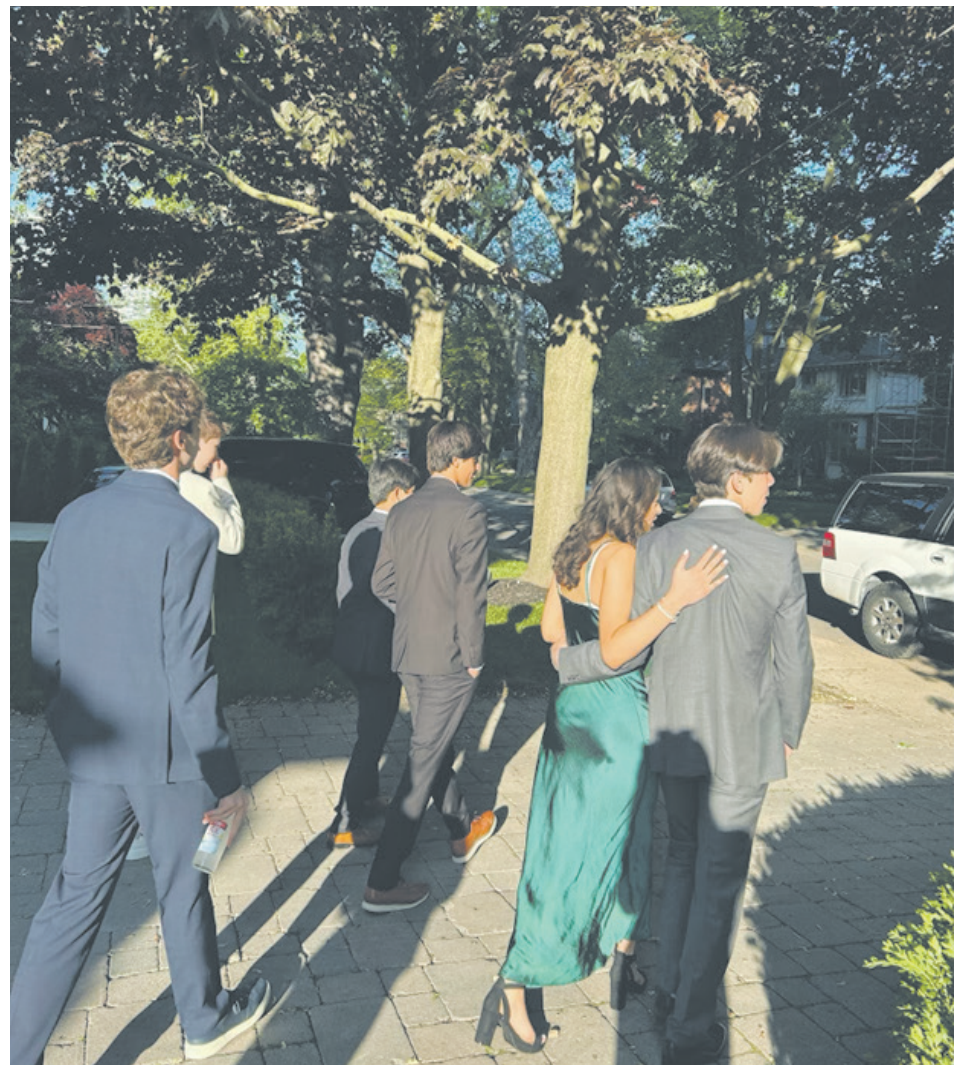
I think we all can agree that prom is not worth it; but, we will see you all there. We get it, it's prom. It's everything, it's what many of us look forward to from the moment we enter grade 9. But it is romanticized too much in movies. Sorry to crush your dreams, but prom is not like the movies. It's boring, cold, wasteful, and honestly, unfulfilling.

Reason number 1 why prom is not worth it: money. It is so expensive you feel like someone violated your pockets. Tickets usually go for \$120 a pop. Not only that but buying or even renting outfits can be ridiculous. Unless you have random gowns and tuxedos lying around, on average people spend around \$500 on new clothes for one night of their life. I don't know about all your priorities, but spending that much on one night makes my stomach ache. In addition to the main event costs, the after-party is another expense. And yes, we understand it is once in a lifetime so we will go all out, but at the end of the day, this is just not a "worth it" situation. Life is expensive, but this is more about the value you are getting for the price you are paying and how it is just not matching up.

The actual vibes at prom are also a factor. I'll paint you a picture of reason number 2. You drive up to the venue, getting ready to walk in with all your friends. Bag check and security check you for unwanted items and you're greeted by all the teachers. The facility is unusually cold, and you look around wondering what to do next. This is

your prom, but it's underwhelming. Do you take photos first? Do you look for more of your friends? It's even colder outside. Amazing views, don't get me wrong, but definitely cold. Dinner and awards run through. It's time to dance, right? Nope, there is no dancing. NO DANCING. I mean, technically there is time scheduled for dancing, but no one does it. I went to prom last year and when I tell you everyone left after the awards finished, it was no joke, and honestly, totally sad. Dancing is good for the soul, the body, and the spirit. Prom is for celebrating all your experiences in high school with the people who got you through it, and that is done by dancing. Personally, I love dancing and I hope that this year there will be dancing, but if this is what you're looking forward to the most...get ready to be disappointed. It just feels really awkward as everyone stares at the dance floor wondering if anyone will go up first, the poor DJ ready to give a good time to no one around. It kills the vibe.

Also, can we talk about what happens if a couple breaks up right before prom, but ends up winning best couple? Or, even worse, a girl's man winning best almost couple with another woman. Yeah, that happened to me. I clapped, because what else was I supposed to do? We can all agree any situation like that would be extremely unfortunate and uncomfortable. This brings me to reason number 3 on why prom is not worth it, too many people make it about being in a relationship and having a date. I may be lame for saying that, but I'm a girls girl, and spending that night on a boy does not seem worth it. I love a good high school love story as much as the next person, but as the single one in my friend group, I wanna make memories with my friends.

Photo courtesy of **Tatiana Takes**

Guys should make memories with their friends as well because, at the end of the day, that is all we will remember.

I wanna state that I do not hate prom. I am very excited and will have the best time possible, but there are so many factors that say otherwise. Prom can be worth it if you let it be. This is your prom so make it everything you want it to be. Economize the expenses, change the vibe, and spend it with who you want. After all, it's something nostalgic we can look at when we're older.

Prepare for the venue being cold and take advantage of the undeniable beauty which makes for

great pictures. The best part about all this is you have an excuse to get ready with all of your friends. Having everyone look their absolute best at the same time is not exactly a normal occurrence for most friend groups, so getting together to hang out in a fancy room is a great experience. Plus the food is really good. Like really really good.

Really, prom is what you make out of it. It may not be worth the cost, but it is prom, and if the only way we can justify the spending on one night, then so be it. We are so excited for prom and hope to see all the seniors there. Our last hurrah!

ACADEMICS

Mandatory math, optional art?

Why is math mandatory until grade 11 but art optional?

Livia Sabsay
Copy Editor

To graduate, you need three math credits but only one art credit. From this alone, it's clear that the ministry of education generally wants students to focus more on math than art. This is completely unfair. Why is one course getting better treatment?

NTCI has so many great arts courses such as music drama and art, but people never give them much of a chance because they ar-

en't forced into it. Math on the other hand is hard to like yet we are forced to do it until grade 11. While you can get your art credit at any point, most choose to get it "out of the way" early in grades nine or ten.

Objectively there is a reason for the clear preferential treatment and that is because Math is considered more important and necessary than art. Society needs more mathematicians than artists. People think that it's harder to be an artist than work in math and science. This is not true, it's just as hard to break into both fields.

You could argue that math is more important than arts be-

cause it's where all the big discoveries happen and that is true but not everyone wants to do that. Schools need to understand that not every student is the next math prodigy but some are artsy and have passions in other areas.

By the time you reach grade 11 you probably have at least an idea of what your plan is so the logic is probably that since not as many kids are gonna go into the arts more kids benefit from math rather than more kids benefiting from art. However, the reverse is true as well, kids who want to go into the arts might not need math and it will be a time waster.

Sure, math benefits art. Knowing geometry can be beneficial for artists. Artists have a keen eye for drawing lines and understanding proportion, which is useful. As for other strands of math like calculus and statistics, they don't really apply.

Math's need for art is pretty miniscule, if there is any at all and generally people consider math as having more options for careers. Despite not being true, more people want to go into math out of the misconception of it having better opportunities.

ACADEMICS

STEM vs. Arts

Why is STEM viewed as more “prestigious” compared to Arts and Social Sciences?

Eddes Dulaj
Contributor

Being a student, it is highly likely that you have heard lots about the superiority of STEM majors over humanities majors. The consensus amongst many academics is that it is more worthy to major in STEM, rather than humanities. Perhaps it is that STEM requires a more thorough understanding of higher-level math and science concepts. After all, our brains would turn into polyisoprene trying to understand nuclear engineering!

But that aside, the question begs: Why is this the case? Why exactly do we think of STEM to be superior to the humanities?

This can be attributed to a variety of reasons - the academic requirements for STEM programs,

particularly in prestigious universities, are generally very high. An extreme example is Engineering at the University of Toronto, with admission averages as high as 97% for programs like electrical engineering. Comparatively, the Humanities at UofT requires an average in the low to mid-80s, depending on the program. While that is still a high average, it is far more attainable with far less effort than a mid-90s or above average.

STEM degrees also have the reputation of opening up greater career opportunities. With a Bachelor of Science, it is easier to find a job as such degrees tend to possess greater flexibility than a Bachelor of Arts. A Bachelor of Arts restricts your options, limiting your job opportunities to fields such as education, law, and journalism - all of which can be done with a Bachelor of Science.

Our world has been powered by technological innovation.

From the age of Mesopotamia to our present-day society, the one constant is that human development is pushing societies forward. But our creations are not always ethical or appealing to our nature, which is where the humanities/social sciences/arts come in.

Let's talk about the ethics of AI. The prospect of our creations outsmarting us is a marvel to behold. However - is it worth having our jobs displaced by beings that aren't even sentient? Again, this is where the humanities come into play - without having moral and ethical standards, we would not come to a consensus on the extent to which progress is good. For example, nobody wants to see AI win a chess tournament, because that is what it's designed to do. It will always be more captivating to see what we are capable of in a game of wits - not our brainchild.

A more general example - architecture is structurally geom-

etry and physics. But the buildings we live in, are educated in, and work in are not reflective of that prospect. A hallmark of good architecture (besides the engineering) is good visual design. The Parthenon is remembered for its symmetrical, curved appearance, its sculptures, and the fact that it was built as a monument to Athena. That alone proves the case of STEM and the humanities/social sciences/arts having a symbiotic relationship. This has been realized by the populations of the most innovative civilizations in history, one which is echoed continuously into our present.

So is one really better than the other? I think not. It's really the balance of both fields that is equally important in our ever-developing society.

ACADEMICS

The humanities angle

Why is STEM viewed as more “prestigious” compared to Arts and Social Sciences?

Viola Wang
Section Editor

First and foremost, art and science are the same thing. To say that one could exist without the other is inaccurate, as one is the same as the other; two sides of the same coin. Art and science are both the product of humans trying to understand the world around us. They are equal in their exploration, passion, and expression of something we don't understand. The yearning to understand the universe that drives every single NASA launch is the same one that drove Van Gogh to paint his starry night. While both fields were invented by us, and created gradually over time, the things they try to explain were there from the beginning. If humans, as a species are driven by curiosity, art and science, evolved alongside us to sate our desire to make sense of each other and the world we were given. And not only did we strive to understand it, but we also did our best to make each other understand it as well. Even though the universal sharing of it is more recent, science and art are products of our need to know and make others know in turn.

The only distinction between them is this: science strives to understand the world through qualitative means, while art tries to understand the unquantifiable—the emotion and humanity that drives us. When I say science, I mean ev-

erything that can be definitively taught to a person to make them understand the secret workings of our world. From the smallest atom to the entire expanse of the universe, all we know that is important can be taught, can be discovered, and can be shared objectively. Science and STEM quantify the things we know exist and can see. On the flip side, art and humanities tries to explain the things we cannot interact with, but are as equally important as what we can. The things that cannot be quantified. The emotive, the human. You cannot quantify love or truly explain it. You cannot measure on some scale the exact feeling a painting evokes, or what your tears mean when you hear a song that moves you, or when you read a passage that makes you understand something you didn't know about yourself. You can barely describe these essential parts of human life, as poets often try to do. You cannot truly indicate it, cannot explain it to another person without, perhaps, more art. People often say that art is subjective, on any level, with any medium, and they are correct. And herein lies the crutch.

Since most important things in STEM can be quantified, everyone can agree on what it is. An equation is an equation anywhere in the world, and there are set amounts of correct answers. Because STEM has to be objective in order to be true, to reveal truth, then it has set value. Worth is tied to objectivity. Once everyone agrees

on the value of something, then the value becomes fixed and people agree that it has worth. The Apollo 11 project cost 355 million dollars, a set, fixed amount, already spent. If you wanted, you could justify that to yourself by thinking of every bolt, brain, and equation that went into it. It cost that amount of money to send a man to the moon. The value is objective. Van Gogh's *The Starry Night* is valued anywhere from 70 to 100 million dollars. The amount of money it costs to make it is probably less than the cost of the frame. But I'm sure someone out there would say that the painting is priceless because of what it evokes and another person who would confidently say 'a couple thousand dollars' for the cultural significance only. We know the painting has value, because we decided it did. But there is always someone left who secretly thinks that it's just paint on a canvas. They'd burn it to warm their hands. The value is subjective. The difference between 'Man stares at the night sky and feels something that makes him want to go there' and 'Man stares at the night sky and feels something that makes him want to paint it' is minute. Art and science are intricately tied, unable to be separated and remain whole, and the only difference may be the value of a number. And in today's world, where the only things that have any real value or significance are those things that we can objectively assign value to, anything subjective is of no value. If the worth is not agreed upon, and

can thus be capitalized on, then it is worthless. We think that because everyone cannot understand something, then it must not mean anything at all.

We've internalized capitalism, somehow. We relegate value to worth. And the problem plays into itself cyclically, as the more we think STEM is a superior field the more worth we assign to it, the more money a job in that field makes, and the more superior we think it is. It goes on and on. There is no superiority between the two. Man looks up at the sky and wants to go there and take you all with him. Two different ways to go about it. I'm sure someone will say that sure, Van Gogh painted a really awesome painting, but the Apollo 11 mission sent a man to the moon! And I ask, where were you? You weren't even born yet but you live knowing what they did, and you can look up at the sky and know that it's not untouchable, that curiosity and yearning and wonder brought us there. And one day, you can get yourself down to the MoMA (Museum Of Modern Art) and see the sky in the frame and know that Van Gogh understood something that you know just a little bit better now, and it's something you could never hope to quantify. You might do both, you might understand neither. If we continue along this path where the only things important are the things worth money, the humanity we try so hard to capture in the arts will dissipate, delegated to rote study and cultural significance

alone. Maybe someday, everyone will know that a painting is worth millions of dollars, but no one will understand why, or what the painter was trying to convey, trading value for worth interchangeably. But do not assume that being

able to measure the distance between you and the moon brings it closer. Sooner or later, I'm sure, you'll be able to calculate the worth of every centimeter that makes up that stretch of sky and someone is going to try to sell it to you. But

hey, hopefully, some art museums will still exist by then.

Admission may even be free.

LAW AND POLICY

The relationship between journalism and law

When press becomes propaganda

E Wong
Contributor

Journalism exists to present the public with objective facts. The duty of a journalist is to take what they have found—their own observations, the accounts of witnesses, analyses from informed persons—and compile it into a report for the layman. Otherwise indicated, said report should be free of personal bias. Such are the principles of a printing press. However, censorship compromises the objectivity of the press. Statistics may be exaggerated or downplayed, aspects of the truth swept under the rug; newspapers do not record every perspective on every story but a severe imbalance of voices becomes a cause for concern.

In this article, censorship is defined as the prohibition of information that is politically unacceptable or otherwise 'threatens national security'. On paper, national security refers to protection of state interests and secrets. For instance, Swiss developer crimew's exposure of USA's 2021 No-Fly List was considered an attack against USA's national security. From a purely objective point of view, this accusation is just. In practice, security falls into a grey area and serves as an excuse to dispose of people who openly speak against the government. The regulations surrounding national security fluctuate depend-

ing on the nation and the person in charge. Terms used to refer to national security have also changed over time: 'protection of national interests' used to justify communist and anticommunist conflicts, casting people and events as 'enemies of the people' or 'attacks against democracy'. Thus, the term 'security' has a history of being an irrefutable excuse, bringing with it the dead man's knell.

The vague nature of national security results in deliberate selection of materials from journalists. This self-censorship is reflected in Television Broadcasts Limited (TVB)'s news during and in the aftermath of the 2019 - 2020 Hong Kong protests. Most news programmes addressed both the demands of the protesters and the social tumult they brought forth. However, TVB mainly reported on property damage resulting from protests and interviewed politicians that were pro-government. The discrepancy between the two perspectives' 'screen time' on TVB speak volumes of their biased stance; TVB is but one of many media companies that pander to subjectivity- in this case, the narrative they construct aligns with that of authority and they have successfully licked their boot, so to speak. Conversely, one is persecuted when they report stories biased against authority. Apple Daily focused prominently on the motivation behind the protests. They had their assets frozen, their offices raided, and personnel

arrested by the police.

When the construction and circulation of media must adhere to authority, the common citizen is unable to access diverse, informed opinions. Can there be freedom of speech and press if expression of opinion is prohibited? Privilege does not come without duty, after all, and a journalist's duty is to present the public with objective facts. Between the public's right to information or the journalist's personal safety, which should take priority? The government's stance on such a manner is the difference between a Pulitzer Prize and imprisonment- which calls the credibility of authority into question.

