



Green: the New Red & Grey

TINA HUI

It's hard to believe that there are only two more years until I graduate from NT's dilapidated and pungent smelling, yet spirited, walls. It's even harder to believe that our Commencement won't even be held in the same building that we went to high school in! When I along with the grads of 2010 return to the place that has shaped us for four years, we won't be returning to laugh at students getting lost (like all of us have in grade 9) on the legendary Stairway to Nowhere and the S-shaped basement, or to visit to the historic music wing, the modest auditorium, and other significant pieces of NT that have made our time here so unforgettable. That's because by September 2010, the hundred year-old NT – our NT – will be no more. Instead, it will be replaced by an epic, full-fledged eco-school – the new North Toronto C.I.

This green initiative, the first of its kind in the TDSB, is bound to ignite many changes in the school community as well as the Yonge & Eg neighborhood. But how did the green side come to the TDSB? And what will an eco-NT be like? With these questions, I had the privilege to speak with David Percival, the Manager of Standards, Compliance, and Environment for the TDSB.

The new NT has been pegged as an eco-school since the building is L.E.E.D. (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified, meaning that it's green. This certification is done by the Canadian Green Building Council, David explained, and is based on getting thirty-nine credits that encompass “a range of issues and achievements that make up the design of the building.” The credits are based on how waste is handled during construction, how records are being kept, the materials used, and how well the air quality is. We earned one L.E.E.D. credit by implementing something known as displacement ventilation in the classrooms, an environmentally-friendly alternative to excess air-conditioning.

“Our eco-school will set an example of leadership in outstanding environmental stewardship and sustainability.”

Even though “it takes a lot of effort to design and build to L.E.E.D.” standards in the midst of all these environmental considerations, David pointed out that construction won't be extended. It just means more care is added to building it, and the detailed amount of record-keeping is added to keep people honest.

As far as the physical plans go, the school will be fully wheelchair-accessible and will have: a theatre, a green roof, a cafeteria which serves as a lobby for the theatre, a playing field with NATURAL turf, three large gyms, carefully-designed classrooms, and a courtyard that will be decorated with bits and pieces of historical items salvaged from the existing building. Maybe we should put our

swimming pool there too; that's one way that we can still have a pool in the new school. Our eco-school will set an example of leadership in outstanding environmental stewardship and sustainability. To say that “our building is green” would reflect a lot of credibility, David said, and we will all be happier with the outcome; a better, cleaner school.

In this case, the health and environment benefits of the new NT go hand in hand. The exterior wall is made up of a special building envelope that “should last many, many years.” The windows and walls will be tightly sealed, ensuring few leaks. The interior finishes won't give off harmful compounds, and will use asbestos-free materials, which significantly improves the indoor quality. The carpets won't give off urea gas and will be made of recycled material. The green roof will not only be a vivid addition to the plain, grey backdrop of Roehampton Ave., but will help manage storm water and reduce the need for air-conditioning, even to surrounding buildings in the summer.

The playing field will have an irrigation system that manages run-off and conserves water flow to sewers. It will also accommodate sprinklers to only start watering when timers come on. The practically-designed classrooms will let more natural light enter the windows, reducing the need for those bright artificial lights that I'm sure many students have protested to be kept off on sunny days. With more

windows, this open effect will come with almost panoramic views of the streets. So there you have it, the new NT. Buildings contribute a lot towards greenhouse gas emissions, so why not work towards reducing those high numbers? Our eco-school will present more opportunities for us to better understand environmental issues, recycle, and conserve energy.

Making the most out of this opportunity is just the “right thing to do in our time”, as David put it. Let's just hope that when we return, the future students won't gawk at us as we frantically find our way around the new building, while admiring the washrooms with locks, the smooth walls, and the ungraffiti-ed on lockers. Let's just hope that despite not having those unforgettable pieces of NT as we've experienced them, the spirit and tradition of the people will continue on. But just imagine how easy they'll have it...



Photos by Paniz Moayeri



Calling All Lifeguards

CHRISTINA ZHA

As we all know, the TDSB had decided to close down 23 pools in the Toronto District school board this year, including our very own, in hopes of saving 4 million dollars. The 4-million was expected to go to other school programs, such as English as a Second Language, and to cover up any budget shortfalls.

In the rashness of their decision, the TDSB also laid off numerous lifeguards, crushing any chances of saving the pools. With high spirits to prevent these disastrous results, NT students took the

time and effort to go out and protest at the trustee meetings.

Now the tide has turned. Over the period of our summer vacation, the TDSB has reconsidered and decided in our favour—the pools have been reopened!

“The government has heard us!” says a thrilled member of the swim team. Former mayor David Crombie wrote a convincing letter to the TDSB chair John Campbell regarding the pool funding. In his letter he mentioned some of the community corporations that offered assistance in funding, such as the YMCA of Greater Toronto, the Lifesaving Society, Red Cross, the Toronto Community Foundation and many more. In this letter he also proposed establishing a volunteer Aquatics...

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It's All in the Family

Noticed an unusual number of siblings scurrying around the halls lately? Senior girls give us the stuff only older sisters would know: bad habits, funny personality traits, and who's first out of the house in the morning. North Toronto, meet Carmen Siegel, Olivia Cummings, Mack Haines, and Andriana Reppas-Rindlisbacher!

Attention younger siblings: don't get mad, get writing! Send us your thoughts on your older siblings.

Payback time!

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Election Season!

Tristan Sedgewick breaks down the platforms.

Michelle Gordon brings in TV talk shows.

Jonah Goldberg talks to Conservative candidate Joe Oliver.

It's all on page 20.

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Student Experience

An Educational Summer (No Failed Courses Required)

MIRRANDA WHITTAKER

I was fortunate this summer; I was able to “broaden my horizons”, by which I mean I was able to attend a very interesting camp called SUNIA; seminar on the United Nations and International Affairs. Sound dull? Trust me, it wasn’t!

“Educational,” for some people, is synonymous to “boring.” But SUNIA is not, to quote the counselors, “nerd camp.” Yes there were lectures, but, in all honesty, they were more like discussion groups, as we were encouraged to voice our opinions. The guest speakers (an economist-diplomat from the UN and a Corporal from the Canadian armed forces) talked about their experience working within the UN or touring Afghanistan. While those stories were interesting, I’d be a liar if I said I remembered them clearly. So why do I say that the trip was educational? It’s all about perspective.

The real learning took place during the role playing (anyone thinking about D&D, stop it now). Through skits we acted out situations that arise all over the world: everything from the sudden murder of our country’s president and subsequent inquiry to a Security Council simulation on the last day. My personal favorite was the activity where we acted as the government of a fictitious, but believable developing country. And this is where the perspective comes into play.

While we were simply role-playing, the problem solving we had to do was challenging and thought-provoking. I can now fully appreciate how problems in society are all interconnected. For example,

how can someone infected with HIV/AIDS attain medical treatment if they cannot reach the only (understaffed) clinic in the area? Another problem we faced: how can a man living in an unsanitary slum save enough money to move to the city if the money he doesn’t spend on food must be sent to support his family? Obviously, just throwing money or aid into the country isn’t the answer. Medicine or food is of no help to someone who can’t get to it because there are no proper roads. The same can be said for a job if you don’t have the education to be qualified for it.

“It’s all about perspective.”

In some ways this was all very overwhelming. Everything was tied to something else. Which problem do you tackle first? Sanitation or lack of health care staff? Low school enrollment or the non-existent roads? Who’s to decide priority? Real humanitarian workers have to ask themselves these questions all the time.

But here’s the beautiful thing about connected problems: if you solve one, you affect several others. For example, better roads make it easier for the sick to access the drugs they need. It also makes it easier for children to go to school, so that they are able to get better jobs. Maybe those better-educated kids will become health care workers, perhaps solving the understaffed clinic problem. It’s not impossible.

I’m not naïve. I know that the world has a hell of a long way to go. But by loosening one string in a knot, you loosen others as well. Deal with one problem, and you’re on your way to dealing with the others. This is what I learned this past summer; this is what SUNIA taught me. Forgive me for sounding clichéd, but it’s not something I’ll ever forget.



Languages at Work

EMILY LU

The rain, at the moment, was not lethal. It drummed steadily on the sign that read La Société de transport de Trois-Rivières. I stood under it, darting glances down the road for any sign of a bus. I had been in Trois-Rivières, Québec, for five weeks. I was fairly confident that I had gained enough French during the Explore program to get on the right bus to work that morning.

An hour later, I’m desperate. I had been refuted by bus drivers of three different routes that their bus was the wrong one. And there were no other bus routes on that street. Had I read the map wrong? Was my anglophone accent too overbearing? Should I call a taxi? Instead, I followed the forceful recommendations of the previously mentioned bus drivers and wandered across the road to wait.

When I finally got off the bus, my relief was stifled by my complete bafflement and the twenty minute walk that awaited me before I got to the summer camp at l’île St. Quentin.

On other days, it would have been a beautiful walk. It was a single lane country road with untamed forest on both sides. On the bridge, one could look down the St. Lawrence River to the place where water met sky. There were no pedestrians.

But it was grey that day. And as I turned the first bend in the road, the rain turned lethal. It pounded until I could feel the fabric of my socks between my toes. It pounded on until I was lightheaded and not a little dizzy. I checked to make sure my raincoat was still there. It was.

At that second, I would have been relieved to see either a roof or another pedestrian. But neither was to be found within a mile. I was in such shock by the time I got there, that I barely noticed that all the counsellors and kids spoke French, or that I was attracting longer than normal stares.

Over the next couple of weeks, things improved. My attempts at conversation sometimes had tragic endings, but at least it was funny. Cooking was interesting, but at least I didn’t starve. And my attempts at finding the correct bus route paid off, or at least until the road was sealed off to traffic.

There were other moments: when a child chuckled at the joke I made, when I was belting out a camp song whose meaning still eludes me today, when ten kids in the pool were trying to murder me in a splash-a-thon, or when a kid in a car in the next lane waved at me through the bus window. Those moments made my day.

But every moment, even those less than ideal, made my summer complete. And I’ll never look at a bus the same way again.

J’Explore!

ANGIE TONG

On the last day of July, just before the crack of dawn, a group of teenagers gets suited up in their sweatpants and sweaters to brace themselves for the morning chill. We take the same route we have taken the past five weeks to downtown Trois-Rivières to watch the sunrise. We have stayed up all night long, trying to hold on to the last few hours we have together. We sing on the empty streets to keep ourselves awake and we pause once in a while to hold back the tears. This is our last walk downtown, the last sunrise we will see in Trois-Rivières, one of the last moments we will spend together in a long while.

I had a summer mission. It was to immerse myself in all-around French-ness. Long before summer started, I signed up for a government bursary French Immersion program at Trois-Rivières. I would be spending five weeks of my precious two-month break in an unfamiliar place with a group of strangers trying to improve my grasp of a mysterious language. How much fun could that really be?

When we arrived at the Cégep, a group of counselors greeted us. They handed us a bunch of maps and schedules, and our keys. Sadly, my first major dilemma wasn’t speaking in French; it was learning how to unlock my room. We were told that a typical weekday at the Cégep consisted of four-hour classes in the morning; ateliers (art, fashion, and sports) in the afternoon, and homework in the evening. By the sound of it, we were to be spending five miserable weeks in an intense French bootcamp. To make matters worse, most of us were still homesick, and we could not stop

complaining about the cafeteria food, the hard plastic beds, and the lack of familiarity that we were used to back home.

Without a doubt, it was a huge culture shock. French, not English, was the official language on campus. Also, where we would normally expect the boy to girl ratio to be about 1:1, at the program, it was an unfortunate 1:6. Additionally, there weren’t many tall buildings, crowded streets, or Asian people in Trois-Rivières. No wonder a lot of people thought I was related to Yao Ming. I guess they haven’t seen a lot of 6 foot Asians before.

However, by the third or fourth day, I began to understand why there was such high praise for this program. Although the beds did not get any softer, our opinions began to brighten. Everyday became a day to look forward to because there was always something new and exciting to do. There were Saturday trips to Quebec City, the Valcartier Water Park, and Montreal. There were beach parties and Friday dances. Friends gathered in dorms and laughed until curfew. No special giggling formula, just some junk food, music, and good company. As days turned into weeks, sometime between the first meeting and the farewell hug, we realized how hard it would be to say goodbye. Hard to leave a place we have begun to call home. Hard to leave the people we have begun to love.

Before going into this, I thought that I would leave with a ton of French and

that would be the end of it. But I was completely wrong. I gained so much more than just the knowledge of a language. By far, the greatest part of this experience was the friends I made from all across Canada.

Truly, summer 2008 was a summer of love,



laughter, friendship, and memories. For the beautiful city I got to call home, and for the group of wonderful people I got to spend the best five weeks of my life with, I will forever be grateful. If you would like to experience the extraordinary, sign up now for an amazing summer!

visit
www.jexplore.ca

Student Experience

The Best Buddies Way

DANA LOWI-MERRI

I glance around at the smiling faces illuminating all sides of the table. Someone brings up the TV show Friends, and we are greeted with a chorus of, “Oh, I love that show!” It feels so natural, sitting here in Mandarin with classmates and new friends. We’re all ravenous (not to mention really eager to take a brief break from the hectic summative mode), and we start discussing the contents of our plates. Where is a better place to talk of culinary delights than during lunchtime at a buffet?

It was the perfect grand finale to a vibrant year for the NT chapter of Best Buddies.

What is a Best Buddies “chapter”? Best Buddies Canada is, they maintain, “a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing our communities through one-to-one friendships between individuals with intellectual disabilities and other students.” How that’s translated in a high-school context is, well, a club where students (of various needs) get together once or twice a month and do fun stuff together. Serious members are matched one-on-one with a student with intellectual and/or physical

disabilities. These peer buddies call their buddies at least once every two weeks (or maintain e-mail contact, whichever they prefer). They also get together with their buddies outside of school at least once a month. You might worry about making this commitment. Wouldn’t it be awkward to find common ground, or at least find anything to talk about? Not at all.

There is more of a natural inclination to “just be yourself” when you are encouraged to become friends with a group of people. The buddies especially are so excited to spend time with you. The energy that radiates in room 208 during a Best Buddies meeting is obvious the moment you step through the door. You feel calm, and happy. A typical meeting is characterized by lots of joking and laughter. Sometimes there are structured games and activities, like the infamous dodgeball games in the upper gym. Sometimes we watch movies, complete with hot buttered popcorn and other sweets. We have holiday parties (anticipate gingerbread houses, present exchanges, valentines and candy hearts!) and, of course, the end-of- year Mandarin rendez-vous!

Best Buddies is a thriving club at NT, and ALL students are encouraged to check it out.

Keep your ears open for upcoming Hot Air announcements!



Presidential Address

BJORN NORDIN

It is hard to believe that we have been in school for two months already. Two months is certainly not enough time for me to get to know the 1000 of you at NT. So consider the following the catalyst in our friendship reaction, or in the event that you are not interested in being friends, reasons to keep your distance. Beyond being President of the Student Council, I am really just a normal kid. I like physics (a lot), as I am sure many of you do. My dream job would be... an astronaut, (consider the frequent flyer miles!) and my favorite food is DEEP FRIED chicken (preferably KFC but I will settle for any variety). The most important thing that you need to know about me is

that I am no Billy Shakespeare and certainly no Martin Luther King, so please, excuse the preceding paragraph and all past and future speeches. But yes, I am in the marching band. Those rumours are true.

Seriously though, thus far, this year has been extraordinary. House leagues are well underway; we have had great lawn parties, entertaining assemblies, an incredible Red and Grey Day and, semi coming that is sure to be a ball (pun intended). The success of the past few months is entirely due to your wholehearted participation in events – so thank you! Keep your heads up for news regarding Charity Week and other events, and, on behalf of the entire council, stay involved and good luck with the year to come.

(continued from cover)

The Smaller Siegel Sister – Carmen Siegel

Okay I lied; she’s not actually smaller than me. In truth, she’s at least an inch taller – a fact she makes me aware of every time we share clothes, talk about our appearances,

or just generally stand next to each other. It’s especially great when store clerks or a passerby on the street exclaims, “Oh! Twins!” but, alas, I’m neither fourteen nor do I think every grade twelve boy is hot. I don’t hang out in playgrounds on Saturday night or see movies at the mall on Sunday afternoons. I don’t furiously type gossip to my friends on msn all night or stress over how to do my hair on picture day (I’m saving that for Grad Photos). But, Carmen Siegel is still my sister, so, naturally, we share some things in common, such as our love of running around our neighborhood during thunderstorms and watching Zoey 101 on weekends at 9 am. She forces me to make her Kraft Dinner when our parents aren’t home and I drag her to the movie store so that I’m not the only one in pajamas.

I introduced her to all my older friends so that even if she was a complete loser, she’d still be cool enough to know Grade 12s. This plan seems to have backfired, judging by the sudden interest amongst the boys to go to semi, a school function notorious for discovering older boys and younger girls “getting jiggy with it” in the middle of the dance floor. MY SISTER IS OFF LIMITS! I will alert George if I find any of my friends dancing with her, and you don’t want to be on the wrong end of that walkie-talkie, boys. All in all, it’s pretty cool seeing her in the halls, and the admiring glances from her Grade 9 friends are embarrassingly large confidence boosters. Although Mr. Nicolet doesn’t hesitate in telling me that “she talks as much as you do,” it’s nice knowing that my legacy will live on in the school when

I’m gone. And just for the record, Mr. Nicolet, she talks waaay more than I do, and she’s a better liar, which is why I’ll tell you now - Edmund is NOT our step-brother!

ANGELICA SEIGEL

Mini-Madeleine – Olivia Cummings

Since September, Olivia and I have had a countless stream of people coming up to us saying, “you two look exactly alike!” My parents shake their heads, insisting there is no resemblance whatsoever, but I suspect their claims are based on how different our personalities are. I’ll start with childhood. Some kids suck their thumbs, Olivia sucked her fingers. It was always the same two fingers, shoved backwards into her mouth, accompanied by a blanket that looked like it had been through a paper shredder. As kids, I ran around naked, and was surprisingly obnoxious (the things you learn from home videos...) while Olivia was usually oblivious, but always looking like a million bucks – she had beautiful big blonde ringlets. Our interests have always differed. I was barked at for reading



Having Olivia around at home is great; she donates her Coffee Crisps to me on Halloween, she replaces the toilet paper when it runs out, and when she sings a Wicked! song in the shower at the top of her lungs, it sounds like the Broadway recording! But Olivia has always been modest. She’ll tell you she’s not a runner, but she has a scrapbook of ribbons that prove otherwise. She has a Gilmore Girls quotation for any situation (I mean this, just ask her) and is also an original Beverly Hills 90210 expert. She’d probably say we’re closer than Brandon and Brenda. Thank goodness we have different sounding names.

MADELEINE CUMMINGS

More for the Haines Name? – Mack Haines

It’s 7:00 am, and another typical day in the Haines household begins. I grudgingly head down stairs to make myself



a pot of coffee, and as I’m eating my breakfast I wonder how late my brother plans to sleep in. Mackenzie wanders into the kitchen at 8’oclock, giving himself a solid half hour to get ready (and by the look of his bed-head I wonder if he spends more than 5 minutes). At 8:15 Mack takes moments to throw on any clothes he can find (if you’re reading this, your bright orange sweater does not match your striped red and blue polo!), while I take an hour (at least).

When it’s time to leave the house, I hear “Allie! Stop putting on make-up! It’s not like it helps...” Finally we leave the house, and walk up to Mount Pleasant together. Once we hit the corner though, I’m ditched and don’t see my brother again until after school. Many of my friends didn’t believe I had a brother at NT – partly because the most I get from him is a wave in the halls!

ALLIE HAINES

Another Reppas girl – Andriana Reppas-Rindlisbacher

All the Reppas girls have gone to NT and have been somewhat successful in one way or another. Entering NT, my little sister Andriana was very nervous because she had some big shoes to fill. She would constantly ask me about my first days at NT and how I managed to make such good friends, drink from the water fountains at school (I still haven’t told her which are the ones with the clear water), and about what she should wear to school for the rest of the week. It got EXTREMELY annoying, but I remembered that I too was in her exact po-

sition four years ago. I told her how to succeed at NT and gave her rules on what she should and shouldn’t do to go far at NT. Of course, she didn’t listen to a thing I said, as she never really has (most younger siblings are like that I guess). Instead, she decided to do her own thing and be her own person which, in the end, I am very proud of her for.

What is doing “her own thing” you ask? I’ll tell you... she’s one of those people who sings made up songs everywhere she goes, they sound like they’ve come straight out of the corniest soap operas only watched by old English ladies. She paints her nails a different colour everyday (even if it’s a disgusting shade of turquoise) in order to stop her nasty “biting” habit and is thrilled when she sees a bit of white nail growing. She has a “party” and lends out MY



clothes to all of her friends while I’m away at L e a d - e r s h i p Weekend and decides to not tell me until I find out from facebook photos and then she’s screwed. Yes, these things get quite annoying and tend to make me wish she was still at the little Greek school she was at for twelve years. What makes things even worse is having all of my guy friends say, “She looks sooooo much older then you”. And the cherry on top of my day, the most nauseating comment by far that I have to hear every day from Matt ...”Tell your sister good things about me. I want to go on a date with her. Do you think she’ll like me?” I always knew it would be hard to keep the boys away...However, despite ALL of these annoying and embarrassing quirks that come with having a younger sister at the same school as me, she’s my sister, my best friend and always will be. I love you Andriana!!!

