

The Reckoner

of Marc Garneau C.I.

Staff Feature

Ms. Goldenberg

by SADIA AKBAR and AIMAN ALTAF



Photo: Laura Lu

Ten years into her tenure as Principal at Garneau, The Reckoner interviewed Ms. Goldenberg to get the inside scoop about her life before, during, and after Garneau. Having rappelled down city hall, visited Alaska, and won Canada’s Best Principal award, she turned out to be full of both surprises and insight.

Ms. Goldenberg has been an educator for fifty years, starting as an elementary school teacher, then working as an administrator at a middle school, before finally moving up to high school, fulfilling her aspiration to work with older students.

Despite her many years as and love for being an educator, Ms. Goldenberg

actually wanted to be a doctor. When that did not work out, she decided to pursue the career her mother wanted for her—teaching. Fortunately, she says she “gave it a try and loved it.” She pursued a bachelor’s degree in psychology and later received a master’s degree in special education.

At Garneau, a typical day for Ms. Goldenberg is “on the go.” She handles issues as they arise, including any problems students and teachers may have, as well as assisting with exciting events taking place around the school. She says she doesn’t like sitting still in her office all day, not only because of her ADHD, but also because the best part of her day is interacting

with students and visiting classrooms. Unsurprisingly, she is not the biggest fan of the excessive paperwork her job entails, particularly because it takes her time away from working with students.

Over her time here, Ms. Goldenberg hasn’t seen major change in students. However, she noted that when she first arrived, some students were in their fifth or sixth year of high school, whereas now, “95% graduate within the four years they’re supposed to. That’s been a good change.”

Being a principal is a very rewarding job, and for Ms. Goldenberg, she feels rewarded when students are able to participate in a diversity of experiences, especially opportunities they wouldn’t otherwise have. Many of her initiatives have reflected this. In her years at Garneau, she has launched the snack program, annual Grade 11 Conference, the Business and Social Action Program, which will be phased out after next year, and the dearly departed Winterfest.

Within her first two years at Garneau, Ms. Goldenberg launched the mid-morning snack program to help students she noticed didn’t eat breakfast before coming to school. This initiative gained her much recognition and proved her dedication to her students. She, among thirty-one other principals from across Canada, received Canada’s Outstanding Principal award in 2011.

Ms. Goldenberg also started the Grade 11 Conference three years ago, though she had been planning it for quite a while before it was finally able to manifest. The conference is an opportunity for students to explore political and social justice issues. Ms. Goldenberg said that the reasoning behind the event being exclusively for Grade 11 students is because those who are stimulated by something in Grade 11 still have another year to act upon it before Grade 12.

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Marc Garneau Robots

Wrestle for the Win

by RENA LIU

The University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT) opened its doors for students from all across the province on 24 November 2018 for the annual UOIT Sumobots King of the Hill competition, in which teams would bring their robot to wrestle with other teams in a Sumo ring.

This year, Marc Garneau’s Robotics Club consisted of five teams: two Grade 9 teams—MGCI Teams 1 and 2; two Grade 10 teams—MGCI Teams 3 and 4; and one senior team, MGCI Team 5. All teams placed in the top fifty. Marc Garneau Collegiate Institute brought back three awards: the first place trophy, the Best Engineering Design award, and the Most Novel Engineering award.

The club began preparing about a month before the competition. Each team designed a fully autonomous robot that would either engage or avoid other robots, stay within the black area of the arena, and gain points to win awards. Points were awarded if robots performed certain tasks, such as passing over a small green ramp in the middle of the arena. Teams were disqualified from the round if their robot remained immobile for over twenty seconds or went out of bounds.

The day kicked off at 9:00 am in the Recreation and Wellness Centre with a two-hour testing session during which teams raced to test on the official arena, using the last few pre-competition hours to modify their code and improve their robots. During this period, many robots

engaged in head-to-head combat in an effort to push each other off the stage, while others spun to avoid conflicts. Whether the robot engaged or not with other robots depended on the team’s strategy.



Photo: Evan Woo

The testing period drew to a close at 11:00 am with a warm welcome from the University of Ontario. Schools were served lunch about fifteen minutes later as teams added finishing touches to their robots as quickly as possible before noon, when the competition would begin.

See ROBOTICS on P3

Let Them Eat Cafeteria Food

by EMILY LAI and UROOBA SHAIKH

After waiting two months, those con- Assumed with a desire for cafeteria food can finally rejoice: students and teachers alike regained the chance to buy food at school again after Marc Garneau’s cafeteria reopened on 6 November 2018.

“It’s more convenient now that the cafeteria is open, because I had to go out to McDonald’s to buy lunch if I didn’t bring it from home,” said Grade 10 student Jan Koky, who expressed his happiness at being able to buy food at school once again.

The cafeteria was closed near the end of the last school year when cafeteria

workers realized that there was an issue in the plumbing system of the kitchen. A trap that filters wastewater from the kitchen was backing up and preventing water from passing through. The school immediately requested repairs, but repair workers were only able to come to the school in September. The trap is set in concrete beneath the kitchen floor, so construction, which included a replacement of all kitchen tiles, put a stop to all cafeteria functions until the repairs were completed.

See CAFETERIA on P2

CRIMINAL RELAPSE

by SUMEDH DHANVANTHRY

The sirens began to fade. I lay on the concrete in the pitch black of the night, forcing myself not to breathe. My lungs ached; I had run a kilometre. The adrenaline slowly faded and the chill of the night set in. It was freezing, but sweat still stained my thin shirt; I had ditched my jacket in the chase. I tried my best to ignore the cold and remained on the low-rise roof’s floor for another half an hour. It felt like days. At least I knew my way back from here; I knew the city inside out.

It was 1:15 AM; far too late. I was lucky, not just because I had escaped the police, but because I’d managed to sneak into bed undetected. Despite the world being in my favour today, I was disappointed in myself. I thought, firmly:

This is not okay. If we get caught, we’ll go to jail. A brown-skinned boy with a criminal record can’t get a job here. You know that. No more of this.

And that was the truth, no matter how badly I wanted to climb the walls and jump from rooftop to rooftop after sunset to find another blank canvas to soak up my colours. But my urge to express myself inevitably built up. I thought it would eventually fade. It didn’t.

For three weeks, I found myself daydreaming in math class, picturing what the city would look like from a helicopter or from the perspective of a crazed skydiver. Where the shadows would be, where the light would reflect; all the infinitesimal details that make up a picture. I wasn’t disciplined enough to shut my brain off long enough to focus, or to grasp the concepts needed for my algebra homework. But I still managed to make it through math every day, though I can’t say the same for other classes. In particular, the 75 minutes that took up Period 3 were unbearable. I dare say, World History was the straw that broke this delinquent’s back.

It was sunny, and the light shone through the back window, making it very difficult for the people in the back of the class to see the board. I wasn’t paying attention; I never paid attention. Through my fluttering eyelids and translucent fantasies, I stumbled across a possibility for an artwork behind the curtains of my mind.

See CRIMINAL on P6

Can Art be Separated from the Artist?

by MARZAN HAMID and ANDREW LI

It has become increasingly common for a beloved Artist to be uncovered as a criminal, an abuser, a monster whose actions we will never forgive. At the same time, we acknowledge that they are not only our creators and entertainers, but idols of society that continue to represent everything we’ve ever wanted to see and more. It is undeniable that we will want to continue praising works from the likes of Kevin Spacey, Hedley, and Harvey Weinstein. But to immerse ourselves in the weapons of their wrongdoings—believing that it is acceptable because it is *just* art—is grievously blindsighted. Claiming that the art can be separated from the artist is saying that a few enjoyable pieces of media are more important than acts of life-changing injustices.

If we continue to admire their work, are we turning a blind eye to victims and condoning their horrendous actions? Are we providing more freedom, power, and wealth to harm future victims, through the appreciation of their art? Are we considering the implications of separating the art from the artist? As much as we want to avoid it, the time has come to hold artists accountable for their personal lives. For every moment that we praise their work,

we should condemn their misdeeds. We must not omit discouragement and criticism of the artist simply because they provide enjoyment. It’s illogical to dissociate art from the artist, declaring that works should simply be judged by their creative merit. The artists certainly don’t do that themselves. In fact, they take it all in—rushing to claim the fame and wealth that we provide them. When we tell them that their misdeeds do not have a substantial impact on the perception of their work, we’re giving them the freedom to harm others and the freedom to avoid consequences.

An artist’s life is intimately related to how we perceive their artwork: context is fundamental to judging culture. If we consider titles such as the prestigious ‘auteur’ status awarded to many artists for incorporating highly personalized elements as central themes in their work, the reverse must also be true. Criticism and reflection of artwork can only be done by making useful connections—where there are gaps, the audience turns to the artist to fill them in.