We live in a society ruled by law, but such laws are instituted by the government and its personnel. Enacting the structure of the Canadian government, the legislative, executive and judicial branches in theory investigate each other for corruption and ulterior motives when laws are revised or newly proposed. This logic is flawed, however, as one has to place absolute faith in the impersonality of law makers. If the need arises, the government could very much introduce new laws that compromise independence of news companies and publishing houses. Citing Hong Kong, the Beijing government established a new National Security Law (2021) after the protests (2019-20) so as to construct a basis upon which protestors can be persecuted. Moreover, an amendment will be made

later this year regarding Article 23 of Hong Kong's Basic Law to introduce the 'Safeguarding National Security Ordinance'- building upon the aforementioned law -to implement new crimes that threaten national security as criminal offenses, among which list 'external interference', 'using electronics without national authority' and 'unlawful disclosure of official information'. As an example of how vague these terms are, under the new amendment, by submitting this article to Graffiti; penning this article on a computer; and speculating upon the motive behind the amendments, yours truly can be prosecuted with all three of the above. Thus, the amendment of Article 23 serves both as the government's convenient excuse to imprison 'politically incorrect' persons and eradicate different political stances from the press.

While it is true that the protection of national interests is fundamental to the operation of a nation, it is often used as an excuse to prosecute people who hold different opinions. By establishing and amending laws with the intent to suppress freedom of expression, the government holds a disproportionately prominent presence in the field of journalism. In one such situation, the journalist must choose between maintaining objectivity or bowing down to authority.



Photo courtesy of **South China Morning Post**

SOCIAL TRENDS

Is friendliness the new age romance?

Navigating an evolving landscape of romantic relationships

Ivan Anand
Contributor

Quite frankly, the state of affairs around romance has been treacherous for as long as we've known how to define the word 'romance'. With that, we must have a hypothetical sit-down discussion defining what qualifies as a romantic relationship. We've now been four years on from the beginning of the pandemic, as it strays (impolitely) into twenty-twenty-four. A part of that which we also seem to take with us; is expecting the bare minimum due to our immense lack of physical interaction in our golden years of socialization.

Thought experiment: Is the person you're pursuing giving you "the ick"? Now go back 10 years and ask the same question, the magnitude of ick will have changed so significantly that the incomparable distance between expectations might shock you. For better or for worse, we've developed this strangely specific rubric of what society as a collective expects out of romantic relationships. Despite this, some of us are untouched by the ick wave. Being so far removed from any practical chance of a re-

lationship, that a door held open brings butterflies to a once-empty stomach. And while it's important to experience honesty, respect, and chivalry in the real world; that shouldn't be the baseline for a romantic partner.

I speak so critically of friendliness as the new age romance, because friendships are driven by a sense of simple interaction. Both individuals are, in no way indebted to the other. In a friendship; quarrels, arguments, and inconveniences are stepping stones. Only the difference with romantic relationships is that friends don't stand to lose much from how they argue. A romantic relationship is to be viewed from this catastrophic lens of do or die, which runs people to the ends of the Earth just trying to get their problems sorted out. The stakes are so incredibly high in love, that the relationship cannot function as smoothly as most of us would like it to. Even more so, in high school where you are not emotionally attached to a spouse. Marriage is out of the equation, but often still questioned amongst high school sweethearts. Only the ideals come into play more often than the tribulations. Who wants to think of all the bad things that could happen? Not you, not me, not most.

If it seems like I'm losing my train of thought; I'll say this outright. The main argument I'm trying to make is that the bar is six feet under. The bar is a thin sickly wire attached to the ends of wooden poles that have been eaten away by termites. The standards for what qualifies as flirtation have been significantly lowered since the 2000s. And though it may seem like those times are not so distant from now, we've been so far removed socially, that it bears mentioning. Retrospectively, a couple of the past would have had to have known each other inside and out, surpassing all the boundaries of a friendship before even declaring that they're 'going steady'. This concept has, with time, turned into the expectation that people will instantaneously form a connection as though they are entitled to each other's affection. Relationships contain work beyond the ever-so-glorious honeymoon phase.

The gradual decline in effort-driven approaches to leading up to a relationship is in part due to the fact that we simply do not have the 'time' anymore. 'Time' lies in quotation marks because it's a perceived obsolescence. There is no real lack, considering relationships vary in the time that they

take. Though time exists rapidly online, this leads to pacing through 25 years of marriage in one swift week. These standards lead us, as children and students, to think of destructive patterns of romantic progression as an ideal situation that we intend to recreate once we each get swept up.

To the few couples making it work in this world, I believe it important to ask if you have a healthy dynamic. I'd assume (if you've made it to the end of this article) that you do. I wish no ill intent on those of you who are satisfied with a mutual sense of belonging above all else. In the end, we only have each other, but until then, I hope we can strive to foster duality and growth, heightening our standards. The best kind of relationship is one in which both parties benefit; learn from the clownfish and the anemone, the wasps and fig trees, the bees and flowers. All mutualistic, yet independent in their duty on this Earth. All working in harmony, but not taking themselves for granted. So take your time with light-hearted romance, just know of the future that lies ahead. A boatload of work, with an island of contentment thereafter.

MOVIES

Barbie wasn't snubbed at the Oscars

This Barbie isn't an Oscar nominee — and that's OK.

Robina Nguyen
Section Editor

On January 24, The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences announced the nominations for the 96th Academy Awards. The prestigious annual awards ceremony can cement an actor, director, or film's place in history.

Fans were immediately outraged that Greta Gerwig's Barbie—often cited as the movie of summer 2023—was "snubbed" at the Oscars. They assumed the film would earn Greta Gerwig and Margot Robbie (who plays the titular role) nominations for best director and best actress. Even Hillary Clinton posted her support on X: "While it can sting to win the box office but not take home the gold, your millions of fans love you. You're both so much more than Kenough."

According to Barbie fans, they were snubbed in favour of Ryan Gosling's Ken, who was nominated for Best Supporting Actor. "They really are making us live the plot of the movie," one advocate posted in a TikTok that garnered 2.5 million views.

But there are a few things wrong with this perspective.

The entire discourse overshadows the film's eight other nominations, including one for Best Picture. Billie Eilish's song for the Barbie soundtrack, 'What Was I Made For?' received a nomination for Best Original Song. America Ferrera was nominated for Best Supporting Actress making history as one of the 13 Latina women to receive an Oscar nomination. She played Gloria, a mother and Mattel employee remembered for her monologue about the impossible double standards for women.

Secondly, Ryan Gosling wasn't even competing in the same category as Margot Robbie or Greta Gerwig. He was in the least competitive category of the three—best-supporting actor—and benefited from a script where he delivered the funniest lines in a comedy ("When I found out the patriarchy wasn't about horses, I lost interest anyway").

Robbie was up against the five women who were bestowed the honour of a Best Actress nomination, all with storied careers and widely acclaimed performances. If Margot deserved the nomination, who are you saying shouldn't have



Hillary Clinton @HillaryClinton · 42m
Greta & Margot,

While it can sting to win the box office but not take home the gold, your millions of fans love you.

You're both so much more than Kenough.

#HillaryBarbie

717

4.7K

8.9K

1.2M



Image courtesy of **Twitter**

gotten it? Emma Stone? Lily Gladstone? Sandra Hüller?

The hysteria over the Oscar nominations is the peak of fan entitlement and implies that the five women (including Lily Gladstone, the first Native American woman to be nominated for Best Actress) were less deserving of the nomination than Margot Robbie.

A column was published in the Los Angeles Times, where Mary McNamara wrote "If only Barbie had done a little time as a sex worker. Or barely survived becoming the next victim in a mass murder plot."

McNamara's comment was

a not-so-subtle reference to the roles of this year's best actress nominees. She's referring to Emma Stone's character in Poor Things experimenting with sex work and Lily Gladstone's role as an Indigenous Osage woman witnessing the murders of the family and friends in Killers of the Flower Moon.

"You're minimizing the genocide of Native Americans?" one person tweeted. "Over BARBIE nominations?"

"The Barbie discourse is already insufferable," another added. "I saw the film 7 times in theatres. I love it. But using feminist rhetoric

to diminish the accomplishments of other women who were nominated is not it. All you're doing is making Barbie this season's villain."

Some fans wondered why Barbie received nominations while its director, Gerwig, was overlooked. Billy Crystal called it out in his opening song at the 64th annual Academy Awards: "Seven nominations on the shelf / did this film

direct itself?"

While it's true that female directors are underrepresented in the film industry, Greta Gerwig's loss at the Oscars doesn't prove anything — after all, she was competing against a pool of directors with equally—if not more—impressive blockbusters under their belt.

In other words, there is nothing about Barbie's storyline

that makes it any more Oscar-worthy than, say, Justine Triet's *Anatomy of a Fall* (note: Triet is one of the eight women to ever be nominated for Best Director). It had a "feminism for beginners" attitude and tried a little too hard to hit every socio-political statement it could without any real substance. Patriarchy is bad? Check. Ageing is beautiful? Check. Toxic masculinity

sucks? Check.

If the calls for women to shine are only limited to the ones you know and love, this isn't a matter of women's empowerment. It's fan entitlement.

The Academy Awards aren't based on personal feelings — as ex-Academy board member Whoopi Goldberg said on an episode of *The View*, "Not everybody gets a prize."

ACADEMICS

To teach, or not to teach. That is the question.

Should Shakespeare still be taught in school?

Eddes Dulaj
Contributor

To the average student, reading antiquated texts in a course many already find drab is not an effective way to teach. This works to the chagrin of other students, flaunting their copies of *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* as a sign of intellectual superiority over the pesky ignorants who are seemingly devoid of an attention span.

In a literature focused course, you will likely have to read and analyze a Shakespearean play. English teachers have been bombarded with this question since the beginning of time—"What do we learn from reading Shakespeare?"

The common consensus from those who ask this is that Shakespeare's texts are not relatable or relevant to today's society—especially teenagers. For some of these people, it's that his prose doesn't translate well to contemporary language. His characters exemplify the common tropes we find in modern media. Plainly put, students often find Shakespeare boring.

But is that always the case? It should be known that Shakespeare was very influential, beyond those with an unfeigned interest in literature. Many of our vernacular today are Shakespearean in origin. Pop culture was built

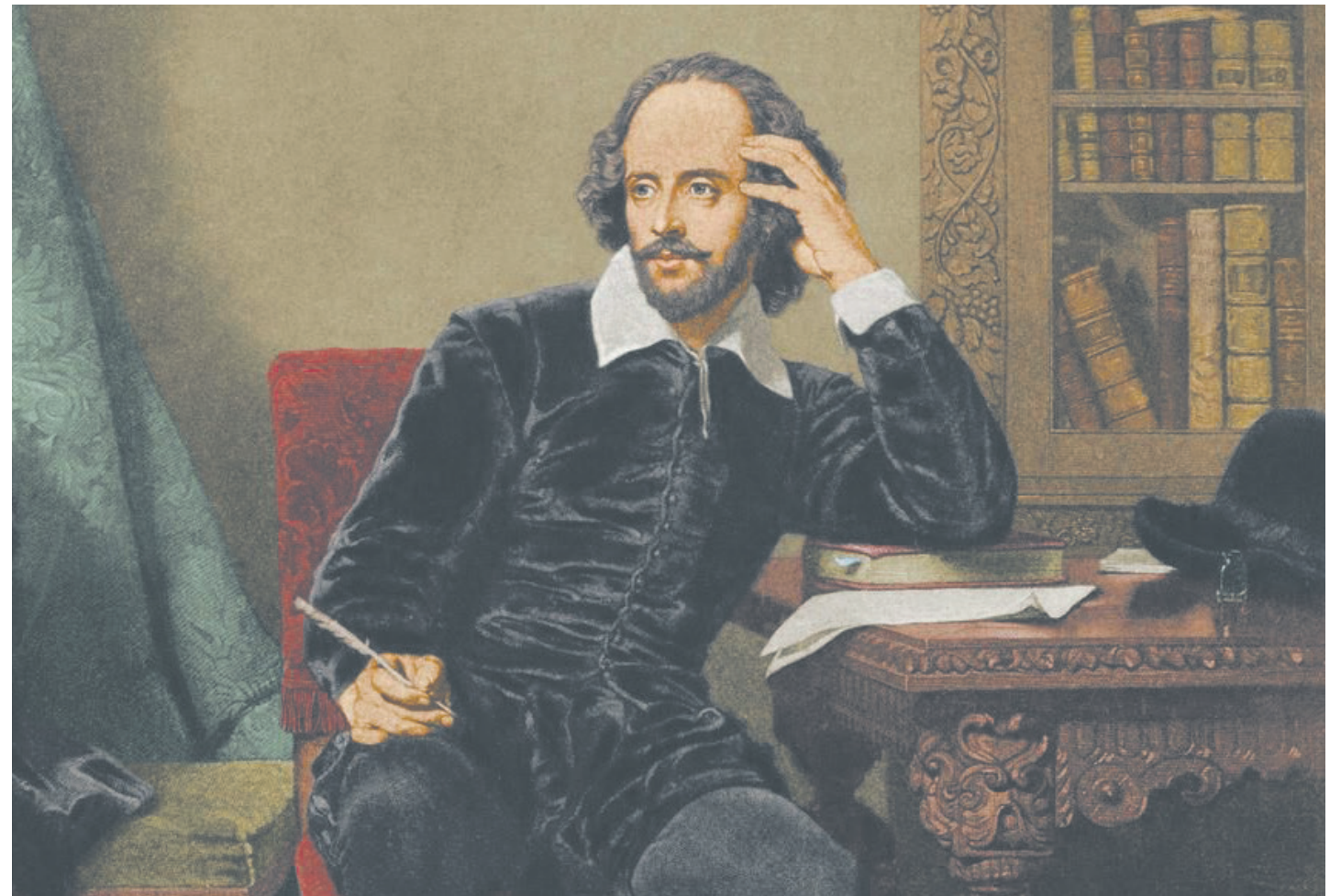


Image courtesy of **Pinterest**

off the back of his literary devices and tropes. The case can be made for Shakespeare to be studied in high schools.

However, the issue at hand is the divide between Shakespeare and contemporary literature. "Shakespeare is important, but the curriculum should be expanded so that students can gain a broader understanding of literature", remarks a grade 11 student. I would propose a chronological variation

of the English literature course, seeing the evolution of literature through time. Students could make parallels between Shakespeare's work and their favorite authors that way—effectively proving why Shakespeare is important.

"Shakespeare doesn't provide a full perspective on the world or writing", is a sentiment shared by another grade 11 student. It can be agreed that literature is volatile. Writing conventions will

change based on the environment of the writer. We view Shakespeare as 'prestigious'—his plays were written for the dirty minded elites, and the dialogue reflects that. Writing is not an objective form of expression, and constraining students' views on it is not beneficial to their literacy skills.

That's why it's all subjective. I'd rather keep Shakespeare in the curriculum, but that's just my opinion.

STUDENT LIFE

Four-day work week

How a shorter week could benefit students

Anisa Kaviani Maram
Contributor

Ever feel exhausted after a long week of school? Do you feel like you are constantly racing against the clock, trying to balance school, extracurricular activities, maybe a part-time job, and somehow have a social life? Think about all the things you could do if you had an extra day each week to catch up on everything. Well, that's what a four-day work week

means for high school students, and it's time we seriously consider it.

Think about how your weekends generally pass. Friday nights are for hanging out with friends, Saturdays are for trying to recharge, but before you know it, it's Sunday and you have to finish your 3 assignments due next week and study for 2 quizzes. Then, in the blink of an eye, it's Monday again, and the cycle repeats.

With an extra day off, we can finally reclaim some of that precious time we often sacrifice.

Picture it: an extended weekend where we can actually catch up on sleep, maybe try a new hobby, or simply enjoy a relaxing movie night. It's not just about having more free time — it's about improving our mental health and well-being.

A four-day work week can truly change the way we view school. With an extra day off, you could come back to class looking different from the zombies you usually see on Monday morning. Additionally, the extra time gives you the chance to try new things.

It's not only students who benefit from the change, teachers and staff could use the extra day to recharge too. Imagine how much more engaged and enthusiastic they could be in the classroom with a little extra time to themselves and with their families.

Obviously, there are many challenges and issues that would have to be fixed before this is possible, but isn't our well-being worth the effort? It's time to seriously consider a change when it prioritizes our overall quality of life.

STUDENT LIFE

Mandatory volunteering is an oxymoron

The pros and cons of community service

Isobel Coulthard
Contributor

No matter your course selection or post grad plan, we all need those 40 hours to get our diplomas, but why? The stated purpose of community service hours is to teach students their civic responsibility and how to give back and help their community. Volunteering is also seen as a great way to gain experience and provides a better world view.

However, some students see

it as a waste of time.

Some students think that forcing people to help others defeats the purpose of them choosing to do good and that volunteering should be undertaken by willing people who want to give back: making it mandatory only serves to create dislike for the activity.

However, without community service being a graduation requirement many students would go through their education without really thinking about or engaging with the societal problems surrounding them; Canada needs citizens who think about more than

just themselves. Also, some students need the incentive to get out there and start gaining important life skills; responsibility, organization, time management, and people skills.

Another point of contention is often the specific amount of time involved: 40 hours. Some say that it's too long and should only be limited to one "day" or "session" of volunteering and then students can decide to continue.

This is strongly contested by those who say that, compared to four years, 40 hours is a very manageable undertaking (essentially

only one full work week). There may even be benefits to increasing it to allow for the true impact and lessons to be realized by the students by establishing consistency and longer relationships with charities and organizations.