P.S. Rule: Don’t date Matt!

KATERINA REPPAS
-RINDLISBACHER

Summertime



For the first two weeks of July, I got to be a history student. Along with thirty other Canadian teachers, I participated in the Peace & Reconciliation study tour of China and Korea, a trip sponsored by the Toronto Chapter of ALPHA, a Chinese-Canadian organization dedicated to the learning and preservation of Asian history. Ours was a study of the World War II Japanese invasion of China and Korea and thus we visited four cities, each with a different study focus.

In Shanghai, we attended lectures by leading Chinese professors and human rights lawyers and studied how World War II treaties, international diplomacy and

various court cases have allowed Japan to avoid accepting responsibility and neither apologize to nor compensate the many victims of injustice. The highlight in Shanghai was hearing the heart-wrenching testimony of a survivor of the Japanese sexual slavery system. Grandma Tan was called a “comfort woman” (what a cruel description!) and who told of her capture and torture and fears at age 16. Grandma Tan was accompanied by her 40 year old son who admitted to us that he had just heard his mother’s sad story only two weeks previous to our visit.

Next on our tour was the City of Nanjing. For seven weeks beginning in December 1937, Japanese soldiers butchered over 300,000 Chinese women, men and children. (I would highly recommend Iris Chang’s book The Rape of Nanking for a readable description of this horrid, and now largely forgotten event.). The Nanjing Massacre Museum was, ironically, built on a previously unknown massacre site; some of the bodies are visible where they were dumped. The two survivors of the massacre who talked with us had no difficulty showing their hatred and anger and demand for an apology. The study group then flew to the City of

Harbin in Manchuria where the focus was on Unit 731, one of the Japanese laboratories experimenting with biological and chemical warfare. There were, obviously, no survivors of the beastly dissections and inoculations of plague and other diseases, but we did hear stories from two men who, in 1974, accidentally handled one of the many Japanese chemical bombs still buried in the Chinese countryside. They talked of their chemically-induced illnesses and how their families’ lives have been forever affected.

Our last city to visit was Seoul, South Korea, a Japanese colony from 1910. Once again we heard the sad stories of the Korean “comfort” women, many of whom were never reunited with their families. Some of the Korean comfort women now live together in the House of Sharing and they invited us to dine with them one evening and listen to their stories. Every Wednesday since 1992, these Grandmas have demonstrated in front of the Japanese embassy demanding an apology and redress; it was a privilege to join their demonstration on the final day of our study tour.

Beyond the lectures and museum visits, I did have the chance to experience Chinese and Korean culture—the food, the streets crowded with people and bicycles

and automobiles, the Buddhist temples, early mornings in the parks where seniors practise their tai-chi and bring their birds to “converse”, and the washroom squats. Bartering for souvenirs in the markets was a challenge for me, but fun. (It’s great to actually want to buy souvenirs made in China and Korea!) Booming cities like Shanghai are an architect’s dream. I climbed the 392 steps to Dr.Sun Yat Sen’s mausoleum, took a gondola ride in the Purple Mountains overlooking Nanjing, stood on cliffs overlooking the mighty Yangtse River, lit a traditional Chinese lantern wishing good-luck and happiness to family and friends, and attended a martial arts performance.

I am somewhat embarrassed to admit how little I knew of this horrid chapter in World War II history. I feel incredibly honoured to have been able to participate in this learning experience. It is sad to realize that so many in China and Korea are victims of the Second World War and that so many others throughout the world suffer such human rights abuses. We are so very



If ever you decide, in the middle of telling a children’s story, to modify it, I would advise you to have an Indonesian translator around. It is a sure way to prevent the change from ruining the original story.

Before I explain what I mean, let me tell you the story behind the story. Two friends and I travelled through South-East Asia over the summer, and, in Jakarta, we met an Indonesian who worked for a local NGO. She was very friendly and offered to show us some of the work her organization--Bina Mandiri Indonesia--was doing.

When we arrived at the kindergarten, classes were out. Seeing no children, I imagined we would look around and leave. Our new friend, however, had other plans. From our conversation upon meeting her, she knew we were teachers. As students began to arrive, she announced that we would teach them. Though we protested, we could not dissuade her.

All too soon, we were on. We decided to start with “Head and Shoulders, Knees and Toes.” I quickly realized how difficult this song is to perform even when you know English. I can’t tell you how many times I pointed to my eyes when I should have pointed to my nose, or how often I began to rise to touch my head only to realize I was supposed to bend and touch my toes. I am amazed the children were able to learn the song, given they were performing it in a language foreign to them.

Next came story time. My two Canadian friends claimed they couldn’t remember a single children’s tale between them, so the task fell to me. After several minutes scouring my memory, I decided on “The Three Little Pigs.”

The room fell quiet. Forty eyes stared at me. “Once upon a time,” I began. Our Indonesian friend translated my words into Bahasa Indonesia. I continued: “there were three little--” Then a thought seized me. The population of Indonesia is over 85% Muslim. How would the children react to my story?

I didn’t have time to ponder the cross-cultural implications. In an instant, I made my decision and finished the sentence: “lambs.” My two Canadian friends gave me looks. Our Indonesian friend dutifully translated.

Only I kept forgetting that I’d begun the story “The Three Little Lambs,” and, every so often, I’d say “pigs” instead. The tale would have been terribly confusing had it not been for our friend and Indonesian translator. She would wait for me to finish a sentence, and whenever I mistakenly said “pigs” instead of “lambs,” one of my Canadian friends would cough, and I’d correct myself before she translated the error. After a while, she began to translate almost as I was speaking, so I assumed she was ignoring my mistakes and using “lambs” every time.

At the end of the class, I asked her how she thought the story went. “Very well,” she said. “There’s just one thing. Why did you keep saying ‘lambs’ and not ‘pigs’? You confused me! I think I must have said ‘lambs’ myself a couple times.”

Needless to say, our time at the school was a learning experience for more than just the schoolchildren.

Mr. Taylor

Not many of you can say you’ve walked alongside a 13,000 pound beast this summer, but I did. I stood just a few metres from not one, but six African elephants, and passed within spitting distance of rhinoceroses, lions, cheetahs, and zebras. I watched in awe as they moved slowly through the tall savannah grasses and cavorted about as if I wasn’t even there. This was my summer adventure, a long awaited trip deep within the grasslands of Africa... just outside of Cambridge, Ontario.

Yes, I visited the African Lion

Safari with my family. It was a wonderful day, punctuated by the much hyped “elephant swim” during which staff turn their six wonderfully trained elephants loose into a small lake on the grounds. I bet you didn’t know that elephants swim effortlessly. They do. They are at ease in the water, jumping on each other’s backs, and spraying with their long trunks. It was a site to behold. The day was riveting, and on top of it all, we managed to pick a day in which it hardly rained. It was an ideal day at an ideal summer venue.



Summertime



So, you’d like to hear a few words about how I spent my summer vacation. Make that my extended summer vacation in which my wife Clare and I traveled around the world for 6 months. There is a lot to tell! You might enjoy hearing about hiking the Inca Trail and watching the sun rise over Machu Picchu. Or, maybe about how surfing the big waves in Maui is a lot like surviving the spin cycle in an industrial washing machine. At least it felt that way to an amateur like me. Bungee jumping in New Zealand was the scariest thing I’ve done in quite some time although white water rafting on the Zambezi below Victoria Falls was definitely more dangerous. But all that adventure aside, I think I’d like to tell you about a memorable lunch I had at the side of the road one afternoon while on safari in Malawi.

It wasn’t the food that was memorable; I think I ate a ham and cheese sandwich with Mrs. Ball’s Chutney on white bread. The ambiance was nothing to write home about either. A hot African sun was shining down and the landscape was dry and barren. No, what was memorable about that lunch were the spectators. Our group had only started preparing things when we noticed that there were about a dozen children of varying ages watching us. Don’t ask me where they came from. Oftentimes people just seemed to emerge out of the bush as if though they were beamed there by some Star Trek like transporting device. As we ate more children arrived and as more children arrived, they all moved closer and closer. It was obvious that they wanted to partake in our lunch and from the look of them, they appeared to be very much in need of a good meal, not to mention some clean clothes that weren’t full of holes. An awkward silence descended upon our group as we tried to eat our lunch without feeling too guilty. Eventually, one of the bleeding hearts among us (OK, it was my wife the social worker) asked our group leader if we could share our food with them. She replied that it probably wasn’t a good idea because we didn’t want them to become dependent on mooching food from foreigners.

So there we were, a bunch of rich white folks from Canada, Australia, and the UK eating what for us was a meager meal while a bunch of poor kids from Africa watched us eat what, for them I suspect, would have been a feast. The food in Africa is not very good in general, but I have to say that lunch left a particularly bad taste in my mouth. Just as we were about to leave, one of the older boys finally spoke up. Could he have the old soccer ball that some of us were kicking around. ‘No’, came the reply. And with that, we were back in the truck and on our way.

I think it is hard to spend time in Africa and not think about why much of the continent is in the state that it is and also wonder how things could be im-

proved. By improved I do not necessarily mean making it look like an extension of the United States or European Union. Perhaps Africa should just be left alone to be Africa, whatever that might look like once all the foreigners trying to help or exploit the situation have left. You no doubt think that in today’s interconnected world that is not a possibility and you are probably right. Nevertheless, as citizens of a developed county that sends aid to Africa and as members of a student body, some of whom will travel to Africa as part of a community development initiative next year, we’re obligated to ask ourselves one question. Do our efforts do more harm than good to Africa?

You may think that when we collect clothes and send them to Africa, that can only help the situation. But do you stop to think about how dropping free clothes into a community affects the local tailor or merchant. You may think that sending thousands of kilograms of food aid to a country can only help the situation. But do you stop to think about how that affects local farmers, global food prices and Africa’s fragile agricultural based economies. You may think that going to Africa and building a school can only help. But do you stop to think about what impact that school will have on the destruction of traditional culture and way of life. Not to mention how your volunteer labour will affect the bricklayer whose job you have stolen for the week. Last and most of all, you might think that having westerners go to Africa to try and solve problems can only help. But do you stop to think about how that affects the psyche of the African people. People who were told for generations that they were not capable of governing themselves or solving problems on their own. Who were told not long ago, that they were less intelligent, less civilized, even less human than whites. Does our going there attempting to help, eradicate or perpetuate this lie?

Consider the following comment from Isaias Afewerki the president of Eritrea. ‘Years of aid has begun to foster a culture of dangerous dependency in the country. It has nurtured lethargy, debilitating idleness and unemployment and eroded the industriousness and hard work ethics of communities’.

You may think after reading this article that I think it would be a bad idea for you to go to Africa on the global education trip. That is not true. The problems facing Africa are extremely complex and I do not claim to have all the answers. But let me say this. If you do go to Africa, leave the ‘I’m here to save the world’ attitude at home. Because no matter how many bricks you lay or how much money you manage to leave behind, the person who will benefit the most from your experience will be you.

“Perhaps Africa should just be left alone to be Africa, whatever that might look like once all the foreigners trying to help or exploit the situation have left.”



Spain is a fascinating place even for the shortest visits; having the chance to spend an entire year there is simply wonderful. My wife’s father was born in a high valley in the Pyrenees, just south of the French border. He came to Canada during the difficult years of Franco’s rule, and after a career as a professor of Medieval Spanish drama at University of Toronto, retired along with his wife back to northern Spain. This gave our family the opportunity to spend our sabbatical year in Spain as well, and for my children to meet their Spanish relatives and get in touch with this part of their heritage. And for me to visit plenty of castles and other historical sites to my heart’s content.

We settled into a small provincial capital called Huesca, nestled into the foothills of the Pyrenees. The setting was spectacular. Aragon, the province we were in, is actually one of the most sparsely populated areas in western Europe, and so we were immersed a vast landscape of dry rolling hills, with farms, vineyards and orchards stretching up to dramatic mountains. In spring, when the almond trees are in bloom, the air is filled with a beautiful fragrance — it is nothing short of sublime. Summer is hard and dry, especially hot when masses of high pressure move up from the Sahara and bake the land. Fall is pleasant, still warm, and winter free of snow in the lower elevations, but the wind blows strong and harsh. It is a land of contrasts and extremes, both in its climate and in its history.

Huesca was a fine example of this. The founding of the city is lost in the mists of time: it was originally a prehistoric Celto-Iberian fortification called Bolskan. It was taken over by the Romans around 30 B.C., and was the site of a famous college. After the withdrawal of Roman power in the fifth century A.D., it became part of the Kingdom of the Visigoths, before being captured by the Moors in the eight century A.D. and renamed Wasqah. It was the site of fierce fighting during the Christian Reconquista in the eleventh century. The latter is one of the best preserved early medieval castles in Europe, and was featured in the opening scenes of the movie Kingdom

of Heaven. During the Spanish Civil War Huesca was the site of further intense battles, and the English writer George Orwell actually fought there with the Republican troops. Trenches from this time still litter the countryside. And the walls around the old city of Huesca were built and rebuilt by every conqueror. The oldest stones, around the base are worn by the winds into fantastical shapes.

Just to the north were the mountains, where I spent every moment I could. In the high Pyrenees there was also a wealth of even older history. I spent a lot of time in the Valley of the Rio Aragon, where my father in law was born. It is possible that this is the valley that Hannibal chose when crossing the mountains. It has been the central route across the Pyrenees since time immemorial. The valleys and hills of the

“It is a land of contrasts and extremes, both in its climate and in its history.”

area are covered with dozens of archaeological remnants of the third millennium B.C. megalithic culture of northern Europe that also gave us Stonehenge. Most are dolmens, sort of miniature stone houses which served as burial chambers, and are kind of creepy when evening is starting to close in, and you are still high up in the mountains, alone. Others are sacred circles, or the foundations of large ritual complexes. Nothing is more fascinating than to retrace a route two thousand metres up that has served as a ritual path for five thousand or more years, and to come to the ruins of the complex, surrounded by forbidding cliffs and daunting peaks, with eagles and vultures soaring above you, the stones echoing with their eerie cries.

Also humbling was watching my five year old daughter and three year old son learn to speak fluent Spanish in under two months, while I was still struggling mightily with my Spanish verbs at the end of the year. My son still thinks my Spanish is “muy divertido.” He laughs and answers me in English. Perhaps if I had studied harder, Señora Elliot. Esta facil para los jovens, y defacil para los viajes, mi creo.

Fascinating people, a rich history, a stark and beautiful landscape, wonderful food; Spain is a varied and wonderful country, rewarding the visitor in so many ways.



Summertime



Ms. Marquis

I am a travel junkie. I suppose there are worse things to be. But I just can't seem to get enough of awe-inspiring landscapes, architecture steeped in history and of the culture, food and tradition of people outside my borders. I spend the days and nights between each school break dreaming of and planning my next big adventure. Perhaps it's my early days living in the Caribbean, perhaps it stems from my year backpacking around the globe. It's an expensive habit... but such a satisfying one. It has expanded my understanding of the world I live in, the achievements, suffering and beauty of our planet's many peoples. But more importantly, it has given me insight into the person that I am as well. Naturally, when I was offered the chance to attend this year's Olympic Games in Beijing, I was happy to oblige.

It still seems a bit of a dream. China was incredible. I had hoped to someday experience China, but never did I expect that it would happen so soon, and certainly

not at such a historic Olympic Games. See, this wasn't any Games. This was China's 'coming out party,' an introduction to the world.

I was able to attend just four short days of the Games including the closing ceremony. Like the rest of the world, I was awe-struck watching the theatrical, moving



opening ceremonies on television. Leading up to the Games, I also followed the media's coverage of protests during the torch relays and conflicts with militants in China's northern regions. I guess in many ways China is still steeped in cultural and political mystery to many of us in the western world, and I wondered what it would be like to be there and if I would see the

control that China's government reputedly has over its country.

Beijing is a massive city. In the area in which I stayed there were tall glass skyscrapers, hotels, and elegant diplomatic embassies surrounded by parks and canals. Clear blue skies reigned overhead, and although hot, the air was clean. Flower beds and ordered landscaping lined every major autoroute leading to the Olympic Green. Sculpture was erected to celebrate the Olympic Spirit. The roads were uncongested, the sidewalks swept meticulously clean. Not what I had expected at all, especially for a major urban center.

At every turn, friendly Olympic volunteers, mostly young people who spoke my language, were there to assist me. Every aspect of visiting the country, from our reception and entry into the country at the airport, to ticket taking at the sporting events I attended (Soccer, canoe/kayaking, and a day of track-and-field) was met with efficient and courteous execution. The Bird's Nest and the Water Cube, and dozens of other high-tech looking buildings made me gasp at their beauty and engineering feats. Pinch me! Was I really seeing this with my own eyes?

“I had hoped to someday experience China, but never did I expect that it would happen so soon, and certainly not at such a historic Olympic Games.”

But what impressed me most about my visit to the Olympics was not just the dressed up city and the logistics of running such a complex world event; it was the ordinary Chinese people themselves. I was overwhelmed by the pride and enthusiasm that my hosts had for their country's achievements, its history and for being the nation that literally wowed the world. One afternoon, while I was touring in Beijing's Forbidden City, I met a young Chinese family, tourists in their own country, who were also there to celebrate the Games.



There were two little children, a girl and a smaller boy, perhaps four years old. They were all tarted up in their best clothes and clutched Olympic and Chinese flags as they walked the historic buildings of the City. The little boy was a bit shy, and turned his face into his mother's skirts for protection. But what was revealed was so adorable. Mom had shaved the Olympic rings and '2008' into his hair. This was not an edict handed down by officials up high. This was not a staged experience choreographed by the Beijing Olympic Committee. This was pride and love of country - the same kind of enthusiasm that prompts sporting fans to wear foam fingers and North Toronto students to paint themselves red and grey. It was really lovely, honest, and indelibly memorable. This vignette and many others witnessed in the faces of the fans from all over the world cheering on their country's athletes and sharing in the spirit of competition overshadowed any media hype or negativity that brewed in speculation over China as a country.

Now that's what I love about travel - those little moments that reveal so much about us as human beings. We really are one race, and this is a great big planet with so much to teach us about how to live together with tolerance and respect. Yup, I'm a travel junkie... and I can't wait for my next fix.



The Making of the Wildest People

TINA HUI

I'm sure that anyone at NT who has ever done an overnight solo before (at camp, in their backyard, or for braver souls, in the cemetery) is full of vivid stories waiting to be told from their night of sleeping alone in the woods. As daunting as that would seem at first, I discovered that it's an adventure that's truly worth trying, whether you're an outdoor enthusiast or not, and even in the midst of rainy weather or bear scares.

But the evening of Monday, July 21st boasted neither rain, nor bears, nor stars; just bugs, an uncomfortable coolness, and an interesting night.

It was pegged that July 21st, 2008 would be our Death Day. On that unusually brisk summer afternoon at Camp Wanakita, sixty other student counselors and I set out to accomplish that unavoidable task which was guaranteed to define our month at camp: the solo.

At 4pm, after a long trek in the muddy back trails of the camp, I finally found the perfect solo spot; a shady, forested area where fallen tree trunks lay. This place, as unknown as it felt, was my home for the night. I was going to be on my own for sixteen hours.

To my horror, as soon as I sat and rested against a tree stump, creatures of all sizes started to appear; most notably, the Wanakita Mosquito Chorus. Even though I looked ridiculous wearing muddy rubber boots, long pants, leggings wrapped around my ears, and two hoods over my head in twenty-degree weather - I had to find a way to drown out their continuous buzzing and avoid being eaten alive. But somehow, through three thick layers of clothing, they were still as audible as ever. That was when I realized that a mosquito's drone can penetrate through almost anything, regardless of how many layers you have around your ears. And seeing that I didn't bring any bricks to build a surround-

ing wall with, and had nothing else better to do, I began humming with those pesky creatures, slowly being immune to them. By midnight, after scribbling dreadful poems, writing ten-page spiels, and building a stick shelter, I was exhausted, shivering, and wrapped tightly in the crunchy tarp. As I came to another realization, that I should have brought my sleeping bag, I trembled with fear whenever I heard the slightest rustling of the leaves. My imagination flew to all sorts of Blair-Witch-like proportions, and being a Lost fan didn't help. Could that have been the wind? A whisper? A wild chicken (which Camp Wanakita is rumoured to have lots of)? A ax-murderer? A BEAR?

Conveniently, then came the washroom dilemma. In bear-proofing 101 you learn that bears are attracted to anything that smells "interesting", and yes, human pee is one of them. But I was desperate and decided to risk it. Reluctantly, I grabbed my flashlight and freed myself from the relative warmth in the groundsheet, walking out into the darkness and towards my stick tepee, where I found it the safest to pee. As I stared out into the unknown, the total pitch-blackness of the surroundings ignited a terrifying chill inside me that had nothing to do with the cold air. I dashed back into the safety of my groundsheet as quickly as I could. That was when I realized that if you have to go, you should go BEFORE the sun sets.