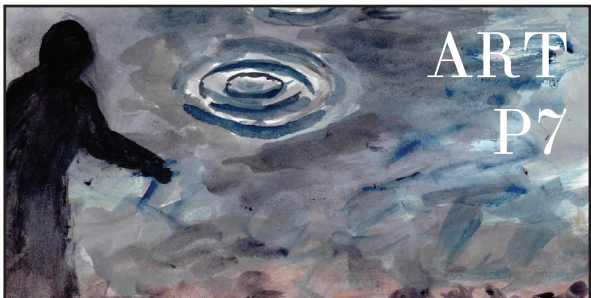
See ART AND ARTIST on P4



P2
SCAW NIGHT



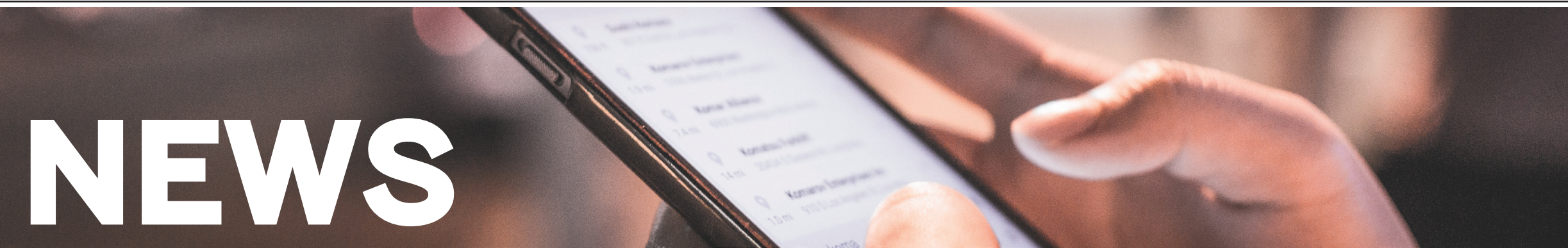
P4
PRESTO CARD



ART
P7



P7
COMIC



Getting to Know Ms. Goldenberg

STAFF FEATURE
Continued from P1

Winterfest, an annual event in which MGCI students participated in various activities such as skating, snow-tubing, or visiting the CN tower, was also established thanks to Ms. Goldenberg’s efforts, though was discontinued last year. It originally began as a means to enable students who did not get a chance to get out of their community to try new activities and experiences. Though many students loved Winterfest and had a wonderful time on their trips, several complications, including waivers from organizations and students changing their minds or not signing up, forced the event to come to an end.

On a more personal note, Ms. Goldenberg revealed that her favourite hobbies include travelling and reading. She could not pick just one favourite destination but said that she loved her visit to Portugal as well as to Iguazu Falls in Argentina, the British Isles, Alaska, and Morocco. When she is finished with this

job, she plans to travel more and has her eyes set on destinations in Asia and the Galápagos. As for her favourite book, she said, “One of the books that I really enjoyed was *The Book Thief* [by Markus Zusak]. That’s a book that we have a lot of in the library and I think everybody should read it.”

A big believer in social justice, Ms. Goldenberg said that given three wishes, she would hope for “world peace, eliminating the homeless issue, and making sure everyone is well fed.” She encouraged students to help solve these issues in their community, mentioning the Out of the Cold programs that are prevalent in the Danforth area as a worthy cause. She encourages students to volunteer in these efforts, emphasizing that “working with the homeless can be a real eye-opener.”

For her parting words, Ms. Goldenberg wanted to leave students with some food for thought: “Every student

in the school can have an impact on their lives and those of others. Think about your friends, think about your family, and think of some goals that you have in order to make things good for yourself and good for the people around you. Challenge yourselves to bigger and better things. Because those things are right there within everyone’s reach.” ■



Photo: Laura Lu

The Return of the Lunch and Snack Programs

CAFETERIA
Continued from P1



Photo: Jessica Xiong

“The kitchen still needs a lot of work,” one of the school’s cafeteria employees admitted. The school plans to replace most of the kitchen equipment, including the ovens, stove, and counters, later this year. This will be the first cafeteria renovation in about six years. The objective is to install new dishwashers for the reusable plates the school hopes to replace paper plates with, in an attempt to be more eco-friendly.

Another eco-friendly initiative being taken by MGCI is the Farm to Cafeteria initiative. With a grant from the Farm to Cafeteria program, fresh produce will be delivered to the school to create sustainable and healthy meals for students that will be served about once a week. “A small portion of the produce will even come from what is grown in MGCI’s own garden,” said cooking teacher Ms. Gunn, adding, “The preparation of these healthy meals would be done by students at the school.”

Aside from the weekly Farm to Cafeteria program, the school wants to make the cafeteria student-run. “Whereas right now we have a Toronto District School Board employee who comes in and serves the food, we want to make the cafeteria a separate initiative run by the school. Food would be made and sold by students,” said Principal Ms. Goldenberg.

For now, the cafeteria is operating as usual, although some of the prices have increased from last year. This is because fuel and shipping costs are on the rise. In addition, many subsidies that once existed for different kinds of produce have been taken away, making it much more expensive to buy.

Despite a rise in food prices, the cafeteria’s menu remains the same as last year’s. The most popular item is still the \$6 Energizer Meal, which is the main meal that is cooked fresh daily.

Another indulgence missed by students while the cafeteria was closed was the morning snack program. It was also affected by the delays as there was no access to the kitchen.

The snack program was started at Marc Garneau in 2009 by Ms. Goldenberg when staff started to notice that many students were unable to focus in class due to a lack of nutrition. Students are not always able to eat breakfast for a multitude of reasons including financial inaccessibility. The snack program was established in hopes of giving students the nourishment they needed to

be able to concentrate and perform well in school.

The snack program is currently funded by the Toronto Foundation for Student Success, which provides about 205 000 meals every day to students across Toronto, as well as by donations from parents. Last year, the school had considered charging every student \$2 per month for the program, but eventually decided against it to keep the program accessible. Similarly, there is a lunch program at the school that provides free lunches every day to students with financial struggles. There are about eighteen students enrolled in the program so far.

This year, the school is trying a new system for the snack program. Instead of having individual bins for each first period class, snack bins will be placed in front of stairwells on every Tuesday and Thursday morning, so students can take what they want on their way into class. This is an eco-friendly initiative that will require fewer plastic bins and garbage bags, which were previously put into each classroom’s snack bin to avoid food waste in classrooms. The fare is the same as previous years: clementines, apples, bananas, yogurt, cheese strings, vegan muffins, and cookies.

Students are excited to once again have morning snacks and cafeteria lunches. Although plans for a renovated servery is in the works, for now, students at MGCI can enjoy being well-fed. ■

A Night to Remember

by IVY DING

The third annual Fall Fest was a night to remember for students. Held on the evening of 15 November 2018 from 6:00 to 9:00 pm, MGCI’s first dance, organized by Social Convenor Sumaya Mohammed, took place at J.J. Best Western Banquet Hall. Students came in semi-formal clothes, excited for a night promised to be full of music, dancing, and fun.

Ticket sales began three weeks in advance at lunch in the cafeteria. From 22 to 23 October, tickets were available to students for an “early bird” deal at \$23. Afterwards, the price was raised to \$26 until 9 November. Guest tickets were sold at a higher price of \$29. Various platforms, including morning announcements and social media, were used to advertise the event during the sales. All money made from sales was directed towards event costs, including paying for the venue, the DJ, catering, and future dances.

While most students arrived between 6:30 to 7:00 pm, doors opened at 6:00 pm. To attend, students were required to present their tickets as well as their student identification cards. Prior to the event, students submitted song requests and a playlist was made for the DJ. Refreshments including samosas and spring rolls were also available throughout the night. Contrary to previous years, no awards were handed out for best and most consistent male and female dancers, best dressed male and female attendees, and cutest couple. The dance started out smoothly and was well received by students. Grade 12 attendee Tahira Sayed said, “Honestly, [the dance] has been the highlight of my day. It’s been really fun.” Attending the event for the first time, she said that she regretted not coming last year. “It’s a time to have fun. It’s not too formal like [the

Semi-Formal], it’s sort of casual and a time to just have fun with your friends.”

Although the dance was planned to end at 10:30 pm, Ms. Goldenberg stopped the festivities early. On multiple occasions, due to inattentive dancers being ignorant of their surroundings, a couple of students had collapsed. She paused the music several times, warning students to cease their behaviour, and eventually told students to call their parents around 9:00 pm. “For half the students, Fall Fest went well,” Mr. Sharp later commented. “For the half who ruined it for the other half, I am sorry to hear that they weren’t willing to make it an event everybody could enjoy.” He added, “When you have a group of people who, no matter what you say, will not listen to the safety concerns that we as administrators have, then you really have no other choice but to stop the event.”

This is not the first time a major school event has been concluded prematurely. Many were upset to discover that the ever-popular International Show will likely be cancelled this year due to the fire alarm being unexpectedly pulled near the end of last year’s show. Students’ behaviour had also been addressed by Ms. Goldenberg during the middle of last year’s Fall Fest. After these recent incidents, students are left wondering whether the administrators will feel obliged to cancel future events as well.