I found it useful to have the incentive to start community work at first as it really pushed me out of my comfort zone. However, beyond that, perhaps it should only be the students who are truly interested and invested in civic work who should get the credit for completing it.

features

SOCIAL TRENDS

The guilt of privilege: suffering as a "requirement"

Exploring the association of guilt with privilege

Justine Gaw
Contributor

Privilege and oppression have always existed in tandem, each resulting from each other in a vicious cycle of privilege oppressing one and benefiting another, maintaining the oppressive systems that allow this to occur. However, the occasional intersection of the privileged, the oppressed, or other marginalized groups, creates a subgroup that doesn't quite fit into either category. Thus, such individuals often face a unique mix of advantages and disadvantages due to their unique societal position. The privilege may come in elevated social statuses and access to opportunities not often afforded to such marginalized groups, while marginalization may manifest itself as being of such communities that often do not have access to these privileges. The exploration of the guilt that is subsequently placed on these privileged individuals for their advantage addresses the antiquated need for "suffering" to connect with one's identity.

Common rhetoric dictates that suffering and firsthand experience give one the right to speak about the general issues that the group that they identify with faces. While there is some truth regarding this, in that firsthand experience lends an insight and an investment that cannot easily be refuted, this expectation places an inordinate amount of guilt on individuals of

the same group who have not experienced the same levels of difficulty. They are often seen as ungrateful, with heavy connotations of naivete and insignificance surrounding the actions they take because "they simply don't understand." In this way, the guilt associated with the privilege of "not suffering" comes from external pressures, almost an expectation to feel guilty. People from the same minority group criticize those who speak about the hardships the group experiences as a whole and, in a way, discredit the right that the individual has to speak "for" the collective. More often than not, this occurs between those born into different countries, often more economically developed than the origin country for the group, and those born into the origin country, such as between immigrating generations. Another form of guilt, which may be rising in prevalence, is a form of internalized guilt often occurring as a result of, but not exclusively, from the aforementioned external pressures. This form of guilt often induces an identity crisis of some form, of not feeling like a "worthy" member of certain groups. Though there is some truth to the concept that experience forms identity, experience, or lack thereof, does not deny an individual their cultural heritage, and by extension, their identity. Overall, guilt due to privilege often is a result of a palpable rift between individuals of the same minority group who have significantly different levels of privilege, be it wealth, opportunities, social class, and so on.

It has previously been established that the expectation of suffering is fundamentally antiquated and inhumane but this does not render all forms of "guilt" unfounded. Privilege tends to blind individuals to the issues surrounding them, resulting in unused potential and a lost possibility for change. This is often because certain benefits can only be labeled as privileges when contrasted with the lack thereof these benefits. As such, should individuals be incapable of perceiving the societal imbalance that their privilege causes, they are typically blissfully unaware of the actions they can take to mitigate this imbalance. However, when awareness strikes them, guilt begins to set in, more often than immediate action. It is not unsubstantiated guilt in the way that ignorance is tacit support of the systems that cause divides between classes, but it is inherently useless guilt if not acted upon. Privilege narrows focus and guilt debilitates and all of these do nothing to incite change. Perhaps this has much to do with the issue of representation, that an individual feels pressured to "speak" for their community but they feel "unworthy" due to their mere second-hand understanding of the hardships that others face. Firsthand experience merely supplements these causes and allows for more targeted solutions; it does not give anyone more claim over their cultural or personal identity. It is vital to recognize that it is not any individual's responsibility to speak for anyone but themselves and if it is their choice to take ac-

tion to mitigate issues faced, then they have the right, if not the responsibility to do so.

Elements of privilege will always be present in an individual's experience, appearing in their conventional forms or not. These are simply the uneven cards that are dealt to us; we cannot validate or invalidate identity by privilege alone. The question of privilege should not be if it is deserved, but rather what can be done with it. Guilt will go nowhere but ignorance is by far the greater sin.

SOCIAL TRENDS

Looksmaxxing

Self Care Culture For Him™

Jack Wolkove
Section Editor

When I was a wee lad on the internet, I stumbled upon YouTube videos making fun of Reddit incel (involuntarily celibate) communities. This is exponentially better than having stumbled upon the actual communities in the wild, but has nonetheless melted my brain irreparably in some way. Now, imagine my surprise when my mind stew stumbled across words I used to solely associate with angry misogynistic men on the internet being used in TikToks in a different manner.

Looksmaxxing was originally used to describe a process in which men could alter their appearance to get women to be romantically attracted to them. According to the incel hypothesis, certain biological advantages allow some men more sexual success than others. There are the basics of height and muscle mass, but there are also deep cuts such as a carnal tilt (something to do with eye shape?), and wrist circumference (less than 7.5cm is no bueno, sorry brothers).

Since its disturbing origins, the word Looksmaxxing has evolved to be used as a masculine term for grooming and self-care. There is something to be said about men adopting habits women have been pressured into doing for decades. Purchasing skincare products and wearing makeup are things for which women have been both encouraged and ridiculed, teased for “trying too hard”. But now that guys are “allowed” to do it, now it’s cool. It’s quite comical really, that many guys in their mid-

late teens are teaching each other how to use face cleanser and moisturizer, while many girls have been exfoliating since 12.

Nowadays, the techniques are coming out of the wazoo! There’s the dieting and exercise, but there is also a personal favourite of mine, mewing. According to the American Association of Orthodontists, it’s when “a person presses their tongue to the roof of the mouth to make their jawline look tighter and slimmer”. This is too fantastic, in that it’s pure fantasy, in that it doesn’t work. Yet, it is truly the crown jewel of this digital establishment.

By observing some of the most popular Looksmaxxing TikToks, one can see that the perception of this practice ranges from humorous and mocking to more concerning behaviour. A lot of the judgments made about people’s appearance are attempted to be made objective by some standard. There are pictures outlining the distance between people’s eyes, the curvature of their jaws and noses, and measuring their cheekbones. At that point, it seems more worth it to just get off your phone and go to the gym, go on a walk, or call your grandma.

This is not new, of course: beauty standards have been rampant for longer than anyone of the Gen Z age group has been alive, it’s just our turn to take the wheel on the language used and what we deem important enough to obsess over. I’m not an expert, but I don’t think constantly comparing yourself to others and zeroing in on the features you hate most about yourself in pursuit of self-optimization is super healthy. On the other hand, Looksmaxxing influencers might be

Photo courtesy of **Jack Wolkove**

able to normalize more traditionally “feminine” behaviour in men, like encouraging diligent personal hygiene.

Perhaps this will save some middle school-aged boys from refusing to wash themselves properly for fear of being viewed as effemi-

nate. Self-acceptance, or at the very least tolerance, has been the more fulfilling route for me and probably many others. In the meantime, perhaps try Kindmaxxing, or Respectmaxxing, or Virtuemaxxing.

POLITICS

The inevitable doom of puppet democracies

and the role that colonization plays in such

Justine Gaw
Contributor

As any proper government system is, democracy, in its simplest definition, is a paradox. Derived from *demos* (people) and *kratos* (power), democracy is, simply put, a government standing on the will of the people. By definition, it cannot be the will of the majority, as democracy claims to hear the voice of the entire population, nor is it an autocracy or an oligarchy. Two basic principles define democracy: equality and individual autonomy. All opinions are put on the same level; everyone is equal, yet everyone is individual as well. It is vital to note that though

the Classical Athenians (5th-century B.C.E.) were credited with the first democracy, not all modern ideologies are derived directly from them, and many nations formed their own versions of democracy separate from the Athenian influence. Thus, democracy is more of a broad umbrella term than a specific government system, coming in as many variations as there are democratic nations. Keeping this in mind, in the interest of simplicity, this article will define democracy as a political system that prioritizes or otherwise factors in the vote of the general public in any way, shape, or form. As we attempt to make sense of the complex, varied political systems that share the name of democracy, one thing remains constant: a democracy is not a democracy if the

people cannot speak.

Despite the extrinsic differences between the democratic nations of today, democracy is not dissimilar to other forms of government in that it rises and falls, functioning or failing depending on the environment. In this way, we cannot directly credit the successes of democracy to its origins or otherwise accurately predict the political outcome based solely on this. The efficacy of democratic institutions is often directly affected by the state of the public, i.e., the prevalence of political literacy and other such factors. However, puppet democracies ensure that the public and their opinions are neglected, eliminating the entire premise of democracy in itself. We will then define puppet democra-

cies as government systems under the name of a democracy that does not truly factor in civilian voices. Note that this article will not be using the conventional definition of a “puppet government,” as the implications are that of a government controlled by outside forces, but rather defining “puppet democracies” as imitation democracies. We then recognize that civilians are purposefully deluded into believing in their right to choose as votes are forged and statistics falsified to place a puppet leader on the throne. It is vital to distinguish between a puppet democracy and a failed democracy, as a puppet democracy cannot be considered to be truly democratic. Perhaps it is stable, but when the people have no say in how their country is run, then democra-

cy is a delusion. A failed democracy may have collapsed under the many imbalances that can occur within the framework of democracy, but it will have been honest in the least. There are many overt examples of puppet democracies, such as that of modern-day Russia under Putin's regime, where opposing candidates often exist as puppets to delude global and domestic perceptions into believing that this authoritarian regime is a democracy, though elections are contrived. However, the more subtle puppet democracies often pose larger threats to the well-being of the people, as the effects on overall civilian freedom and autonomy are undetectable until the system collapses.

Consider the Philippines, considered to be the only Southeast Asian country that had never developed a centralized government before being subjected to Western colonialism. After 300 years of authoritarian rule, they gained their independence before being immediately recolonized by the United States, which imposed an authoritarian government on the nation again before placing a

puppet democracy as the government system, claiming to prioritize Philippine autonomy and "prepare" them for democratic self-government. However, the heavy-handed restrictions placed on the Philippines by the U.S. ensured that only the elite were equipped to lead the country, emphasizing the divide between civilians. Under the subsequent Japanese occupation, a puppet president was placed in charge of the Philippines, further delaying the formulation of a proper constitution. At this point, the Philippines was deeply affected by colonial influences and, with a government system that continued to favour the elite, slipped easily into an authoritarian government under former President Ferdinand Marcos Sr.'s rule, with regularly contrived election results and the antithesis of press freedom. The EDSA People Power Revolution overthrew the decade-long dictatorship, but it would be a long time before the Philippines reverted to any semblance of "normal." The years after Marcos Sr. were the years of political dynasties, of the elite representing the people, and it was only

recently, with former President Rodrigo Duterte, that the Filipino lower to middle class were represented by a leader for whom they truly voted. However, years of political illiteracy allowed the murderers on the throne and thousands, if not millions, of Filipino "drug addicts" to die in Duterte's succeeding drug war. In the present day, with the election of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., the Philippines continues in its old cycles of political dynasties. The world sits by as its ever-weakening political system threatens to crack under Duterte's continual threats to the unity of the nation, Marcos's shifting foreign policy, and the general effects of a puppet democracy begin to learn their true nature.

The Philippines walks with the crutch of the "white man's burden," a concept used by the United States and various European countries to bring the "barbarism" so prevalent in other nations to civilization, serving as a justification for colonization. This nation and its current downfall are fascinating case studies of a puppet government turned puppet democracy,

of how colonial control metamorphosed into elitist control, a tragedy of a nation tripping over all that "helped" it. Essentially, the white man's burden acted as the catalyst for the Philippine government to crumble, setting the stage for the introduction of democracy but also removing any hand that the majority of the people would have had in shaping their own democracy, turning it from an autocracy to an oligarchy wearing the face of democracy.

Perhaps when we consider the Philippines against the broad backdrop of other proclaimed democratic nations, we see no anomaly, but when we turn back to the original values of democracy, equality, and individual autonomy, we realize how skewed our perception of democracy itself has become. However, this then begs the question: how many of our democracies are puppet democracies? How many of the ideals of a free government where the people's voice matters are delusions of grandeur?

GEOGRAPHY

Nine-dash line: territorial disputes in the South China Sea

How conflicts in South China Sea can impact the world

Justine Gaw
Contributor

Ownership as well as the right to access the natural resources of the South China Sea has been heavily disputed for centuries. Bordered by China in the north, Taiwan and the Philippines in the east, Malaysia and Brunei in the south, and Vietnam in the east, this portion of the Pacific Ocean is abundant with natural resources as well as crude oil and fossil fuels under the seabed, serving also as a popular route for ships to pass through. Thus, the sea plays a vital role in the economies of the coastal regions that border it, leading to the race between countries to lay claim to the veritable treasure lying between them. There are two aspects to this conflict: the claims to the largely uninhabited archipelagoes of islets within the South China Sea and the claims to the waters themselves. Currently, Vietnam, the Philippines, and China have been the most vocal in their claims, with significant overlap between claims.

The earliest evidence found of historic navigation of the South China Sea dates back to the Sa Huynh civilization predating Vietnam, with Sa Huynh artifacts found in Taiwan, the Philippines, and Malaysia, dating back to 1000 BCE. In contrast, China's claims to the South China Sea date back

since 200 BCE, with "evidence of ancient crops, wells, houses, temples, tombs, and inscriptions left by Chinese fishermen on some of the islands and reefs of the South China Sea islands." Such claims have been passed down through successive governments, with the Kuomintang in the 1920s and more recently, the People's Republic of China in the late 1950s. However, it has been shown that while Chinese activity was prevalent in the South China Sea from 200 BCE to the 1200s CE, Vietnam has procured route maps dating back to a similar time frame, establishing the similar prevalence of Vietnamese activity. The Paracel and Spratly islands, two largely uninhabited archipelagos in the South China Sea, were subsequently occupied by France in 1932, then Imperial Japan in 1939. Upon signing the Treaty of San Francisco in 1951,

control over the islands was relinquished and Vietnam claims that the states attending the conference recognized its sovereignty over the islands. During this time however, the PRC made its claims to the islands as well, but its claims to the waters were first explicitly drawn out by the Kuomintang with the "eleven-dashed line", a claim inherited and subsequently revised to be the "nine-dash line" by the PRC.

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) was signed on December 10, 1982 and ratified soon after by numerous Member States, notably China, the Philippines, and Vietnam. This convention aimed to outline the laws surrounding territorial claims to the sea and the natural resources within it, as well as regulating the overall utilization of the oceans and the involved resources. Article 57 of the UNCLOS

states that the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of Member States extends 200 nautical miles beyond a nation's territorial sea, which extends 12 nautical miles from the coastlines. The nation is fully sovereign over their territorial sea (i.e. control over airspace, surface waters, underwater resources), but only has sovereign rights over their EEZ (i.e. rights below the surface of the sea). The UNCLOS is the basis for much of the Philippine and Vietnamese claims and subsequent dispute over the South China Sea, though the overlap of the two Member States' EEZs are less significant than the overlapping historical claims to the Spratly Islands.

The UNCLOS and the historical claims of these three countries to the waters and the archipelagos within the South China Sea consist of the current foundation of the issue. Much of China's present-day claims to the waters stand on the basis of history, which, as ruled by the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, does not constitute a legal basis. Despite this, China continues to maintain their claim on the South China Sea and the land features within it through the nine-dash line, a dashed line extending to encompass the near-entirety of the South China Sea and claim it as China's EEZ, though it extends well beyond the 200 nautical mile limit. China then attempts to reinforce their claims to the waters by drawing



Photo courtesy of **Business Insider**

their baseline at the coastlines of the Paracel and Spratly archipelagos, which has been recently disproved due to the uninhabitable nature of these islands. Vietnam's claims to the waters largely follow the EEZ regulations, though it is extended to encompass the Paracel Islands and the Spratly Islands, to which Vietnam maintains historic claims. The Philippines likewise claims only a portion of the South China Sea through its EEZ, laying no claim to the Paracel Islands but claiming a portion of the Spratly archipelago as the Kalayaan Islands on the basis of history.

The historical claims to the land features involved are not under the jurisdiction of the UNCLOS and as such, there is no concrete resolution in sight due to the coveted natural resources within and surrounding these islands. However, much discourse remains over the

waters in question, with stand-offs between military and fishing vessels, escalations from low to medium level conflicts, and collisions between the aforementioned vessels. Action has been taken to further ratify legal claims, such as the 2016 UNCLOS Arbitral Panel award, in which it was ruled that the Philippines maintained accurate, legal claims towards the waters involved in the EEZ, as the Spratly Islands concerned within the EEZ could not generate an EEZ of their own. Furthermore, the Tribunal ruled China's actions to be illegal, be it the violation of Philippine sovereign rights, the interference of traditional fishing rights, and the exploitation and destruction of maritime features and resources. Further progress, however, remains sluggish at best, with the limited breadth of solutions such as the Code of Conduct between

China and ASEAN Member States and the reluctance of Beijing to engage in multilateral discourse regarding the topic. This may be affected as well by the sudden shift of the foreign policy of the Philippines as the presidential election turned the Philippines from a pro-China stance to a pro-USA stance. The Philippines and Vietnam have, however, recently agreed to promote cooperation between coast guards and partner on adjacent security initiatives to prohibit further escalation of the conflict.

Though the larger-scale conflicts previously plaguing the maritime vessels have died down, the current and possible effects of this dispute continue to threaten not only the socioeconomic states of the countries involved but also the global trade circuit as a whole, as the South China Sea remains a popular trade route among shipping

vessels. Furthermore, individual livelihoods and the fishing industry in the Philippines are significantly impacted by the standoffs occurring around the reefs and near the islands, limiting access to natural resources. This conflict will not be resolved if all nations involved continue in their ambiguous claims to the islands and by extension, the waters, with the potential of escalating into larger conflicts that will devastate the economies of the LEDCs involved as well as the coveted natural resources in question. Ambiguity and individuality are the antithesis of progress and it is imperative that the ASEAN nations involved ensure that their claims to the waters are on legal bases and that China acknowledge their violation of Part V of the UNCLOS and clarify their claims on the waters with the international community.