When it proved that I wasn't ever going to stay asleep for more than two hours straight that night, I fished out a booklet that we had been given earlier and mindlessly flipped through it. My final realization was found typed plainly on the page two: "Now I see the secret of the making of the best persons," the quote read, "it is to grow in the open air and to eat and sleep with the earth." - Walt Whitman.

The "making of the wildest people" should have also been mentioned in the quote. When I think of solos, I think of wildness. I think of my friend telling me of how, at one point during the night, she had marched around a log while singing the whole soundtrack to Rent. I remember another friend who confessed that his tongue stayed numb for five hours after he had foolishly licked a slug. And, finally, I think of being fully human, with nothing except for nature and your free self having control over you for just one night.

After living through that dynamic experience and have still having managed to keep relatively sane, I can say that one solo in a lifetime is already enough to make you braver and more nature-loving (or mosquito-hating). But, maybe next summer, I'll take that muddy trail back up to the spot where my stick shelter stood and do an overnight duo.

Summertime



Where in the World is Mrs. Pady?

Music teacher Mrs. Pady, along with her husband, has taken a year off to travel the world. Starting in Tokyo, she’s made her way to the Japanese cities, Kyoto, Nara, Hiroshima, and Miyajima. Lucky for us, we can trace their journey, read their stories, and browse through a gold mine of already nearly 200 stunning photos complete with captions. It’s worth zipping over to their site just to see that in Japan, vendors sell square watermelons! There’s also a neat video of high-ranking sumo restlers circling the ring before a match.

Posted by: Mitchell & Deborah | September 30, 2008

Hiroshima has by far left the deepest impression upon us so far in Japan. The city’s horrifying history has been preserved through a park that contains the haunting skeletal remains of a domed building that was at the epicenter of the bombing as well as several beautiful memorials and a fantastically detailed museum. While the city works hard to ensure that this tragedy is remembered in hopes that it won’t be repeated by mankind, life continues to thrive around it in a way that we have not seen anywhere else. In a country that we have already come to know as friendly and welcoming, Hiroshima’s citizens are the kindest we have encountered. From the moment we arrived via the shinkansen train, EVERYONE we have met has been so warm and genuinely thrilled to have us visit. This is a city where complete strangers will walk up to us to ask us how our day has gone or if they can be of any help to us. Unbelievable. We were fortunate enough to meet up with three quarters of the Smith family once again on our first evening in Hiroshima and landed ourselves in a fun and quirky restaurant called Organ-za that serves delicious meals along with free use of a sewing machine or typewriter while you listen to recordings of Christmas music played on steel pans (seriously... we’re not kidding). The next day we visited Miyajima where the Itsukushima-Jinja shrine and its bright orange torii appear as though they are floating in the water just off shore during high tide (we arrived in low tide to wander through the mud right up to the torii).

While we were visiting this temple, a traditional Shinto wedding took place at the main shrine. This was an unannounced surprise, and while wonderful to see, strange to realize that such a private event was taking place while hundreds of tourists walked past. Right next to the floating temple was the Daigan-ji shrine which is dedicated to the goddess of the arts and of water (the rhythm and pattern of water is considered to be the inspiration for the arts). In the evening, our return to Hiroshima was completed with the most fantastic meal of okonomiyaki (a huge pancake of noodles, egg, cabbage, meat, onions, seafood.... and pretty much anything you feel like dumping into it). The cheerful humour of the chef while he was cooking everyone’s meals really added to the flavour and the atmosphere.



Some of Mrs. Pady’s friends.



The torii of Itsukushima-jinja in Miyajima

How to make: Canoe Trip

LYNDON KIRKLEY

On September 10th – 14th a group from NT’s Outers Club ran a four day canoe trip in the southern region of Algonquin Park. Our group of eleven students and three advisors paddled a four day, fifteen kilometre route starting and ending at Rock Lake Campground. The trip focused on leadership, outdoor education, and environmental awareness.

Everyone took away new skills from our time in Algonquin. People learned to set up camp, use a can opener, and deal with nature’s most annoying pests and creatures (i.e. zzzzzzz...slap! ...*itch*). We learned how to portage a canoe, prepare wilderness meals, and become more wilderness aware. Everyone was responsible for his own well being as well as the well being of others. There were no injuries. From early morning swims to songs around the campfire, every moment was a fun and memorable experience.

This trip inspired confidence in its participants and its leaders. Of course, none of this would have happened if it had not been for our fantastic club advisors Ms. Chisholm and Mr. Scudder. They gave us their support and enthusiasm, and invaluable assistance in working with the school and leading the trip. Special thanks to Mr. Blackford, our parent volunteer, without whom our wonderful adventure might not have happened. We would also like to thank Mr. Gorenkoff for his support and helpful advice.

Thinking of running your own canoe trip? Gather the following; two staff advisors, one parent volunteer, two club heads, and nine wonderful participants. Add in a serving of paperwork mixed with helpful administration, and a pinch of outdoor passion. Bake for several months. For best results, serve with enthusiasm.



Ms. Kazman’s son, Noah Hager, was married this summer in a traditional ceremony in Jerusalem. “May the love for truth, life, and peace be a blessing for all of us,” says Ms. Kazman.

Nerd Power at Fan Expo ‘08

MIA HUSIC

Near the end of the summer, I got a Facebook message from the Graffiti 08-09 group telling us to write about any unique experiences we’ve had over the past two months. As far as eye-opening experiences go, the most I’ve discovered about the world over the summer was which songs on my iPod are good for jogging, which ones are good for sprinting, and which ones just plain suck. But then I remembered that in less than half a week I’d be spending almost three full days at the Metro Toronto Convention Center. What could be going on at the Convention Center that would make me want to spend an entire three days there? Oh, just the biggest gathering of nerds in Canada.

That’s right! The Fan Expo Canada 2008! Gaming nerds, comic book nerds, anime nerds, sci-fi nerds, and even horror nerds gather for a three-day celebration of all the things they love most. This five-genre convention held once a year in down-town Toronto is known for being the biggest event of its kind in our country.

This year’s Expo was potentially

one of the best yet. The number of people that showed up was definitely larger than any before. One of the many reasons why such massive crowds come to the Fan Expo is because the guest lineup is always excellent. This year’s list was impressive. Illustrators from both DC Comics and Marvel Studios, Sean Astin (Sam from Lord of the Rings), film director Wes Craven (famous for Nightmare on Elm Street and the creator of Freddy Krueger), and Johnny Yong Bosch (voice actor of Ichigo from the hit anime Bleach) were all on the extensive list of stars that were present for the three-day convention.

But awesome guests are not the only thing there is to this event. You may be asking yourself right now “What else could there be at a convention apart from the merchandise and the celebrities?” Quite honestly, there’s a lot more. Yes, there are people who come to these sorts of things to get the one collector’s item they’ve needed since last year, or to meet William Shatner. But in truth, there is a lot more to the Fan Expo than just celebrities and shopping.

One of the best things to do at a convention is attend screenings of shows and movies you love, or ones that you’re interested in but never had a chance to watch. It’s a great way to end a day at the con after walking around the dealer’s room

for hours and hours. Apart from screenings, I also love going to the panels and workshops. A panel is pretty much a Q&A session with one or more of the guests at the con. Workshops, contests and tournaments are also fun to watch and take part in. One of the best contests is probably Anime Name That Tune, a game where the players have to guess which anime a song being played is from.

But the events and games are still not the greatest things about conventions such as the Fan Expo. The people there are what make it fun and exciting. There is really nothing better than meeting someone who loves all the same nerdy stuff you do. If you’re standing in a line, chances are that you will find a new friend fast. Besides, the more people you meet the more fun you’re going to have. The more the merrier, right? Right.

So conventions aren’t just for geeky hermits. There is a lot more to them than just obsessing over your favourite sci-fi show or showing off your extensive Star Trek knowledge. They’re about having a good time, making new friends, and being a dork. Whether it’s during games and tournaments or in a hundred-person line up, you’re sure to have fun no matter where you are or who you’re with, as long as you’re there for the love of nerdiness.

To read more posts, check out:
mitchdeb.wordpress.com

Summertime

University: Where Shall I Go Today, Where Shall I Go?

PAULA SANDERSON

“At this particular academic institution, we pride ourselves on being number one in academics,” was asserted by EVERY university tour guide on every university tour I went on this summer. So how do you tell the difference between a good university and a bad one? After visiting nine of the country’s finest, I now have an idea of what makes a school good and what makes it not as good, because, frankly, there is no such thing as a bad school. To help you out, I’ve come up with my top 10 tips in university searching.

1. Program

There are hundreds of programs at each school, and it’s up to you to find the one you want. Even if you don’t know which one to go into, get an idea of the general areas you like. It helps you fine-tune your questions and tours. For example, if your goal in life is to be a writer, why would you waste your time seeing a chemistry lab over an arts classroom? Often universities will even give you special viewbook for your program. On tours, I found that I was able to get more out of them by asking specific questions.

2. Sleep Over.

Staying overnight in the towns was key. Although I had never been in Aunitgun-ish, Nova Scotia, I could see myself living there. However, I had to experience the two-hour flight and three-hour car ride it took to get there. Is it worth traveling that far?

3. Tour.

Touring the campus gave me a better sense of the schools. Although Dalhousie is a larger school than some of the Maritime schools I visited, the campus doesn’t seem as large and unfriendly to me as, say, Western’s campus. In fact, it took us only an hour to see most of the campus, unlike the University of Toronto, which demands days.

4. Small Tours!

Some of the campus tours I went on had large groups of people. Although you might hear a question that you hadn’t thought about, in a group setting teenagers can be awkward and just not ask questions. On the private tours I was able to talk about anything I wanted to talk about, see anything I wanted to see. I’m not a science girl so I didn’t have to waste my time checking out the science labs, and I got to check out the pools instead.

5. Residence

Make sure you check out the residences. Perhaps they look nice on paper but until you get in the room and see what it’s really like, you have no idea how they really are. A double room might sound nice on paper, but are you going to study when your roommate has friends over? Or, on the other hand, do you really want to spend all your time by yourself, especially if you get homesick?

6. Tours guides

They tell funny stories about their university, like tales about students who dress up in full medieval armor and stage battles in the quad at Kings, or Rick Mercer’s Toga wearing partying at St. FXs. Speak to them!

7. Library.

You like to think you’re at school to study and you will have to use the library sometime. Go see it.

8. Academic Calendar.

I’m not a “school is for studying” type of girl. However, some of these schools almost make me want to be. The courses that the schools offer are fascinating. I can understand how math or history could be boring, but who wouldn’t want to take the history of rock and roll, or the sociology of fashion? I would recommend picking up an academic calendar. Not only will this list all the names of the courses that the school offers in your program area, it lists ALL the courses the university offers with brief descriptions of the courses.

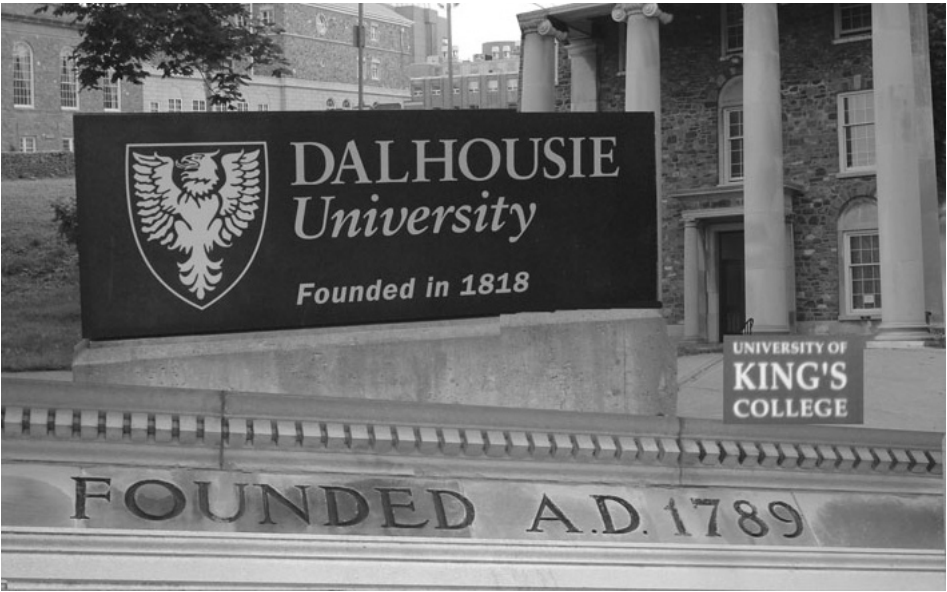
9. Social Stuff.

The student guides didn’t know off hand what marks you needed to get in, but they did know what residences have the best parties. The general vibe-students know about the social stuff and the administrators know about the academic stuff.

10. Free Stuff!

The mark of a good tour is the stuff they give you at the end. Dalhousie gave me a nice green bag, Kings gave me a pen and stationary, St. Francis Xavier gave me a t-shirt! (All things that will play into how well the university treated me from the start). After all, Leaside and Northern gave me a piece of paper telling me to go to their school, North Toronto gave me a pen. Look where I ended up.

You’ve got those nice grade 12 marks (I hope), and now you’re applying to your dream school. Just make sure you’ve checked it out. You will never get the true feeling of a school unless you visit. After all, you’re going to be spending four years of your life there. You might as well like it.



How to change your life in 5 weeks

HANNAH TARDER-STOLL

For the past two years at NT I always wondered how some people managed to get hundreds of community service hours but still have time for a normal life. I know that the requirement is only 40 hours, but the little over-achiever inside my head kept telling me I needed more. It did occur to me that I could volunteer during the summer, but that isn’t really the ideal way to spend my vacation. Although, when I went through my summer plans, they were starting to sound slightly dull. I wasn’t going to camp and I don’t have a cottage; so I decided to volunteer at Bloorview Kids Rehab, a rehabilitation centre for disabled children. When I applied, I had no clue that I was about to embark on one of the most life-changing experiences I would ever have.

The first step of my volunteering experience was to attend an information meeting at the rehab centre. I met some other volunteers and was a bit intimidated to find that they were practically all university students. I then signed up for my interview. I was quite nervous, as I had never had an interview except for the “mock interview” in careers class. Trust me; it’s a lot scarier when you don’t know the questions beforehand. Fortunately, the interview was a success, although that wasn’t the end of my application process. Once I was officially accepted as a volunteer, I had to go for a four hour training session. I learned how to lift people out of a wheelchair and what to do in case of medical emergencies. I even had to watch a video that featured two clowns who taught us how to wash our hands properly. Even after this long training process, I still wasn’t ready for the real thing.

When I got to work on my first day, I didn’t know what to expect. But, as

soon as I started working with the kids, I realized that there was one thing that my intensive training process couldn’t possibly cover. That one thing was the emotional impact that these disabled children had made on me.

Most of the kids I worked with were in wheelchairs, most of them couldn’t talk, and most of them were hardly aware of their surroundings. We would sing songs, do arts and crafts, bake cookies, and half of the kids would be staring into space, completely unresponsive and inattentive. What could we do? We kept singing, we kept baking, but it was absolutely heart wrenching to see these children who were hardly able to function, let alone make a paper mache mask.

Probably the most frightening experience I had during my five weeks at Bloorview was the first time I encountered a seizure. We took the kids out for a walk on a sunny morning. The child I was looking after was particularly alert. After about ten minutes, he started screaming and rubbing his hands together. I thought he was just happy to be outside, until my supervisor came up to me and said, “He’s having a seizure, I’ll take him from here”. I was in shock. I had never seen a seizure before, and didn’t know what to do when I first had to deal with one.

As the weeks passed, I learned more, I encountered more seizures, and was able to handle them more effectively. I soon realized that although it was heart wrenching to see these kids that could hardly function, even the smallest smile from one of them could make my day.

I worked with a lot of disabled children in my 5 weeks at Bloorview, and they had a huge impact on me. There were times that they made me sad, there were times that they made me happy and there were times that they made me hopeful. But one thing is certain. I walked into Bloorview at the beginning of the summer hoping to leave with approximately 100 hours. Instead, as I left the building for the last time, I was walking out with an entirely new perspective on life.



North Toronto

Take the Lead

ALEXANDRA MCROBERT

What is the school day, or “ham-burger,” as Lyndon Kirkley once analogized, without the extracurricular, or “relish”? School is nothing without the extracurricular aspects, and the students who make it all happen.

On September 25th, 40 of North Toronto’s student leaders boarded a school bus and spent three hours on the road together to Camp Glen Bernard. This trip, that is, Leadership Weekend, was organized by Alex Walker, Paula Sanderson, and Emily Corbett, with help from Mrs. Whelan and Mrs. Rough.

“First you get to know each other,” started Paula on the first night, “then you get to trust each other, and then you get to kill each other.”

The Cross-Country Debate: Sport for the Weak or Exercise for the Strong?

SIMONTEONG

The sport of cross country is simply fierce competition in a scenic wilderness setting. Sounds great, right? Just ask any member of the NT cross country team. Our team is small, with many runners preferring to train on their own. Is it because people think cross-country is a “wimpy” sport? Is it even a sport? Cross-country is generally acknowledged as a sport where few people compete and even fewer people succeed.

First and foremost, cross country is a sport. Though running is relaxing, cross country is not. In cross-country you must build your endurance, stamina, and lower body strength. Coaches always remind us to mentally prepare ourselves for the grueling trail ahead. You must never stop running! Many cross-country runners interviewed for this article mentioned that cross-country is better known as an individual sport; however, there are chances for teams of runners to succeed.

It’s an individual sport in the sense that it’s one person against two hundred other people, while, on the other hand, it’s a team sport when runners are able to draw motivation from each other.

Madeleine Cummings, three-time OFSAA cross-country competitor, hates racing. “Every year, someone on the start line is nearly in tears, groaning ‘Why do I do this?’ and murmurs of approval and self-pity follow.” Running a race is not what normal people would describe as “fun,” but it is rewarding, and that’s why runners keep coming back to compete. Many people think that running requires minimal skill and lots of talent, but Cummings mentions, “you can be born as a sprinter, but raised as a runner”. Distance running requires a little bit of talent and a lot of training. Anyone can do it, and it’s also a great cross-training sport. Face it, most popular sports involve running.

Still think cross-country is a wimpy sport? Here are two things that cross-country runners suggest you to do. One, talk to Billy Silverstein. Two, run up your local ski hill a few times, and report back to us.



Before long we were done the first set of bonding exercises, and there was no longer any shame. What I mean is, people who had never talked before got personal. Stories began to come out, mostly about funny experiences and summer traveling...

“Geoff Handley bit someone’s sock in an attempt to rip it off.”

By the end of the weekend, everyone was so comfortable with one another that they could be entirely themselves. Geoff Handley bit someone’s sock in an attempt to rip it off during Sock Wars. (This wasn’t actually witnessed during the weekend but was spotted on Facebook at the back of a picture). Amber Day put a Pringles tin on her arm and ran around as a hook man. James Bok almost fell onto the ground while crowd surfing.

Those who had stage fright lip sync’d shirtless. I was afraid of heights and managed to get myself on a log high up in the air (although I didn’t manage to cross it, there’s always next year!)

Every student on the trip portrayed leadership qualities at some point, whether it was during the colour battle, the thinking hats exercise, or the productive club meetings.

The most important part of the trip, above all, was learning how to be a leader. Leading, taking charge, listening to what others had to say, kiss-of-death, and crowd surfing were all part of it: Leadership Weekend 2008.



Photo by Hanna Janossy



Photo by Alex Walker

ON BEING A BUDDY

Senior students share their stories.

Too Cool For Me

I pick up the phone to dial his number. I’m scared. No way around it. No, this isn’t a crush I’m calling, it’s my buddy. His dad had given me his cell number and I knew this was going to be awkward. The call rang through; the first thing I hear is “yeah?” and so begins my “Go NT!” spiel. He’s with his friends and for the next five minutes I can tell he isn’t paying any attention. After I finish, he hangs up on me. Oh man. First day of school: I meet him and my other buddies (the rest are the way they’re supposed to be: shy, awkward, nervous, like I was.) Well this story doesn’t have a climax or a real ending but here goes: he was too cool for the tour, ghetto-handshook his friends in the halls, and we never spoke for the rest of the year. Hah.

Anonymous

“Huckle Buckle!”

I was in shock after checking the Buddy List in June 2008. Somehow, I was not just a buddy but a buddy leader. Now this might not have surprised the average buddy applicant very much, but I had never been a buddy before! On Grade 9 Welcome Day, two friends and I were assigned to run the huckle-buckle station. We started each rotation with a demonstration. I friend and I set ourselves up about 7 seven meters away from each other, and the other yelled, “Huckle buckle, cheek to cheek!” We charged at each other ready to touch our cheeks together, only she ran at me with her tush and I ran at her with my face. We ended up in a mound on the ground with a bunch of niners laughing at us!

Shoshanah Kuper

My Buddy and I Still Talk

Lets admit it: most senior buddies in the buddy program speak to their grade nines on tour day, and that’s all. They barely remember their names and go back to the own things in their lives. As one of my friends once put it, “Buddies is fake.” I think that’s because she, and many people at NT, didn’t have the same experience I did as a grade nine. My buddy was in grade twelve, and I thought she was the coolest. She did tons of extra-curriculars, and went out of her way to make me feel welcome. She called me throughout the year, and

I remember I wasn’t afraid asking her simple questions like “do people actually dress up for red and grey day?” or more urgently, “what do I wear to semi?” My buddy and I still talk, and she messages me every so often to find out what I’ve been up to, and how school is treating me.