Michelle Mackie, a member of SAC, summarized the night afterwards: “It went well at the beginning, and then people just got carried away.” Despite the unfortunate mishap, most students and teachers agreed that the event overall was fun and well-organized. Fall Fest 2018 was truly an unforgettable experience. ■



Photo: Sumaya Mohammed

Sleeping in School for SCAW

by JESSICA GUO

Every night, millions of children around the world lay down without a proper bed to sleep on; from 30 November to 1 December, MGCI Key Club hosted their annual school sleepover to raise money for these children. All of the money that was raised will go directly to Sleeping Children Around the World (SCAW), a Toronto-based organization whose mission is to give every child the opportunity to have a good night’s sleep. Since 1970, SCAW has sent bed-kits that include a mat or mattress, mosquito netting, a school bag with school supplies, clothing, and shoes to over one million children in thirty-four developing countries. This year, MGCI Key Club will donate nearly \$1 400 to SCAW, enough to provide forty bed-kits to children in need.

SCAW night began at 5:00 pm on Friday after school and ended fourteen hours later at 7:00 am on Saturday. Students were allowed to hang out in the gym or cafeteria and various activities were offered in both. In the gym, students could play games such as basketball, badminton, and volleyball. There was also a dodgeball competition where

students could compete against their friends; the winners were rewarded with chocolate bars. In the cafeteria, attendees could play video games like Mario Kart and Call of Duty or watch horror movies. Dinner was served in the cafeteria at around 7:45 pm and consisted of pizza, lasagna, and pasta salad. Snacks were also available all night. Students were told to bring something comfortable to sleep on during the night, though some people borrowed mats and slept on the floor or on benches.

Around fifty students were in attendance, a major improvement over last year’s twenty-nine. The number of participants was especially impressive considering that last year, Key Club had to postpone SCAW Night until March due to low registration. The event was heavily advertised with many announcements, word of mouth, posts on social media, and posters around the school. Students were required to hand in their signed forms along with \$25 by 29 November if they wanted to attend, and this deadline was strongly emphasized. As the deadline drew closer, Mr. Sharp and Ms. O’Flynn-Wheeler made announce-

ments reminding students that without a form, they could not participate. When asked why he decided to participate this year, student Saliha Sunderji said, “Everyone said it was really fun last year and one of my friends came too so I thought it would be good.” Most students were aware of the charity that they were supporting, however, for many attendees, the driving factor was the opportunity to spend a night at school with their friends.

Students were generally satisfied with the event. Almost all attendees were engaged in the various activities that were available and there was improved participation from last year. When asked about how SCAW Night could be improved, student Jack Wong said he wished that a space separate from the cafeteria or gym could be allocated specifically for sleeping.

MGCI Key Club President Maggie Xu thought the event was very successful, commenting, “I’m extremely proud of the turnout this year as it’s almost double last year. I am also especially happy that there was more group participation and people seemed to really be enjoy-

ing themselves throughout the night.” For next year, Maggie hopes that “just as many students or hopefully more want to get involved.” If participation in

SCAW Night continues its upward trend, MGCI Key Club is sure to accomplish its goal of raising money to give children in need a bed to sleep in at night. ■



Photo: Justin Ye



Eco-Ex: An Exhibition for the Striving Environmentalist

by UROOBA SHAIKH



Photo: Janet Chen

When the bell rang to signal the start of lunch on 22 and 23 November 2018, students passing through the galleria slowed their steps for MGCI EcoTeam’s annual Eco-Ex as the aroma of hot chocolate drifted through the air and brightly colored signs advertising taste testing caught their eyes.

educating students about the environment and reminding them of their responsibility to take care of it. The event consists of numerous booths stationed throughout the galleria that display information about being more eco-friendly.

As in previous years, this year’s Eco-Ex included stations featuring an organic food taste test, where students tried to differentiate between organic and non-organic food, and a honey taste test, where students got to learn about pollinators. There was also a water taste test station, where the benefits of drinking tap water rather than bottled water were explained, as well as a gardening workshop where students learned to take care of a bean plant and could take one home. There was also a Lug-a-Mug station where students were given free hot chocolate if they brought a reusable cup or mug, and a do-it-yourself station where they learned how to make bookmarks out of reusable materials.

As well as the usual stations mentioned above, two new ones were added this year. One was Recycling Roulette,

where students played a game to win candy. The goal of the game was to put waste into its correct bin: garbage, recycling, or compost. The game was very popular, with more than fifty participants over the span of two lunch periods. The other new station was a petition stall where students had the opportunity to sign a petition to protect natural areas in Toronto.

Eco-Ex had a large turnout this year and students felt that they benefited from it. “I definitely learned things I hadn’t known before coming [to Eco-Ex]. Before today I hadn’t really thought about the fact that organic food actually tastes different from normal food, and that drinking tap water has so many benefits. I also liked that we were able to do hands-on activities and have them demonstrated to us,” said Grade 10 student Tharanya Paskaran.

EcoTeam was also satisfied with the event; they were pleased to see that their hard work and planning had paid off. “Our goal was to remind people that we need to be more aware of our

own environment in ways that will stay with them, and it seems we have accomplished that. When students participated in the Recycling Roulette, they may have done it just to get candy, but at the same time they also learned about the different waste bins and what goes in them,” said EcoTeam President Tazik Shahjahan.

Beyond Eco-Ex, EcoTeam is planning other eco-friendly initiatives this year, including the Trashion Show, where students are challenged to design an outfit made completely from recycled materials such as CDs, paper cups, and aluminum foil. In addition, the club plans to host an Eco Movie Screening, where a movie related to environmental issues will be shown.

Based on the success of the two days of the exhibition, these future initiatives are sure to receive positive word-of-mouth advertising from students and attract an even larger crowd than was seen at Eco-Ex, which left students empowered and prepared to make their school and the world a better place.

Garneau Spreads Kindness in the Café

by EVELYN JIANG

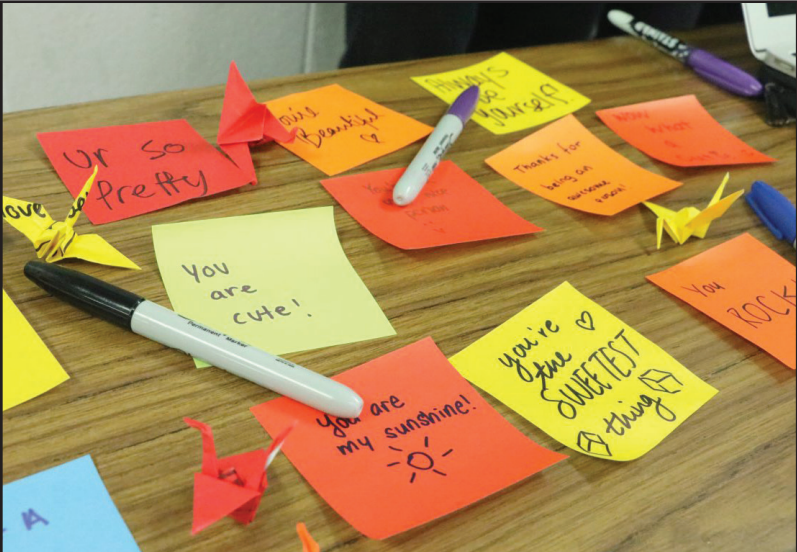


Photo: Jenny Bai

On 30 November 2018, students flooded into the cafeteria at lunch and were greeted by the Kindness Café booth set up along the side. The Kindness Café is an annual event held by Undercover Kindness, through which students can express their gratitude and spread kindness.

MGCI Undercover Kindness was founded in 2013, and runs a multitude of campaigns and events. Since its founding, Undercover Kindness has grown significantly, and with it the number of projects it has undertaken. The club has earned positive recognition beyond school walls, including receiving the 2017 Class Act Award alongside a grant of \$6 000 USD for their hard work in spreading kindness through small but meaningful acts. The money has helped them fund large-scale projects, such as murals in the cafeteria.

“We work towards a supportive school environment in which everyone has mutual respect for each other,” said Larissa Long, a member of the club. “We want to do this through little acts of kindness that can make someone else’s day.”

The Kindness Café is the largest event that Undercover Kindness organizes. “It’s just to make people happier, especially during stressful times,” said Caryn Qian, the president of the club. “I hope that students take inspiration from us and realize that all it takes is a moment to stop and say something nice to make somebody else’s day,” she added.

Through the Kindness Café, students sent thoughtful, supportive messages to others in the school. Many chose to write

inspirational messages on sticky notes, which will be stuck on student lockers later in the year, as well as messages to teachers, which will be distributed before the winter holidays. Undercover Kindness also collected compliments on pieces of origami paper, which will eventually be folded into paper cranes and displayed in the galleria. Students could also send compliments to specific MGCI students or teachers by submitting to the online Undercover Compliments Garneau page. All the compliments were sent anonymously in hopes of spreading kindness “undercover.” As an added bonus for participants, Undercover Kindness prepared an assortment of sweet treats, ranging from glazed donuts to sugarbread cookies, and offered them to participating students.

The Kindness Café was received extremely well by its participants. Many appreciated the simple opportunity to brighten another person’s day. “It was well organized and the snacks were also really good,” said Shokria Ameri, a Grade 9 student. “Students were really happy to participate, and the organizers were very nice.” She added that the event could have been promoted more beforehand to attract more students. Advertising the Kindness Café through morning announcements, social media, and posters would have made the event more successful, she said. Even so, this year’s Kindness Café was the most successful so far, and the event will undoubtedly continue to grow in future years.