LITERATURE

Literary criticism in school as the desecration of art: how then should we critique?

Write what you want to but not how you want to

Justine Gaw
Contributor

The written word is often manifested as a form of outright communication, of overt explanation, of a simple, plain way to say what you mean. So often, we consider language to simply be a collection of nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs that we string together into a narrative due to the way we were taught. Writing is then boiled down into little mosaic tiles that tell a story only when viewed from afar. As such, we know to read past the words, to claw out the meaning, and to leave the writing as the superfluous packaging. This is to the detriment of literature, and the written word as an art form. The words themselves hold individual value, and it is this value that crafts the story. In literary criticism, we are taught to separate art from its medium, but what is art without a medium?

Much of how we consider literature and other forms of writing stems from how we are taught to write. There is a way to write formally and correctly with proper grammar and syntax so that each word flows together with uniform cohesion. An essay should have an introduction, body, and conclusion, just as a story should have an exposition, a rising action, a climax, a falling action, and a denouement. Like most paradigms, there is some semblance of truth behind these arbitrary rules. "Bad" writing exists in its own form. Just because a piece does not follow traditional structure doesn't mean it should automatically be classified as "inefficient", "bad", or the other terms

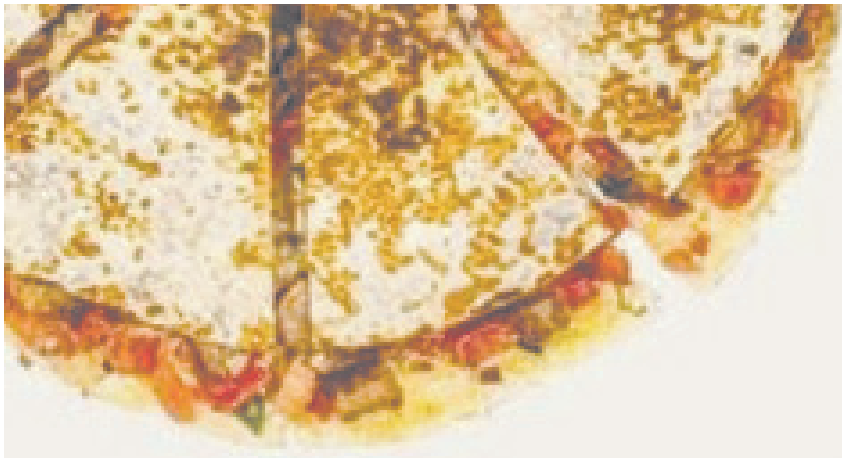
we use to degrade forms of writing that are unorthodox. However, this fear of "bad" writing inhibits our ability to explore the written word, consequently inhibiting our ability to view the written word as a fluid medium. Rather, we've begun to perceive it as a strict set of rules to follow. Thus, we are conditioned to reshuffle words and sentences like a sick game of Scrabble. We apply this mindset to reading, where we search for what the author is saying, disregarding how they choose to say it. Write what you want to, as the rule seems to be, but not how you want to. We then become especially adept at reading critically, though only when the writing is comprehensible and comes in neat pills that are easy to swallow. This proves an issue because our understanding of the text becomes severely limited by our inability to fully immerse ourselves in the style of writing, and learn why the author writes in the way they do. If we cannot read fully, then how can we criticize adequately?

Appreciation of art does not mean a commentary devoid of all analysis and criticism but rather a fundamental respect for the perception of the art and its context. Criticism has its merits in literature and is considered an art in its own right, but only when the subject matter of the criticism is considered art as well, as detailed in *The Anatomy of Criticism* by Northrop Frye. This entails an inherent respect for the art form and all the components that construct it. However, respect for an art form is inversely proportional to the level of "relatability" it has with an audience. When dealing with visual forms of art, often more respect is elicited because of the awe it inspires, ascribing to the

school of thought that associates difficulty with impressiveness. As such, literature is more often than not regarded with the mindset that "anyone can write," and while valued for the messages behind it, it may not be inherently considered with the same respect as "traditional" forms of art. This lack of respect thus warps our ability to criticize literature with the appreciation it deserves, leading to a skip down the steps of criticism and straight to judgment. When we break down critique, we note two major components: judgment and comprehension. Judgment is perhaps the most visible aspect of criticism, often seen as a scathing review or a detailed commentary on the effectiveness of a work. Judgment is certainly a vital aspect of criticism, as it promotes discourse regarding the effectiveness of the work, but standing alone, it contains undertones of disdain for the work, shutting down discussion rather than inviting it. Unfortunately, in the field of amateur literary criticism, judgment is hardly fettered but rather allowed to control the direction of the critique, producing a gruesome desecration of the work standing on the basis of opinion alone with no effort to evaluate the work in the context of which it was made. Comprehension is what lends criticism the objective nature it requires, redirecting the blow of judgment and turning criticism from an inherently self-centred action to an introspective, genuine art in its own right. To allow a piece to take you to the worlds and ideas that it contains is to allow the piece to interpret itself and to establish how it stands on its own in the grand scheme of things. To comprehend is to learn the special lan-

guage that a work speaks, to converse fluently with the writing, and to wholly know the stories it tells. Only then can we deliver judgment, and only then does the criticism become art.

There remains the antiquated belief that criticism determines if a work is "good" or "bad," but how "good" a work of art is is not determined by external factors but rather by the author themselves. Rainer Maria Rilke, in *Letters to a Young Poet*, states that art is good when it has arisen out of necessity, when the artist would rather die than not create the work. Thus, art, in its barest definition, is the catalyst for a chain reaction of responses, born from the primordial need to express. Criticism plays an integral part in this reaction, matching the passion of the work it responds to and setting the stage for further discourse. Like all nuanced things, critique is a balance between personal preference and objective observation. What is the author trying to say, how does the author say it, how can we interpret this, and is this effective? In this way, criticism manifests itself as a unique form of art, building purely on the work in question, with its strengths lying in the way that it is intertwined with the art. There is an order we like our world to be in, a comfort in a black-and-white sense of right and wrong, good and bad, positive and negative. When we apply this view to literature, we place rules above expression, withhold respect for the art form, and judge, rather than criticize.



Z-TECA MEXICAN EATERY EGLINTON
40 Eglinton Ave East

Student Special

15% OFF

z-teca Mexican Eatery Eglinton
for North Toronto students & staff.

Burritos | Bowls | Salads | Tacos
Quesadillas | Breakfast | Catering

Follow @z_teca for GIVEAWAYS & PRIZES



*Proof of school ID required

SOCIAL TRENDS

Fictional revolutions

The role they play in real life

Justine Gaw
Contributor

As history flows in its cyclic motions, revolution and the desire for fundamental change resonate within various cultures across the globe, whether they are influenced by each other or not. Revolution, commonly seen as a violent usurpation of existing political systems, is not always manifested as physical uprisings. Ideological revolutions and industrial revolutions, to name a few, stand on the principle of drastic change, a complete reformation of existing systems. Often romanticized, the concept of revolution appeals to our individuality and the desire to go against the flow as well as our yearning to stand with peers and face challenges as a collective. There is something so inherently appealing about rising up as a collective and making such a significant impact on society that it remains forever changed. As all romanticized concepts do, revolutions find their way into literature, be it the dreams of rebellious teenagers yearning to make a difference, contemplative historians reflecting on past revolutions, or present revolutionaries hoping to relight the idea of change once more. Often seen as a reflection of real life as well as ideologies and desires, literature provides a fascinating glimpse into the world of revolutions, what they were, and what they could have been.

Consider *El Filibusterismo* (*The Reign of Greed*), the follow-up novel to Jose Rizal's *Noli Me Tangere* (*The Social Cancer*), as a focus. Set three hundred years after the Spaniards first landed in the Philippines, *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo* by extension explore the injustices faced by the Filipinos by the Catholic church as well as colonial rule in general. *Noli Me Tangere* serves as a buildup of tension, with *El Filibusterismo* serving as its release. *El Filibusterismo* depicts not one major revolution, but multiple, with varying degrees of success. The first revolution was more action towards reform than an overt uprising, manifested in the form of an institution: the *Akademya ng Wikang Kastila* or *The Castilian Academy*, proposed by Filipino upper-class university students hoping to address the language barrier between Filipinos and the Spaniards. The *Akademya ng Wikang Kastila* was not a revolution in the conventional sense but it was considered a radical proposition in its time. Thus, the government, instated by the Spaniards, sensed the potential for the spread of education to become an intellectual revolution, when so

much of their reign over the Filipinos was supplemented by their control over the access that the Filipino people had over educational resources. Thus, the *Akademya ng Wikang Kastila* was dissolved and the students behind it imprisoned. The second revolution in the novel was one of personal motivation, spurred on by Simoun, the main character, and his desire to exact revenge on the Catholic church that had his father executed and forced him to flee the Philippines. He returns later on with a separate identity and formulates a plan to upend the influences of the Catholic church. His plan falls through, with those implicit in his revolution captured, and his name revealed to

Filipinos to the same social class as the Spaniards, we question why the academic revolution did not succeed, why he didn't paint a picture of hope and what could have been, and instead tore the carpet from under the readers and outlined its failure in broad strokes. This boils down to the purpose of his novel. *Noli* and *El Fili* were never meant to inspire hope in a dark world, they were to open the reader's eyes to the world that was their reality. A successful revolution would be all well and good in a world where the people are hyper-aware of the injustices, a world like today where hope is a necessity, but the Filipinos were unaware of the world that they faced for it was simply the

need to, that the Filipinos would revolt in their own way, but he gave what advice he could. A successful revolution, after all, is worthless if it is fictional, but a failed fictional revolution is built on the patterns and premonitions of history.

Other works address revolutions in retrospect, as a retelling or as a hypothetical, of what such revolutions would have been. As such, these fictional revolutions serve as interpretations of history, primarily as hindsight, rather than aiming to induce revolution as well. *Animal Farm* by George Orwell represents the Russian Revolution of 1917, and while it is not a "historically accurate" representation of the actual chronological events of the revolution, it serves to reframe the ideologies of revolution itself into comprehensible terms, providing haunting insight into the promises that all revolutions fail to keep and the historical revisionism that occurs without any notice. R.F. Kuang's *Babel* conversely represents a nearly entirely fictional revolution that serves as a hypothetical, set during the British Empire, but with distinctly fantastical elements. She creates a world in which language is a commodity, another product that could be bought and sold, of which to be profited off. The translators stolen from their home countries revolt and bring the empire to its knees, if just for a moment. This revolution is of pure speculation, but it manages to capture the magnitude of the injustices that the British Empire committed to its colonies and the still-existing prevalence of pretentious institutions and the impact of such. *Babel* plays into the strengths of speculative fiction well by allowing the ideologies and messages to bleed into the present day and haunt the antiquated systems of today, serving not as an overt call for revolution, as *El Fili* did, but rather as a persisting question of what can we do now?

The beauty of fictional revolutions is that they never have to be an unbiased representation of fact. They call to the readers, be they revolutions long dead, the fresh hopes of a new revolution, or revolutions that have never existed and may never exist. They hold the advantage of near-universal allure, of inherent change, and who would ever turn down the call to right the wrongs of this world? Fictional revolutions impact society just as much as true revolutions do, save for the fact that perhaps the best revolutions in fiction are those that have failed, cadavers open for dissection. It is said that we never truly learn from history, but we can learn from fiction as fiction learns from history.

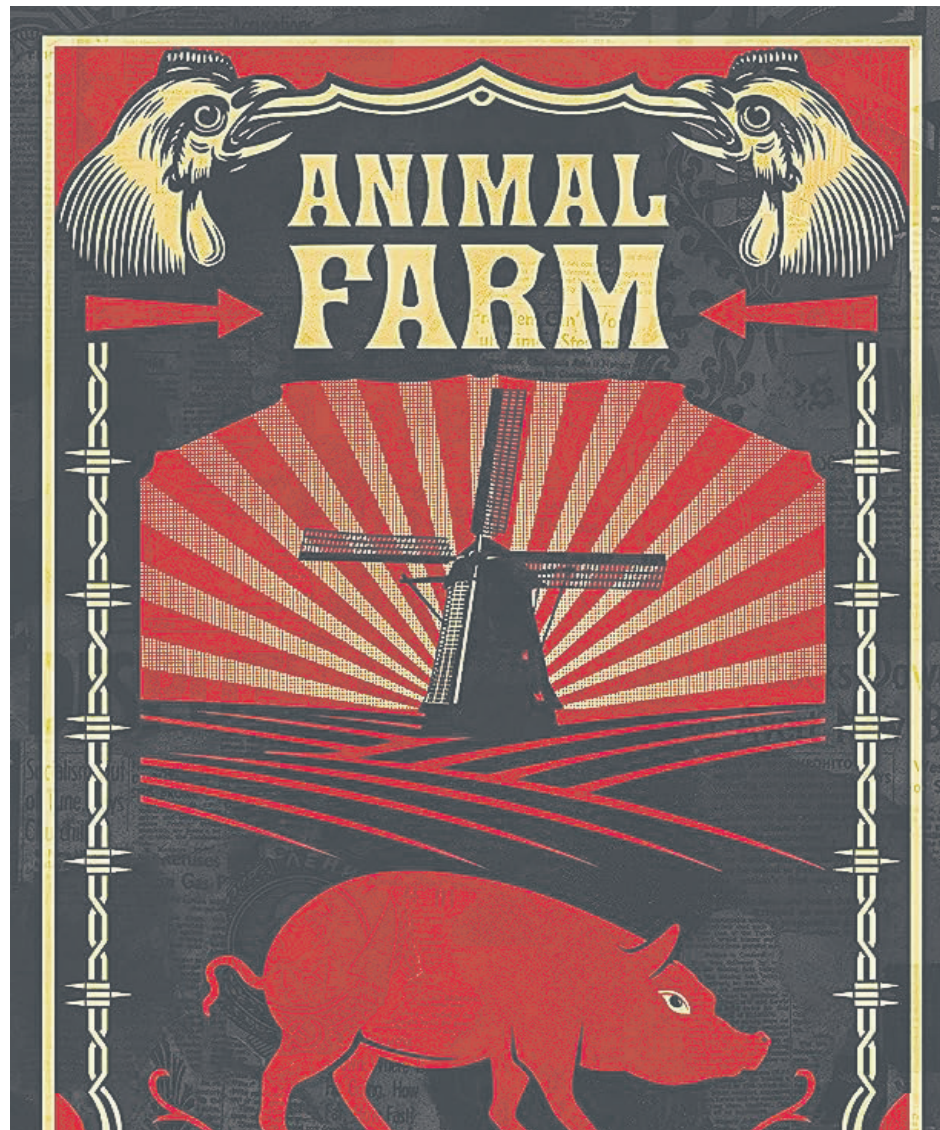


Image courtesy of Amazon

the government. This revolution adheres to more conventional definitions of resistance, with the intent of overthrowing an authority.

Rizal wrote *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo* with the intention of inciting reform in the Philippines. He writes not with the purpose of a bloody revolution, and this is clear in the values that are presented with the two main revolutions occurring. The *Akademya ng Wikang Kastila* and Simoun's revolution contrast significantly with each other in ideologies yet they share the same endings; utter failure. The revolutionaries all end up imprisoned or in Simoun's case, dead by his own hand. However, considering that Rizal stood firmly against outright revolution and instead for societal and legislative reform and the elevation of

world they knew. The failed revolutions were the fuse to the flame that the ideals behind the novel lit, connecting it to the people just in the way where it would strike the hardest and resonate the longest. With his revolutions, Rizal asks the what-if questions, presents hopes and dreams to the readers, and then crushes them beneath his heel because what else would the Spaniards have done? There was an underlying message of caution to the Filipinos, to not approach revolution in these ways because the repercussions would be far greater than the benefits. He used the failed revolutions as fuel to the emerging sparks of anger to the injustice, but a cautionary tale, to not be brash, and to act carefully. Rizal could not predict the revolutions that would work and perhaps he knew he didn't

STUDENT LIFE

Boardom begone!

The hidden gem of NTCI's club community

Tori Wilson
Contributor

Since their first appearance in roughly 2,600- 2,400 B.C., board games have been enriching family game nights worldwide. From Monopoly to Risk, the ways to end your friendships are endless! But in all seriousness, board games are a fantastic way to foster positive relationships that keep players coming back for more. In a December 2022 study, the global board game market was estimated to be worth between 11 and 13.4 billion dollars. With the rise in digital media, surely something isn't adding up, right? Surprisingly enough, the current increase in board game popularity makes a lot of sense.

A familiar fad to many, the pandemic fostered a perfect environment for board games to thrive. People were bored, and while contact bubbles were limited, game possibilities were endless. Yet the need for strong, frequent social bonding persists, even in a post-pandemic world. Studies prove that repeated, constructive social interaction has a highly positive impact on humans, not only reducing anxiety and depression but

also lengthening life span. Humans are inherently social creatures, and if it means hunkering down and playing Cards Against Humanity with Grandma to keep sane.

Enter Scrabble Club, a bustling hub of excitement despite its seemingly dull subject matter. Every Monday, Ms. Grondin's English room comes alive with the sound of flipping dictionary pages and spirited debate on why one's "very real word" should count. Not even Dr. Lee could rip the triple word scores out of an attendee's cold, stubborn, scrabbled hands. (That's an official word in the Scrabble dictionary!) Scrabble Club originated in 2022 by a former NT student, Andrea Forth, who approached the club's current staff advisor, Ms. Grondin, with the idea. Scrabble Club's continued success, however, goes far deeper than what initially meets the eye. Having only been formed a year prior, there wasn't a particularly infamous name made for the Monday lunch group despite Andrea's efforts. She was described as "very invested in it. She put a lot of effort into making it inclusive and trying to get more people to come, and I think she wanted to pass it on. Not to just let it die."