While being a buddy for grade nines these past few years, I always try to think of my own experience in the buddy program. Although some people think it’s ineffective, or fake, for me, it meant showing up for semi in the right outfit, and wearing a ridiculous Red and Grey day costume when everyone else did.

Alex McRobert



The Royal Conservatory of Music at last!

LINDSAY CHO

We’ve all experienced (and are still experiencing) what it’s like to go to school and have classes while a building is under construction. For the past four years, the Royal Conservatory of Music has been renovating its building on Bloor St. W. It’s adding a new rehearsal hall, the Koerner concert hall (which seats 1,140 people), and new wing of studios. I’m happy to announce, that the days of having classes in rooms that may or may not be filled with asbestos, listening to “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star” while learning about dominant 7th chords, and practising in studios that aren’t soundproof are finally over! On September 8th, 2008, Toronto’s musical community was invited to the Royal Conservatory of Music’s open house. The massive building is a stunning work of architecture and design, albeit a little confusing. Okay, it’s very confusing. To save you all from the hard work of wandering the halls of the RCM for 22 hours while you explore, practice, or simply just take pictures, I’ve taken the liberty of compiling a series of tips and tricks to aid you in your exploration of one of Toronto’s newest landmarks.

Upon entering the building from the East entrance through Philosopher’s Walk, be sure to check out the brick walls of the original building... and maybe even yell in the atrium while you’re there (make sure there isn’t anybody there because the security guard might get angry at you. Although our beloved Henry’s Café is no longer present in the RCM’s building, rumour has it that a Starbucks will be moving in soon! So be sure to bring your Starbucks mug with you to the RCM!

With seven floors of studios and classrooms (five floors plus a ground floor and a basement “concourse” floor) that’s a lot of stairs to trek up, especially if you’re carrying multiple heavy instruments, so use the elevator whenever you can! It is located on the West side of the building in the new wing. Be warned, however, that the elevator makes a weird whistling sound... and a scary lady’s voice greets you upon entering and exiting!

Arrive early in order to ensure that you’ll get a practice room. You can get keys to rooms from the service desk on the first floor... with a fee, of course.

Be sure to check out the sleek new washrooms on the ground floor and the UNISEX bathroom on the 2nd floor! Complete with white sinks, and a lot of glass.

Other bathrooms (some which are wheelchair accessible) are located on every floor except for the ground floor near the elevator.

While on the 4th floor you can touch the roof’s shingles as they are exposed... there’s also a neat little window that looks into a classroom so that you can spy on your friends while they’re in class! Also located on the 4th floor in the new wing is a door that leads out onto the glass roof beside the unfinished Koerner Hall. Unfortunately, when I tried the door it was locked, so better luck next time!

For a nice place to hang out during your down time, check out the leather couches on the first floor (near the service desk), the tables and chairs in the atrium, or the corner nook with built-in benches near the Philosopher’s Walk entrance.

I hope this has been helpful, and I encourage all of you to check out the new RCM building!



Photos by Amber Day



This is Still Toronto

WILL RUTLEDGE

This is not the Toronto Star or the Globe or the Sun. It is not my journalistic duty to tell you all about the real world. I should be writing about how we don’t have a senior football team, or how the construction outside is progressing, how the student council is probably broke, or how everyone privileged enough to afford such a service hates the new Facebook, or perhaps I should be entertaining you with an angry rant about the condition of the school. But, I’m not going to.

Instead, I’ve written something about this city. We all live in it, but few of us LIVE it. I have yet to live it at all. I’ve only reached the tip of the iceberg when it comes to this place, and I probably never will understand it. In fact, fifteen of the eighteen years that make up my life have been spent living in the same neighborhood: a white collar area with blue collar families sprinkled throughout. Very few of the city’s 50 plus homicides have occurred on my front step. Therefore, murder isn’t what I’m here to write about.

I’m going to spin you a journalistic tale, experienced firsthand, of my journey into the heart of the inner city. But my question must come first: how many of the students at this school care? Too many, I feel, will turn away from this article that is probably buried behind the muse, just before sports. Too many will say, “So what?” and move on. Because if it isn’t about the school and if isn’t about you, why care?

This isn’t a funny article, and it isn’t filled with little stolen inside jokes from online videos. Instead, it is about the cheek society has turned on too many young kids in Toronto. Rexdale is a community not many of us at North Toronto

are familiar with, and those who are have my full respect. It is a community once known to be the home of a gang of local Crips. Some of you may remember the 106 gang members arrested there a summer or two back. Some of you may remember the movie based on the Jamestown neighborhood called Doomstown. Those few of you also have my full respect.

I was there this summer for a total of three weeks and saw more of anything than I’d seen in the previous eighteen years. I saw kids who, in a community with low expectations for its youth, are exceeding those expectations because of a simple program run by a few educators. The program was set up to help the so called “at-risk youth” with their reading, writing and socialization skills while using basketball to appeal to them.

“It’s hard to tell an 11-year-old that anger isn’t the answer when he sees the opposite every day.”

It doesn’t take long to see the anger in some of the kids’ eyes. They know what they’re expected to be and they know it’s the adults that set those expectations. It is the anger that comes from being ignored. All it takes is a quick look around the school to understand that it is in a state of neglect. And yet when the bullets fly, we put sole blame on the one who pulled the trigger.

It’s hard to tell an 11-year-old that anger isn’t the answer when he sees the opposite every day; that he can’t resort to violence over a basketball foul. The truth is, these kids aren’t as out of reach as they’re made out to be. If I, a 17-year-old student, can look one in the eye and tell him he

What Can You Do in the City for Cheap?

ARTS AT THE HEART

This Friday-Saturday-Sunday marketplace featuring local art at Yonge and Dundas ends on October 26th. Check out work from local artists and artisans.www.ydsquare.ca

RUN WITH ART

Register at <http://www.themovementmovement.ca> to “run a museum,” and join the movement.

SPORTS AT VARSITY STADIUM

Missing the NT football team? Ever wanted to watch live lacross? Watch U of T’s teams play at the newly built Varsity Stadium. Tickets for non-U of T students are \$5. Check www.varsityblues.ca for times.

INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF AUTHORS

IFOA features readings, lectures, interviews, and discussions with some of the world’s best writers. An authors list is available at www.readings.org. Tickets to most events are \$8. Be sure to bring along a book or two to get signed.

RCM’S GREAT ARTISTS SERIES

Hear Anton Kuerti play a selection of Beethoven Sonatas at Mazzoleni Hall (in the Royal Conservatory of Music building on Bloor). Student tickets are \$10. www.rcmusic.ca

has a choice to be the bad guy or the good guy, anyone can do it. Any teacher, youth worker, or just ordinary person can assure these kids their fate isn’t so sealed. They just need to know that doing right or wrong is a choice we can make everyday and that they aren’t left behind. When these youth are at their last straw, they’ll pick whatever is available, because there is no bailout coming. They take what’s offered to them, and it’s often the drug trade, an institute that has long been rooted in the depths of urban society and has been the cause of a “war” that only accumulates casualties; the bodies of the same youth I worked with in the gym of a Rexdale school this summer.

Some might ask where are the politicians, or the police, or the media? When Jane Creba was shot outside a downtown shopping center in the heart of Toronto, the reaction was immediate: politicians, police, and media alike hopped to it. The same thing happens to a Rexdale youth, and a couple detectives quietly work their scene, and a lone reporter takes notes.

We’re far too quick to dismiss these kids as lost causes. They’re only eight years old, but they’re already a “lost cause”. But, the truth is, there isn’t a lot to be done except work these summer programs. This article may enlighten you, but one day it’ll be in a blue box. There isn’t much a reporter or wannabe reporter like myself can do except remind you that while you’re reading about someone’s summer in Greece, there have been 50 homicides in this city so far. While a far cry from the 353 in Baltimore in 1993 and the over 600 in Detroit in the early 1990s, it is still a number that shouldn’t be.

Instead of ignoring these kids, embrace them, show them that they are not forgotten. They see everyday that they’re to be ignored. They see it in the headlines, in the condition of their schools, and on television. And finally, while this may just be Graffiti, in my eyes, this is still a newspaper, and this is still Toronto.

Announcements

the annual...
MUSIC
bowlathon!



Friday, November 7, 2008
6:30 PM - 9:00 PM
Listen to hot air for details!

**Need to advertise your club?
Organizing a major school
event? Send us the details at
ntcigraffiti@gmail.com
We may be able to help with
publicizing your cause.**

**HELLLOOOOOO
from the GAA!**

NICOLA GAILITS

The CN Tower Stairclimb
is coming up this THURSDAY on
October 23rd.
Everyone who's going get pre-
pared; bring clothes you can
move and run in.

Girl houseleagues!!! They
are starting soon. There will be a
Dodgeball houseleague, so keep
your eyes peeled.

That. Is all.

Yo. From the BAA.

Simon Teong

This is a shout out to all
you guys out there! Winter sports
are on their way, some starting
as soon as the end of October
and beginning of November. Be
sure to check the athletic board in
front of the Men's Phys-Ed Office
and keep on listening to Hot Air
announcements. Coming our way
is Alpine Skiing and Snowboard,
Jr and Sr Basketball, Curling,
Hockey and Swimming.

Lost your gym uniform?
Purchase vintage NT clothing for
cheap from the Mens' Phys-Ed
Office.

Upcoming Events

University Lunch Visits

Monday October 20th
Wilfred Laurier University

Tuesday October 21st
Dalhousie University

Wednesday October 22nd
Ryerson University

Thursday October 23rd
Queen's University

Tuesday October 28th
Schulich School of Business

Thursday October 30th
Acadia University

Next Class Rep Meeting

October 29th - 9 am

PA DAY!

Friday October 24th



The Field House
October 23rd, 2008
315 Queen Street East
8 PM - 12 AM

Letters to the Editor

Earth Day: A Success?

I would have to agree with Alex McRobert that Earth Hour was not completely successful world wide. More has to be done to raise full awareness. There has to be a smarter solution to try to solve the Earth's problems. For example, if Earth Hour happened on a monthly basis and encouraged specific action, people might become more sensitive to environmental issues. Furthermore, tax breaks and/or other monetary rewards associated with proven reduction in the use of electricity could attract more people to such programs.

Chris Stogios, Grade 9

I thought that "Earth Hour: What a Power Saver" by Alex McRobert missed the true purpose of Earth Hour and didn't examine the event thoroughly. Congratulations were given to those who participated in that hour yet they were mocked for using power after nine o'clock. The writer dis-

missed it as pathetic and absurd. She agreed the event saved power but disagreed that it motivated people to change their ways or that it really informed people about what needs to be done to save our Earth. Her sarcasm was meant to amuse readers but the negativity made me dislike the article in general.

I participated in Earth Hour and attended the celebrations at City Hall. I learned many things, including how much Earth Hour across the globe (in other cities like Sydney) had really helped our world for the better. It inspired me to keep on doing my part and make sure others around me did the same. The author clearly stated that she took part but never mentioned if she did it for the hour or if she was one of those people who bragged later to her friends.

As a student who cares about the environment's future, I turned my lights off hours before eight o'clock and, as I mentioned, went to the celebrations in the cold. Earth Hour was more than trying to turn off our lights. We needed to learn more, evalu-

ate what we are doing to help, get involved in programs, motivate ourselves and get excited about saving our Earth. It's wrong to criticize what others did on that day; the event was to help those who don't know what to do. Just because the writer's classmates didn't learn and didn't change their actions, doesn't mean others didn't. Many of my friends and neighbours did things to use less waste, including my own family; we started simple. We started using biodegradable dog bags and reusable grocery shopping bags, just like the speakers at the Earth Hour party had said to. Instead of being negative, she should have been happy that someone was doing something that she could be a part of.

Be proud that you live among people who care and even if it's a little effort, it can go a long way. All you have to do is your part for our future and help others follow your example.

Christina Atkinson, Grade 9

Grad Trip

The broadcast email on grad trips was right on the money. During March break, I travelled to Cuba with my daughter (Frances Ballard) and 3 of her long-time girlfriends from summer camp. I chaperoned them and had a nice vacation myself.

However, the resort that we were at, Tryp Cayo Coco, hosted two grad trip

companies, Break Away Tours and S-Trip. Between them, they had about 900 grade 12 students at the resort. There was a large group from Humberside.

I can't possibly describe the behaviour of the kids. It was like "Lord of the Flies" - chaotic, shocking, disgusting, embarrassing and frightening. There was no support or guidance much less supervision for the kids. They were held by security, jailed, hospitalized etc. Many were in casts within days of arrival, one in a full body cast, from slips, falls, jumping off balconies; some had bandages from severe sunburn; one went home in a wheelchair. Gardeners spread soil each morning over vomit. Bars closed due to abuse taken by the bartenders from the kids. Drunkenness and promiscuity prevailed.

Fortunately, the resort was large enough that we had our own pool and beach area. Frances and her friends pretty much avoided the areas of the resort where the kids were accommodated. So we managed to enjoy ourselves despite the ugliness around us. I was extremely embarrassed to be from the same country as these kids, much less city/neighbourhood. It was in stark contrast to the lovely nature of the Cubans at the resort: polite, respectful, friendly but reserved.

I would be pleased to speak to any parent considering sending their kid on a grad trip.

Pat Boeckner

Letters must be submitted to ntcigraffiti@gmail.com, and may be edited for length.

Spotlights

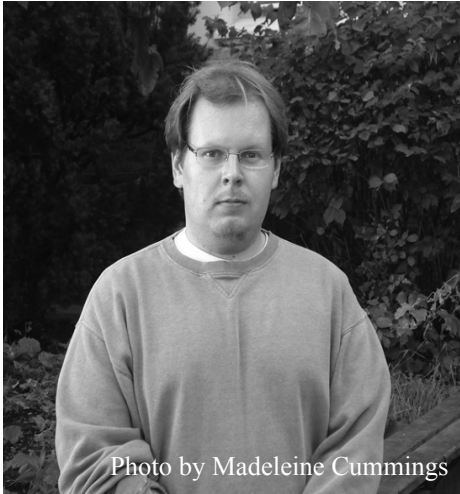


Photo by Madeleine Cummings

Mr. Chumack

NINA HITZLER

Some know him as "Chums", but his real name is Mr. Chumack, and you should get used to seeing him brightening up the halls of our decaying building. Before becoming a co-op and business teacher this year here at North Toronto, Mr. Chumack taught at George S Henry Academy, also in Toronto. His first impressions of N.T. were of the friendly and spirited staff and students.

Comfortingly, as the teacher of the co-op class, he himself didn't know exactly what he wanted to be when he was in high school either. If given the chance to take a co-op course in high school, Mr. Chumack would have preferred something in the business or marketing field. He enjoys working out at the gym, tennis, badminton, and, of course, computers!

The sense of giving back to the community is Mr. Chumack's favourite part about teaching. With his experience of 'Red and Black Day' at his previous school, he will surely be an asset when it come to famous Red and Grey Day.

Ms. Pyper

MONICA BOLGER

On September 18th, 2008 I had the chance to speak with North Toronto's new vice principal, Ms. Pyper. She is delighted to be at such a wonderful school and part of a staff that gives so generously to helping students. She has already noticed that the students work extremely hard and are compassionate towards one another.

This will be Ms. Pyper's first year as a vice principal. Before coming to NTCI she taught at the University of Waterloo in the dance department and was a curriculum leader for the arts at North Albion Collegiate. From 1992-2007 Ms. Pyper was a principal dancer and Assistant to the Artistic Director of Ballet Creole.

By the end of the 2008/2009-year, Ms. Pyper would like to have met every student in the school and be involved in helping us find our strengths and fulfilling our goals and dreams. She is especially looking forward to the many events, celebrations and traditions unique to NT. We are lucky to have as dedicated a vice principal as Ms. Pyper come into our school community. Good luck Ms. Pyper!



Photo by Monica Bolger



Photo by Emily Cha

Mr. McNaughton

JAIMIE ROEBUCK

Joel McNaughton is the newest addition to the music department at NT and has replaced Ms. Pady this year as the strings teacher for grades 9 through 12. This Grey's and One Tree Hill fan grew up on a dairy farm and in his spare time he takes pleasure in training for marathons and practicing his assortment of accents.

Mr. McNaughton has been teaching for three years and was previously employed at L'Amoreaux Collegiate Institute. He has been playing the violin for eighteen years, the piano for twenty-one and the French horn for ten years. He explains that the reason he loves teaching is because he is able to "share [his] passion for music and engage students in the art of creation."

Mr. McNaughton's overall impression of North Toronto is nothing short of buoyant and optimistic. He claims that NT is a busy place with an abundance of activities and spirit. Although his "quizzes" seem more similar to tests, he is challenging us to reach our full potential, which is something that will not only strengthen our performance now, but will assist us in the future as well. Mr. McNaughton is a valuable asset to the music department and is helping to enrich our music program even further. We are extremely lucky to have him here in the North Toronto community.

Ms. Ovington

JESSIE PENG

High school may have been a lifetime ago for Ms. Ovington, but her passion for French has remained constant throughout the years. Although she had always received good marks in the subject, it was a university study-abroad program in Paris - also known as the city of love - which made her "fall in love with the language and with teaching." Along with her dynamic personality, she also brings a variety of cultural experiences through the doors of NT. After completing her education in Scotland, she taught English in Paris, and recently returned from her honeymoon in Italy!

However, regarding her own high school experience, her worst memories are still crystal-clear. She recalls throwing up on her guidance teacher on the first day, before she even had the chance to introduce herself, but her anxiety was short-lived. Throughout her four years, she developed an ongoing interest for photography; some of her other hobbies include going to the movies and visiting the gym. When asked about her impression of NT, she answered without hesitation, "All the students and staff are really friendly, and are truly making the effort to get to know me and help me around the school." We wish Ms. Ovington a successful year at North Toronto.



Photo by Aileen Li

GRAFFITI

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Editorial¹³

We'd like to take the opportunity to welcome you all to the Summer 2008 Edition of *Graffiti*. Now, those of you who have been following *Graffiti* for the past few years might be surprised at this, asking "I can remember Fall, Winter and Spring issues, but Summer?" You'd be right. For the first time, this year we will be publishing four issues of Graffiti. Since its humble beginnings as a small, stapled-together magazine publishing student poetry and artwork, *Graffiti* has grown enormously. This year, we have over fifty writers and thirty photographers on our staff lists, as well as an eighteen-member editorial board. *Graffiti* has become a large part of the North Toronto community, and with our extra fourth edition we hope to continue *Graffiti's* trend of expansion and improvement.

We created this issue to show you what NT students (and teachers!) were up to this summer. So often our experiences and memories fade come September. While the leaves drop, the weather turns cold, and the work piles up, we hope that this Summer edition will bring back fond memories of warmer times to inspire you.

Featured inside are stories of summer jobs, volunteer experiences and various voyages around the globe as well as the *Graffiti* staples; that is, student opinion and reporting articles. Also new this year is Graffiti Online, or GO, as we like to call it. Graffiti Online is what it sounds – this newspaper, but on the web. Here we will host issue archives and photo galleries, and also publish information for prospective and current contributors. In addition, here we'll post content that didn't appear in print issues due to limited space. You'll be able to print out what you please, and follow links that are related to what you're reading. Be sure to check out graffiti.ntci.on.ca!

We're very excited about all of these changes, but when it comes down to it, the paper is only as good as you are. To fill four issues, we'll need more of your fabulous work. So write then submit, and we'll put your thoughts in print.

Producing this first issue has been an experience to remember. From the appearance of mysterious fridges to malfunctioning computers, we've faced a whole host of unexpected occurrences. In fact, looking back at the beginning Grade 12 year as a whole, there was a large number of surprises, good and bad. Here are some things we wish we'd known **before** finishing Grade 11:

1. **A spare period is necessary for the preservation of your sanity.** Just trust us on this. The only people taking a full schedule are either a) insane, b) art students, c) desperate, or d) any combination of the above.
2. **Scholarship applications wreak havoc on your work schedule.** If that's what you're interested in, start preparing for scholarships at the end of Grade 11. Or 10. Heck, write them in middle school.
3. **Don't wait till Grade 12 to get involved.** The more you do in younger grades, the richer your high school experience will be. High school doesn't last long enough.
4. **University Fair pamphlets are useless.** Unless you already know what you're looking for, university handouts all look great but say the same things. The only way to get useful information is to talk to people.



5. **Volunteer as much as possible, as early as possible.** By Grade 12, you've got other things to worry about. If you can keep volunteering, brilliant, but make sure you've got at least the 40 hours under your belt before your final year.
6. **You're not allowed in the school past 6 PM.** Wherever you are, whatever you're trying to do - the caretakers *will* find you.
7. **Become a class rep.** Two words, folks: free timbits.
8. **Go to leadership weekend!** It's four days of delight. Make sure you go at least once.
9. **Kiss up to your teachers.** They're the ones who will be writing your recommendation letters. Make sure at least three of them know how to spell your name correctly.
10. **Convince your parents to go into the furniture industry.** Everybody likes a free grad couch. Instant popularity.