Cougars Climb for United Way

by EVAN WOO

Fourteen MGCI students caught the sunrise on the top of Canada’s tallest building, the CN Tower, after climbing up its 1 776 steps in the early morning of 24 November 2018.

“It was so rewarding to be at the top after a hard climb. The view was worth every single step,” said Grade 9 student Kelly Wang.

The CN Tower Climb, officially called UP2018 this year, is a charity event hosted by United Way Greater Toronto, an organization that supports social services, invests in communities, and fights local poverty in the Greater Toronto Area. Raising over 1.5 million dollars, about four-thousand people across Toronto participated in the climb this year. The event aims to promote school spirit, provide an opportunity for students from different grades to bond, and give students the chance to make an impact in their community. MGCI has taken part in this annual event for many years; for the second year in a row, the school’s delegation was captained by Grade 11 student Laura Lu.

Earlier this year in October, an information session was held for students interested in the climb. However, many of those students did not end up participating in the event, likely due to the minimum fifty dollars that needed to be fundraised. Nonetheless, the school team raised \$1 340 through door-to-door donations, online pledges, and in-person donations, meeting its goal. It was also aided by several students who helped fundraise, but did not take part in the climb.

Students gathered at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre (MTCC) at 7:00 am and travelled to the CN Tower for the climb shortly after. Although schools could decide when to climb between 6:00 and 10:00 am, MGCI climbed early to beat the crowd that would gather later in the morning.

Climbing up the CN Tower was not an easy feat. Grade 10 student Sigil Wen de-

scribed his experience climbing, saying, “It was tiring. I had climbed the tower last year, so I thought I knew what I was going to expect, but I was wrong. But people encouraged one another and it motivated all of us to keep going.” Although participants could climb at whatever pace they wished, they were timed using electronic wristbands and were encouraged to climb as fast as they could. Some took on the challenge and had impressive results. MGCI’s Austin Lin climbed to the top in an incredible thirteen minutes and came in seventeenth among the morning’s competitors, while Jeffrey Qiu climbed up in thirteen minutes and twenty-two seconds, coming in twenty-seventh place.

The top of the tower was filled with excitement and joy, as climbers were given an opportunity to enjoy the view and cool down before taking the elevator back down. Upon returning to the MTCC, participants were able to take photos, get a t-shirt, and celebrate their accomplishments. Grade 11 student Eric Zhao, who participated in the

climb, said, “Climbing the CN Tower isn’t something that you get a chance to do very often, and I thought it was a good way to experience something fun and unique while supporting a great cause. I’ve been to the CN Tower Climb almost every year since Grade 5, and it’s almost become a tradition to attend every year. I’m sure I’ll be going again in future years.”

The next United Way climb will be held on 2 November 2019. Laura looks forward to seeing more climbers, saying, “I hope everyone gives it a shot at least once in their high school life.”

The Reckoner would like to recognize the following students for their efforts in participating and fundraising for this event: Laura Lu, Gabriel Cassidy, Josephine Davey-Young, Anirudh Goel, Jessica Guo, Jacqueline Huo, Evelyn Jiang, Aimee Li, Larissa Long, Max Lu, Jeffrey Qiu, Kelly Wang, Sigil Wen, Evan Woo, Justin Ye, Wendi Zhang, and Eric Zhao.



Photo: Evan Woo

Battling Bots

ROBOTICS
Continued from P1

The preliminary round saw the five MGCI teams and one team from another school wrestling with each other on the black Sumo ring.

As the matches continued, teams raced back and forth between their tables and the competition space, changing batteries, modifying code, and rebuilding their robots before the start of their next match.

Team 4 qualified for the semifinals, coming in fourth place with a total of 62.5 points. Team 1 finished eighteenth place, just two places below the minimum for semifinals. Team 5 came in twenty-eighth place with 42.1 points, and Team 2 scored 29.7 points finishing in forty-eighth place. Team 3 was one place below Team 2 with 29.1 points.

In the semifinals, Team 4 battled with seven other semifinalists in seven rounds,

knocking out three competitors, avoiding heavy conflicts, and crossing the green ramp three times. The team swept all rounds with a total score of 26.5 points, which brought it to first place on the leaderboard.

In the finals, the team performed extraordinarily well, wrestling their way through competitors and knocking out several competitors as well as accumulating many points.

For the first time in the competition’s history, two teams tied for first place, with Marc Garneau Collegiate Institute and St. Joseph Secondary School both being crowned as winners of 2018 UOIT Sumobots: King of the Hill Competition.

Garneau’s winning team included Akil Miki Huang, Elias Kountouris, Aryan Misra, Serena Poonawalla, Josh Saha, Andrew Wu,

Joseph Xiao, and Joshua Xiao.

Akil Miki Huang, a member of Team 4 and an MGCI Robotics Club executive, said, “From my experience in robotics club, both last year as a member and this year as an executive, I really do believe that UOIT 2018 was really the competition that solidified our esprit-du-corps as a club.”

Many members were thrilled with the results this year and hoped to achieve more in the future.

“I think that the club has grown rapidly in the past few years,” said Andrew Li, a senior club executive and member of MGCI Team 5. “This year’s results have undoubtedly exceeded everyone’s expectations, and I’m eager to see where the team will progress in the future.”



EDITORIAL

TO HEAL A KILLER

by ANGELA PANG

Three months ago, convicted murderer Terri-Lynne McClintic was transferred to an Indigenous healing lodge, after serving eight years of her life sentence in the Grand Valley Institution for Women. The Correctional Service of Canada had granted her request, oblivious to the imminent media frenzy. Her transfer to Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge—an alternative prison system that practices Indigenous values and customs in order to lower recidivism rates—sparked widespread outrage amongst Canadians. Many argue that child killers like her shouldn’t be given these special accommodations, and that McClintic’s heinous crimes deserve—and only should deserve—a permanent stay in a maximum security prison. Indeed, the horrific nature of McClintic’s involvement in the 2009 murder of eight-year-old Tori Stafford should enrage all of us, but does it necessarily mean her presence in a healing lodge should do the same?

The most prevalent argument made against the transfer is that Indigenous healing lodges are too comfortable and offer security measures that would be inadequate for a convicted child killer. Notably, Andrew Scheer, the leader of the Conservative Party, expressed his disgust at McClintic being eligible to transfer to a healing lodge, and said that the Liberals should ensure she is “behind bars” instead. However, the reality is that modern prison systems are not that different from Indigenous healing lodges in terms of the level of accommodation and security. Prisons are no longer dark dungeons where prisoners are kept behind steel bars at all times—they offer workshops and job opportunities for inmates as well. Healing lodges are no places of luxury either. Despite the name, inmates still adhere to strict schedules, and are required to perform chores and attend rehabilitative programs. Whether you believe that is already too lenient for offenders like McClintic is irrelevant to

the issue at hand—the two prison systems are similar in their treatment of inmates, so her transfer from one to another shouldn’t be as big of a deal as it is made out to be.

In addition, the Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge offers the same level of security that McClintic’s previous institution had. Though lacking barbed wire, the healing lodge has eighty-nine armed security guards for its sixty prisoners—much higher than the nationwide average of three inmates per correctional officer [1]. What’s more, McClintic is classified as a medium-security prisoner, so a medium-security healing lodge should be able to both accommodate her and ensure that the surrounding community is safe. Healing lodges are going to be different from what the public imagine prisons to be, but that doesn’t mean they’re not as adequate in protecting communities and regulating inmates as traditional prison systems.

Since both systems are so similar, some may ask—why bother transferring McClintic at all? Well, although both should appease the public’s sense of justice and safety concerns, the difference is rooted in the inmates’ experience. Healing lodges have been shown to drastically lower recidivism rates by as much as 50% for Indigenous inmates [2], so this could be what McClintic needs in order to address her violent past and further her education to ease her eventual transition back into society. At the healing lodge, inmates are treated as members of the community and are motivated to participate in the community by means of chores and healing workshops. For an individual like McClintic, who has been a drug user since she was eight, the healing lodges could be a way for her to finally come to terms with her past and move on to a better future.

Furthermore, it’s not just McClintic’s rehabilitation that’s up for improvement—the safety of the prison guards

and the other inmates is as well. In 2012, McClintic was accused of physically assaulting another inmate—evidence that the traditional prison system isn’t working for her or anyone else in her vicinity [3]. The healing lodge’s independent living format and vocational training programs would provide a much needed, much less violent outlet for her grudges, and would actually help keep those around her safe. Although there is not definitive proof that McClintic would miraculously improve in a healing lodge, it is clear that it would be a much better alternative to the current system.

