

Reckoner

of Marc Garneau C.I.

Admin Feature: Mr. Di Felice

by BAHIR ALI-LATIF



Photo: Angela Xu

In the fall of 2019, Marc Garneau C.I. welcomed three new administrators: Mr. Di Felice, Mr. Haid, and Ms. Papadopoulos. For this edition, Bahir Ali Latif interviewed our new principal, Mr. Di Felice.

Q: What did you do before you were a principal?

A: Well I was a vice principal obviously, before that I was head of guidance, before that I was the head of chemistry and science. I've been a chemistry teacher for many years, I've taught chemistry for almost twenty years before I became an administrator. My background is actually organic chemistry, so I was hired many years ago to teach International Baccalaureate chemistry at Victoria Park. Back in the day, I taught at Victoria Park in 1990. It was my first job actually, teaching International Baccalaureate chemistry, I very much enjoyed it. It was a very challenging but satisfying type of thing, and as you can see from my walls (pointing to a periodic table on the wall of his office), I still very much miss chemistry. I really enjoyed teaching chemistry back in those days. Before that, obviously I did, sorry I'm a biochemistry major from university. My second teachable is also math, that's where my background is. So I've been an educator for many, many years. I had other jobs obviously, but I'm not sure if you're interested in that.

Q: What made you want to become a principal?

A: That's a good question. Well I've been an administrator now for almost 15 years, and around 15 years as a teacher before that. So, I feel that I was prepared. I think becoming a principal is something like you know when you're ready to do it. So I just felt that I was prepared for the next challenge in my life. I've often said that I probably have ADHD in a lot of things and I think we are fortunate in education to reinvent ourselves every few years. So as I said, I started chemistry, then went to guidance, I became a VP, I did E-learning. It was nice that within the same framework of education, I was able to do many many different things. I never felt I was that teacher, and some people are, that could stay in one school for thirty years and teach the same thing. I needed to change every five to six years regardless. So even as a VP, I've been in four different positions in those fifteen years, so I never spent for than four to five years in any one place. Because I find it fascinating that every single school in this board is actually slightly different and does things differently, and has different kind of students, and different kind of staff, and I love that kind of learning that occurs when you meet new people and different ways of doing that. So I think that's where that came from.

Q: Was there a certain dream job that you had when you were a teen? Why?

A: So I never honestly thought I would be a teacher until my last year of university to be honest. It was never my dream to be a teacher. I don't think I really had a dream job to be honest. I was the oldest of five children. My father was a labourer, so all my father wanted was to make sure you don't become a labourer. That's what many parents want, they make sure that their kids' lives are better than theirs. I actually started university as a business major, believe it or not, and then transferred over to chemistry the second year. I knew I wanted to be a chemist at

that point. I didn't realize I would be a chemistry teacher. As a matter of fact, I did two years towards a masters and then research. I actually thought I would become a chemistry researcher, but then I really fell in love with teaching.

Q: How many years have you been a principal?

A: Six months! Principal has technically been five months, but I've been an administrator for, wait let me do the math, I think it's actually twelve years, I could be wrong though. And then eighteen years before that I was a teacher.

Q: What's your favourite part about being a principal?

A: I think my favourite part is that I can effect change. So, you know, little things that you would not be able to do as a teacher, or as a vice principal. And so for example this year, it wasn't a big thing but I thought, every grade nine student who gets a shirt for phys-ed, I said they shouldn't pay for it. I can, as the principal, make that decision, and it happens. I don't need to get anyone else's permission to do that. I think principaling now is much different than what it was ten to fifteen years ago. We kind of do something called inclusive design. We try to get parents and students and teachers into what we're doing and I find that at the end of the day, the principal can effect change, rather quickly. Being the boss kind of makes that easier!

Q: Are there any sports you enjoy playing now or used to enjoy in the past?

A: Yeah, I play hockey, I used to play soccer, but my ankles have given out on me! I play tennis. What else do I play right now? Baseball, I used to play, but I've slowed down in my old days. The only thing I still play on a regular basis is hockey actually.

Q: What is your favourite food?

A: My favourite food? Well my favourite food of all time is lasagna! I know, I feel like Garfield, but I'm Italian, I have no choice! I love pasta, I can't deny that, as you can tell by looking!

Q: What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

A: In my spare time, I actually like to catch up on documentaries on TV. I love Netflix, and I love many of the streaming services now because they very quickly allow you to see things. So I used to do it more often, but it's been more difficult more recently. I have two young children, an eight year old and a five year old daughter. So it's been harder because of that, but I would say I do a lot of watching documentaries.

Q: What do you think is different now in school as compared to when you were in high school?

A: Wow! I would say that students have more voice than ever before. I would have never imagined a student even having the ability, even the thought of saying some of the things that students say, and I don't say that in a bad way. I think students should strongly advocate on their behalf. The TDSB in the past few years has definitely had its student censuses. We have ways of measuring students and asking what they want and what they don't want and I think thirty five years ago when I was in high school that just didn't exist. And I have a sense that students

are more aware of how things happen in high school. I had no idea how to apply for university or how courses were created or that kind of stuff. It was just like going to class and getting back home. I didn't know there was anything else type of thing. I think that now students are aware, and are involved and are actively involved in what happens in the school, and that's not a bad thing, and I think that's a very good thing.

Q: What is the most difficult part of being a principal?