Graffiti Editorial Policy

Graffiti aims to inform, represent the views of, and showcase the talents of North Toronto Collegiate Institute students. Pieces of writing must be fewer than 1000 words, with the exception of short fiction, which must be fewer than 1500 words. Submissions from all students in all grades are encouraged. Submissions from staff, parents, former students and teachers are also accepted. Letters to the Editors are only accepted from those not connected with the school. Only poetry, short fiction and personal essays may be published anonymously.

The Editors encourage that articles be submitted directly by email. Otherwise, submissions may be emailed directly to the Graffiti staff, or submitted via CD or USB key to the bin at the back of room 309. It is the aim of Graffiti to do all it can to avoid plagiarized articles, but the Editors and North Toronto Collegiate Institute assume no responsibility for any such article. While opinionated and controversial articles criticizing policy or opinion are welcomed, articles containing slander or personal attacks will not be published.

The final selection of articles will be determined by the Editors. Articles that are not printed are kept on file for future issues. All submissions become the property of Graffiti and may be edited. Those submitting work automatically accept all the provisions of this policy. The Editorial Board retains final discretionary power in all matters relating to Graffiti.

For all public submissions, please send email to ntcigraffiti@gmail.com.

Feature



When Not to Take the High Road

JENNIFER GILLIES

You stumble down front porch steps, shrieking with laughter at nothing in particular. You pull out your phone, and after 3 wrong password entries you’re able to open it up and look at the time. Crap. You have ten minutes to get home, and the subway has long stopped running. “Hey man, you wanna ride?” Your equally-hammered friend staggers beside you, throws his keys up in the air, and watches them fall. Even in your inebriated state, you shake your head at the idiot beside you. “No thanks,” you say, with great superiority, “I don’t get into cars with drunk drivers.

What are you, stupid?” As you strut off towards Yonge Street (maybe you’ll just take a cab), a blue minivan pulls up beside, Lil’ Wayne’s “Lollipop” blasting in your ears. “Hey babe, wanna ride?” Your BFF, who (only minutes ago) was hitting bowls with you (for all you niners, that’s a method of smoking weed), nods to the back where an empty seat is calling your name. You eye her suspiciously, and ask “Have you been drinking?” Your friend haughtily replies, “Dude, drinking and driving is for idiots, of course not.” You slide open the door and hop into the seat, content that you have found a safe and quick way home. Right? Wrong.

Though most of us don’t get into cars with a drunk driver, teens are finding it hard to turn down a ride from a driver who is high. But it’s time to realize that driving high is as bad an idea as McCain choosing Palin as his running mate. In 2001, the Ontario Student Drug Use Survey found that 20 % more students were driving high than driving drunk. Why could this be? Well, marijuana is as easily accessible and socially acceptable as chocolate cake (which, funnily enough, is a favourite among stoners), and therefore many teens are likely to smoke a joint or hit a bowl or two. So now we’re surrounded by a bunch of rowdy teens armed with access to daddy’s car, prematurely-granted G2s, weed, and all necessary dope-smoking paraphernalia. Unfortunately, they are also equipped with information as accurate and up to date as NT’s website.

*Kenneth, a grade 12 North Toronto student lives by the motto “the higher, the wiser.” Many North Toronto students seem to agree, saying they are “more cautious and aware when [they] drive high”. Some even go as far as to say that they “drive better high than [they] do sober.” Well that’s reassuring. Turns out (big surprise) that cannabis actually negatively affects key driving skills, like reaction time and ability to pay attention. So where did this false mindset come from? There’s no real culprit, so I guess we can go ahead and blame our 21st century devil – the media. Unfortunately, thanks to an overwhelming and constant campaign by MADD spread-

ing awareness about the dangers of drinking and driving, the few ads we see about driving high (yes, that one with the talking rolling papers) seem insignificant – and send us the message that driving high is not as bad as (and therefore better than) driving drunk.

For those of us who are actually educated on the effects of driving high, what’s our excuse? Well, unfortunately a ride at the end of a hard night is sometimes too tempting to resist (especially as winter approaches). No one enjoys stumbling to the subway (making sure to catch the last train before the TTC closes), or paying the recently-jacked-up cab fare. No one likes to call their parents to get picked up while music pounds and fellow partiers laugh and scream in the background, totally blowing your cover about watching a movie at a friend’s house. And no one wants to leave the party by 11:30 to catch that bus, to get to that station, to ride that train, to jog that ten minute walk, to be home by that 1 o’clock curfew. Then again, no one likes to eat vegetables, get a good night’s sleep, or do homework. But we consistently do things that we don’t like to do because we know that in the long run it’ll all pay off. We’ll in this case, it doesn’t.

Next time you’re offered a ride by someone whose eyes are the colour of tomatoes, and who has just single-handedly finished off a cake, take the subway instead (or a cab, or walk or bike or rollerblade). Because this is the one time you shouldn’t take the high road.

Straighten your Knee, or I’ll Feed your Remains to my Dog!

YEVGENIYA SHAKLHTER

In a frigid room and on a hard floor, we sat in 200° splits, trembled, and waited. There was silence. Prickling silence. Her bare feet making no sound on the floor, she prowled behind us. We didn’t know where she was, but we could feel her gaze on our toes and knees and backs... backs and knees must be straight, toes must be pointed. Not all of us would escape, but we didn’t know which one. Not all of us could do these splits- they were too hard for some girls, who hovered above the floor, shaking...it would be one of them.

The victim chosen, our teacher called out the name, and dragged the girl to the front. We turned around at her command to watch as our friend placed one foot on a bench and hesitantly attempted a split. It was not to be—she still needed 15 cm to touch the floor. In dead silence, the teacher crept up behind her, and pounced on her, putting her entire weight on the girl, pressing her down. The air was rent with the victim’s scream, and we drew our breaths, knowing that it would not stop. And at last, there was silence in the hall, and white against the dark floor, the little girl was sitting in a 200° split.

We relaxed, detaching our nails from our palms, but not for long. In the darkness gleamed a bare white knee—a bent knee, and with a wave of fury, our teacher removed her leather belt, as the girl flinched, as we cried out a warning, as she let out a scream of fear, as we realized that it was too late, and with a hateful swish and a crack of the whip, the belt connected with the trembling knee.

From the hard floor and out of the frigid room, great ballerinas emerged.

Before I continue, I ought to justify myself to those who are reading this

with revulsion and horror. This is not an article to defend corporal punishment. Nothing can justify beating students to a pulp—little, scared girls with bare knees and pale faces. This is about a different thing altogether: Canadians’ different approach to sport, music, and art.

Almost all of us do something outside of school. We go to play Ultimate Frisbee in the park with our friends. We play tennis with our families. We take dance lessons. We all love it. We go to our ballet classes to...ahem, relax.

This is a wake-up call. Ballet and relaxation have nothing in common. Relaxation is sleeping away on a sofa, with a bag of chips and a TV turned on. Ballet is a sport, hideously difficult, bitterly painful, cruelly unrewarding.

For some reason, we only see the fun in sports and in other extracurricular activities that we do. To the real challenge, we close our eyes. We enjoy Frisbee, but how many of us stay behind and practice those flicks and hammers—all alone in the middle of the field? How many of us musicians spend our time playing scales, when the world is stuffed to the top with sonatas and concertos? I am a figure skater, and I consider myself to be quite serious about it, but I can tell you at once that miraculously, breath-taking spins and complex jumps interest me a whole lot more than stroking the perimeter of the arena, doing skills exercises—the same ones, over and over.

One of the most horrible aspects of

this approach to sport is the restraints we impose on our coaches. They may not yell, because the laws prohibit yelling; they may not criticize, because our parents out there on the stands are anxiously looking on, hoping that their Johnny or Mary is having a great time. It is quite clear to our

For some reason, we only see the fun in sports and in other extracurricular activities that we do.

teachers and coaches that we’re not interested in the sport itself; we’re interested in the fascinating, exhilarating, pleasant aspect of it. We’re there to have a good time. And if Jessie can’t do a split...well, then, Jessie can’t do a split, and that’s that.

But when have you ever heard of a ballerina who couldn’t do a split!?

Yet some coaches resist. Some coaches refuse to say, “Well done. It was much better today,” when there isn’t even a hint of an improvement. One such person is my amazing figure skating coach. She has a completely different method of teach-

ing, which includes the transformation of a prospective student into a dog biscuit if the knee is not straight. Only the knee! Who cares about that? But it is such details that make up a sport! And how well my coach spots such details! “Fairy guardmother” we call her. Her teaching methods may be slightly more violent than most and certainly stricter than almost all, but how we love her for it! As we loved my old ballet teacher who beat us...dreaded her in class, trembled when we heard her approach, but loved her nonetheless! Because, little girls though we were, we understood the distinction between sport and entertainment. We understood that we were helpless on our own. We understood that, if not for her, we would never have achieved that high level of excellence; if not for her, we would never have been accepted into the best European schools of ballet, where my former classmates now study. We understood that she was taking us as raw diamonds, and by force removing the ugly tarnish, letting us shine.

Because none of us shone on our own.



Feature

Looking for Happiness? Move to Africa

Comparing Harlem to Ghana

NICOLA GAILITS

The iPhone comes out. I jump on the bandwagon and buy it. You’re next door. You’ve watched the same ads, but you can’t afford it. Wouldn’t that make you feel

(A) miserable
(B) excluded
(C) dejected
(D) unsatisfied
(E) all of the above?

On separate trips I visited Ghana, in West Africa, and then Harlem, an area of NYC largely populated by African Americans. These worlds are different in almost every way you can imagine. People wouldn’t be able to understand each other even if they both spoke English. Ghana struggles in poverty while Harlem enjoys relative prosperity. But who enjoys life more? Is it the people from Harlem living in the underbelly of a glamorous American city, or the Ghanaians of Western Africa?

The obvious answer is Harlem. They have access to healthcare, education, a reasonable climate, and, very importantly,

media. With media comes the desire for a high life, and, for many in Harlem, it’s one they can’t have. After working two jobs after school, they cram for a test, babysit their five-year-old sister, and watch Gossip Girls shopping in Paris. Those in Ghana, on the other hand, have no access to the lives of celebrities. They haven’t heard of Coach (besides the bus), and they are unfamiliar with pizza. Their neighbours are the ones they compare themselves to. That comparison is on a much smaller scale: who sold more mangoes at the market today?

What I’m getting to is that happiness can be thought of as the gap between what you have and what you want. When this gap is abnormally large, like in Harlem and Orange County, unhappiness festers because the temptations of a fabulous life are dangled in one’s face. The average lower class American makes \$1000s more than the typical Ghanaian, but who has a more satisfying life?

We learn about the suffering of the African people and their struggle to survive, but our struggle is different. What

we deal with isn’t just physical. It’s mental suffering, knowing you’re worse off than that man on 5th Avenue. Poorer Americans have more opportunities, more material goods, and better healthcare than Ghanaians. But, overall, Ghanaians may be more



pleased with their day-to-day lives. This may sound ignorant or insensitive of what Ghanaians face daily, such as barely being able to provide enough rice for their families. But you can see the happiness in the culture and on their faces. Ghanaian children yell and wave vigorously at the side of the road, exultant to see you.

Everyone wants to meet you, shake your hand, and be your friend. All across Ghana, signs read “God’s shoe shop” and “In God we trust”. Even if their crops fail, their trust in God never does. There’s also respect for another’s work and family that you don’t see over here. Why steal from your neighbour when you rely on each other to get by?

Essentially, once you have the necessities (food, water, shelter), you’re looking for happiness. Whether that means making piles of money or traveling the world, everybody looks for it. Some people just have different expectations of what happiness is. Ghanaians appreciate what little they do have, and the media can’t throw in their face what they don’t have.

Life is like a movie review. You’re told it’s outstanding, five stars. You expect a good show, and you end up disappointed. When you’re told it’s going to be dreadful, you look out for things you can enjoy. So if you’re looking for happiness, don’t look to your neighbour’s house, look to the mud huts.



Model UN Conference “In order to pursue justice, you must feel the injustice first”

CONNIE ZHANG

Power. Defined as the control and influence over other people and their actions. It is something many wish to acquire; through intelligence or physical force. Yet, when power is attained, it is hard to hold on to and even more difficult to use wisely. Last year, I experienced how difficult it is to use power when it is actually attained. Joining Model UN has been an extraordinary experience I will never forget.

My first conference at the University of Toronto was eye-opening. As part of the Disarmament and International Security Committee, delegates from different schools worked together on a successful resolution that would end Israeli-Lebanon disputes and attacks from the Hezbollah, a heavily armed and supported paramilitary group that has fought with Israeli forces to defend Lebanon due to the lack of a central government or authority. At the end of the day, I even had the honour to hear famous

UN peacekeeper Romeo Dallaire speak about his experiences in Darfur and the genocide there. After my first conference, I gradually began to understand how the UN worked. In November, I attended SSUNS, the major conference held each year in Montreal attended by schools from around the globe. My committee was UNESCAP (United Nations Economic and Social Council for Asia and the Pacific) and there were approximately 50 countries and 5 NGO’s. After much research on my NGO, CARE, and determining what my views were towards gender equality, human trafficking, and poverty reduction, I managed to write a successful position paper. While I was researching, I was shocked at some of the statistics that came up. Approximately 218 million children around the world are involved in child labour instead of receiving adequate education. Many are trafficked into prostitution, domestic servitude, dangerous mining, and even armed conflict. Human trafficking has also led to a rapid spread of HIV/AIDS. Using the dollar a day poverty standard, about 1 billion people in Asia and the Pacific still live without access to education, shelter, clean water, healthcare, and other necessities to sustain life.

At the conference room at the Delta Hotel, I met some amazing students who were determined to create the best resolution that would solve these critical

issues peacefully while adapting to each country’s situation and needs. Despite the powers we were given to create resolutions and implement new programs within countries, there were many limiting factors that hindered a mutual agreement for resolutions. Some delegates revealed corruption in their country’s government, other Asian countries voiced their concern over the clash with religion that would happen if the UN implemented an end to arranged marriages. All of a sudden, I felt the difficulty the real United Nations faced every day. If it took a whole day for our committee to finally agree on two measly resolutions, imagine how strikingly difficult it would be for the real United Nations to create a solid resolution.

Model UN not only taught me about how the UN operates, but the shocking conditions some countries were in. I’ve heard many influential speakers at the conferences and one I particularly remember said, “In order to pursue justice, you must feel the injustice first.” It was understanding the devastating injustices of these countries that led me to feel the need to create a resolution that would help ameliorate their lives, even if it was only Model United Nations. I strongly encourage NT students to take part in the exciting conferences this upcoming year, as I am positive you will begin to look at the world from a different perspective.

Don’t Sweat the Small Stuff

TINA YU

High school! Those terrifying words. Rock-hard reality came rushing at me: I’m entering high school! When I entered grade 8, I was pretty happy, and looked forward to my last year in elementary, completely oblivious to what horrors lay beyond my grade 8 year. However, when I was still daydreaming about the past summer, I found everyone around me debating over which high schools are the best, and busy visiting high school open houses. I could no longer avoid reality, so I began stressing about it.

The high schools on TV are always filled with snobby cheerleaders, lunch-money-demanding bullies, gun-wielding gangsters, and exclusive cliques. I’ve often heard the tales my high school friends would tell. Stress over marks and exams, people dropping out of school, and friends drifting away. Let’s just say that I absolutely dreaded the prospect of high school. I assumed that high school would be terrible, yet North Toronto seems to have me proved wrong.

I arrived two hours early on the first day due to insufficient information, but I was so glad when I saw a familiar face who was early too. No one bullied me out of my lunch money, there was no gun-wielding psycho murderer, and it turned out that North Toronto didn’t have cheerleaders. As for assignments and tests, well, I’m not stressing that much... yet.

The Grade 9 Welcome Day really impressed me. The Buddies and Spirit Club were so enthusiastic. The school song was sung around ten times and each time with more fervor. There is so much spirit! The students here obviously love their school. I’m starting to see that maybe high school isn’t the monster that Hollywood makes out to be.

As for my life at N.T., I’m really enjoying it so far, but I’m sure all that unnecessary stress took years off my life. My point is, don’t sweat the small stuff!

Feature

Shortcut to Success? Not at all.

DANIEL JACOBS

Robert Kleinman and Edward Li have reached levels of academic success that aren't supposed to be possible. Edward, with an average of 99.5%, placed third out of all the students in the TDSB. Robert Kleinman, with an average of 99.8%, came first. Grades such as those are occasionally seen as good marks on a quiz, but as an average? It is an absolutely unbelievable achievement. In the words of one impressed student, Cindy Guo: "Legendary people... they'll always be remembered by us."

I'm ashamed to admit that the first thing to cross my mind when I read of Robert's and Edward's successes was a rather strong piece of French invective. I was sitting in the computer lab of the Trois-Pistoles Adult Education Centre, and I'd been feeling pretty good about myself. My marks were great, and I'd even come all the way to Québec to learn French. What a swell guy. Then, out of the blue, that 99.8% landed on me like a ton of textbooks. The effect on my ego, in the succinct terms of Mortal Kombat, was simply: FATALITY.

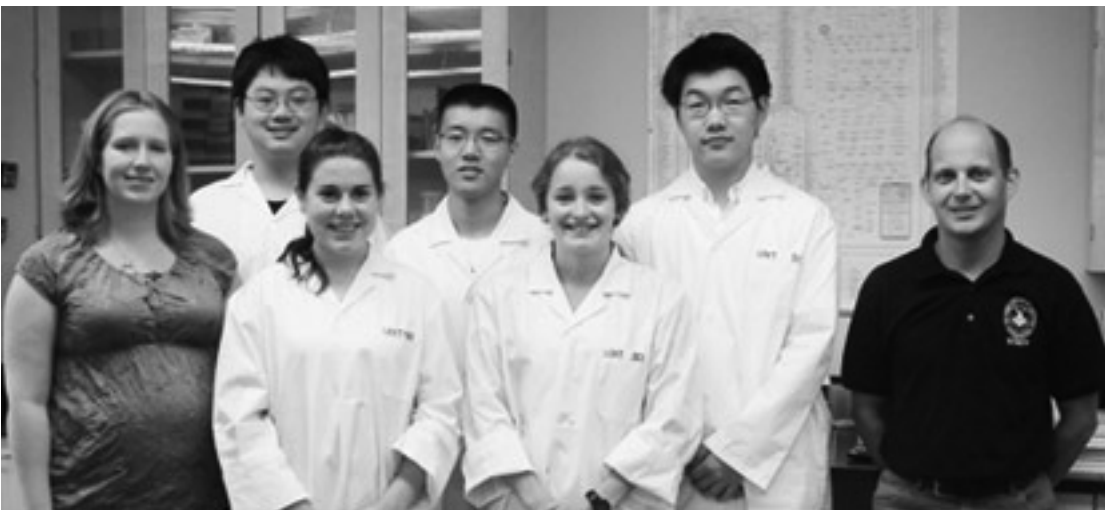
After scraping the remains of my pride off the floor, I took some time



to think about the situation. Agreed, it is hypothetically possible to get marks like that, but what would it take? North Toronto students had varying opinions on the matter. Talvi Parming thinks, "It takes a lot of studying, and a lot of free time to spend studying." She goes on to add, grudgingly, that "I guess being naturally smart helps too." Allison Soong believes that a liking for the subject is important as well as an innate talent for absorbing information. Peter Zeng believes you need to be "endowed with brilliance, be very hardworking, and have great time management skills." The general consensus seems to be this: in order to get a near perfect average, you need a combination of intelligence, and the patience to get through lots of paperwork.

Robert and Edward have shown us that it is possible to approach perfection. Why, therefore, is a 99% still such a rarity at NT, an institution filled with so many bright minds? Speaking of Robert and Edward's averages, Cindy Qiu jokes, "It makes me want to work really hard for about five minutes, and then I realize that it's probably not going to work out for me. It takes a lot of discipline to have good study habits." Douglas Lam agrees. "To pull off that kind of success requires a great deal of focus, attention to detail, and persistency to understand above and beyond the basic requirements in any course."

It'd be simple to classify Edward and Robert into the 'super-genius study-freak' category, but it's not that easy: Edward is an avid badminton player, and organised the school Math Club. Robert led the school chess team, and (as Mr Mendelovits helpfully pointed out) is a breast-stroker of rare skill, not to mention senior boys' captain on the swim team. Not only



did they find time to focus on academics, they also followed their own interests. Now, at this point, it just seems unfair. These two have high grades and still have some time for diversions? Ivana Danon is curious as to how much they had to give up in order to achieve what they did, and asks "Is it really worth it in the end?"

The answer, coming from both Robert and Edward, is a definitive yes. "I'm pretty happy with most of the major choices I made over the last four years, and would make the same ones over again," says Robert. For Edward, "there are definitely small things here and there that I wish I had or hadn't done. But in terms of major decisions, I don't think there is anything that I regret." The cost of the sacrifices that each made in order to achieve their goals

were minor in comparison to the rewards. Edward is most puzzled by people assuming that academic success requires a huge sacrifice of social life. "This isn't true in the slightest bit," he argues. "I feel I study less than my classmates. Success in school does not depend on how much time is spent studying. A productive hour can be more effective than a whole

day's work." While Edward wishes he had more time to develop his hobbies and Robert would prefer a 35 hour day, neither feels that his sacrifices were major. For example, the biggest change that Robert made was to stop watching television. "That freed up an hour or two of each day," he says happily.