If you’re someone like Andrew Scheer, however, and you believe that McClintic should still be punished for her actions in a traditional prison, the welfare of murderers and inmates like McClintic probably won’t be of much interest to you. Thus, it may surprise you to learn that it would be in your best interest, and the best interests of the general public, to have McClintic transferred to a healing lodge. Even though she is currently serving a life sentence, life sentences in the Canadian justice system don’t mean that the prisoner stays in prison for life. More than 40% of those sentenced to life in prison are eventually released back into society [4]. McClintic would’ve been eligible for parole in six years, and it is fairly likely that she will be rejoining society later on. So now, for those of you who ask what is the point in rehabilitating a murderer, the real question is: What kind of person would you rather have rejoin society? Would you rather have a community member that spent decades in a traditional prison with little access to education and a history of abuse, or one that was able to learn important life skills through an Indigenous healing lodge? Would you feel safer in your community with a murderer who has spent their years enduring more punishment or one that was given an opportunity at reform? Everyone, regard-



Illustration: Sophie Yang

less of the repulsion they feel against “helping prisoners”, would choose the latter. The reality is that we can’t keep prisoners locked up forever—one way or another they are going to rejoin society, and it is up to society to craft a prison system that ensures that they don’t re-offend when they do. If healing lodges could potentially prevent McClintic from committing other crimes, then it would be certainly worth the transfer.

No matter how counterintuitive it may be to teach child murderers life skills or to put them in more progressive prison systems, it is the best option for not only the inmate, but also for the safety of society as a whole. Indeed, McClintic has committed heinous crimes in the past, and no one is denying that she should face severe consequences. However, the anger that we feel towards her actions shouldn’t blind us in making the right decisions. Yes, our satisfac-

tion of revenge would be fulfilled if we forced her to stay in a traditional prison system—but her chances at recidivism—and with it, our long term hope for a safe society—would be compromised. It’s time we set our preconceived notion of traditional punishment aside, and place her in an environment that will benefit both her and society. ■

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This Title is **BAD**, just like **PRESTO**

by CONNER LEE



Illustration: Amy Chen

In June 2007, the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) rolled out the revolutionary proposal of the Presto card. With Presto, the world was to become a beautiful paradise without fare evasion. The TTC dreamed—Toronto dreamed too—that these investments would solve the TTC’s spending deficit and lower its ridiculous fares. Yet, instead of following in the footsteps of successful transit systems in Asia or Europe, the TTC just couldn’t resist spending an extra billion dollars to add their own flair, a flair that simply doesn’t work. Torontonians now suffer from the consequences of broken down gates, incomplete coverage, and simple design flaws.

Presto gates are well known for their visually appealing but flimsy design, which makes them prone to both mechanical and electronic errors. Travellers thoroughly enjoy the two-second delay between tap-

ping their cards and the door opening offering them the unique opportunity of slamming into gates. The delicate motors are also known to break, causing the gates to go out of commission. These damages could have been mitigated if doors for entering and exiting were separated, but the almighty designers of Presto decreed that entrances and exits must use the same door—after all, how else would travellers bump into each other and create a cacophony?

The mediocre software Metrolinx provides further annoyance. The TTC decided that monitoring all registered cards, payment of fare, and status of Presto gates on the same software is a good idea. The 1.8 million pesky daily travellers never fail to overload the system during rush hour. Common bug reports include gates refusing to open, not accepting payment, or showing a big red ‘X’. This would have

been acceptable if it was immediately addressed by the TTC when it was first discovered in 2016. Instead, in accordance with Torontonians traditions, progressive changes to government-run organizations must be delayed for at least two years, no matter the daily disruptions and resulting public annoyances.

Previously, transfers were valid for the whole day due to a lack of an effective time tracking system, and riders abused this power to the best of their abilities. Presto set out to tackle this issue by using electronic data to keep track of transfers, but it failed miserably. The TTC made the faulty assumption that riders would bother to pay at all, after all, only under those conditions could transfers be applied properly. With the arrival of Presto gates and gatekeeper removed from the station, riders received the perfect opportunity to demonstrate their creativity in fare evasion—be it by charging through gates after they are opened by another person, jumping over the Presto gate that has a grand height of ninety centimeters, or walking through an empty space that the TTC thought would be wise not to patch up. It wasn’t as if the TTC gave people a choice—major subway stations no longer have full support for tickets and tokens; it often becomes necessary to walk several hundred metres just to find the one entrance that allows payment without Presto card. With the ridiculous circumstances that the Presto card presents, it became inevitable that riders cheat fares as they see fit.

The Presto card is notoriously unreliable and fails to achieve any of the goals the TTC stated it would. Convenience is in no way increased when gates are constantly out of service and not maintained. The hope that deficits would be addressed also failed from the faulty design and lack of time for all riders to transition to Presto cards. Once a beautiful and fantastical idea, Presto cards are now merely victims of TTC’s terrible implementation. ■

Overlooking Painful Past

ART AND ARTIST

Continued from P1

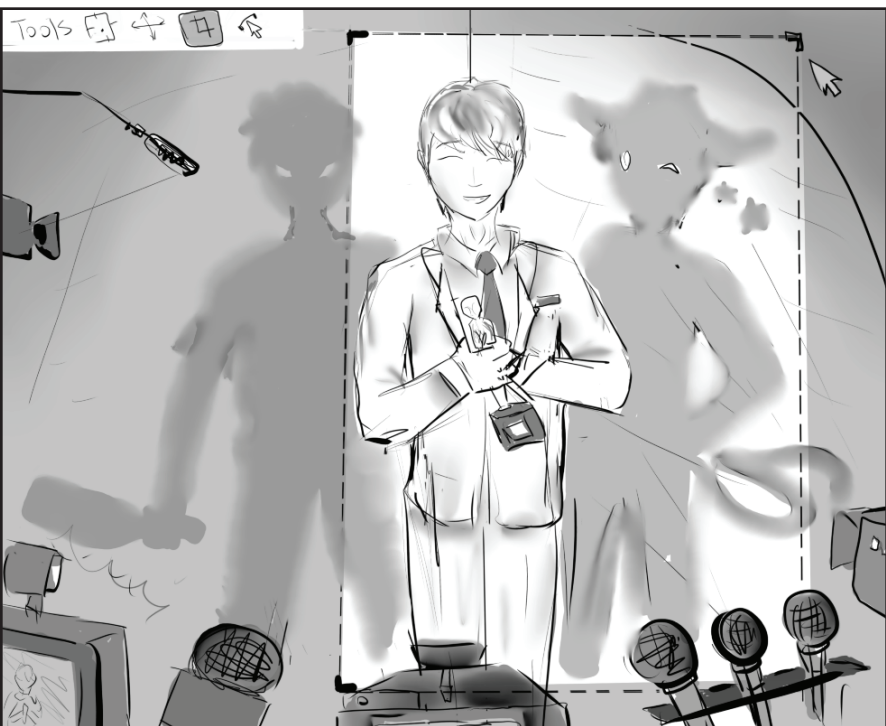


Illustration: Zoe Cheng

A producer’s personal life has much to do with the portrayal of narratives and stories in their works: different circumstances in their life inevitably leak their way into the art. We cannot look at Weinstein’s work without questioning his treatment of female leads in his works. We cannot watch lengthy shots of Kevin Spacey on screen without our conscience screaming to turn it off. We cannot listen to Hedley without being reminded of the lead singer’s recent arrest. How can we see art at face value, when their actions tarnish what it means to us? It is imperative that the personal life and values of the artists be examined alongside their work, especially when it is blatantly obvious that what they produce is a reflection of their beliefs and characteristics.

Perpetrators are not the only ones who have a hand in producing the work. The goal of this movement is not to harm the innocent creators—it is to create a more accountable and responsible industry. If the most powerful in the field—the directors, producers, and hiring managers of the industry—were more inclined to align their works with the values of accountability and justice, the criminals at the core of the issue would be the ones bearing the brunt of the consequences, not the innocent creatives hooked as bycatch. The perpetrators would be rightfully shunned, banned from the creative spaces that have more to offer without them in it. To let criminals continue in the industry unscathed would be injustice in its rawest form; it would taint the work of other talented individuals with a distasteful guilt. ■



To Unify or to Divide?

OP-ED by NELSON LEE

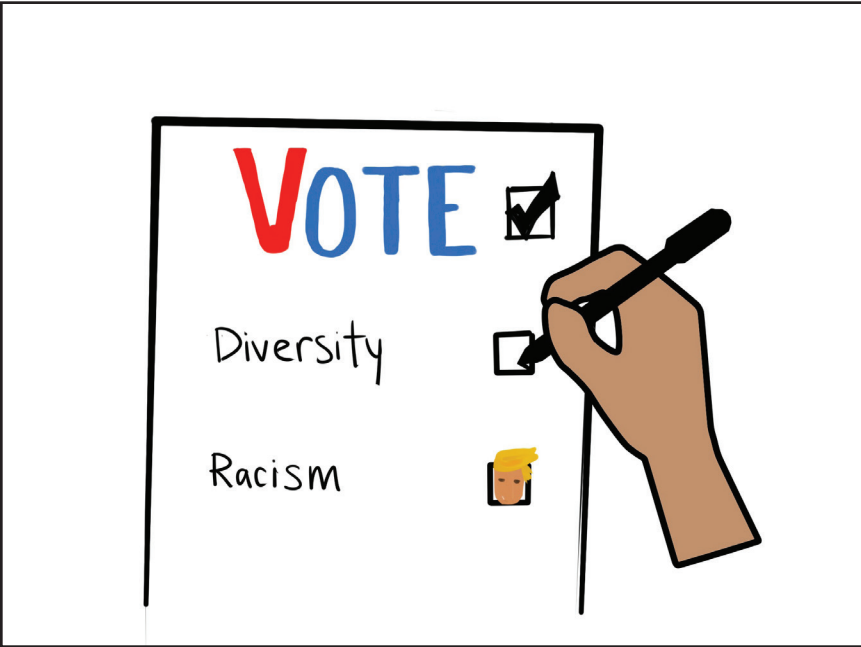


Illustration: Molly Yu

On 16 June 2015, Donald J. Trump started his US presidential campaign by alienating a significant portion of the electorate, saying, “[Mexicans are] bringing drugs, they’re bringing crime, they’re rapists.” Despite many saying that such narrative marked the ridiculousness and the death of the campaign—before it really started, Trump railed on, promising to build a grand wall dividing the US border with Mexico to keep aliens out. It was no surprise then that on election day, his competitor Hillary Clinton won 66% of the Latino vote [1].