Luckily enough, her enthusiasm wasn't lost upon two people who reciprocated similar feelings

of passion towards Scrabble, Jake Harrison and Guillermo Fernandez, the current heads. With the transfer of ownership, they've not only sustained the club but also Andrea's legacy. It has a highly dedicated and consistent attendance base. One of this year's new members is grade twelve student Kayla Vanek who described her attraction to Scrabble Club; "I have friends there! Just thinking about Scrabble Club in school gives me a break from the rest of my day... I don't have to think." This sentiment extends to staff as well as Ms. Grondin remarked, "I think it's really nice to have opportunities to socialize with people. Especially when there's something that you can focus on, so even if you're a little bit shy you can still be included because you can play the game... and you know, nobody gets hurt playing Scrabble." (Many would beg to differ, have you ever almost won a game of Scrabble?)

But, what keeps players coming back seems to be most strongly associated with the bonds they form with their peers rather than the game itself, which is both fantastic and unfortunate. When asked about opinions surrounding Scrabble, Minuette Waugh, a grade eleven NTCI student, said "I feel as though Scrabble is a bit

too organized." but would "100% join" if Bananagrams (a slightly more freeform version of Scrabble) were added to the club. Carol Porto, a grade nine NTCI student, went on record claiming, "I don't really like Scrabble, it's my least favorite... me and my friends, we all don't like it." Regardless of some negative feelings, some suggest it's worth a round. Vanek has "tried to herd people into Scrabble Club. And they're always like, 'Who plays Scrabble?' or, 'Why Scrabble? Scrabble isn't fun!' Like no, it's so fun! ...(It's only disliked) because it's Scrabble. Which is seen as an older game for older people."

So what's the truth, is Scrabble really that formative of an experience? Or is it exclusively for the old souls that roam the halls? I hate to say it, but that answer is for you to decide. Scrabble Club truly is what you make of it, both in friendships and word scores. Meaning, if you happen to find yourself free next Monday looking for something to do, consider peeking into 218! Because most importantly, you'll never know until you try. But don't take it from me, in the wise words of Kayla Vanek;

"Live, Laugh, Scrabble."



business & tech

MUSIC

In defence of Apple Music

It's not that bad

Rowan Boswell
Section Editor

Every November 29th, Spotify Wrapped comes out, and everyone posts their music from the past year—everyone except Apple Music users. Many Apple Music users will then share their unhappiness and embarrassment over their exclusion. However, I would argue they have no need to feel shame. I plan to prove Apple Music is the better listening plat-

form. Firstly, Apple Music has spatial audio, which leads to a more immersive listening experience. The spatial audio option tracks the listener's head movements and adjusts instrument placement, vocal harmonies, and background supports. Though this might be hard to understand, when trying this feature on Apple Music, the difference is clear and replicates a live listening experience. This is great, as people can be more immersed in their favourite artists' music. Secondly, Apple Music also integrates much more seamlessly with Apple

products. It's easier to customize your phone with Apple Music, and you are able to see friends' Apple Music profiles through their iCloud accounts. Thirdly, if you are looking to support a small or new artist, Apple Music is the way to go. They pay around double per stream, as does Spotify. Spotify pays around \$.003-.005 per stream, while Apple Music gives about \$.01 per stream. Though these are small numbers, the difference can create a huge change in a new artist's career. Finally, most people care the most about prices, and in this case, Apple

Music is still the better option. Apple Music is \$9.99 a month, while Spotify Premium (without ads) is \$15-16 per month. Users with other Apple subscriptions can bundle and save a ton by getting Apple Music, Apple TV+, Apple Arcade, and iCloud+ with 50GB of storage for \$14.99. Deals like this make Apple the more economical option. Apple Music provides superior sound, better artist support, and more cost-efficiency. In conclusion, while you may be missing out on Spotify, everyone should still take a good look at Apple Music.

arts & lifestyle

MOVIES

Is Marvel doomed?

Marvel movies before and after Endgame

Sabine Jalil
Contributor

The superhero genre has been pretty saturated over the past few decades, mainly thanks to Marvel Entertainment. Marvel has been the dominant producer of superhero comic blockbuster films for almost 20 years. They have had international success with nearly every film they've produced, garnering widespread attention and acclaim. They produced one of the highest-grossing films of all time, *Avengers: Endgame*, which is still one of their two most critically acclaimed. Marvel remains one of the most prestigious studios in Hollywood to date. However, it looks like all that may have been changing due to recent developments in the last 4 years.

Its latest blockbuster, *Madame Web* (2024), has already been widely disparaged for its terrible quality overall, and is on track to be the most lampooned work of Marvel's since the fiasco that was *Morbidity* (2022). *Madame Web* is a film depicting the origin story of one of Spiderman's little-known allies, Cassandra Webb, and her journey to becoming Madame Web. The film's initial critical response so far has been predominantly negative, producing over \$25 million at its opening weekend, a record low for a studio that used to make movies that raked in hundreds of millions on its opening weekends. So what's going on?



Photo courtesy of Marvel

Since *Avengers: Endgame*, the majority of primary characters have been killed off or retired to be replaced by new characters to take up the mantle (ie: Hulk being replaced by She-Hulk, Captain America being replaced by Falcon etc.). The debut of most of the new replacements has been either highly criticized or mostly ignored. Few have been welcomed with open arms and are yet to win the hearts of fans.

One glaring issue that may be a key cause of Marvel's recent dip in quality is the speed with which they have been producing new content. In the last 4 or so years, Marvel has seen a significant uptake in the quantity of content that they have been producing, with both their TV shows and movies with a notably mixed reception. They've been churning out movies and episodes so constantly that it's

likely that it's taking a toll on its staff – overworked employees tend not to produce good-quality results most of the time. From 2008, their conception, to 2018, Marvel was producing about 1-2 movies a year – and it has only steadily increased from then on, releasing 3-4 movies a year now, and that's not counting the many TV shows they've spawned since the dawn of the 2020s. Currently, there are about 11 new projects they're working on at the same time – it is apparent that the pressure is there for many of Marvel's employees.

Avid fans and critics alike have noted that *Avengers: Endgame* would have served better as a finale to the entire Marvel series, and a good note for the franchise to end and disband on – but of course, with Marvel being Disney Co.'s most profitable subsidiary (especially in the last few years),

it would have been unfortunate to lose the chance to milk as much profit as possible from it. Criticisms of Marvel's current state are only becoming more prevalent amongst fans, critics and casual moviegoers, and it is clear that something with Marvel has to change – or continue the cycle of low-quality production that they've kept up with the last few years.

With the new *Deadpool & Wolverine* film next up, despite the popularity and success of the *Deadpool* franchise, there is not a lot of hope for the upcoming Marvel movies. The mediocre quality of their recent output has dampened many fans' hopes of seeing another one of the familiar spectacular blockbusters that they used to know. Some projects have done well even with the mediocrity of most of the recent movies, for example, the success of *Loki* (2021-2023), which indicates that all is not lost yet for the studio.

The careful craftsmanship of the previous *Avengers* movies (mainly the pre-*Endgame* movies) still shines through even upon re-watch, and it's clear that Marvel has set themselves a high bar to clear as they venture further into this new era of Marvel movies. They may have had a rough beginning (which may be ironic to say, as it's already been 6 years) but the few good movies they've had since (*Spiderman: No Way Home* and *Guardians of the Galaxy 3*) show that some of that spark of creativity and quality is still there in Marvel – they're not doomed yet.

FASHION

Grammys fashion review

The titans of the music industry and their sadistic stylists

Logan Proulx
Editor-In-Chief

Rowan Boswell
Section Editor

The Grammys was a night of lots of notable moments. The red carpet was just one of the times that had viewers impressed or slightly confused. Here are a few looks that caught our eye that need some discussion.

Taylor Swift

We'd like to preface this by saying we love and respect Taylor. This year's Grammys was rough for Ms. Americana, and we applaud her for pulling herself up and carrying the Super Bowl ratings on her back. With the trigger warning out of the way, this look is botched. Show-stealing? Sure! Show-stopping? That's a stretch. Schiaparelli is bowing her head in shame. This should be a wake-up call to her fans, reminding them you can't take the millennial out of the girl. The outfit feels disingenuous, almost like it's trying too hard to emulate Reputation Taylor. Anyone else getting an Ashley vibe? Taylor, what long gloves you have! "All the better to forcefully drag Lana Del Ray on stage and congratulate her for losing." And what a strong side part you have! "All the better to ice Celine Dion back into retirement." It's not all bad though. Using Lana Del Ray as an accessory really helped make the white of her dress pop!



Lana Del Ray

Appropriately dressed in all black to the event, Lana Del Ray was mourning the loss of her Grammys. Robbed goddess. If we were nominated for 11 Grammys and lost every single one, we'd go with funeral chic too. The bangs were a choice and helped to pull the alt vibe together à la that goth kid from *Horton Hears a Who*. We also appreciate her choice of gloves, which appear to be made of the same material as her infamous mesh COVID mask! It's the little things. Although she couldn't pull out the win, Lana proved once again to be the breakout star of the Grammys, serving glambot attitude in the process. Will she ever win a Grammy? We have faith. With a face card like hers, she'll be running the *Tortured Poet's Department* like the Navy.



Ice Spice

"Are you ready for a lesson in fashion?"

Anna Wintour gulped.

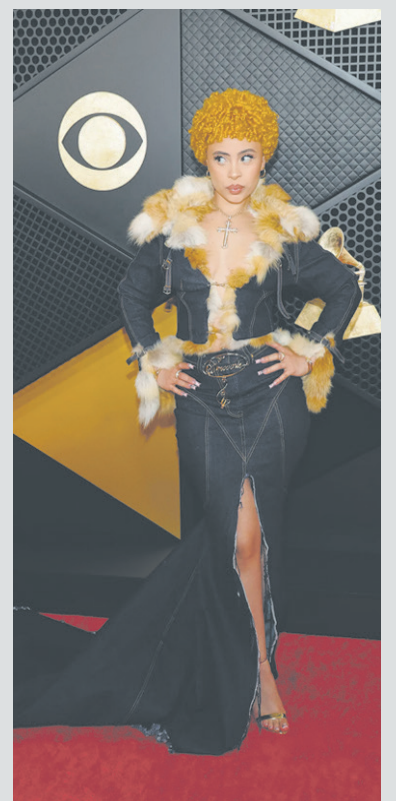
Coco Chanel nodded.

Karl Lagerfeld shuddered.

Christian Dior blinked nervously.

"Yes Ice Spice," they said in unison.

Some say roadkill. We say her best red carpet look to date. For her Grammys debut, Ice Spice donned custom Baby Phat, a Y2K brand popular circa 20 years ago, forgotten to the hands of time. The look was custom-made and fitted for Ice Spice as an homage to past icons from the Bronx. The fur and denim ensemble is also a teaser for her upcoming sophomore album—Y2K. We're gagged. Showstopping, incredible, never before seen, iconic, fashion-forward, trendy, hip, and chic are all sobriquets the media has given to Spice, and for once, we agree. The streets are saying Isis Naija Gaston is our generation's short-haired misunderstood female fashion icon, a new people's princess.



Doja Cat

Doja Cat stayed silent when asked, “Who are you wearing?” on the Grammys red carpet. Rather than speaking, she knelt slightly to gesture her forehead to the press. There it was. The name Dilara Findikoglu, the dress’ designer, tattooed right below her hairline. Looking camp right in the eye. The dress itself is very flattering on Doja Cat; however, many eagle-eyed viewers remarked how the outfit was a departure from the “satanist undertones” of the artist’s recent looks. @Amy4dams on Twitter remarked “She looks tired </3” and many fans seem to share the same sentiment that Doja Cat may have lost her spark, citing her Grammys outfit as an example. We couldn’t disagree more with the critiques and think this outfit is a return to form. So glad she ditched the vape and cat ears (or at least left them at home).



Ed Sheeran

Where’s your outfit?



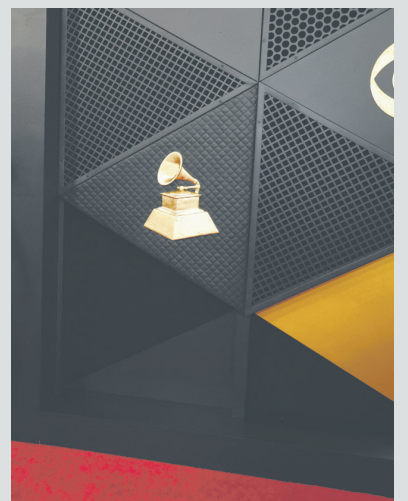
21 Savage

We’re bored, 21 Savage, we’re bored. As big fans of his, we can confidently say that his well has run dry. Every single year since 2018, he has worn a variation of the same outfit to the Grammys. Black sunglasses with a black coat (usually with some sort of ornate lining) overtop a black shirt, wearing black dress pants and black shoes. We appreciate the addition of the gloves, but he’s giving us scraps to work with. We won’t hold that against him, though, considering most men wear the same outfit every year. Sleek, well-tailored, and unoriginal. That’s the company line.



Harry Styles

Absent, as expected. Attending the Grammys must not happen to “people like [him]” very often. Shame. We would’ve liked to see him at least attempt to recover from last year’s Grammys trainwreck. Then again, maybe last year was an eye-opener for Styles. Could his absence at the Grammys indicate his detachment from the music industry and any future album releases? Fingers crossed! We think he’s in a good spot right now. Out of the public eye, privately recovering from Don’t Worry Darling with Taylor Russell by his side, clad in toned down, pedestrian clothing. Attending would have jeopardized his rebrand. In a way, Styles’ nonappearance may have been a blessing in disguise. Had he shown up, likely in some derivative pastel suit, skirt, feather boa, or all of the above, the masses would have taken to Twitter, assailing our feeds with pictures of Styles’ *fashion?* captioned, “He’s so brave!” or “Unconventional masculinity!” or “Challenging gender norms!” and we’d once again have to admit that the gender norms are winning.



SOCIAL TRENDS

Battle of the bottles

The ultimate water bottle ranking

Tai Vaughan
Section Editor

Elsa Scurfield
Section Editor

The battle of the bottles is real, it divides schools and drains bank accounts. These are the main six, and no doubt you have a very strong opinion about at least one. You may detect hints of bias here and there. However, this does not mean that our ratings are inaccurate; this is the truth (or at least our truth). Stay hydrated, stay cool, and stay safe from the Gatorade gremlins!!



Photo courtesy of **Elsa Scurfield**



The Starbucks Cup - AKA the Impractical Princess (\$37) - 5/10

- Is it really cheaper than a Stanley if you have to buy a new one every month?
- Stop putting yourself through constant emotional turmoil with this fragile cup. If you need a good cry, just watch The Notebook
- For those of you who witnessed Tai's mental and physical breakdown in Math over the loss of her sixth limited edition Starbucks cup, we hope you got the help you needed
- While Elsa remains loyal to this cup, it causes her more stress than her grades and has undergone many reconstructions



The Disposable Water Bottle (\$1.75) - 1/10

- #Killtheturtles!!!
- This bottle is ratchet, ratty, and rancid
- Don't kid yourself, reusing one of these does not make you superior or more financially intelligent
- That being said, we're jealous that when it's too much to carry, these can be chucked in the trash at your earliest convenience
- We feel bad for being harsh, but what is harsher than disgracing the environment to this level? - clearly these people were not in Ms. Meyer's climate change class



The Hydro Flask - COVID Cool Girl (\$40) - 8/10

- An-I-oo! Sksksk!
- You bought this during your VSCO girl phase and you feel the need to get your money's worth, but that is respectable
- In all seriousness, it is probably the most practical option
- We sympathize with the trauma you have after being so violently replaced and shamed by the Stanley, and hope that with time, you will learn to accept yourself



The OG Gatorade (\$6) - 7/10

- "Yo bro, can you waterfall me?"
- Clearly, there is still a ways to go before you can leave behind the water guns, but this is more socially acceptable
- You are either a hockey boy or you really badly want to be one, and you think this will trick others into thinking you're in AAA
- You hate on basic Stanley girls, but this basic water bottle has defined you since you were in House League



The Owala - The Other Woman (Emphasis on Lana Del Ray's Version) (\$40) - 8/10

- Sure, the claim to fame is that you look like a Koala while you drink from this water bottle, but is that really something to be proud of? Honestly maybe.
- You do deserve some credit for being ahead of the trend, and this is undeniably a practical option, but the clean-girl aesthetic is not ready for the jungle-girl aesthetic quite yet
- However, if you're one of those people that chose this water bottle for its practicality, we salute you



The Stanley - The Queen Bee (\$45) - 9/10

- Basic? Fine. Hygienic? Not really! Worth it? Absolutely.
- Perfect for the aspiring Range Rover, pilates princess, Utah mom
- Anyone spreading hate speech such as lead-poisoning, trend following, or money wasting allegations should be prosecuted to the highest degree
- We will not be commenting on the recent lead-poisoning scandal.

TV

Percy Jackson and the Olympians: how exposition can kill a story

A faithful adaptation gone wrong

Victoria Rizo-Cubillos
Contributor

After two failed movie attempts, one musical adaptation, various sequels and graphic novels, and years of clamouring from fans, Percy Jackson and the Olympians have finally got an accurate adaptation. Percy Jackson is a book series in which a 12-year-old boy discovers that Greek gods are real and he is the demigod son of Poseidon, the god of the seas. The first book was published almost twenty years ago and a lot has happened since. Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief kicked off this journey and as of today, 180 million copies have been sold around the world, catapulting it to international success.