So if their lifestyles didn't change very much, then what is it that allowed these two to achieve such a high average? Was it the techniques they used to study? Edward says, "I don't think I did anything differently from everyone else. In short, I read, I remember, I apply." So no tricks, no magic. Just work and diligence. According to Robert, "it is very difficult, if not impossible, to succeed without good training and a large amount of effort." But as we've already discussed, it is extremely difficult to sustain the drive to succeed over an extended period of time. What personality traits allowed Robert and Edward to do so? Edward believes it is due to his being inquisitive, tenacious, and independent, but also says, "the characteristic that I value the most is resourcefulness." Robert's answer is devastatingly simple. "I'm willing to work hard when working towards a goal," he explains.

These answers are fairly standard for any successful student, yet not many students can boast to have achieved so much. There must exist some fundamental difference that gave rise to their achieve-

ments. In essence, we must ask why Robert and Edward value academic success, and why they push themselves to such heights. In his answer to this, Robert continues with his trend of baffling simplicity, saying only

"I always try to do the best that I can, no matter what the area." Edward's explanation is more emotional. "As immigrants to Canada, my parents sacrificed a lot," he says. "They left behind things that took them decades to build just to give me a brighter future. Academic achievements are important to me

because they demonstrate that my parents made the right choice... It lifts a burden off my shoulders." However, he never cared about rankings. Like Robert, Edward says he wished only to do the best he could.

Both Robert and Edward lifted themselves to such heights because of a desire to test their own limits. "Ever since Grade 9, they continually pushed each other," says Mr Zohar. They helped each other along the way in one of the most intense competitions North Toronto will ever see. But what of the students who follow? Far from being depressed at the prospect of ever bettering them, we should be inspired. In the words of Mitchell Fort, "Their achievement is grand. It is a testa-

Calling All Lifeguards

(Continued from cover)

Working Group (AWG) in order to take over tasks such as completing inventories of pools for public uses, making recommendations regarding the needs and improvements of the pools, and working towards setting up a permanent situation to the funding.

With the pool reopened (in fact it was never drained in August) only one question remains. What are we waiting for? The current problem: the lack of lifeguards. Many of the former lifeguards had either found additional positions in the TDSB system or had gone on and found other work. So the board is now working toward pulling in more lifeguards willing to work within the system. Job offers have been put forth for any interested candidates. If a qualified lifeguard is found, then the school board sends the candidate to the individual schools. After that, the school completes the process with their private interviews.

However, with 23 schools all scrambling to find a suitable lifeguard in

ment to the excellence that can be reached within the public school system through hard work, persistence and discipline." Angie Tong is of a similar mind. "I think what they've done is beyond amazing," she says. "It's inspirational and something I respect a lot."

Does that mean the rest of us who lack the ability to follow through on our grand ideas are failures? Lori Nemoy admits that she will never be able to focus to quite

that degree, but, then again, "a 99.8% average is not what I most want out of life." Or, as Vlad Durdureanu puts it, "most people aren't willing to sacrifice certain aspects of their lives for [academics]." Robert and

Edward were willing to commit a great amount of time and effort into their scholastic endeavours, but for many, school and percentages are not of pivotal importance. Paula Sanderson says, "I really don't care [about grades] as long as I learned

something and improved." According to Robert, success is measured by doing one's best. For his part, Edward also reminds us that, even in the worst situation, "you can learn a lot from failure."



the next 2 weeks before the start of the swim season, it is understandable why the process is taking so long. Just for North Toronto students' information, right now, underneath our feet, in the basement, there is a freshly cleaned and heated pool with a hit of chlorine waiting for us to jump right in. We're all ready to go.

News splash!

Swimmers rejoice! After spending a summer worrying whether or not we'd ever see our beloved birdbath again, we know have a pool. With the hiring of NT's latest lifeguard, Yelena Ivanova, it looks like our aquatics programs can now (legally...) run again.

No more will we be deprived of our cockroach-ridden changerooms, salt-encrusted showers and sludge-covered pool deck. Dust off your goggles, sew up the holes in your suits, and shake the moths out of your towels. As for the rest of the school, prepare to be conquered by the reek of chlorine. Or, better yet, join your water-loving friends in NT's fittest, greatest, and soggiest team.

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Feature

The final ramblings
of a teenage soul:

Because I’m Still Not Done Bitching

J Balmores

I remember back in Grade 10 when one of my best friends at the time told me, “by grade 12 [I] would know who [my] friends are.” That statement was more than true. Friends had come and gone, high school lives had come and passed, and going into the 2007-2008 session I not only knew who my friends were but I also knew the following: whom I hated, whom I loved, whom I didn’t really know but pretended to like so that I could use them (unbeknownst to them) as messengers between my real friends and I, whom I wanted as a teacher, and who I wouldn’t want as a teacher but would spend most of my time bugging anyway. What can I say? I’m a picky kid.

As it goes, the year began at a quick pace, alive and radiating with potency. My categories stayed pretty much the same, it was too easy. Finally, one day, the cruising crashed, the vitality turned to bacon grease and high-cholesterol, and I developed a relatively apathetic attitude towards the rest of human civilization. Sure there were the D-Bags whom I never wanted to talk to, but grad year is such a vicious maelstrom that you could have a complete dialogue with the Lt. General of all D-Bags and forget that it ever happened. My prejudice was thwarted (imagine that...) with the realization that Grade 12 isn’t the top of the social ladder in any respect; it’s just the final pole on the monkey bars that create our advanced daycare system.

Mid year to me meant one thing and one thing only: Enigma. For all you new kids on the block Enigma was the 2007-2008 North Toronto fashion show, that which sucked the life out of all involved. Scenes weren’t coming together, the basketball team was playing at 25% of its potential, school still existed, and I was too busy to care whether or not my friendships stayed in tact. This is where the clas-

sifications began to mush and mold into a transparent Flubber-like substance which I then placed in the oven, overcooked, and diced into distinctly multiple pieces (and ate them all without regard to which one was which). Those whom I was around I spoke to, those whom I hated I forgot about, those whom I pretended to like received no more artfully executed lies, and I started changing from the stealthy, conceited, self-proclaimed intellectual, into the guy who spoke his mind and in the process lost any respect anybody had for him.

Now for all you math students who’re falling asleep to all of these letters and words and paragraphs and punctuation, here’s something to look at. [Friends = x, Business = y] Now look at this: As $y \rightarrow \infty$ | $x \rightarrow 0$.

For all the English kids (like myself, who consequently didn’t understand what that meant when first introduced to it), it means that as y approaches infinity (or as your business and workload grows) x approaches zero (you lose friends). So now for the problem, what do you work on? Keeping your workload from exploding all over your face, or keeping your friends in tact?

I can’t tell you what to do, but I can tell you that I chose the former. It wasn’t a bad decision, it wasn’t a good decision, but it was a decision, and if there’s one thing I’ve learned it’s that you can’t take them back (regardless of how many times you push Ctrl + Z).

I grew a tendency to lose myself in the fat fog of blind work ethic. On the court there was nothing more important than pissing off my defensive check, keeping the ball out of our hoop, and gently dropping it into the opposing team’s elevated gaping hole. At fashion show practice there was no such thing as food or sleep, homework or smiling, there was nothing more important than hitting hard, staying sharp, and keeping our holes from being elevated or gaping in any way. In my digital abode the only thing there was to think about was BOOM! Leg shot? Needless to say, being a friend was the least of my worries, paying \$13 to forget my night is just not my thing. Then again, maybe I’m just a bad person with no soul, terrible habits, short legs and a voice that the voices of the future should never listen to. Either way, I can tell you

that our little variable friend x decreased to about seven.

Now let’s not get ahead of ourselves and believe that I was too busy to love my life. I enjoyed every single bit of grade twelve with no exception (as an exception you may throw out the idea that I definitely didn’t enjoy certain people... well I certainly enjoyed ripping on them in the back of my mind.) The parties were pretty live (though some people looked... not live), the school work was actually worth doing (though some of it was... not live), and red and grey day was never as fun as it was in 2008, but as the year progressed the amount of fervor and fight began to die down. After charity week, fashion show, and spring fling were over, only prom remained.

So what is Grade 12? What is the whole build up, the excitement, and the gossip all about?

Prom: this was what we were all waiting for. Prom was the sum of our four years, the peak of our existence, the money bags to our heist troupe, the end of four years of hard work. It was a day to start walking on our own two feet and to put the drama llama to rest on the puke stained floor of wherever we had our after party; in essence, we were Kurt Cobain and prom was the final stare down that sweet barrel of Nirvana. Prom is fun, it’s cool seeing everyone looking nice for a change, but between the chocolate fountain, the guy telling my friends and I how to arrange ourselves in front of his camera, and the fact that I worked at the venue, it was everything I wanted it to be. People sober (some for the first time that school year!), dressed up nicely, danced, ate, had a good time, all before the after party. This is the part of the night I like to call “mor P” as it is a time in which urination is key to your survival. I found myself staring down blankly wondering where the pee was, but after a few minutes of disappointment I surrendered and grunted in anger before zipping up and needing to pee again. This was all fun and games until about 1:00 to 1:30. I call this time ‘Porm.’ This was a time when a few boys and girls disappeared from the hall-

way leaving the rest of the boys and girls feeling lonely and depressed. I fortunately missed porm and completely avoided all the romping, once again enclosed in my mor P stage. Soon it was time to, er, mop. We had to get serious, otherwise we would be charged an extra 50 dollars, and lord knows prom sapped me of all forms of currency (i.e. real money, monopoly money, baby teeth, bits of string, strands of my ex-girlfriend’s hair, sperm [too much mountain dew can do that], cotton, toe-nail clippings, facial hair, dignity). Prom after party was fun. Prom after party was stupid. Prom, the celebration of our deliverance from high school, had just delivered us a new llama of drama to ride off into the sunset.

So what is Grade 12? What is the whole build up, the excitement, and the gossip all about? Well, to me at least, the G-Dozen was a summation of all of high school. The awkward and apathetic Grade 9, the stupid, fun, and apathetic Grade 10, the smack-in-the-face-it’s-time-to-get-serious- Grade 11, and the crash and burn of all social existence in the final moments of legal childhood. Take all of that, put it in a box, wrap it up with some tinfoil and ribbons, ship it off to Kansas, and you have my Grade 12.

Now I must admit, when I began writing and narrating my year at the beginning of Grade 12, I had no clue why I was doing it. After a summer of self-reflection I can rightfully say that it was because I needed an easy way to say “I’m lonely, befriend me.” Sure it sounds pathetic but the beautiful thing about NT is that, in one way or another, people responded. NT is a community that always responds; be it a petty cry for attention, a need for love and affection, or a search for personal intervention, if you knock, one of 1100 kids will answer.

Although my narrative sounded cynical, it was only because I neglected to mention the fact that North Toronto Collegiate Institute is not only an amazing place to learn and grow, but it’s a place to meet people you’ll never forget. Sure there are bad times, but there are also good ones, so just take what you’re given because you’ll never find yourself in a place like this again.

Sorry for rambling, and thank you for letting me. Much Love.

My Year Behind the Scenes

SHOSHANAH KUPER

One night in March of my grade 10 year, I couldn’t sleep. I sat up thinking about what I wanted to do for my co-op placement and, therefore, a trial run for the rest of my life. There was teaching, cooking, camp administration; the options were endless. After months of searching for a suitable placement, I started working at More Magazine. Now, I’m sure (like me at the time) you have no idea what More Magazine is. Simply put, it is a lifestyle magazine for women over 40, which is published by the same company as our faithful fashion show sponsor, Elle Canada.

For some time, my placement consisted of filing, mailing, and making excel sheets with PR beauty contacts. Basically, I was paying my dues.

However, I figured that I would rather pay now and not take science than pay five years from now. These dues were paid off quickly after I went to my first professional fashion shoot. It was nothing like I thought it was going to be: it was low-key and not as “editorial” as I had envisioned. Soon after, I began to order clothing for shoots, help style the shoots, and choose accessories.



Best of all, because I was working on these shoots behind the scenes, I soon got to go to more shoots creating more scenes. One day I was asked to volunteer at the Fashion Group International’s annual Night of Stars. It was a black-tie event

where I was told to wear a black dress. The only problem was, I didn’t have one, so I made one. It was a black, jersey floor length, ruffled and sequined empire waist dress. When I bumped into Linda Lundstrum (creator of La Par-ka), she told me she liked it and was very impressed that I was 17 and had created this on my own, with no training or bought pattern.

Secondly, and more importantly, I became incredibly well networked with people in the industry. For example, I was able to get a professional makeup and hair artist (who works with Jordin Sparks and Julianne Moore) to help us out (for free!) with the Hypnosis fashion show ads and welcome back assembly photo shoot.

Not only did co-op make my future goals more accessible while lightening my course load, but it let me experiment with careers in an industry I would like to enter. I would highly recommend the co-op placement program to anyone interested.



Feature

Crowded

MADELEINE CUMMINGS

Last June, a number of North Toronto teachers were “re-located;” that is, they were forced to seek work elsewhere in the Toronto District School Board. This September, North Toronto welcomed record numbers of Grade 9 students - considerably more than last year. Why does the TDSB cut teachers while letting more students into each school? This is not a question I can answer, but I can tell you why your classes are large, if they’ll stay that way, and how you can survive in a room with 30 plus.

The TDSB does its hiring (and firing) in the spring. The system is as follows: the TDSB looks at the number of Grade 9s in the school, then assumes that a Grade 9 class of the same size will enter the school in the year following. If the size is small, some teachers may find themselves out of a job. The problem is, the number of Grade 9s entering NT fluctuates year to year. The year, there are simply too many students and not enough teachers.

This board policy punishes both teachers and students. Often, the teachers who NT doesn’t have room for are young. Is it fair that a new teacher be dropped in different schools year after year? Neither you nor your teacher really wants a large

sion based classes will benefit from a large number of minds; it means more diversity, more perspectives, and livelier debates. But a large math or science class means large challenges for everyone involved. Teachers may only move on with a lesson if all 35 students understand – and students come from different backgrounds, with different abilities, and different learning styles.

Grade 9 student Elayne Mayer has an English class with 33 other people. “The worst part of it is,” she says, “everyone has to suffer. There is never any one-on-one time with the teacher.” Some students willingly hide behind their classmates, finding that a large class is the perfect place to relax without being scolded. “People are listening to iPods in class... it’s easier to get away with that.” Elayne’s science class

is also large. “When doing experiments, you need enough room and enough stuff for everyone. Sheets and materials run out. There is a lot of waiting. It’s annoying.”

The TDSB is trying to reduce class sizes, or, is at least trying to respond to a Ministry Mandate from the government of Ontario which stipulates that primary school classes (from Kindergarten to

Grade 3) be capped. These caps are causing great distress among primary school administrators, but that is a whole other article... The caps come directly from the government’s Every Child program, a four year program that was designed to help students with reading and math. The government hoped it would improve students’ EQAO results. Whether or not it has worked (McGuinty says it has), it is plain to see that nobody in power is trying to lower the class sizes of students in older grades. But high school years are crucial. Many university programs have prerequisites, and demand an understanding of the material taught in those prerequisites.

The North Toronto administration does all it can to improve the situation, which, as aforementioned, is dismal, especially for the Grade 10s who are currently bearing the brunt of the teacher shortage. Fortunately, the board has allowed Mr. Gorenkoff to hire two more teachers, Mr. Hood and Mr. Yeung. This will undoubtedly help the situation, but it also opens up a door of new challenges, such as the splitting of classes and the rearranging of schedules. Changes are expected to be complete by October 27th.

For now, if you’re stuck in a crowded classroom, you can do either of two things: make use of your teacher’s extra help time slots and join the NT math club (free tutoring!), or suck it up and realize that in a little while, you may find yourself in a class with 500 others at U of T.



class size. Here’s why.

In a large class, students get less individual attention from teachers. The teacher must manage more students – marking more work, tests, and exams. Struggling students fade in a large class, and smart ones also suffer, having to settle for a much slower pace of learning.

It’s not all bad of course. Discus-

WORD ON THE STREET

WHERE IS THE SMELLIEST PART OF THE SCHOOL?



“Mr. Pidgeon’s room... (long pause) after a pig dissection class. Smells like formaldehyde.”
-Angie Tong



“Definitely the basement.. It smells like nothing I’ve smelled before!”
-Sheryl Yang

“I’d have to say L10. I’m not sure there’s a word for it. Old, rotten food and sweaty feet...”
-Max Hoffman



“Portable 1. Smells like black mold. After I brought in air freshener: mountainberry black mold!”
-Mrs. Withers



“Definitely the unventilated mens’ staff wash-room. Some of the older male staff members have digestion problems.”
-Mr. Zohar



“Well last year after gym class I noticed it smelt bad almost everywhere I went. But I don’t know why it was only after gym...?”
-Dustin Dubiel

Politics

Elections in the Great White North

TRISTAN SEDGEWICK

The election is here again, with two drastically different men ready to face off. You all know what I’m taking about – the Canadian federal election! Our eyes may be focused on the madness south of the border, but our minds must remain here. Not many of us really care about the outcome, but we must. Sure, the American election is more interesting, but the Canadian election is more important. Both McCain and Obama place America first; they’re not going to do anything for Canada. Obama has already stated that he wants to renegotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement, and he’ll do it in America’s favour.

The Canadian election matters. The Liberals promised 55 billion dollars for city infrastructure. How much of that will go to dear Toronto remains to be seen, but it is a great plan. We all recognize that Toronto could benefit from more money from the Federal Government. The Canadian government will determine our health care system, our child care system, and our education system. It seems that in

this election, it’s the NDP, Liberals, and Greens who are making all the promises while Harper sits in his cozy sweater vest shooting lame commercials. The Canadian government will make or break our economy. The Canadian Government will determine our course of action in Afghanistan. Dion vs. Harper (don’t kid yourself thinking the NDP or Greens might win) might not be as exciting as Obama vs. McCain, but the winner of the Canadian match will soon start to affect our lives. Some of you may say that no matter

who’s voted in, no change will happen, but new laws and amendments will be passed, and whoever gets in will determine Canada’s future.

A neglected but important issue to young people is post-secondary education. Whether we go to university, college, or the trades, government policies will really affect us. Here’s how the parties stack up.

Green Party: The Greens say that they will forgive half the loan for students who complete degree or certificate programs. The Greens want to expand apprenticeships and job training to reduce the shortage of skilled workers.



Conservatives: The Tories say they will give students and their parents a tax credit on buying school books; they will invest \$100 million to improve postsecondary support and enhance the student loan program. They didn’t devote a large section of their platform to this however.

Liberals: The Liberals will replace the existing tax cuts with an Education Grant in which students will receive money every three months. Along with the GST rebate it will be worth \$1000 per full time student. The Liberals will reform the rules covering student loans. The liberals also say they will make student loans interest free for 2 years.

NDP: The NDP haven’t released their party platform but here’s what they’ve already done. When Jack Layton rewrote the Liberals’ budget in 2005, he put 1.5 billion aside to help with education and job training. The NDP tabled the Canada Post Secondary Act to improve our college and university education system.

The Canadian election might not but as flashy or drawn out as its American counterpart, but it’s the Canadian election that really matters to all who live in the Great White North.

TV Comedy Makes Politicians the Punchline

MICHELLE GORDON

Late-night comic Jay Leno recently said in his monologue that he wasn’t sure vice-presidential candidate Sarah Palin knew what to do about the economy. “Do you think she has any experience in this? She was asked today what to do in a bare market and she said you shoot it and then skin it.”

Jay Leno’s punchline is an example of how American voters are increasingly getting their analysis of the presidential campaign not from newspaper editorials or Sunday morning talk shows but from television comedy talk shows.



they could possibly hope to reach on the Sunday morning political talk shows.

Playing an especially significant role in television comedy’s shaping of the campaign is the weekly political skit on Saturday Night Live. SNL comedians impersonate the candidates in both appearance and mannerism, and voice the normally unspoken inner thoughts and motives of the candidates. Amy Poehler gives voice to Hillary Clinton’s real ambition



Comics such as Jay Leno, David Letterman, Conan O’Brien, and others open their shows with monologues that define the candidates and reinforce public perceptions of them. According to the comics’ jokes, McCain is old and out of touch; Obama is young, academic, and elitist; Palin is a Bible- and gun-toting frontierswoman; and Biden is gaffe-prone. By dwelling on their weaknesses, the comics force viewers to focus on the least appealing aspects of the candidates and this can affect their judgments on whom to support.

It is not only the comics’ monologues that have a political impact. Having the major candidates as guests on their shows gives those candidates an opportunity to display their more human side, as Bill Clinton did when he played the saxophone on Arsenio Hall’s show during his first presidential campaign in 1992. The viewers feel that they are getting to know the candidate as a person, not just as a politician. Politicians are now able to connect with a younger, less political audience than

– personal not feminist. When Sarah Palin (Tina Fey) says, “We can all agree it’s time for a woman to make it to the white house.” Clinton retorts, “I didn’t want a woman to be president; I wanted to be president, and I just happen to be a woman!” This type of humour provides a deeper insight into what makes the candidates tick than can be expressed by conventional news coverage.