Thanks to previous election results and his continued attitude towards Mexico, the idea of Donald Trump winning the Latino vote in the future seems ludicrous, but it is possible. For the President to win the Latino vote, he needs to change how Latinos perceive him. So how would the President put himself in a favourable light?

The President should avoid lumping Latinos in one group, and promote a stronger border without offending. He should talk about his economic successes for Latinos as President. He should become more nuanced on his rhetoric and phrasing on illegal migrants.

Currently, President Trump lumps law-abiding Latino citizens and permanent residents all under the same umbrella as illegal immigrants and gang members. By addressing the different groups of Latinos under one term, he alienates Latino immigrants who are American citizens—the only group of Latinos that vote in US elections.

The President may lose some votes from extreme anti-immigrant voters, but generally, this change in messaging would drum up more support for Trump. Most Trump voters already rally behind his idea to secure the border. Reducing the number of illegal border crossings will also curb illegal drug trafficking revenue from cross-border gangs and create the perception of a strong and secure southern border. The President’s “tough on crime” rhetoric would win.

To engage Latin-Americans in his cause, the President should call upon law-abiding Latino citizens to help him keep the border secure and safe. This may seem counterintuitive at first, but there are many reasons why Latinos may want a stronger border. Many Latin-American citizens came to America to escape troubles in their home countries.

People, especially families, flee to America to escape authoritarian regimes or run away from unjust persecution. In one story reported in National Geographic, Espana, the father of a two-year-old child, was willing to risk separation at the border than to return to Honduras and face a likely death from criminals and gang members [2]. Espana’s story is similar to countless other stories of asylum seekers from Cen-

tral America’s Northern Triangle of Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador. These countries have significant gang populations, and not coincidentally, among the highest murder rates in the world.

Citizens who live in border states would appreciate the reduction of potential crime and criminals entering their neighbourhoods and communities. Like all families, Latino families wish to raise their children in safe environments. Fewer gang members crossing the border has clear benefits: less crime, fewer drugs, and less violence. Safe communities offer stability and opportunity; moreover, it prevents children from getting caught in cycles of poverty or crime.

The President’s other selling point is the economy. The majority of Latinos are in the working class, meaning many would be open to mitigating the cycle of poverty, an opportunity that the President could and should utilize. Already, the President has some numbers to give him credibility in the Latino community. Rasmussen Reports states that the President’s economic policies have driven down unemployment for Latino non-college graduates to its lowest level since the early 1970s. Non-managerial wages have also increased 2.7% in the last year. The Bureau of Economic Analysis reports that over 3.6 million Americans have been lifted off of food stamps since Trump was elected [3]. Though voters may not forgive his early rhetoric, if Trump can further help improve the economic lives of Latinos—and advertise it—Latino families and voters would thank them in votes [3].

Repeating these figures enough times will change the public’s view on the President’s handling of the economy. The wage growth and reduced unemployment are noticeably felt in Latino communities. Also, the general American electorate—and Latino voters—will not remember that the President’s economic successes were a result of President Obama’s economic policies. The optics would be in the President’s favour. President Trump, the “New York businessman,” made all these economic gains possible. He can also counter the Democratic Party’s promises and platform of creating economic opportunities for the disadvantaged and claim that he too, can help out minorities by creating jobs and opportunities.

Another factor worth playing up is how the President’s tax cuts help out Latino businesses. Latinos are the most entrepreneurial demographic in the United States. The United States Census Bureau reports that the number of US businesses owned by Latinos grew by over one million firms from 2007 to 2012 [4]. The President’s tax cut has helped generate more revenue for these small businesses, a fact that the President should tout.

However, this evaluation of the President and how he can win the Latino vote has one major flaw: we referred to Latinos as one large, homogenous group. Keep in mind Latino voters are not single-issue voters. They do not vote as a bloc just based on immigration; the economy, healthcare, and jobs are often much more critical issues. It is clear to distinguish between different groups of Latinos: Mexicans, Central Americans, Caribbeans, Cubans, South Americans and more. There are further distinctions and differences within each group. Thus, this plan would not be as effective on some Latino groups compared to others.

The President would need to continuously repeat the main pillars to promote this plan effectively. Not only will this convince Latino voters to vote for him, but consistently erode his current stance on Latinos. During his re-election campaign, the President should also highlight this message when in border states. This will maximize the number of Latino votes he gets.

However, the President is very unlikely to promote this message in 2020. When campaigning for the 2018 midterm elections, the President used fear-mongering tactics instead of unifying Americans to win over supporters. He campaigned on the angst of “immigrants pouring over the border” and a caravan of poor people marching to cross the US border. He has deployed over fifteen thousand troops on the border to stop Central American asylum seekers from legally entering the United States. Emboldened by the sweeping victory of candidates he campaigned for, it is likely the President will continue his fear-driven message to win over non-Latino voters because it riles up his base.

His rhetoric will not help the Republican Party in the future; in fact, it may actually hurt them. America’s demographics are changing. Key Republican states like Arizona or Texas are becoming more diverse, progressive, and inclusive. America is projected to become a minority-majority country by 2045, meaning that visible minorities would be the majority [6]. The President’s key voting base: white, uneducated, evangelical male voters is shrinking. When the President slowly disappears from the national stage in 2020 or 2024, how will the Republican Party win elections and retain power?

It is time for the President to include rather than to divide, not only to boost his chances of winning, but also to set America back on track to being a diverse nation where minorities and Latinos can enjoy the American Dream. ■

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Youth Change Climate Activism

by DEREK NGUYEN

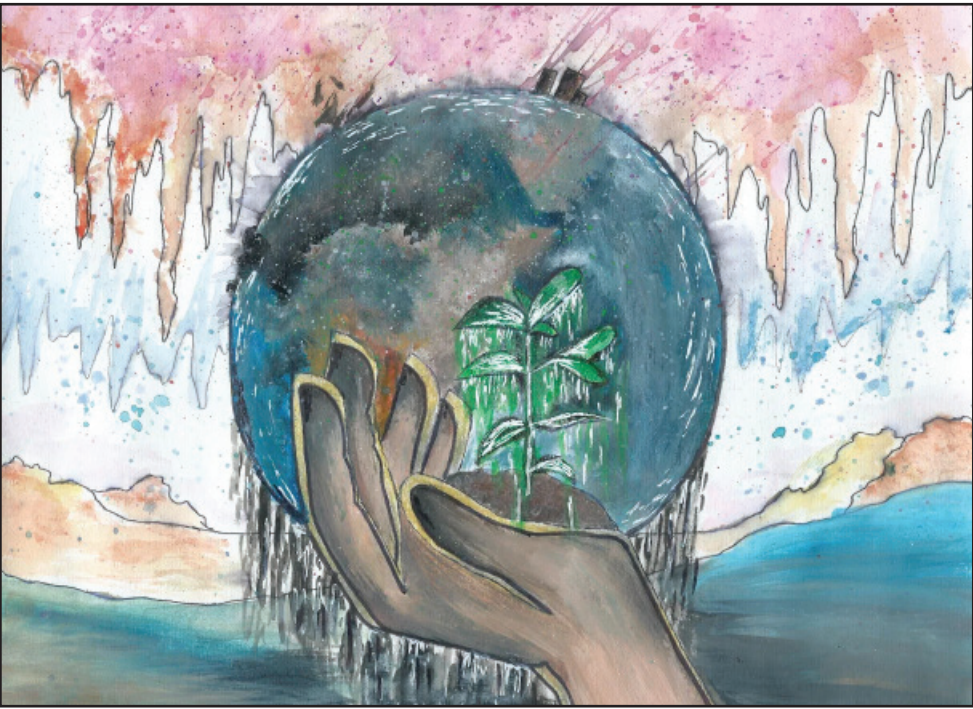


Illustration: Lauren Liu

On 30 November 2018, an estimated eight thousand students from over two hundred schools across Sydney boycotted school in protest of the Australian government’s inaction with regards to climate change. Kindergarteners and high school seniors alike came out to demand change from their government [1].