Shortly after the first book, the movie rights were purchased and the studio quickly went to work, expecting that this would be the next Harry Potter. In 2010 and 2013, movies were released to critical failure and some financial success, but any additional sequels were scrapped. The movies are completely ignored by fans and Rick Riordan—the author himself—says that he has never watched them, since it would be “[watching his] life’s work go through a meat

grinder.”

And so came the TV show made by Disney+. And I am not kidding when I say that I have been waiting for this show for seven years.

The show chronicles the first book, Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief, where our main character is blamed for stealing the master bolt, the ultimate weapon and source of power that belongs to Zeus, the king of the gods and god of lightning and the sky. Percy is joined by his best friend, Grover, and Annabeth as they journey across the United States to find the bolt because, well, Percy didn’t know gods were real until two seconds ago. Even though this was quite a faithful adaptation, I couldn’t shake the feeling that something felt off. The characters were all there and most chapters took events exactly as they were in the books. But it didn’t feel like Percy Jackson; the suspense and climactic moments were completely erased, the characters were watered-down and simplified versions of their book counterparts, and the pacing of the show was completely off. And this can be attributed to one thing and one thing only: Exposition

Quick English lesson before we continue: exposition is used to give information to the audience

that is crucial to understanding a story. This is typically knowledge the characters already possess. Sometimes, this is done by a ‘fish out of water’ character, or in this case, Percy Jackson. A kid that is new to the world around him and consequently, has to be told information to understand. Percy is the audience’s way into the story and world. Sanjna Rijesh, a grade 12 student, was asked about this issue and said, “They definitely overexplained so many things and I feel like a lot of the episodes were them just explaining.”

For example, in the third episode, the trio has left Camp Half-Blood, the Hogwarts of this world where the children of gods can be safe. On their quest, they encounter Medusa, a woman who has snakes for hair and can turn anyone who looks into her eyes to stone. Like all Greek monsters, Medusa is hidden from the mortal world. She lives in a place called Auntie Em’s Gnome Emporium, a garden statuary shop. The three kids come across the area because they smell burgers and Annabeth immediately figures out they are in danger. She is the daughter of Athena, goddess of wisdom and she was set up to be someone who is always “6 steps ahead of everyone else.” But, another important thing about Annabeth is that she has never been

outside the camp. In the book, this event plays out very differently. When Percy, Grover and Annabeth come across Medusa, they are so hungry that they do not notice anything and are kindly invited inside by the monster. As she is talking to them, they start to notice that something feels off and manage to escape. They are with Medusa for a long time, which allows them to put the pieces together for her identity and allows them to be more secretive and calculated. This is a tactic the author uses frequently in his books; the characters land in some kind of trap and they have to think quickly to survive.

In the show, Annabeth immediately notices where they are and explains what they have to do. Then, Medusa slowly walks outside of her house and announces who she is. This immediately defeats any attempt at suspense because they already have told us the conflict that the kids have to face. Now, we are just watching them go through the motions.

Unfortunately, the Percy Jackson TV series was not immune to the theme of movie/TV adaptations missing the mark. Though the series had many positive moments it seems this medium will never be able to truly encompass the experience of reading the series.



Photo courtesy of Disney Entertainment

FASHION

The North Face cult

Is fashion individuality dead?

Sophie Ratner
Section Editor

Whether it's in the identical back profile of a group of Grade nine girls with their Uggs and Super Puff jackets, or the friend group of Grade eleven boys who all wear the exact same North Face coat, the impact of fashion trends looms large at NT. This is as expected, with a grand internet presence and a relatively large amount of disposable income compared to other age groups. Teenagers are the most susceptible to trends.

With a homogeneously dressed student population, it can give the appearance that there is no individuality within the North Toronto community. However, some students strive to be individuals with their fashion sense. Sequoia Henning, a Grade 11 student has responded to the monotonous fashion of NT by utilising her own creative skills. "Making my own clothing saves me money. I can make the exact piece I'm looking for instead of looking for it. I also just like to sew." Apart from sewing her clothes, Henning makes an effort to dress up for school. "I dress up for myself. Even if my day is bad, I can feel better knowing I put time into myself, although I don't dress up every day. It's not a bad thing to dress like everyone else; it's about what feels comfortable and good to you." Lael Keith, a self-described "kind of stylish male" says that he incorporates trends into his wardrobe whilst still maintaining a unique look. "I like to mix it up. My shoes might be trendy, but the top



Photo courtesy of **Sophie Ratner**

I choose might not be trendy." Despite this, Keith and all his friends sport the North Face puffer. His reasoning was simply, "I saw my friend wearing it, and it looked good."

Keith's answer does bring up another question: Do high school students get their fashion inspiration from celebrities and social media, or is it simply a copycat

game amongst peers?

Dropping almost \$450 dollars on a jacket seems like a big price to pay to be on trend; it made me think back to a purchase I made in Grade nine. I bought Doc Marten boots to fit in with the trends of the time, only to realize that not only did they not align with my style, but they were also completely impractical for the cold Toronto winters.

Other students have had similar experiences, such as Sports section editor Salma Kassim-Lakha: "When I think of regretful trendy purchases, I immediately think of the Nike Air Force sneakers I bought in 2019. I bought the high-top ones to at least be slightly unique, but in reality, I wanted those checkered Vans."

MUSIC

Music vs. social media

Is social media ruining music?

Jocelyn Xia
Contributor

Music is a shared interest among millions of people, whether it's created through instruments, vocals, or percussion. It is a form of art that allows for limitless creativity, shaping one's personality and characteristics. Thanks to advances in technology, we have the privilege of listening to and creating music more easily. In the 21st century, social media and trends have greatly influenced the demand for music, popularising artists, songwriters, and singers.

It's fascinating to consider that many of the instruments we play today were once just ideas.

Through continuous refinement, they have evolved into the instruments we know now, producing each note with a purpose. Music-creating technologies have been advancing exponentially, making it easier than ever to produce music. For example, a program called Dream Track, powered by YouTube, is a powerful music-producing AI that can generate a full 30 seconds of a song, including vocals and lyrics within just a few days.

However, the prevalence of social media in today's society has many pros and cons, especially in its impact on the music industry. Social media can negatively influence artists to match trending styles to gain more engagement. This trend has led to an increase in songs with themes of unhealthy relationships, breakups, and explicit

content. It's common to hear songs on streaming services containing profanity and questionable ideas, exposing younger listeners to inappropriate lyrics.

The evolution of music not only affects listeners but also artists as well. Popular Tiktok sounds often feature a short segment of a song and is repeated in videos, creating viral trends around a specific part of the song. Songs like Say So by Doja Cat, Savage Love by Jawsh 685 and Jason Derulo and Bad Habit by Steve Lacy were in almost every single video. This has reached a point where some "fans" attend concerts merely to shout out that one popular verse and then fall silent for the rest of the performance. This behaviour highlights how social media trends can influence the way people engage with music, fo-

cusings more on isolated moments rather than appreciating the entirety of an artist's work.

TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, and other social media platforms have profoundly impacted our society. Not only have they exponentially spread songs across social media, but they also contributed to the rise of explicit content in music. The choices in music have changed drastically through the generations, reflecting the influence of these platforms and the changing tastes of listeners. As we move forward, it is essential to critically examine the effects of social media on music and society, ensuring that we continue to appreciate music's artistry and cultural significance.

sports

ATHLETICS

2024 Superbowl Recap

Are the Chiefs a dynasty?

Andrei Dan
Section Editor

Super Bowl LVIII was one of the most anticipated championship games in recent NFL history. The Kansas City Chiefs defeated the San Francisco 49ers in a showdown that took fans on an emotional rollercoaster. Whether you tuned in on your Sunday afternoon to witness an epic halftime show from the legendary American singer-songwriter and dancer Usher, watch Mr. Irrelevant battle his way to his first Super Bowl Title, or see if Travis Kelce would propose to Taylor Swift center stage after the Chiefs won their second title in a row, the final did not disappoint.

The beginning of the 2024 NFL season seemed to let down many Chiefs fans. Coming back as the defending champions, Kansas fans had set high expectations of Patrick Mahomes and the rest of the squad to bring home yet another title. However, things didn't seem to go as planned. Before the playoffs even began, not only the fans but many sports analysts had written off the Chiefs after they had the worst regular season record since Mahomes took the role of starting quarterback. However, playoffs bring a whole new game in any sport. It seemed that the Chiefs were able to connect and by placing Kadarius Toney on the "injury" list, Kansas was able to win four games in a row to bring home the Lombardi Trophy, defeating all the favourites — Buffalo, Baltimore, and San Francisco — along the way.

In addition, Super Bowl LVIII smashed the record for all-time female and total viewership with an unprecedented 123.7 million views. This is known as the Taylor Swift effect. The NFL has expanded its fan base from die-hard football fans to Swiftie admirers who are simply interested in the Swift and Kelce relationship. Interestingly enough, the whole culture around



Photo courtesy of NBC News

the Super Bowl seemed to shift. Even sports betting apps seemed to incorporate Taylor Swift into their Super Bowl specials. If you thought betting on the colour of Gatorade poured on the winning team coach was absurd, try gambling on the over for Taylor Swift broadcasting appearances set at 5.5. Or how about a +2200 line on Swift and Kelce announcing that they're having a baby? That means that bettors who placed \$100 on that prop, would have expected a return of \$2,200. Unfortunately, most of the Taylor Swift lines did not hit leaving a lot of wagers unsettled. Travis Kelce however brought miracles to sports gamblers. After having a mere one catch for one yard at the half, his production started picking up in the third quarter. Kelce had nine receptions for 93 yards with

his final catch placing the Chiefs in the game-winning position. The Chiefs brought a monster second half after trailing 10-3 at the half to secure the victory. Many speculate that linebacker Dre Greenlaw's unfortunate Achilles rupture allowed the Chiefs to start making big plays on offense which ultimately led to their victory.

The second consecutive title for the Kansas City Chiefs brings a couple of questions to NFL fans. Firstly, whether or not a three-peat is underway? It's safe to say that the possibility of a third straight championship can not be ruled out when Patrick Mahomes is starting. Despite the challenges that the 2024 regular season brought, the playoffs seemed to bring a whole different breed of Mahomes. Knowing that a player

has that clutch gene will keep any sports fan hopeful that any feat is possible. Secondly, whether or not the Chiefs are a dynasty. Merriam-Webster describes a dynasty as a "sports franchise which has a prolonged run of successful seasons". Taking a look at the Chiefs, in the last five years they have made four Super Bowl appearances and won three times. This sets Patrick Mahomes on pace to match perhaps the greatest dynasty in all of sports history with Tom Brady's Patriots 11 Super Bowl appearances with six championships. So the answer is definitely yes. They are a dynasty. Not a dynasty in the making as many football fans claim, but an established dynasty set from dominating on the world stage for the past half-decade.

PROFILE

All-star with an all-star salary

The re-signing of William Nylander and the team around him

Ian Boswell
Contributor

On January 8, 2024, Swedish all-star William Nylander signed a contract extension with the Toronto Maple Leafs for eight years with an AAV of 11.5 million dollars for a total of 92 million

dollars breaking a franchise record for the highest total salary. This is not the only franchise record he has broken this season, the other being the longest point streak to start a season with 18 games,

beating Frank Mahovlich, CM Lanny McDonald, and John Anderson. Between Frank Mahovlich CM and Lanny Macdonald alone there are two Hall of Famers, seven Stanley Cups, 2,109 points, a lot of all-star

games, and two legacies that are up in the rafters. A lot of people would think that the William Nylander extension is simply a good player getting signed to a pricey contract, but there is a lot more than that to be discussed.

The Toronto Maple Leafs salary cap is likely a topic that every loud and angry Toronto sports fan loves to discuss. While many of these fans rave like loons, their opinions are valid. The truth is the Toronto Maple Leafs have struggled for years with the salary cap. The Maple Leafs are only seventh in highest payrolls, the first being the Colorado Avalanche. What makes these two teams' hefty fees different? Both Auston Matthews and Nathan Mackinnon are the highest-paid for these teams. Maple Leafs fan and grade nine student at NT, Maximo Edwards-Padilla said, "This makes sense they both typically thought of being at least top five players in the league at their best, even top three". John Tavares and Mikko Rantanen are the two second-highest-paid players. This is our first big difference. Mik-

ko Ratanenis a 27-year-old former 100-point scorer. John Tavares is a 32 year old that is as of writing on a nine-game pointless streak. Edwards-Padilla said, "Tavares can be a good player, but in a salary cap era it can be hard to justify his salary". Next comes Mitch Marner and Cale Makar. Many would say you should be comparing Matthews with MacKinnon and Marner with Rantanen.

Colorado not only has what a lot of people would say is the best defenseman in the league with Cale Makar a top-five forward in the league with Nathan Mackinnon who currently has the second most points in the NHL this season along with a great winger to play with MacKinnon. They also have a strong, and specifically consistent goaltender plus great depth. This is what makes Colorado great; they have a strong core, but they are not just top-heavy. Edwards-Padilla said that the hope is John Tavares and Mitch Marner take pay cuts saying the Leafs organization can build a good team if they can keep Mitch Marner's salary under nine million dollars a year and John Ta-

vares' under five or six million. If they do this the Leafs can pick up a good defenseman and maybe look for some depth. Would the costly William Nylander contract negatively affect the Leafs in the future? "As long as they don't overpay anyone in the future and they look for players that work around this core, this roster has really good potential," said Edwards-Padilla

While this team and this player have good potential there is still an issue with this massive salary no matter the player. Probably the most worrying thing about re-signing about a drop in production. He said he believes what might happen now that William Nylander has this massive contract is he may become less motivated to perform at his best whether this be consciously or subconsciously. When he first said that he wanted ten million dollars many people considered this absurd, he played excellently at the beginning of the season. Before January 8th, he was at a point per game higher than 1.45 and a goal per game higher than 0.56. Since signing his contract he is at a point per game

of 0.7 and a goal per game of 0.2 (as of January 30th). The Leafs organization can assist Nylander through a sports psychologist, giving him an edge over opponents. According to the Leafs website, the team has a group of performance staff involving individuals ranging from coaches to scientists to dieticians. Edwards-Padilla added, "Recently William Nylander has been playing very well and I think he has his mojo back with the help of the motivation of the performance staff".

The William Nylander contract will significantly affect the Toronto Maple Leafs. Positively or negatively. In truth, an eight-year contract above ten million dollars will probably lead him to retire with the Leafs. If he performs well, he deserves his spot with the Leafs, as no executive would want to trade a player they drafted and is loved by the city. If he doesn't play well and they decide to trade him, not many teams will trade pick up that big of a contract, regardless, William Nylander will stay with the Leafs for many years to come.

PROFILE

Out with the old Raptors in with the new

The future of the Toronto Raptors

Ian Boswell
Contributor

On January 17, 2024, Pascal Siakam was traded to the Indiana Pacers. It truly is the end of an era. This season, not just Pascal Siakam but also OG Announoby were traded. This leaves Chris Boucher as the last Raptor to be on that championship roster. North Toronto CI student and basketball fan, Federico Rizo-Cubillos felt the trade was a bittersweet management decision. Rizo-Cubillos says "You know, I am excited about the future of the team, but I am really going to miss those players". He continues, "It feels good to know that the Raptors organization is not just sitting on

the fence anymore. They decided to rebuild instead of just falling into mediocrity". Rizo-Cubillos added, "Obviously, the Raptors won't be good for a while but I prefer to see them be very bad for a few years then watch them be a weird semi-playoff semi-lottery team". Regarding Siakam being traded, he said "It shows a lot of confidence in the Raptors to allow Scottie Barnes to try to develop and really be the face of this team without a veteran player who has personal accolades, a major part of the Raptors franchise history, and a championship under his belt". In terms of the core of this raptors team in the foreseeable future, Rizo-Cubillos said "the Toronto Raptors have a really good core of young players. These include players like Gary Trent Jr, RJ Barret, the recent draft pick

Grady Dick, and obviously Scottie Barnes". Rizo-Cubillos said "Obviously it is pretty unlikely that this team is going to win a championship but I think this roster is slept on in terms of potential". He added "It's also important to remember this core is too young to be in their primes as well as they are relatively unfamiliar with each other. Other than Gary Trent Jr and Scottie Barnes these players are all in their first year with Toronto". Looking to the future, Rizo-Cubillos said "This year's draft class is not the strongest, especially compared to last year being led by Victor Wembanyama (San Antonio Spurs). However, due to this year's trade of Pascal Siakam and even more OG Announoby, the Raptors organization has many draft picks in this year's draft". It is important to know

that some of these are from the San Antonio Spurs which are top six protected which unfortunately for the Raptors pressures them to not tank completely. Rizo-Cubillos said "I think the Raptors should trade the second-round pick they got from the Knicks as well as Jacob Poetl for a first-round draft pick, probably from a playoff team as Jacob Poetl and a second-round draft pick is not worth a chance at a first-overall pick". Rizo-Cubillos is feeling "fairly confident in assets they have right now- they just need to play their cards right". The truth is this team ended an era, but out with the old championship team and in with the potential for one.

ATHLETICS

Football at NT?

The sudden push for a revival of NT's football team

Ian Boswell
Contributor

After the pandemic, North Toronto decided to disband the football team once the rental contract for equipment expired. This resulted from a lack of interest and enthusiasm in the football program at NT. However, in recent years, there has been a growing interest in restoring the team.

Grade 9 student Damon Ablack has decided to take action and has started a petition. Ablack said, "This petition is supposed to reflect the values of the people in this school, and recently there has been a movement from mainly Grade 9s to bring football back to the school". He said "Our goal is to get 500 signatures. Currently we are about 20% there". He continued, "From there we can work on raising the money, through fundraisers, donations or even some funds allo-

cated from the school".