Another SNL skit depicted Clinton and Obama being questioned by a panel of reporters who threw tough questions at Clinton and soft ones at Obama and even asked whether he needed a pillow to make him more comfortable. This was a parody of the unequal treatment the candidates had received in a Democratic Party debate. It spurred a more even-handed approach by the media at the following debate.

Just as the internet has added a powerful new dimension to the U.S. election campaign, television comedy has also become an influential force, giving comics more clout than network news anchors and journalists. During the U.S. financial crisis, Jay Leno complained when a couple of his jokes fell flat that “it’s tough to write good financial jokes” but political jokes present no such problem. The next president of the United States may very well be the candidate who can best roll with the punchlines.

Joe Olive: Is he up for the challenge?

JONAH GOLDBERG

When I sat down to think about what to write for Graffiti, an interview didn’t even occur to me at first. I knew that I wanted to write about the election, and I knew that I wanted it to be unique. Then, I suddenly had the idea to interview a candidate in my riding, which is Eglinton-Lawrence, the same as NT’s riding. I contacted the Conservative candidate for this riding, Joe Oliver, and set up an interview. I wanted the school to decide whether the Conservative Party, who may very well be re-elected, represent what the youth want. After all, we are the future.

Why did you get into politics?

I was asked to run for the nomination for this riding by a former cabinet minister. The Prime Minister had asked him to find candidates for the next federal election. I was about to retire, and I have always had an interest in public policy. I felt that I should give something back to the community.

Why should people, especially young people, get more involved in politics?

I, personally, have always had an interest in politics, even at a young age. I had some involvement at university. Our youth are our future, and should be engaged, understand the political system, and bring ideas forward.

Why do you feel that the Conservative Party is the best to run this country?

First of all, they are more practical. Mr. Harper has been in power for just over 2 1/2 years, and has accomplished a lot for Canadians. For example, the government has reduced the tax burden for the average family about \$3 000 a year. The government has also run a sound economy, been a staunch supporter of Israel with their battle against terrorism, and has introduced legislation to limit greenhouse gas emissions.

Why do you feel that you are the best candidate to represent Eglinton-Lawrence in the House of Commons?

There are two reasons. First of all, it is likely that the Conservative Government will be re-elected. I would be sitting in government, as opposed to my opponent, Mr. Volpe, would be sitting on the opposition benches. I could be a strong voice for this riding in the government. Therefore, I could do things for the riding. I have a strong financial background, and also in securities and regulations, and in other areas as well. These are all relevant to the many challenges that the government will be facing.

Many young people are concerned about the environment. What does your party plan to do about it?

There are 2 aspects of our plan. The first part is that we have to do our share. We are the first government to introduce absolute reductions on emissions by corporations. The second part is that India, China and The U.S. produce 60% of global emissions. You can’t arrest climate change without including them in our plan, and Mr. Harper has made international initiatives to do that.

What do you think is the most important issue of this campaign?

If I had to pick 1, it would be the economy; however there are several important issues. At a time of a turbulent global economy, the economy needs a steady hand at the tiller.

I leave the decision up to you. Will Joe Oliver represent North Toronto well in the House of Commons?

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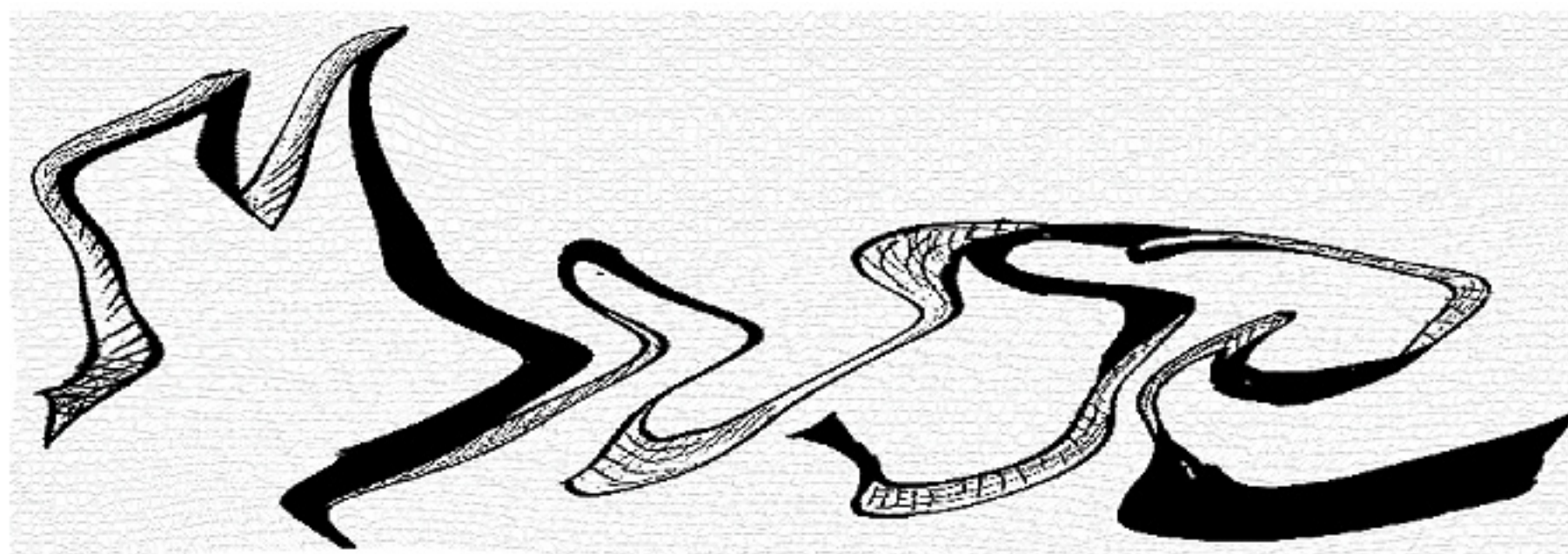
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ANGIE TONG

Butterflies
(or A Silly Little Poem About Love)

I see the one I admire and blush,
And instantly turn to stone where I stand.
I desperately tell me heart to hush,
And of course it won't obey my command

My heart flutters like a butterfly's wings
I know it sounds silly but it's true
Sappy love songs play on my heart strings
Each time that face comes into view

I feel like I've been struck by lightning
When I hear that voice, a lovely sound
My pulse sent racing at each sighting
I can't quite keep my feet on ground

Each encounter results in the adrenaline
rush,
Associated with an adolescent crush

Miranda Whittaker



AMBER DAY

AMBER DAY





TINA HUI



ALEX MCROBERT



ALEX MCROBERT



ALEX MCROBERT

Humour

The Top Ten: Listing the First Ten Things to Enter My Mind, in No Particular Order

KAVEH “AIR JORDAN” GHORASHI

I am Kaveh. Controversial, eristic, but always polemic. Those all mean controversial. Kaveh teaches us well.

Anyway, top ten.

10. Black Jellybeans.

Who the crap made these? The jerks must have been all like, “hey, instead of combining sugar with fruit flavour, let’s fuse it with the taste of destruction.” Destruction hurts, and black jellybeans taste like flossing with barbed wire. Get on fixing that, North Toronto; start a revolution. I give black jellybeans two stars. I’m also implementing a rating system that has stars in it.

9. Bruce Willis.

Sweet lord, this guy is the man. He’s been shot at least four times, he’s blown up like, two airplanes, and he’s a ghost who is also a superhero. Think I’m just combining plot lines from his movies? Discussion over.

8. Cannibal Corpse.

Their new album is called Kill. That’s it, just Kill. The cover doesn’t even have anything else on it. The only way this could be more hardcore would be if the case were made of metal and was on fire. And their videos, forget about it. I watched one called Make Them Suffer; I closed the window after a bit because it was terrifying me.

8. High School Newspaper Reviews of TV Shows.

High school newspaper reviews of TV shows are pointless.

7. High School Newspaper Reviews of Me.

Dangerously. Awesome. Reviews of me get four stars. Also, I forgot to give

the last three things a rating.

6. Skye Wattie.

Skye’s name isn’t recognized by Microsoft Word, and he is my nemesis. But, like, in a good way. Skye is the friend who will always bring you down a few pegs when you need it; which seems to be often for me because he keeps tipping over chairs that I’m sitting in. But at the same time, when I didn’t make the final cut for the soccer team, Skye gave me a hug. Thank you, Skye.

5. Guys who Did Make the Soccer Team.

I have no ill will towards the more intimidating players; your victories will be well deserved. But to the guys like Julien, whom I know couldn’t take a swift kick in the dick, to you I say, “Watch out. One day, you will be on the receiving end of a swift kick in the dick.”

I realize I’ve listed the number eight twice.

4. The Guys who Took My Student Advisor Job for this Newspaper.

There are three. I’m afraid of all of them. They each get five stars, and I guess anything I forgot to give a rating to gets three stars.

3. Water Polo/Girl with a Triple Black Belt.

Oski Turanoglu thinks they’re the

same. Sure, they’re both intense, but that’s all they have in common. First of all, I was lying when I said water polo was intense. Second, if Oski tried dating a girl with a black belt, she’d kill him. She would put him in a hole, bury him alive, and judo chop his head through the dirt. Bottom line: I’m right.

Oski gets a star and a half, and water polo gets nothing. Any girl with a black belt gets a Certificate of Fright from me.

2. Bruce Willis.

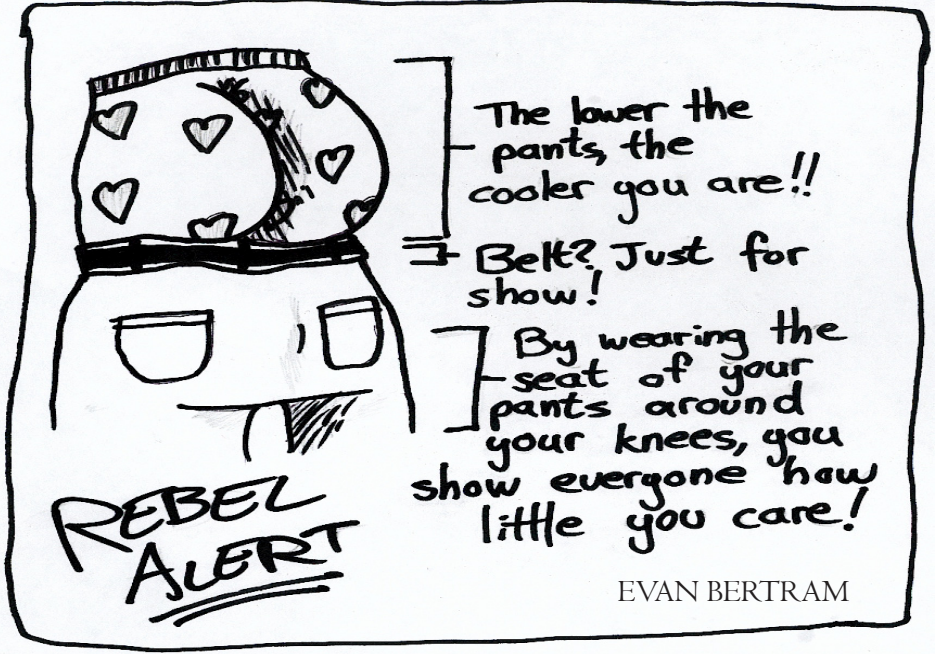
If Bruce Willis wanted to, he would make a copy of himself and give it wings. Then he’d have this clone eat whoever decided the flavour of black jellybeans, and he wouldn’t feel bad about it. But Bruce Willis keeps these powers under wraps because he was in Die Hard. He doesn’t need super powers.

I’ve decided to turn this into a game show. Bruce Willis gets everyone’s stars.

1. Giving Me Money.

This is just a suggestion, but hey, communism was once just a suggestion. I just wrecked you.

There. I’ve made a political comment, and I’ve removed whatever swear words there were, just so people who hate change wouldn’t get offended. I would have thanked the Graffiti staff, and also my



Those idiots in the liberal press (you know CNN, Fox...) keep going on about pesky “censorship” scandals. Just that you wanted to ban a couple of books from a public library doesn’t make you’re a bad person... and I mean everyone likes a good book burning. In fact, it’s very American... like caviar and vodka... And the whole “firing people who don’t agree with you,” I mean that’s what politics is about right. We don’t want people who stand by their own views. No, that makes politics messy; we need people who will hold firmly to the party line. I feel confident that a person who would put a friend in control of a \$2 million environmental agency, on the basis of an application that cited that “she always liked cows as a child” truly deserves to lead America. But what really angers me is all those people who say that you are totally unqualified for this job. And that you were just chosen as a gimmick. I mean, it’s obvious to me that politics should be about race and gender and not actual beliefs. Who cares whether you’re a polar opposite to Clinton, you’re still both women and that’s what counts, right? (of course you weren’t only chosen because you’re a women... cause that would be taking advantage... or kinda...what’s the word... erhm... sexist?)

I feel truly sorry for those people going on about how you have no foreign policy experience. I mean, you can see Russia from your house, like, all the time... I mean I’ve been to Niagara and I sure as hell know how the US should be led. Finally what I love the most is this whole “hock-

ey mum, gun totting, anti abortion, think the world was created 4000 thousand years ago, anti-sex-ed thing.” It’s like you’re the perfect stereotype of the US. It would be really unfortunate if, back in Europe, we all had to come up with some new jokes because the US actually changed. I understand the whole Christian thing means you don’t like divorce...but if you ever are in Canada...

Waiting Desperately for a Response,

Alexander

Dear McKenzie,

I’m so darn glad to hear from a young man like you from outside of the greatest country in the world (AMERICA!). I have never been to your country and don’t really plan on it because you cut off women’s heads, but I have heard that you make really darn good tea. Anyway, you’re darn right that I’ve had more executive experience than all of the other candidates. I’ve managed a family the size of a small country for the past few decades and only made one mistake (although it was really my daughter’s mistake! LOL!). Alaska is a lot like America but with more snow, kind of like if Canada was a teenage girl and America was a redneck hockey player and he knocked Canada up and they had a child it would be named Alaska.

Yes, that’s the best way to describe it. So with ruling Alaska as governor the

editor, but being forced to take the swear words out of what was supposed to be my article has filled me with disgust.

Les Excuses

Il y a une phrase que chaque étudiant de français connaît bien. Pour survivre dans un environnement francophone, il est très important que vous puissiez dire : « Est-ce que je peux aller au toilette ? »

Mais M. Stamp encourageait ses étudiants à trouver les... ‘alternatifs’. Voilà !

M. Stamp, est-ce que je peux ...

- Distraire les travailleurs de construction ?
- Devenir un martien ?
- Voler le chapeau du Pape ?
- Manger un trombone ?
- Promener mon éléphant ?
- Changer l’eau à vin ?
- Marcher à Nunavut?
- Me raser la tête?
- Trouver moi-même ?
- Aller accoucher ?
- Aller jouer avec les pingouins avec des trompes ?
- Sauter par la fenêtre ?
- Me transformer en violon ?
- Demander Mme. Chisholm pour un gummie ?
- Visiter chez M. Pidgeon pour une insulte ?
- Manger un étudiant en neuvième année ?
- Voler avec les oiseaux ?
- Danser sans vêtements à la cafétéria ?
- Me marier avec ma vache ?
- Aller vivre dans un ours ?
- Voler autour de la classe sur un balai ?

Et la meilleure excuse?

“M Stamp, je dois aider avec la construction de la nouvelle NT.”

past few weeks or months or however darn long it’s been, I’ve had more experience than all of the presidents combined. Abe Lincoln’s got nothing on this hockey mom! YEEHAW! I don’t know anything of this Russia you speak of, but I’ll tell you what I do see every morning when I wake up: the most beautiful sight a person can see... heaven. In fact, I’d like to take this opportunity to announce that as (vice) president I will be building a bridge to heaven. That way all of America will be able to visit the angels in paradise. It will only cost 1 trillion tax dollars, which is cheap considering it will be made out of solid gold! ALASKAN GOLD! That’s right, I’m darn serious.

So when you go to vote on the 13th or the 16th, or whenever this darn election is, I’d like you to vote for me, Alex, you sweet little British hunk. Because you know what they say about hockey moms and sticks! LOL! Super duper. Maybe I’ll even sub-prime your mortgages; I am a beauty queen you know. Anyway, I have an illegitimate grandchild to save from hell.

Good Hunting,

Sarah “Stick Handler” Palin

P.S. Is it true that British men don’t brush their teeth? That’s gross, lol.

P.P.S. Just because I don’t like divorce doesn’t mean I don’t like a little British on the side.

To Sarah With Love

ALEX MCKENZIE AND WILL RUTLEDGE

Dear Sarah,

I must admit to having been passionately in love with you from the first time I saw your sculpted jaw peeking out next to McCain. I instantly realised my raving crush on the old dodder was well placed (I always had a thing for bad boy mavericks), and that you were the real deal. I mean, you’ve had more “executive experience” than all three other candidates combined. I really feel that your role in Alaska will have prepared you handsomely for controlling the most powerful country in the world. Admittedly, the cold calculated move of your appointment came as a bit of a surprise... perhaps power is an aphrodisiac, but I was instantly taken in. I said to myself, “here is a person with nerves of steel, who can get up every morning see Russia off the coast and not burst into tears (damn those Ruskies don’t they know the Cold War’s over). If that doesn’t qualify you for office, what does? All thoughts of Obama and his message of reform suddenly disappeared. “You know what I want?” I thought, “I want small town values to be the values of the next Vice President. (quick question...I know it sounds stupid, but what are small town values again?)”

Review

The Fascination of...People?

KATE WALKER

I am sitting at my desk. I am all ready to work. My workspace is clean, the house is quiet, my pencil is sharpened and my highlighter is poised and at the ready. I can finally write those bible responses for Lit. Then, all of a sudden, my fingers start to twitch. I open my laptop, click the Internet and in a blink type “perezhilton.com.” I simply cannot help myself. I need to know if Jakey G. (Jake Gyllenhall, for those of you who don’t come up with nicknames for celebs in their free time) has finally proposed to Reese Witherspoon, which, I learned, sadly hasn’t happened.

In the first weekend of September, Toronto opened its gates and welcomed guests from all over the world to enjoy the beauty of filmmaking. That weekend, I walked around Yorkville in the hopes of seeing Brad Pitt with Maddox in tow. I walked to every Starbucks, Whole Foods, waited by Birks for 45 minutes, all with a camera in my hand. I even put a little notebook and pen in my purse in the hopes of running into any celebrity. But did I see anyone? I saw a lot of people; there were a LOT of crowds around Bay and Bloor that day. But, no, I did not see any celebrity. But why, then, do I know that I will do the exact same thing next year?

We are trying to fill that void that American television has left us. We are trying to live the lives of people who aren’t that glamorous. We are in the constant hope that maybe if we go to L.A. and wear that really low-cut shirt, that Adam Brody will whisk us off our feet. The truth is, we are all just people. People doing little things sometimes get big things. It just so hap-

pens that some people get to have those big things and little things recorded to stand for the rest of time.

Living at Yonge & Eglinton, which is a more sheltered part of the world, I feel connected to people from other walks of life when I read about Jennifer Aniston. I can’t help it. I feel connected to all the other people picking up that Us Weekly in the grocery store. Although it is definitely not the most profound piece of journalism, it still is evidence of our generation. Sadly and regrettably, people in fifty years won’t remember the single mother from this decade with three jobs supporting her five children. They will remember that this was the year when Angelina Jolie had twins. This is part of our people’s history.

I am a history buff. I love to learn all about what people were like in any time period. For a while, I pretty obsessed with the Tudors (not the show, the actual monarchy). I knew all about the politics of the marriages and the relationship between Elizabeth and Mary. I read books and saw documentaries. I was just fascinated by these people. So, for me when I read about Jude Law, it helps to fill my curiosity of people in general. I also love to read biographies on anyone. Again, it is the need to know about people’s lives that are so different but at the same time, the same as my life.

It may be silly and stupid and a waste of my time and money. But, I am interested in people and what they look like without makeup. It is not a moral issue and I am not going to stop reading books, but it is nice to read a little People at the end of a stressful day. As long as you don’t let it run your life and as long as you realize that celebrities are just people, there is no harm in reading about Jesse Gytherspoon (pretty clever, eh?).

Number Me Curious

ANGELA KIM

You know a game has reached cult status when jurors throw a \$1 000 000 drug trial to play it when they’re really supposed to be listening to evidence. Yes, staff and students of NT, along with Windows Solitaire, Tetris, Pac-Man, and World of Warcraft, welcome the newest induction into the ever growing list of addicting games: the Sudoku.

Contrary to commonly held notions, the first Sudoku was published in 1979 by an American architect- only it was scandalously called Number Place. It would take another decade before its popularity in Japan forever changed its name to Sudoku, which, according to my faithful Wikipedia, translates to “single number”.