The Adani Carmichael coal mine, expected to be one of the largest mines in the world, was predicted to produce an estimated sixty million tons of coal each year, and would be operational for decades. The Adani Corporation requested a loan of \$1 billion AUD from the Australian government to fund their project. In response to months of protesting from citizens, the Adani Corporation has opted to continue the project through their own financial resources, and reduced the current annual coal production to ten million tons, but with the caveat that it would gradually be bumped up to a maximum of 27.5 million tons [2]. However, it is not enough to satisfy the young activists of climate change.

Sydney’s movement was developed and planned by fourteen-year-old Jean Hinchcliffe, who was inspired by similar protests organized by fourteen-year-olds Milou Albrecht and Harriet O’Shea in the state of Victoria. Prior to the initial protest, the two highschool students had already tried to gain attention from the federal government through various means, including formal letters in an effort to abolish coal mining, and convert completely to renewable energy. When they saw no progress, they knew they had to switch to more drastic means [3]. The Sydney protesters demanded that the federal government deny the mining of both coal and gas and have Australia completely sustained by renewable sources of energy by 2030 [4].

Climate change is not just an issue in Australia. Globally, the burning of fossil fuels has produced carbon emissions of over nine gigatons, and in 2017 this figure rose by 1.4% despite efforts to mitigate climate change. Total carbon emissions are projected to rise even further in 2018. For years, the world had been on the road of improvement, with huge ambitions such as the Paris Climate Agreement, but has since lost momentum [5]. With the US, the second biggest contributor to climate change, pulling out of the agreement and continued fossil fuel extraction, we are headed for a world of sporadic temperature, weather, and natural disasters.

Canada is no saint when it comes to climate change either.

In 2016, Canada as a country received an environmental grade of “D”, ranking fourteenth out of sixteen countries, above only the US and Australia. The annual Canadian citizen’s carbon emissions of 20.7 tons per capita is extremely high compared to the global aver-

age of a four tons [6]. The oil sands of Alberta are especially devastating to the environment, contaminating both air and water quality. Only 17.4% of Canada’s energy comes from renewable energy sources, including hydroelectric and biomass, both of which can damage the environment. Even though scientists have been aware of climate change since the 1800s, almost 33% of the Canadian population does not believe that climate change can be attributed to humans or industrial activity [7].

The issue of climate change is a global one. Many people believe that the consequences of climate change are something of the distant future, but in fact, changes in our environment are destroying lives in the present. Rising sea levels have displaced countless coastal communities, and will continue to do so. Hurricanes, formed from changes in air currents that devastate entire towns and cities, are growing in frequency. Forest fires, initiated by dry hot weather, not only endanger lives, but increase carbon emissions themselves when they burn, creating a vicious cycle. Unfortunately, the impoverished communities that contribute the least to climate change are both the least prepared and the most affected by the ambitions of more developed countries. Misleading information from fossil fuel corporations deceives the public into believing that climate change is false, often supported by politicians who benefit from the production of fossil fuels.

More youth in Canada need to follow Hinchcliffe’s initiative and challenge current federal standards, as climate change will not wait for the students of today to become adults. Climate change awareness is no longer enough, and huge changes must be made to our current energy system. It is both unethical and impractical for Canada to remain a fossil fuel reliant entity. Those who will be affected the most in the upcoming years of climate change—the younger population—must take the initiative to repel the efforts of fossil fuel corporations to ensure safety or their future. ■

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of Marc Garneau C.I.

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LIFE

The Ballerina

by MICHELLE WANG

It sounded like birds chirping
their mellow tunes, at the break of dawn;
like my mother’s slender fingers
that used to dance over the piano keys,
so swift and daintily
that I could never catch
her fingertips, gracing
the glossy white and black surface.

Her frilly tutu glistened
with fairy dust from the sunrays
that shone, through the sheer drapes
and glinted off the twirling skirt,
scattering magic across
the stark white walls.

It almost seemed like it was never-ending;
like the petite ballerina poised upon
the wooden box, would never stop spinning;
never stop smiling.

But slowly, the crisp chimes began to fade away
and the music stopped playing.
The birds ceased to chirp their sad tunes;
the keys stopped dancing
with every stroke, of my mother’s hands.
The magic disappeared, replaced
by a still nothingness.

And still, the fragile ballerina kept her smile
with her arms high above her head,
her thin fingers still touching
at the very very tip
even though
she stopped twirling.

The sunlight still shone through the window. ■



Illustration: Helen Sun

A CAN OF PAINT

CRIMINAL
Continued from P1

In that moment, time stopped. I looked around. The profile of the city outside the window, the image inside my head, and the colour of the sky all came together in this gorgeous mental collage of modern art. This was going to be my magnum opus; I could feel it. I’m certain I was grinning like a psycho, but I didn’t care. There was too much dopamine rushing through my head for me to be concerned about anything else. I closed my eyes and inhaled, deeply. Time for a relapse.

I waited ‘till 11:00 that night to exit the apartment through my bedroom window. We were on the third floor, but fortunately, I had a balcony. I had all the hand- and foot-holds memorized by now. Very soon, I was standing on the roof. Now, it was time to survey my surroundings. I needed a blank wall that wasn’t easily visible, but still accessible. I spent some time navigating, scouting for a feasible candidate. No dice. There would probably be more options at ground-level. It was riskier, but for my idea, it was worth it. My eyes had acclimated well to the dark at this point, but the streetlights on the roads were troublesome. In no more than five minutes, I spotted a wall at the end of an alleyway that was perfect for my piece. The concrete barrier was a hundred metres away, give or take. I unzipped my bag and unsheathed my can of grey spray-paint in preparation.

In my peripheral vision, I caught blue light. Before I could turn around, I heard the noise that made my stomach drop to my knees. Over the wailing of the siren, I heard the voice of an officer.

“Drop the gun.”

Hold up. This was a can of paint, not a fire-arm. I turned around to show the cop that I posed no real threat. But the police car headlights were turned off. Now, the only illumination on the scene was from the streetlights behind me. As I held the can towards the officer, who stood thirty metres away, I heard his voice again.

“This is your last warning. Drop the gun.” His voice was quivering. In a flash of revelation, I pictured myself back in World History class. The light would shine through the window behind us, and we couldn’t see the board. This cop couldn’t see me. In a thoughtless gesture of surrender, I reached to unzip my bag and reveal my stash of paint cans. As my finger touched the aluminum zipper and

it glinted in the warmth of the streetlight, a loud sound rang out through the alley.

Pop.
I looked down. There was a hole in my stomach.
Pop.
A hole in my ribcage.
Damn. ■



Illustration: Amy Chen

White Walls

by HARI ILANGOMARAN

People talk about hospitals, and they talk about people getting better, or people not getting better. They talk about the doctors that save lives, they talk about the nurses that help, they talk about the monitors and the needles and the tools. But what they don’t talk about, what’s arguably worse than the getting better or getting worse—what kills not the body but the soul—is the waiting room.

It is here that Lillian finds herself, late one December evening. When she had first arrived, the snow had just begun to fall; it was graceful, quiet. Now, she looks outside and sees a ferocious blizzard: the wind is whistling under the glass doors of the building, against which a few inches of white are stacked.

Lillian taps her armrest impatiently, crossing her legs this way and that. Hours have passed and her memory of the night has derailed from chronological events to fragmented feelings.

“Honey, I’m home,” she calls, hanging her keys on their designated hook. Roxy is uncharacteristically docile, there’s no reply from Olivia, and Lillian knows something is wrong.

“Ma’am?”

Her thoughts are interrupted by a nurse standing over her. “Follow me please.”

The living room is empty. The kitchen is empty. The bathroom is empty. As she makes her way to her bedroom, the ringing in Lillian’s ears gets louder. She lifts her burning palm to the doorknob and turns it.

Lillian jumps to her feet. “How is she?” She follows the woman down a shiny white hallway, and the nurse glances at that clipboard that all nurses seem to have. She scans it down to the bottom, then looks up at Lillian and smiles weakly. “You’re going to be okay.”

The window is wide open, the ceiling fan is on, and the white sheets have been stripped off of the queen bed. Lillian’s girlfriend lies, not on the spring mattress, but on the carpeted floor, pale and unconscious.

They’ve arrived at a door. In the next room, Lillian can hear crying. It sounds like

Liv; Lillian knows it well from all the rom-coms they had watched together. Her favourite, *The Notebook*, and the memories attached to it visit her now:

Olivia sniffles loudly and buries her nose in her girlfriend’s neck. “Liv, you already know how this is going to end,” Lillian sighs, putting her arm around her. “Yeah, but it doesn’t make it any happier! Look at him, he’s all alone!”

Lillian rolls her eyes, smiling. “Babe, they get back together.” “Yeah, but it’s still -”

Then she sits upright, eyes wide. “There’s a dog,” she mutters. “I’ve never seen that before. How could I have missed that?” She muses for a second, and Lillian notes a familiar coy look in her eye. Liv turns to her and grabs her hand. “Let’s get a dog together.”

She wonders vaguely if the nurse has brought her to the wrong room, but goes in anyway. It looks like most hospital rooms; there’s a bed, a monitor, a chair. But first, she notices that the walls are a fresh minty green, the same colour of Lillian and Olivia’s bedroom. Olivia had insisted they paint it her favourite colour, because it reminds her to brush her teeth every morning.