People who play lots of sports are aware of how expensive football equipment can be. Even if students raise the money themselves, the school would still eventually have to contribute. Ablack said "It is my personal belief and a belief of many others around me that a school should reflect the needs of the students, and the students of NT particularly want a football team". He then continued by saying "NT has never really been

known for their sports, but for decades we have had a very strong football team". Ablack said "Have you seen the trophies!"

Damon added "NT is in need of new sports...NT is on the lesser side when it comes to the amount of sports they offer compared to schools like Northern and Lawrence Park, and I believe that to improve our athletic reputation we need to have more options for NT athletes to express themselves".

ATHLETICS

Girls Volleyball

Looking back at the season

Salma Kassim-Lakha
Section Editor

Both the junior and senior girls' volleyball teams had a thrilling 2023/4 seasons. The teams competed in a number of tournaments and played competitive regular-season games both placing third in the south region division. With Ms. Murphy coaching the senior team and Ms. Heron on the junior team, along with the assistance of additional staff, both teams consider their seasons a success.

The junior team was able to connect with the new grade nine athletes and concluded the season on a higher note. It's never easy to locate players who are both committed and have the necessary skills when a team has just been established. Many of the girls were unfamiliar with one another, especially regarding their playing styles which can be a snag at the start of a season. Regardless, these girls were able to overcome and ultimately qualified for playoffs, where they unfortunately lost to Riverdale CI in the quarter-finals. Elle McBride and Sophia Churchill, two of the team's grade nine athletes, discussed the challenges they had when working as a team, "Since we didn't know one another very well, it was difficult to play as a team at the start, but by the end, we were able to play very well together." expressed McBride. Both girls expressed the transformation of the team throughout the season from the struggles they had to the unity that they were able to achieve through the many practices, the wins and the losses that they were faced with. Ms. Heron agreed that the biggest challenge the team faced was "trying to gel as a team and get everyone on the same page with these varying levels of experience" as well as how the team was a "developing team" with a range of experience making the start of the season a bit more difficult. Yet despite their struggles, the team was able to work together to provide their best efforts and achieve success. Ms. Heron, McBride, and Churchill all described the team's most memorable moment, the matchup against Northern at a tournament. This notable game was considered a highlight as NT was able to put up a strong battle against Northern who were ranked first in the division. Ms. Heron added "We played so well and really came together as a team. During that game, and came so close to beating them, only losing by a few points. We had them scared! Given they were such a strong team this year, it was a big accomplishment for our girls to be so competitive

Photos courtesy of **Zoe Sergeyev**

against a well-established team." Overall, the girls established a cohesive team showcasing their skills and determination. Looking to next season Ms. Heron says, "We learned a lot of valuable lessons this year, which will help us come back a strong team next year!"

Advancing to the regional finals, the senior girls had an unforgettable season. The girls gave their most effort in all the tournaments they competed in as well as their regular season games. Grade eleven student Zoe Dirisio stated, "We kept getting better and better throughout the season," also indicating the same pattern of progress over the year. Every team encounters challenges whether

it's inconsistent teamwork, lack of communication, or uncommitted players, but for this team, the main issue they were faced with was having players balance their extracurricular volleyball teams with the school team. Dirisio mentioned, "Our biggest challenge was having our players away. Many of us play at a club so missing school games because of club tournaments was tough, we were often missing some of our top players." As a result, the team consequently found it challenging to stay consistent and regularly execute as a whole. Regardless, the girls proved their strength and unity as a team by winning many of their games. Apart from their regular season matches, their

participation in tournaments allowed them opportunities to connect strongly. The girls' victory in one tournament and placing second in another, were undoubtedly one of the season's most memorable moments. The team had an impressive season, Dirisio added "It was a pretty good season, I definitely think we could have made it further but that is certainly a goal for next year."

Overall, both teams displayed their hard work and dedication throughout the season. The favourable results were achieved due to the players' and coaches' dedication, commitment and devotion. Congrats to both the junior and senior girls' volleyball teams!

PROFILE

The cataclysmic effects of Lewis Hamilton's switch to Ferrari

From the Silver Arrows to the Prancing Horses

Victoria Rizo-Cubillos
Contributor

The biggest news in Formula One history was revealed on February 1, 2024. Lewis Hamilton, seven-time world champion, has decided to pivot, and as of 2025, he will be racing for Ferrari. This news unraveled in a matter of hours and fans around the world were outraged. Grade 11 student, Becky Yip says, "When I first saw that he was moving to Ferrari I was so shocked, I couldn't move." And months later it still doesn't feel real.

Sir Lewis Hamilton is the most decorated Formula One driver in the world, with multiple world championships, race wins, accolades, sponsorships, and opportunities coming his way. Hamilton has won seven world titles, and with the help of Nico Rosberg, they have catapulted Mercedes to incredible success, as the team won seven championships in a row from 2014 to 2020. Unfortunately, Hamilton's streak was broken in 2021 when some regulations were overlooked by the then-race director for Formula One, Michael Masi. This allowed for Max Verstappen, a rival of Hamilton's from the Red Bull racing team, to win his first world title. But in 2022, things changed. Hamilton had a new racing partner and the car was vastly different from the previous years, which impacted his performance incredibly. In the 2022 and 2023 seasons, Lewis Hamilton only managed to get a podium position in 15 out of 44 races in total. And not a single one was first place.

The F1 community believed that once Hamilton had won his eighth championship in 2021, he would retire as he is older than most of the drivers and his goal

would've been completed; to be the only driver in the world to have eight championships. To be unstoppable. But his determination has not dwindled. Or has it? With the past two years of underwhelming performances from him and his team, a decision had to be made. Keep in mind that Hamilton has grown as a driver alongside Mercedes, but despair appears to be seeping through. "I think this move is desperate because you wouldn't expect someone who's been at Mercedes for eleven years to suddenly just move to Ferrari," says Sanjna Rijesh, a grade 12 student. We aren't too deep into the 2024 season, and yet, this has shaken up Formula One as we know it.

First of all, the news as to why he has decided to switch has not been released yet, but some assumptions can be made. Number one: Hamilton is tired of Mercedes' performance and believes that he will not be able to achieve that eighth title with them. This makes perfect sense. The news came soon after Hamilton had reportedly tested out the new car, but it is unlikely that an entire career shift is made off of one vehicle. Secondly, and this is more speculation, it is because of the money. Of course, everything in Formula One has to have some sort of monetary compensation, but when you are already being paid 55 million dollars a year, chances are you are not going to give that up. Finally, we must look at Ferrari's overall brand as the most prestigious and successful Formula One company in history that houses some of the most famous names in the sport. Even Hamilton himself has said on his social media platforms, "I feel incredibly fortunate, after achieving things with Mercedes that I could only have dreamed of as a kid, that I now have the chance to fulfil an-

other childhood dream. Driving in Ferrari red." Being a part of Ferrari is any driver's dream, but it's also important to consider that in the past two years, the Italian outfit hasn't been doing so great either.

Now, what does this all mean? Immediately, we have to recognize there is going to be a major change for the drivers. The first name that comes to mind is Carlos Sainz, the second half of the Ferrari team, racing with them since 2021. Hamilton will be joining Charles Leclerc and this begs the question as to where Sainz will go. Many people believe this is incredibly unfair to Sainz because he has proved to be a masterful asset to his team and its overall success, as he managed to win the only race for Ferrari last year. Sainz's future is uncertain but he has said that he is "training to prepare as best I can and give everything" for this last season. Secondly, this leaves a huge gap in Mercedes' roster and it becomes quite a valuable spot to fill. Imagine being the replacement for Lewis Hamilton. Speculations have arisen with hopes of Valtteri Bottas returning or possibly a simple switch and Sainz can go to Mercedes. This is also coupled with the fact that by the end of the 2024 season, many of the other driver's contracts will be ending. This certifies major changes in the lineup for 2025 as it gives a lot of space for drivers to move around. By Hamilton announcing this early, he certifies that he sits in that seat.

Another concern that fans have is the new dynamic that will arise with Hamilton and Leclerc in one team. Charles Leclerc has been with Ferrari for most of his F1 career and fans have observed that the team favours him over Sainz. He is an extremely talented driver but has not proved that he can hold his own against his worst enemy,

Ferrari themselves. In the past two years, they have pulled some questionable strategic moves and failed their drivers performance-wise. Becky agrees, "They could've won more races if their strategy was better." Compared to Mercedes, Ferrari has a faster car, which will bode well for both drivers in 2025. The question now is: who will they prioritize? The answer seems obvious, with a seven-time world champion joining your team, but how do you maintain another driver's loyalty? How will they be able to manage both of them to let them each shine? Without a doubt, this will be one of the most dominating forces in the next few years if Ferrari manages to pull it off. Because if Hamilton wants to win his eighth title, they are going to have to step up their game.

Finally, this is the year of ultimatums, with it being Hamilton's last year with his home team and Sainz's last with Ferrari, the news will have a major influence on this season. Now that there is a time limit for the drivers, how hard will their respective teams push themselves to leave a lasting impression? On Mercedes' side, they must prove they are still a team without Lewis Hamilton at the helm. "With that loss of a massive figure, that would cause a loss of fans because let's be honest, most Mercedes fans are really just Lewis fans," grade 9 student, Federico Rizo-Cubillos remarks. However, Noah Beijer, a grade 10 student disagrees, "He lost many fans when he made the switch because they were more Mercedes fans."

Yet, excitement still persists. Truly, no one can predict what will occur, but we will see how deep these impacts go in the 2024 and 2025 seasons, specifically the latter, which will be etched into the history of Formula One forever.



Photo courtesy of **F1Briefings**



Photo courtesy of **GPFans**

humour & games

POST-SECONDARY

The non-existent NT to clown college pipeline

The new engineering at U of T

Elizabeth Rosen
Section Editor

High school rather repetitively takes up four years. That's a lot of doing the same thing, and so it isn't surprising in the least that NT's new generation of future-graduates are scouring their options outside these square-donut halls. Future doctors, lawyers, and engineers walk these very halls with us, and those who aren't cave to the ever-growing demand for another podcasting-entrepreneur-mob-boss. But- what about clowns? The heart and soul of our humble nation. Don't believe me? Just look at a few politicians' performative pasts. Clowning may be the silliest of the specified skill sets, but they harbour an array of skills nonetheless, and quite valued ones by the average employer at that. Entertaining people until their show time is up, and carrying through to put smiles on faces no matter what. Improvising, adapting to any show-shenanigan, from the silly to the serious. Being read-up on the quick remarks, witticisms, and puns from the latest edition of the joke-cyclopedia. And if these sound too charismatic and social for the average person to master, I haven't even started listing uni-cycling, juggling, balloon-animal making, fire blowing, or makeup mastery yet. Now I have.

To obtain a clowning degree at one of the more esteemed institutions such as The Clown School in LA, Pig Iron in Philadelphia, or Clown Gym in NYC, classes young clownlings are required to take include a history of the clown,



Photo courtesy of **Elizabeth Rosen**

the body of the clown, ensemble clowning, balloons and magic, and physical clowning. But if a recognized clown college seems like too much of a financial commitment to something as abstract and subjective as honing your clownsona, there was a full instructional video made in 1987 by Ringling Bros and Barnum & Bailey Clown College that was posted on Youtube. The Ringling Bros and Barnum & Bailey Clown College as a whole was the first original clown college, opened in 1968 but has since closed in 1997, producing many notable alumni such as two Ronalds Mcdonalds and Steve-O.

Now, perhaps I am stereotyping our student population. Perhaps there is a spark of the classic fool shining bright within more people than meets the eye. Perhaps even those who are very outwardly set on some scholarly profession have the most to hide, and it is for that reason I have collected the testimonials of four of the more academically-focussed students at

NT, to see where their heart landed when it came to clowning. Aditya Nair, Sam Huang, Scarlett Yi, and Thomas Ireland generously accepted to be my chosen few in reviving their suppressed clowning desires, if not, creating them.

My chosen block of students replied with aspirations of working as engineers, wall street business people, and contributors to society. Such larger than life professions looming just beyond their reach, while clowning lumped near the bottom of their priorities; almost as if it were forgotten as a super-plausible pathway. When asked how many years the universe would have to gift them to go to clown college, an astounding majority replied along the lines of never enough. It appears the Canadian public school system had failed to inform these youth once again of the possibilities that awaited them in the artistry of clowning, which is why I had to save them from their own ignorance. Just as I am right now, saving you.

Did you know that there are over ten different clown aesthetics and personalities? Most people picture the Whiteface clown as the great default clown-setting, characterised by their colourful hair, exaggerated features, primary clown scheme, big red nose, and of course white face base. But this very popular clown kingdom splits into two more tiers on the clown-taxonomy cart, of the auguste and contra-auguste versions. The Auguste, meaning 'idiot' in German, is the hilariously incompetent member of the clown posse, while their foil, the contra-auguste, the star pupil. Character clowns share a Whiteface clown's makeup style while dressing in any profession, often poking fun either at their job as a whole, or all the ways one could do their job badly. Pierrots and Mimes are for the more sophisticated audiences, sporting back triangle eye makeup and mainly shades of black and white. Their endless gloom is expressed so clearly that it's surprising they haven't gotten any surges of popularity within the high school demographic already. Rodeo clowns, Harlequins, and Jesters are lesser known, but all quite interesting clown variants all taking from a specific aesthetic.

Because the internet, in all its omnipotence, had still failed to widespread "Build a House and We'll Tell you What Clown You Are!" buzzfeed quiz, I had to take matters into my own hands. My newly enlightened interviewees had to put their imagination to the test, and create their first very own Clownsona for the whole school to see. I'll let the photos speak for themselves.

ACADEMICS

Physics is wrong: I am not gaining momentum as I go forward

The midterm slump hits people like a train

Mina Lofft
Contributor

Jean Paul-Sartre once said "man is a useless passion. It is meaningless that we live and it is meaningless that we die", and I think that quote, or some variation of it, is on every student's minds in the middle of every term in this godforsaken lower institute of learning. It is during midterms

where students reflect most on the fact that they could have been picking mandarins off of trees and swimming in clear beaches if they had not evolved, but instead they are participating in this thing called an "education system" just so they can become slaves to consumerist capitalism. I, of course, am indomitable and completely unaffected by this affliction, which you can clearly see from my factual and completely unbiased articling skills.

Midterms is a misnomer, be-

cause they're actually much worse than mid. They're pretty atrocious actually, because you're too far away from the start of the semester to have the work ethic that comes with having a break, but you're also too far away from the end, where you know you have to lock in for exams. This leaves you with an awful in-between apathy that is like Jean-Paul himself whispering in your ear the uselessness of continuing your education. The coursework is unbearable, the teachers are getting

annoying (sorry) and you can't turn to any of your friends for help because you know they're also three steps away from the edge. Stewing in your own self-pity is the only option, which is what I'm doing right now.

I guess now is the point where I'm supposed to say, "haha! It's not so bad though! Here are some tips for success!", but I'm not going to do that because I don't have any. My best advice as someone who is one hundred per-

cent qualified to give advice is to remember that this too shall pass, just like everything else. Two weeks or months or years from now you'll forget all about this presentation or test or assignment, but what you will remember is the most crushing disappointment you've ever felt in your life when you're rejected from the university you applied to. You'll also remember the horrific humili-

ation of being in a class with everyone one year younger than you.

So, if nothing else can, let fear drive you. Give your blood, sweat, and tears for your future self, the you that can't wait to go to university or college or trade school to do this disgusting pretentious academic marathon all over again. And let the midterm report cards encourage you to keep your grade

above a 50.

If you're reading this and thinking "what? None of this applies to me and I don't relate to this at all! I don't feel burned out during midterms and why would I cry over my grades?"; this article is not for you. You're better than me and incredibly intelligent and go with the flow. You're wonderful and amazing and I should've never written this

article. I am so sorry, etc. etc. You're perfect and I'm so, so jealous. Go frolic in a field or something and enjoy all of your joyous whimsy.

For my last message, I'd like to remind you that running into the woods and abandoning society is not safe, however attractive it may seem at this moment. Keep Yourself Safe <3.

ACADEMICS

Which math course would you crash?

When the math aint mathing

Eddes Dulaj
Contributor

Maybe you're not the most mathematically adept student, but you really want to major in commerce or get an IT job or whatever it is that requires you to take math. Well, here's a guide for how you can increase your mathematical prowess exponentially with the math courses at NT:

Mathematics: Wow, your very first high school level math course. You must feel so smart, solving those relatively simple algebra problems... sorry for killing your confidence, grade 9s. As long as you have a good teacher, this course isn't too bad.

Principles of Mathematics: A bit of jump in difficulty. You learn what the quadratic formula actually is, and how it's applicable in a lot of

different situations. But I'm telling you maaan, a lot of this material carries over to more than one 3U level course. For the sake of your Functions and Physics, practice your factoring as much as possible. Do radicals, and do lots of word problems. Grade 10s - thank me later.

Functions: This is where things start to fall apart. Did you think grade 10 trigonometry was the easiest unit in math? Have fun while that lasts, before you learn what trig identities are, as well as when you're asked to find the 0.977382th radian in the C quadrant on the cartesian plane; what I said doesn't even make sense. Make sure you can factor and do radicals (I mean, you passed grade 10), because if you can't, you will be truly lost. Also, do your homework, or your grades will suffer badly.

Functions and Applications: Okay, so you don't want to go into a program that requires any math. This

article has no relevance to you, so scram or else you will be held hostage by the Math Department to take Functions instead, regardless of whether you've completed this course or not. Be wary, because your punishment will only get more severe... (Really though, this is just an abridged version of Functions)

Advanced Functions: This is just Functions but with more trig identities and tangent graphs. The jump is also not that big from grade 11. To my fellow grade 11s, I am trying to give you guys hope for next year. To the grade 12s reading this, well, I'm hoping you did well. Perhaps you did better in this course than last year, which seems to be a very common occurrence.