For those of you out there who have yet to attempt thi=s game, it may be difficult to understand the cause of your friend’s anxiety at finding himself at a seeming impasse, or his eye-bulging, hair-ripping frustration when he realizes he made a mistake and needs to start over again. You’d be surprised how mind-bogglingly addictive that deceptively innocent nine by nine square can be. Heck, it’s even addicting to watch people play Sudokus. Just ask the thousands of viewers of Sudoku Live, the world’s first Sudoku TV show, where, you guessed it- a live audience gets to watch real live people solve Sudokus in real time. Riveting, non?

But when you get down to it, that’s all it is: a game (albeit a seriously addictive one). It really bothers

me when an overly avid fan of Sudoku suggests it’s a productive use of one’s time, or, even more atrocious, declares that it’s intellectually stimulating, even deserving of its own allotment in the Ontario high school math curriculum. First and foremost, the game could theoretically be played with any nine distinct symbols- numbers were used solely for convenience. Second, how much thought does it actually require to count off nine numbers in your head? (That was a rhetorical question.) But there’s no denying its popularity, or should I say, notoriety?

Sudokus really have grown exponentially in its devout following since I was first introduced to it by my English teacher as a wee thirteen year old. Sudokus really are addictive, curiously enough. If you have never tried it before, or gave up on your first attempt and never looked back since, give it a chance - it’s ridiculous how rewarding it is when you complete one game. That is, until you realize there are real people out there who can finish it in under a minute.

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

On the Charts

JOSEPH YANG

The sound of “Apple bottom jeans, boots with the fur” is enough to make everyone get in the party mood anytime and anywhere. This song, Low by Flo Rida and T-Pain, sold three million copies and was number one on iTunes for 14 weeks. Since both artists were born in Florida, they collaborated on the song and the result turned out to be the best-selling digital song ever. The verses have an “island” kind of vibe, mixed with hot lyrics that speed up and slow down, and clever lyrics and rhyming patterns.

Exclusive (The Forever Edition) was the first CD album released in June 2008 by a popular artist, Chris Brown. With his exceptional dancing ability and catchy lyrics he wowed everyone. Forever by Chris Brown was the most popular song on his whole album, and was on iTunes Top 20 for 16 weeks as well. With catchy lyrics, beats that makes you move, and repetitive chorus, this song immediate-

ly turned out to be a great success. There were some other great tracks on the album, as well, like Kiss Kiss featuring T-Pain and Gimme Whatcha Got featuring Lil Wayne. However, some people thought the album was too plain with overly used topics. Additionally, a few of his songs, such as With You, became annoying after hearing about 3 times.

Step Up 2 the Streets is the follow-up to the smash hit Step Up, which ignited theaters in August 2006. When rebellious street dancer Andie enrolls at Maryland School of the Arts, she finds it hard to fit in, while trying to hold onto her old life as a street dancer. When she forms her own crew with her classmate Chase and others to compete in Baltimore’s underground dance battle “The Streets,” she faces her old friends to show them that the best thing about the street is ‘people bringing something new to the table’. With awesome and amazing dancing, intense drama and popular music including Low, Church, Bounce and The Way I Are by today’s hottest artists, this movie is sure to grab any audiences’ attention.



ply fascinating. Another hit is House, which follows the eccentric Dr. House through his daily duties at the hospital. This show will be sure to blow you away. There are several quality options for new television on Wednesdays, including Knight Rider. Knight Rider stars Justin Bruening as the

Primetime at its Greatest

BILLY SILVERSTEIN

Almost everyone knows that there is nothing better than a primetime show during the fall months. In addition to the high quality of writing, acting and directing that make up our favourite fall hits; countless people are thrilled with the prospect of a new season of television. Here are some recommendations on what programs should be saved by your beloved PVR.

Mondays are always the most dreaded day of the week, people are always sad to wave their weekend goodbye. Fortunately, Mondays boast some of television’s most intriguing plots. If you’re a Soap-Drama lover, then CW’s Gossip Girl is the show for you. The second season of Gossip Girl begins in the Hamptons, where Blair gets a new boyfriend to spark jealousy in Chuck, while Nate gets a steamy hook-up. For those folks who like reality television, Dancing with the Stars returns with several celebrities including Lance Bass, Warren Sapp, Toni Braxton and Misti May-Treanor. DWTS is one of the most entertaining shows I have ever seen and I’m sure you’ll love it.

Tuesday night TV, however, is just as exciting as Monday. Perhaps the most anticipated show that will be airing on Tuesday is Fringe, from the creator of LOST. Like LOST, the show doesn’t tout any major celebrities, but its fantastic storyline makes up for the lack of the George Clooney or Hayden Panettiere. Fringe is sure to thrill many. In addition to Fringe, there is The Tudors, which revolves around the life of Henry VIII. The show is sim-

alienated son of the former Knight Rider, Michael Knight (David Hasselhoff). For you sitcom lovers, Wednesday nights are pure gold. This includes the hilarious New Adventures of Old Christine, starring Julia Louis-Dreyfus as a single mother Christine, who is trying to keep the peace with many in her life.

In the world of television, no night can rival Thursdays. The sheer variety of genres found on Thursdays is spectacular. If you are looking to satisfy that craving for a good laugh, The Office, starring Steve Carrel, is as funny as any show gets. The Office is truly hilarious, and I’d highly recommend this show to anyone. 30 Rock is Tina Fey’s hilarious creation that is mildly based on her life as head writer for SNL. After all, it didn’t win four Emmy awards for nothing. If you are not into comedy or reality TV, drama on Thursday night is exhilarating. The immensely popular Grey’s Anatomy is excellent. Grey’s Anatomy follows the lives of residents and attending physicians at the world renowned Seattle Grace Hospital. Grey’s Anatomy is simply outstanding, and thoroughly entertaining. Finally, if you are looking for the ultimate dramedy, nothing beats Ugly Betty. Ugly Betty chronicles the life of Betty Suarez, an aspiring journalist who is the editor-in-chief’s assistant at the ultra chic MODE magazine. If you give this show a chance, I can guarantee you will fall in love.

As sad as many are on Sunday’s, the line-up of great television is something that should make you smile. There are several HBO shows on, but the best one without a doubt is Entourage, a show about rising Hollywood superstar Vince Chase and his entourage of friends and family. Entourage is put together very well and I have no doubts.

Review

The Backwards Little Town of Reality TV

ANGELA BROCK

In this article I will utilize a variety of pre-conspired strategies in order to manipulate your thoughts and forever alter your opinions of good television. Don't be too worried though, what with all that Reality TV you've been watching, these feelings should come naturally to you.

Reality TV used to be a scary, backwards little town in TV World that was shunned and laughed at by the rest the TV World's inhabitants. Reality Town scarcely compared to the lush, rolling landscape of Sit-Com Valley. But now something awful has happened. That little town has grown exponentially, morphed into an enormous cancerous mass, fuelled by an engine that feeds off the brains of the innocent and naïve. This terrible place is populated by the brattiest, spoiled teens, tattered, skinny people stranded on islands, tight-faced have-beens and the ghoulishly hideous. This is a place that should be avoided at all costs.

It is like a colloidal mass of grease and infectious bacteria that has been known to smudge its grimy self onto your TV screen and proceed to invade your retinas. In some cases there are lasting and long-term effects. The immediate symptoms of a Reality TV infection may include:

- Trouble understanding simple concepts
- Slurred or incoherent speech
- The shrill cries of your brain cells pleading for their lives.

You can protect yourself and your loved ones from these dangers during a Reality TV attack by taking these simple steps.

1. Pick up your remote control
2. Cock your arm outward from your body at a 70 degree angle.
3. Project remote control device into eye socket to ensure optimum blindness.
4. Repeat steps 1 through 3 on adjacent eye.

A parallel can be drawn between the producers who fabricate the scripts for these "unscripted" programs and the finest fry-cooks at Mickey-D's. The only difference is they clutch the keys to their Bentley's rather than rusty spatulas. A writer creating casting lists, a target audience and plot-lines that comprise Reality TV shows can be equated with a food chemist choosing a sumptuous blend of titillating flavours that comprise America's favourite burger. Mmm.

Figure 1. The Cheeseburger Theory:
Big Mac = Reality TV
Gut Brain

Let us further delve into the far-cries and fallacies of the misnomer, "reality" television. The idea of television that projects reality is oxymoronic. Or maybe just moronic. What is being spoon-fed to us as legitimate is ultimately a falsehood. The format, day-to-day activities, environment, and story line of your favourite reality TV show are designed by producers to mimic a world free of, or added with, imperfections. The producers of a show with a title that forces cackles of disbelief from my mouth each time it bounces off my ear drums, 'The Real World', have admitted most decorously that the show is not real. That they specifically select the par-

ticipants, and use carefully designed scenarios, events and settings to "encourage" certain behaviours and conflicts.

Mark Burnett, creator of 'Survivor' and other reality TV shows was quoted saying, "I tell good stories. It really is not reality TV," to describe his brand of television. But wait! When "reality" straight off the page isn't enough, producers and directors manipulate footage to completely re-mould a scene or make it appear as though participants are doing something they're not. If you allow yourself to sit, slack-jawed in front of your television set and accept a compilation of lies as a representation of truth, you might as well take a nap on a nuclear reactor and have your brain melt out of your ears.

Now onto the dim-witted, shallow-minded and those not properly informed. These are the weak patches in our quilt that are adversely affected by the contrived drivel being spewed into our eyes. It is an orchestra of unethical melodies and a chorus of false-ideals, culminating in a crescendo of stupidity. All this eloquently played by acclaimed musicians like A-list inmate, Paris Hilton and conducted by the most trustworthy producers on the bill. The audience is you, your pals, your children and even that obnoxious guy in the next office. These are the people exposed to the not-so-upstanding examples set forth by Reality TV.

There unfortunately are a vast plethora of mucky things coagulated into the core of what we call Reality TV that, putting it simply, we could do without. Things that shouldn't so much as lurk, let alone be prevalent in our brand of pop-culture. We have a colourful jubilee of things on our plates, so why do we continue to reach for that side of smut?

Ten "Wish It Was Summer Again" Songs

KRISTINA SUCHANEK

Where Do You Go To My Lovely – Peter Sarstedt

I went on one of those super fast trains when I was in France this summer. I don't remember what that train is called; the trip was so quick. But I remember clearly the pigeons in the train station, a little kid who looked exactly like Petit Nicholas, and listening to this song.

My Favourite Book – Stars

There's nothing like sitting in Indigo all day long. You can read or just pretend to read. It's hard to read with your eyes closed, but it's also hard to pretend you're sitting on a beach with your eyes open, when really you've been sitting in Starbucks since you rolled out of bed.

Sweet Darlin' – She & Him

The future of campfire songs; this song was made for summer. S'mores are optional. This song is just so good by itself.

Marilu – Serge Gainsbourg

Close your eyes and pretend you're on a pier looking over some body of water. There are Christmas lights, yet the holiday season is six months away. You're probably in France, but you're doing the twist with some American-looking fellow. And you can't believe the sun hasn't set yet. It's 1966, and it's summer baby.

It's Nice To Go Trav'ling – Frank Sinatra

It's very nice to go traveling, especially in the summer. But au contraire to Mr. Sinatra, it's not so nice to come home. Home means that school's around the corner.

This Charming Man – The Smiths

If I could actually go ride my bike around the city without getting seriously injured, then this is the song I would play on repeat on my iPod. You can still do the same, just walk. Or if you have the whole day, take your bike and this song to the island.

Ease Your Feet Into The Sea – Belle and Sebastian

Summer is never complete without a trip to the beach. Whether that means Woodbine to you and the Mediterranean to someone else doesn't really matter. Just ease your feet into some sort of sea, or polluted water. Whatever floats your boat.

Cape Cod Kwassa Kwassa – Vampire Weekend

Lucky for me, summer every year means Cape Cod. Sand, sun, fried cod, hammocks, clam chowdah, coleslaw, Newman's Own Lemonade, and Starbucks everything. You know Starbucks makes ice cream in the United States? Yeah, so go sit in a hammock, and eat overpriced, caffeinated, ice cream and listen to this.

We Rule The School - Belle and Sebastian

Do something pretty while you can, this sunny season doesn't last forever. Unfortunately, the time comes when we must go back to public education. And this song is depressing enough to be a back-to-school song.

Burnin' Up – The Jonas Brothers

I'm not gonna lie, this was totally my summer anthem.



White Night

ANGELA BROCK

It's 7:21pm Saturday night and I'm standing in front of an enormous paint-by-numbers (like connect the dots with numbers). I stare at it, wondering what it will turn out to be and how long that process will take. At first it seems a millennium. Then people, the most enthusiastic of which are children, pick up brushes and red cups assigned numbers one through nine or so, begin to gather around it, and dutifully do their part. Just as suddenly as I realize this is a forest scene, I am drafted into its execution. I accept my olive green number seven and begin to fill out a small segment in the monumental white map spanning the length of the room. I dab my paint-fattened brush onto the paper and can see now what we're all doing.

Cluttered against this wall, sharing a tight space, we each take a few minutes in part of the creation of something, or perhaps, if you look at our current situation – as I'm sure the artist intended, the re-creation of something. Most others are realizing it too, and smiling inwardly, secretly congratulating themselves. We're supplied the tools, but we donate the time and effort, however little, in the generation of art and a consciousness for nature.

This was what Nuit Blanche 2008 was largely, though not exclusively, about. Some of the most popular themes were: being aware of our effect on the environment, our place in the world, and, perhaps, being a part of the art and, sometimes, just being it. This concept was illustrated at Yonge-Dundas square where people were congregating because other people had crowded around a make-shift watchtower. Atop this stood a man armed with a spotlight and Andy Warhol's famous quote, "In the future everyone will be world-famous for fifteen minutes." He was fulfilling Andy's prophecy, just more economically with only fifteen seconds and no international broadcast. Most, in their fifteen seconds of fame, rather anti-climactically concealed their faces with Starbucks coffee cups instead performing their signature talent.

As I said, this is concept and art often doesn't need one, but rather just a lot of people wanting to be apart of it somehow, willing themselves to understand it. For this reason it's a good thing this piece didn't rely solely on execution and a few thousand people showed up.

It is now 10:47 and I'm at the AGO watching someone cycling on a machine, his silhouette superimposed onto a galloping horse on a concrete wall. He unlike a couple before him as he either has an immense affinity for Westerns and equestrian sports or wanted to somehow bring

this installation to life and opted for flailing an invisible lasso, firing at the crowd, and whipping his stallion. This was a piece left entirely up to the public, but only such that they couldn't do much to botch it up, and, thus, offered bona fide entertainment powered by the people.

Four hours have evaporated and I'm now conscious of the ache in my knees, how little, respectively, I've seen, how little else I'll be able to see, and the number of bathroom breaks taken. So far I've heard things said like, "That is performance art!" and, "Oh my god, are they serious or something?" and, perhaps most thoughtful, "What kinda dog has a trunk?" Some of the things I've seen are Moorish dancers, too much tarty club-wear on a night not Semi, a few good installations and exhibits, a few more zombies, an obese man laying on a bed of white rice being basted with cooking oil, and a blue Michelin-man-like pyramid made of tarp.

This is the remainder of what Nuit Blanche was about: sometimes wonderful but more often a very difficult attempt to see the forest through the trees. The installations are hit or miss, though this year they favoured the latter, offering only a handful of beautiful, thought-provoking or even just entertaining installations, then, finally, and with good justification, one excellent night's sleep.

The Last Word

Graffiti Summer 08 Crossword

Created by Michelle Gordon and Adria Danyluk

ACROSS

1. “Change we can believe in”

6. Minister for Magic

11. Stroller made by Modernkid

13. Land surrounding Lake Victoria

15. Without further ____

16. National Lifeguard Service (abbr.)

17. Last part of WWW

19. Father of communism

21. The cardinal mascot of Iowa State University

22. Charged particle

23. A room or flat

25. The best political team on television

26. Swedish furniture company

28. Keeping a secret or furtive watch

32. Curling team captain

34. A school organization for parents (abbr.)

35. Genetic fingerprint

36. Hatchling’s home

39. A small river in Cumbria, England

40. Number of fairytale miners in a Disney movie

42. Being first in time; original

46. The possessive form of I

47. A play on words (pl.)

48. String component of a shoe (pl.)

51. A recipient of a degree (abbr.)

53. Gym class (bkwrds, abbr.)

54. NT’s Salt and ----- Club
55. Back of a boat

56. Orange pekoe

58. Masculin pronoun (fr.)

59. Friendly Spielberg star (bkwrds)

60. Two is twins, six is ----- (s)

63. Containing moths

66. Poseidon’s domain

67. Fall month minus the T (abbr.)

68. Plural for medium

DOWN

1. People’s best dressed, Michelle -----

2. Capital of Hungary

3. Ancient Greek market place

4. Informal word for mother

5. “20/20” network

6. Calculus, data, and -----

7. First word of show star ring magazine misfit

8. An unhappy emotion (bkwrds.)

9. IM abbreviation for good-night

10. The youngest brother on Life with Derek

12. Double – reed woodwind

14. Many millennia

18. American book store (abbr.)

20. Needed to detect a broken bone

24. Judy Garland’s daughter

25. Indian class system
27. American version of “enriched” (abbr.)

29. Pitbull with lipstick

30. An inkling

31. Pancake breakfast club

33. Part of the mind according to Freud

34. Cast of Avenue Q

37. Snakelike fish (pl.)

38. Law and Order --U

41. “P. Sherman, 42 Wallaby Way, -----”
43. The unit of currency in India (pl.)

44. Debilitating disease (abbr.)

45. Yiddish: to drag or trudge

46. Head of Model UN ----- Coates

49. Catlike

50. And (fr.)

51. IM abbreviation for good times

52. A reply to an email
54. Half of Canada’s shopping magazine

55. Ditto

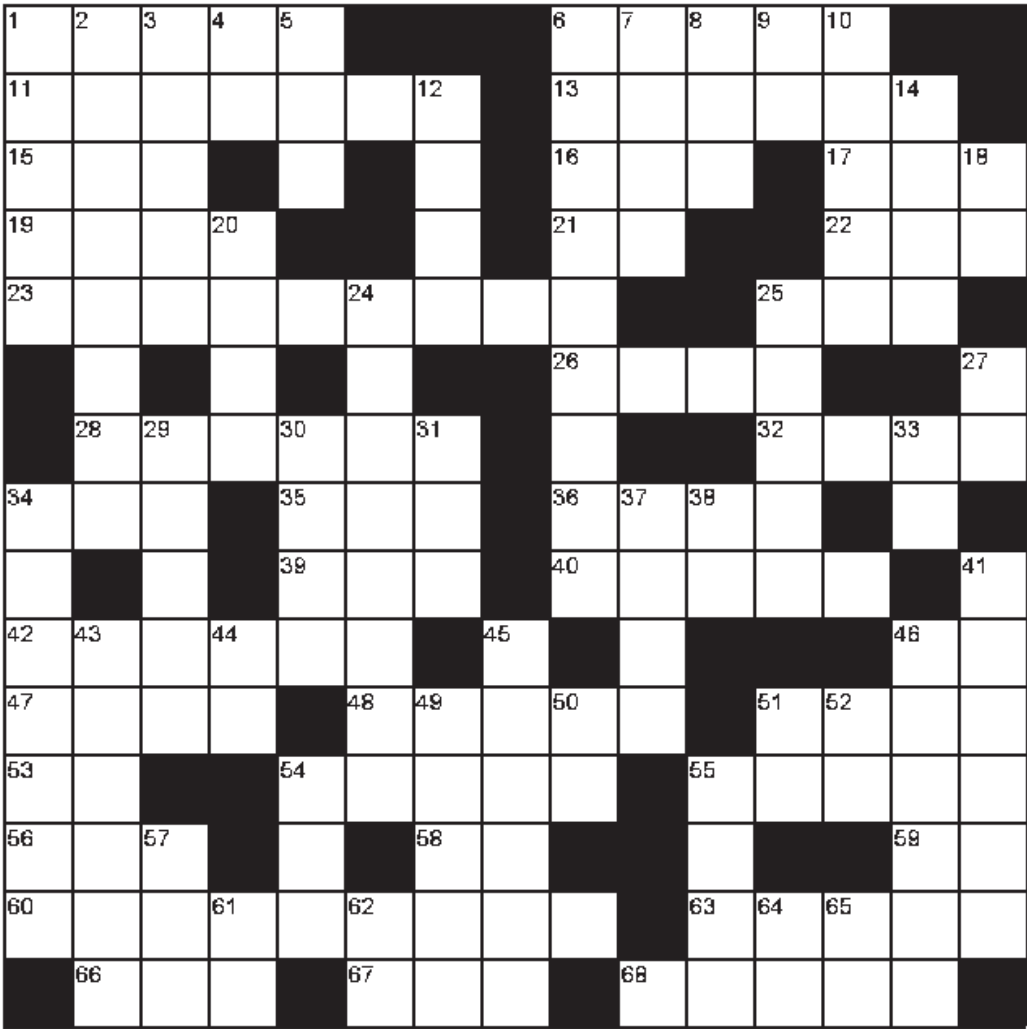
57. Pungent men’s body spray

61. The 73rd element

62. Post scriptum (abbr.)

64. To consume too much (abbr.)

65. The 22nd element



Images of Summer