Lillian watches as Olivia picks up the paint brush; she had wanted to make the first brush stroke, and now she is standing in front of the back wall in their bedroom, poised to do it. She was going to make a clean line right beside the bedroom window, but then she stops. “Lil, come here.”

Olivia grabs her girlfriend’s hand and puts it against her own on the paint brush. “Let’s do it together.” Lillian rolls her eyes; Liv was so sappy sometimes.

Now Liv stares at the wall again, wondering where to begin. Lillian sees her opportunity and seizes it—she flicks a green splatter of paint on the wall, some of it hitting the girls, some of it hitting the white-sheeted floor.

Olivia starts laughing—Roxy has been hit with the paint as well, and there’s a bit right on the end of her nose. “Take our picture,” she says, scooping up the puppy. “This is a moment I want to remember.”

But the room Lillian is in now, despite not

having been cleaned out for painting, is empty; it is void of Olivia Elizabeth Crawford.

“Where’s Olivia?” she mutters, noticing for the first time a doctor standing by the monitor. She, too, has a clipboard.

“Hi, Lillian,” the doctor says instead. “I’m going to need you to take a seat.”

As her heart thumps in her ribcage, Lillian sits down on the hospital bed. She can feel her hands become clammy and her eyesight begins to blur. She gazes at the doctor, waiting to hear the very words she dreads with every inch of her being.

“There never was an Olivia.”

Lillian is dumbstruck. *What?* Absent-mindedly, she looks past the woman in front of her to the window. The snow has stopped now. The sun is on the horizon.

“Lillian, you are a schizophrenic. You have missed a couple dosages on your medication. You’re going to need to take these.” She holds out a clear bottle with minty green pills inside.

No, no, this is unacceptable. “Who the hell do you think you are?” Lillian’s voice rises and her face turns crimson.

“Now!” calls the doctor. All of a sudden, several nurses rush in. They grab Lillian’s arms and legs while she writhes to break free. The doctor prepares a needle.

She feels a sharp pain in her upper arm. Then nothing. ■



Illustration: Christina Zhang

For Her

by TINA WEI

Once upon a time,
We would lay beneath the clouds
and I would count the stars in her eyes
glittering like diamonds on a velvet night sky.
If I could keep laughs in jars,
I would have bottled two hundred of hers.

But what happens to stars when they reach the end of their lives?
They die.

Now,
when I search her eyes for any trace of the sparkle I once cherished,
I find nothing.
The stars in her eyes have all burned themselves out,
exhausted themselves to the brink of death,

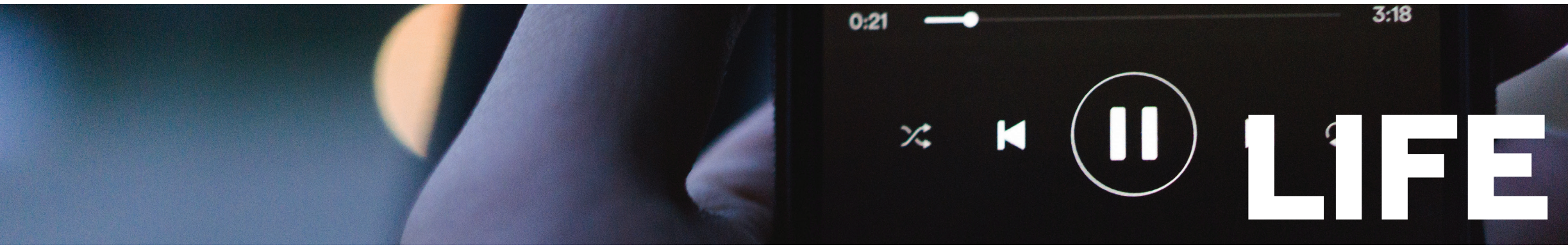
just like her.

I scream out to the sky in agony,
“May you be condemned to hell and back
for stealing the stars that made her eyes glimmer away from her.”
I vowed to tear the very heavens apart
for allowing such an offence.

I cry out in outrage
toward the ones who dared to douse her fiery spark,
“Damn your infertile minds, damn you to the hellish flames,
where your bodies may burn just like her mind
for being so indecent as to shatter the light within her.”
I promised to tear her enemies limb from limb for breaking her,
but I could do nothing about the demons in her head.

I howl in anguish at myself,
cursing myself for allowing her to destroy herself,
impaling myself
over
and over
and over
and over
on this blade of remorse and misery,
telling myself I would never atone for my wrongdoings.

But she,
despite all the battles she fought and the scars she bears;
she cradles my head in her arms
as I weep into her chest
and consoles me.
She was always there for me,
even when I could never be there for her. ■



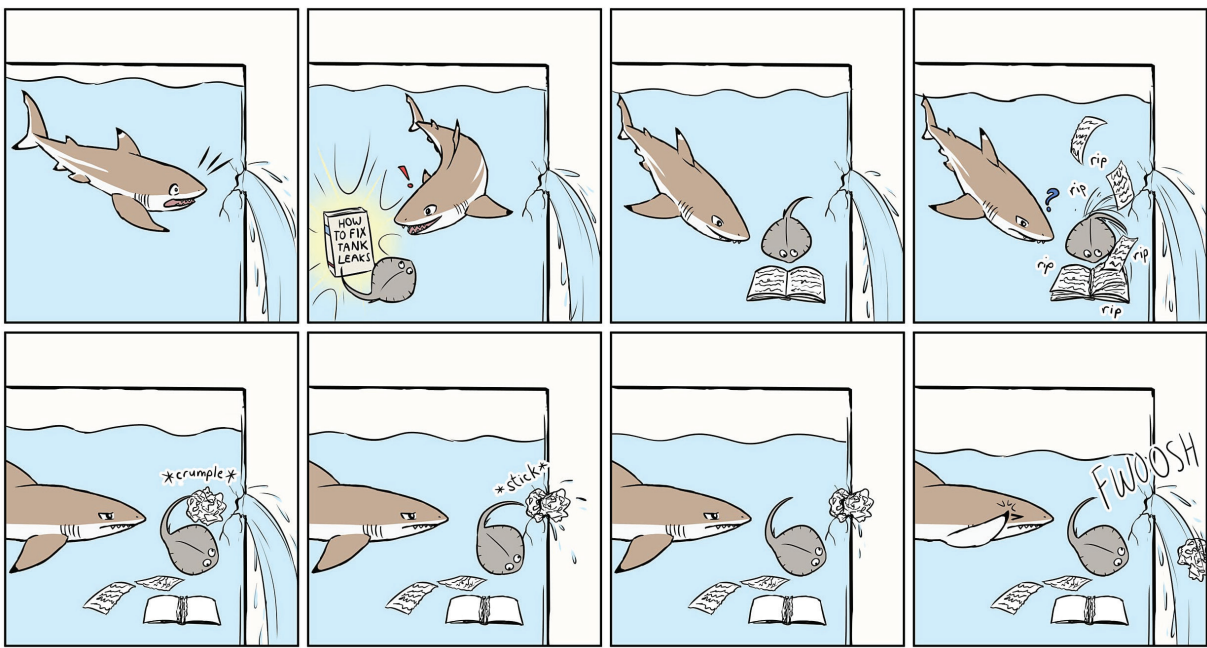
Sit Tight

by ROGER LI



HOW TO FIX TANK LEAKS

by AVA PUN



Skipping Stones

by AMY CHEN



Winter's Branches

by IKHLAS SABRY



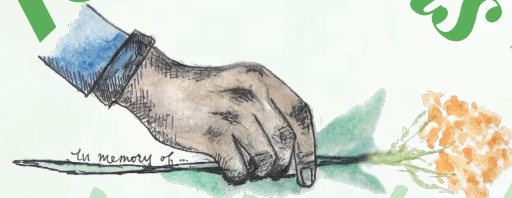
2 Minutes



January

to Midnight

10 Deaths



April

74



June

Seats

157 Years



September

D+40



November

R+2

29 Medals



February

12 SIGNIFICANT DIGITS

By: Adil Haider

Illustrations: Sheri Kim

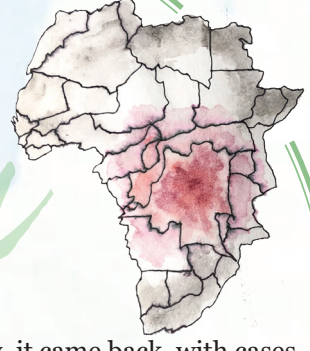
76



March

Years

421



May

Cases

25000 Killed



August

100k Orders



October

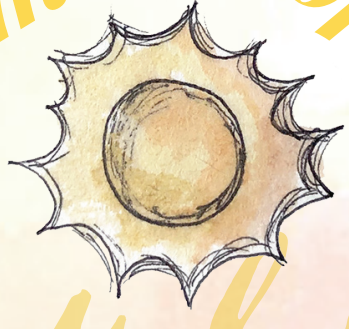
Filled

\$436M Wasted



December

Humider of 47



July

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