Calculus and Vectors: Hell is real. I mean, Calculus is just understanding concepts as far as I know. Gaslight yourself into enjoying math (if you don't enjoy it already) and you will do well. Or put in all the effort until midterms, because then

you can stop caring as you've already gotten into a program of your choosing. Then try to cope with Vectors. I hope you took grade 11 Physics!

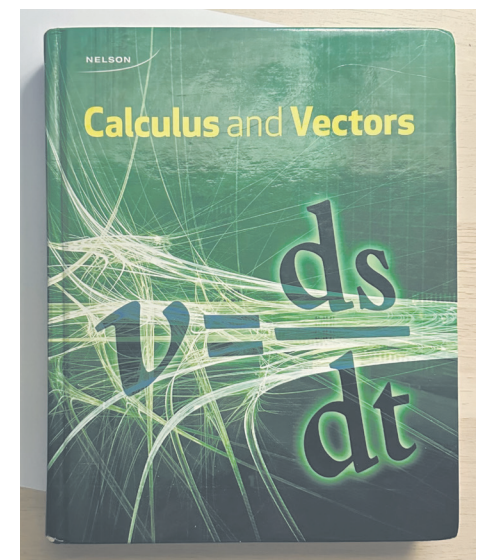


Photo courtesy of **Jack Cai**

Mathematics of Data Management: Probably the most useful of all of these courses in an everyday context. Except no one takes it.

MUSIC

Why'd you have to make a record about me?

Keep it spinning

Ivan Anand
Contributor

At first, this article was going to be a charmingly self-aware guilt-trip piece where I make you feel bad for me because of all the terrible songs I've had written in my honor. Now, as the deadline to submit this article approaches, I've ditched every sense of the regulation one needs to follow to get published in Graffiti. Behold, the greatest misuse of this platform to date. A comprehensive guide to writing songs about the people you love.

In love songs (with the exception of Tracy Chapman's Fast Car), songwriters love creeping in oddly specific details about their hopeful significant others. In fact, the most successful of all love songs are those written in excruciating detail of a relationship that gen-pop can attribute to their flavorless lives. Every artist from The Smiths to Lana Del Rey can be demystified

when you put a face to the words you so strongly hold onto. After all, it can't help knowing that the best albums of all time are about strangely questionable people that just catalyzed your favorite songs into creation.

A strong leading line in a love song, I'd argue, is "Would you love me if I was a worm?" When paired with the lucrative "Do you think we're still together in every universe?" One can really grasp if the relationship will stand the test of fiction. - Note from the writer: I'm taking a break as I'm writing this, and I've stepped out onto the streets for inspiration. The first thing I see is the loveliest of all; an unintelligible rendition of 'You're still the one' by Shania Twain. The subject in question? A man, alone, at the local bar (the Rose and Crown if you're really looking into experiencing this for yourself) I sat outside on the curb, taking note of his peculiar choice to change "You're still the one I run to" to "I'll be the one you run from". - As time goes on, we find ourselves in situ-

ations where there's just no right words to describe the unrequited love we have for those that do not know it already. Asking a total stranger whether they'd love you if you were a worm, could potentially land you a perpetual banishment to the realm of the talking stage.

It may seem hopeless for those who have yet to confront their future spice. For new romantics, I suggest the cold hard pill of poetry. It's quick, efficient, and gets the point across. I'll go the extra mile and incorporate a sample just for you, my special reader, my good time pal, my silly rabbit, my confidante.

A serious poem about love

By Elizabeth Rosen
For Elizabeth Rosen

Cupid bites the hand that feeds him,
Affection steals a glance, defeats him.

For arrows rain down politely,
Through fettered wings, he flies unsightly.

Love be a dagger
To those who run, scatter
From faces to faces
Making matches from matter

Sing songs of days gone,
For palettes are cleansed,
Not battered.

Take what you deserve
For hearts are the latter;
Focus in life to those
In kilns of red plaster.

Fostering the nest
As each little bird grows
A tear from the hummer,
Knowing not of her woes.

Take hold of your passion,
As it fades into rations
Spread from face to face,
Stealing glances, walking faster.

We are of short-time, upheld gracefully, shattered
By only the choice, of confessing what matters.

GAMES

NCCI Sudoku & Killer Sudoku

	8	2	6	3		7		
1						8		
3	5				8			9
				6	9	3		
6	1		4		3			
4		3				6		5
			8					
8	7	9	3	4	5			
			9				7	8

¹⁷ 6	¹⁵	⁷		²⁰	⁹		¹¹	
			³	9		²⁰ 5	¹¹	
		¹²	¹⁶	8	⁶			¹²
²²	⁷ 3			²⁴		¹⁷		
		6			⁸			
	¹⁰	⁸	⁵	¹⁰	¹²		⁷	6
		²⁰			¹⁴		2	⁹
¹¹				⁷	⁹ 8		¹⁶	
¹⁷					¹³			3

Answers (left to right):
 Row 1: 9, 4, 5, 1 - Row 2: 4, 7, 5, 9, 2, 3, 6 - Row 3: 6, 7, 1, 2, 4 -
 Row 4: 7, 2, 5, 1, 8, 4 - Row 5: 8, 5, 9, 2, 7 - Row 6: 9, 2, 8, 7, 1 -
 Row 7: 2, 6, 4, 7, 1, 5, 9, 3 - Row 8: 1, 6, 2 - Row 9: 5, 3, 1, 2, 6, 4

Answers (left to right):
 Row 1: 9, 4, 1, 5, 7, 2, 3, 8 - Row 2: 8, 1, 2, 3, 6, 4, 7 - Row 3:
 3, 5, 7, 2, 4, 6, 9, 1 - Row 4: 1, 5, 6, 7, 2, 4, 8, 9 - Row 5: 9, 4,
 8, 3, 1, 7, 5, 2 - Row 6: 7, 2, 8, 5, 4, 9, 3, 1 - Row 7: 5, 8, 1, 7,
 6, 3, 9, 4 - Row 8: 4, 7, 3, 9, 2, 1, 6, 5 - Row 9: 2, 6, 9, 4, 1, 5,
 8, 7

Killer Sudoku Rules

The numbers within a cage must add up to the number indicated in the corner of that page. There can be no repeated numbers within a cage, i.e. if a cage's value is 10, you cannot put 4, 4, and 2 in it



wanna write for graffiti?

COME TO THE ISSUE III WRITERS MEETING ON WEDNESDAY APRIL 10TH IN ROOM 215 AT LUNCH!!!

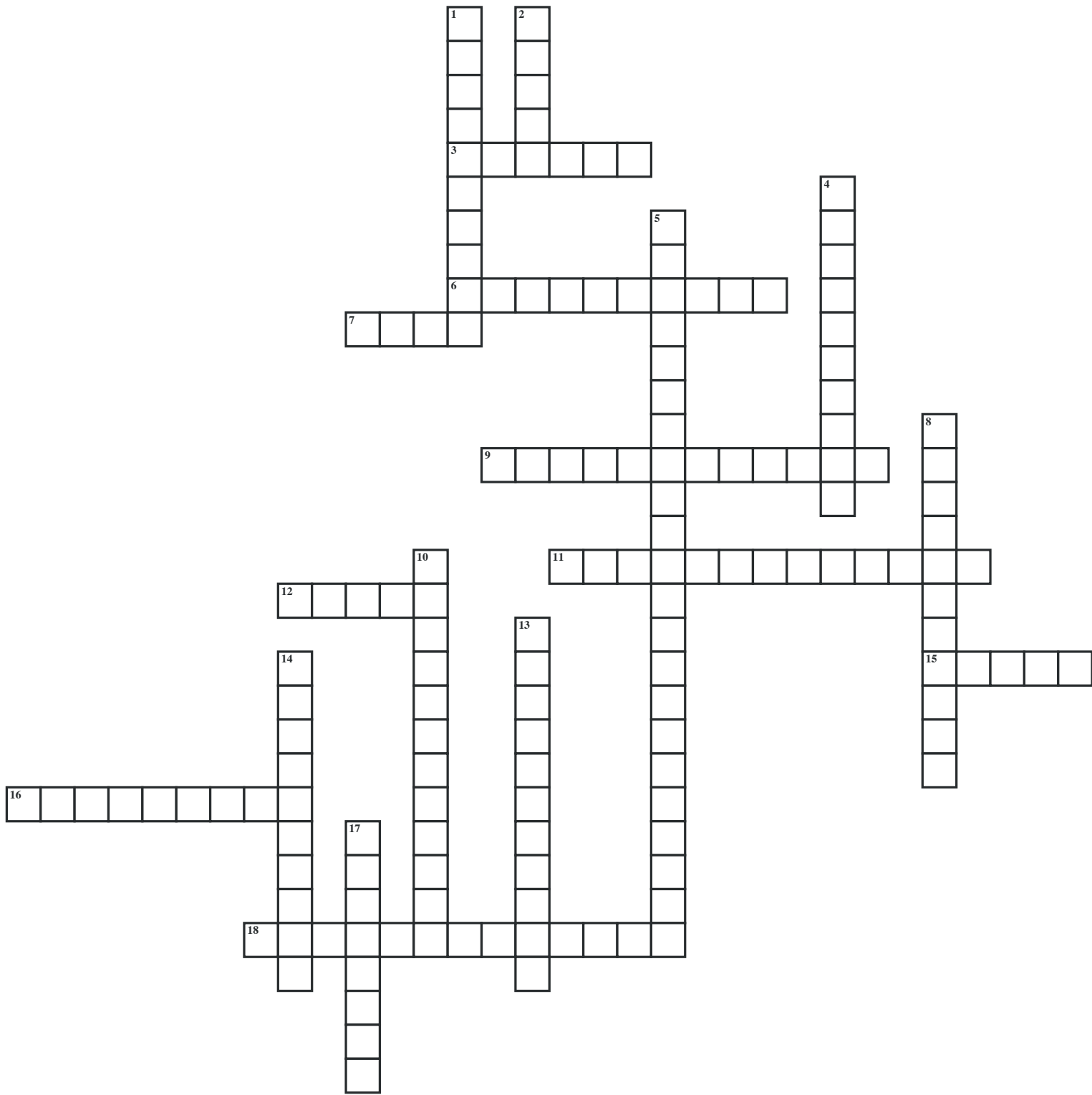
Issue IV, coming June 6th!

GAMES

NTCI Crossword

Lola Urosevic
Contributor

Issue 3 Crossword



Across

- [3] This year's charity week goal was ___ thousand dollars
- [6] Staff advisor for Yearbook Club - full name
- [7] Grad Award: H.L. ___ trophy
- [9] Scrabble Club main club head - full name
- [11] ACL of special education - full name
- [12] Assistant Head of Charity Week's Treasury Committee - first name
- [15] How many times does the letter "c" appear in the school song?
- [16] First ACL alphabetically by last name - full name
- [18] Teacher that hosted a charity week trivia contest - full name

Down

- [1] Head of Visuals for Graffiti
- [2] Head of Charity Week's Silent Auction Committee - first name
- [4] Film Club main club head - full name
- [5] Secretary of Student Council - full name
- [8] Music/art event happening a week from today
- [10] name of the piece Symphony Orchestra is playing in two weeks
- [13] Who on the ski/snowboard team placed 1st in the Giant Slalom for Boys High School Division?
- [14] Which edition of Maytime Melodies is it this year?
- [17] How many section editors does Graffiti have?

Across. 3. Twelve 6. Eric Pommer 7. Kerr 9. Jake Harrison 11. Christina Sepe 12. Vlada or Anisa 15. Seven 16. Tirsh Boon 18. Michael Peddle
Down. 1. Ruby Tucker 2. Maeve or Chloe 4. Kadyr Kwon 5. Simona Gagliardi-Gentile 8. Soda Pop Shop 10. Danse Macabre 13. Ray Macauley 14. Seventy-six 17. Eighteen

QUIZ

Have you read Graffiti?

Did you really? Prove it with this quiz

Sara Kaboudvand
Editor-in-Chief

1. Where was the March Break trip this year?

- a) Spain
- b) Italy
- c) France
- d) Germany

2. What is Senioritis?

- a) The loss of motivation during senior year
- b) The realization that school doesn't matter after midterm semester 2
- c) Seniors not showing up to class (because... why?)
- d) All of the above

3. What is Mr. Tallevi's hobby?

- a) Biking
- b) Cardio exercise
- c) Cooking
- d) Looksmaxxing

4. Is prom worth it?

- a) No
- b) Yes
- c) No, but everyone goes
- d) Who cares? I'm in grade 9.

5. Which artist had 11 grammy nominations but lost all of them?

- a) Lana Del Ray
- b) Taylor Swift
- c) 21 Savage
- d) Doja Cat

6. Which (according to the article) is the most useful math course?

- a) Principles of Mathematics
- b) Calculus
- c) Data Management
- d) Functions

7. Which water bottle was labeled "The Queen Bee" and was the highest ranked?

- a) The Stanley Cup
- b) The Hydro Flask
- c) The Gatorade Bottle
- d) The plastic bottle

8. Who coaches the junior girl's volleyball team?

- a) Ms. Murphy
- b) Mr. Tallevi
- c) Ms. Heron
- d) Ms. Chamberlain

9. Which of the following is not a favourite study spot of NT students?

- a) NT Library
- b) Public Library
- c) Starbucks
- d) YEG Food court

10. So, is NT getting a football team?

- a) *sigh* No...
- b) Why are you getting our hopes up with this question?

Answers: 1. b) 2. d) 3. c) 4. All 5. a) 6. c)
7. a) 8. c) 9. d) 10. *sigh* all



Açaí Brazil
2039 Yonge St, Toronto

Toronto's Best Açaí Shop

20% OFF

Present this coupon to receive 20% off your next purchase.

Açaí Brazil
2039 Yonge St, Toronto
Toronto's Best Açaí Shop
20% OFF
Promotion valid until 2024-05-31

Horoscopes

Written by: Jack Wolkove and Elizabeth Rosen
Illustrations by: Angie Ling



Aquarius - Jan 21 to Feb 18

Aquarius? More like Eatquarius! You are killing it baby, keep it up. Higher than that. Even higher! Highest!!! Oopsies, you went out of orbit, have fun circling the Sun and all her waves of radiation. I think the Sun radiates, I dropped Earth and Space Science idk.

Pisces - Feb 19 to March 20

Ding dong! Could I interest you in some self-respect? I know you're in there, you must come to terms with the pain that is being seen for who you truly are! We all see, Pisces, we all see... Don't you shut the blind-

Aries - March 21 to April 20

Let's play a new game, Aries. Your horoscope is the waste bin of your choosing. If you identify more with the recycling bin, don't even try to fool us with your facade. You're not "a little blue", you are complaining you're scared of heights while standing on your pedestal, get your privilege checked. If you find yourself drawn to the compost bin you're a nice lad/lass/lad, but the rest of us really do hope you rot in the Earth. Finally, if you find yourself sympathizing with the humble trash can, welcome to the club. We've been waiting for you.

Taurus - April 21 to May 20

What is that? Right there under your nose? Good fortune if I'm not mistaken! Oh joy! Oh golly! Rejoice patrons and soldiers of this day-to-day monotony, we have a horizon to look forward to at last! Wait...no that's just a booger. False alarm. Sorry...

Gemini - May 21 to June 21

Stahp it! Stahp! You've gone too far this time. I literally cannot see you because you've gone past the horizon line. Get back here, you.

Cancer - June 22 to July 22

5 is a good number. Keep it close to your chest. Don't tell anyone about it. This will ruin everything we've sacrificed for. Skip it when you're counting for all I care. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, just like that. Easy as 5-sided hexagon. Another thing is mornings; make the most of them. If you didn't achieve anything before the clock strikes noon, I'm afraid the whole day's shot and you shouldn't bother trying anymore. That being said, you could complain less about your fatigue; we're all kind of sick of that.

Leo - July 23 to Aug 22

Everyone makes mistakes Leo, don't beat yourself up about it. Sure, you sacrificed an innocent person or two, but you had to appease those Gods, you had to do it. There are like, 8 billion people too, so don't even sweat it. Maybe tone it down a notch next time though, consider lambs or goats instead.

Virgo - Aug 23 to Sept 22

Seven of hearts! That's it. That's all I have to say. Seven of hearts! Or if you speak tarot, five of- uh-hh- cups? Yeah, the cups. That's how much thought we've put into you. Speaks volumes considering how much thought you've been putting into others lately. Ooooooh. Burnnnnn. Sick burnnnnn.

Libra - Sept 23 to Oct 22

I would never recommend using ChatGPT, but your writing is TERR-I-BLE. Where is the thesis? What is this conclusion? Where are you even getting this quote from? I don't know if plagiarism could even fix this one, come to think of it.

Scorpio - Oct 23 to Nov 22

You know wearing a jacket outside won't kill you. If fact, it might stop you from being killed by your own self-sabotaging. But what do I know, I'm just an incorporeal voice screaming at you from up above because I'm the only one that can see the oncoming blizzard, and I thought you of all people could use the heads up! But here you are, knee deep in snow WITHOUT A JACKET! Get over yourself, PUT ON A LAYER!

Sagittarius - Nov 23 to Dec 21

You know, despite the fact that I may have called you out in the past, I like you Saggy-taggy. You've come a long way. You sleep inside now, like a big kid. Glorious. You brush your teeth twice a day instead of twice a week. You've eaten... okay only one vegetable, but that's still progress! I'm sure you'll reach 5 ft in no time.

Capricorn - Dec 22 to Jan 20

Whoops. You peed yourself.