A: I think it's the frustration sometimes of not being able to do the things you want to do, and sometimes it's simple things like, you know, we have a kitchen that's still not ready to use, so I make calls continuously but the system is difficult to, you know, bureaucratically navigate. Sometimes it's hard to say no to someone, because it's nice to be able to say yes I can do that, but sometimes whether it's because of financial concerns, or curricular, or pedagogical you have to say no. Some of the difficult conversations we have with students is when the fit with Marc Garneau is not right for some students, we have to say "you know what, maybe you need to try something else." We don't do it in a way where we say "get out" but sometimes high school, especially one of this size is not for everyone and sometimes it's a difficult conversation.

Q: What is something you feel students usually take for granted?

A: I think students sometimes don't really realize how fortunate they are to go to school for twenty years and get, well not free because it's taxpayer dollars to pay for it, but a free education which prepares them for the future and I think students don't truly appreciate what they have. And I think that's sort of a lot of us, even as [a teacher] I feel fortunate to teach many of the students that I've been able to teach and sometimes students forget that. I feel like students look back years later and go "oh wow, high school was actually not that bad right?" Especially when they're paying for university and paying for everything else. I think with time comes wisdom, and with time, they realize hey, I could have gotten a college credit, or this or that. And you know, that's the naivety and immaturity because by the end of the day, our students are fourteen, fifteen, sixteen years old, and they're supposed to still be kids you know.

Q: What is one piece of advice you would give any student at Marc Garneau?

A: What I would say is balance your life, and get involved in what you have a passion for. I think a lot of students get involved because they think it's gonna look good on their resume, or their application letter. But if you really love reporting, then be involved in it but if you don't then don't do it. I think with a school of eighteen hundred kids is that we have a lot of opportunities and ways for students to be involved. High school isn't the end all be all, but I think it's a place where a lot of cool things can happen. And if you go back to the idea of the student voice, we are in an age where if you have a good idea, you bring it up to someone and the odds are that if we can make it happen, we will make it happen.

Q: What is the easiest part of being a principal?

A: The easiest part of being a principal? Well, the easiest part is interacting with the students, I have to be honest. My interactions with students are generally speaking positive. I think people sometimes focus on the negative interactions we have with students, but I think the majority of my interactions on a daily basis are pleasant, and nice, and students come in and we have a good time and we laugh. I think students and educators and administrators, we all remember the good times, and sometimes the dark times, those rare occurrences seem like they take over but the reality is that if I look at a month's process, I would say the majority of those days are fun and we have a good time. Like today I went to play soccer in the gym, and I love coming to see the art's night tonight, for example. I feel that the majority of the things that we do are celebrations of students, and that's easy, that's awesome!

See MR. DI FELICE on P2

The Hidden Chains of a Free Prisoner

by MARYAM MOBASHIR and SUNYAH TEHREEM

You're being watched. At every moment they can track you. They know where you are, and if they wished, they could see you. Not only your exterior, but all those things you keep private.

It is important for the public to realize that the government, through their agencies, is capable of taking their information at any given moment. Regulating these agencies is hard, and holding them accountable is even harder.

There are plenty of laws with the objective of protecting our rights; however, there is also the need to protect the country as a whole. Information taken from cell phones and the internet searches is useful to government agencies like the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) for potential threat identification. Devices like the Sting-Ray can help identify threats by intercepting their communications. Once the data has been intercepted, these agencies can then filter through the collected it and establish who could be a potential threat based on internet searches and other data like social media activity. Unfortunately, Canadian citizens have no say in which data these agencies collect nor are they informed when their data is collected.

The problem of digital privacy is pressing for the Government of Canada, especially as technology advances. It is an issue that is constantly talked about and is constantly redefined. It seems like there's a new privacy case before the Supreme Court every year. Take R v Marakah, in which Nour Marakah sent texts regarding an illegal firearms deal. While he was at his friend, Mr. Winchester's, house, the police came with a warrant to search the house, and in the process seized and searched Marakah's phone. Marakah argued that the search of his phone violated his section 8 Charter right as the police had no warrant to search. Marakah said that the court should exclude the evidence collected from the search. The judge ruled in Marakah's favour and excluded the evidence, yet the fact that the police officer paid no heed to Marakah's privacy and received no disciplinary actions regarding this is concerning. The police should not make decisions based on their whims and certainly not without any substantial proof. If the police act in this manner, then there will be far less real justice. Instead, people will have their lives turned inside out with their personal data in the hands of the people that are meant to prevent such things from happening. It seems as though government agencies act

before thinking as they know that, most times, they'll only get a slap on the wrist.

The government is able to access a plethora of data, all of which is readily available to them. According to the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada, your personal privacy only covers "race; national or ethnic origin; religion; age; marital status; blood type; fingerprints; medical, criminal or employment history; information on financial transactions; home address; and your Social Insurance Number, driver's licence or any other identifying number assigned to you" (3).

This definition does not include personal messages and other forms of correspondence. Accessing information like personal correspondence or tracking people through their devices requires a search warrant or court order to be legal. It also does not include monitoring of social media accounts.

The Government can still access all of the data on every phone in the country and can send messages to them at any time. The use of the Amber alert system is a prime example of how the Canadian government can access every phone in the country to send alerts in case of a child abduction. While this has proven to be highly beneficial, and does indeed fulfill its purpose, it leads one to question how the government monitors, stores, and uses data.

A recent article from CBC News reports that the RCMP has launched a review into how they monitor social media accounts to make sure that they are in compliance with federal regulations. The RCMP monitors social media accounts for two reasons: the first is after a crime is committed, while the second is for the detection and prevention of potential crimes (4). By monitoring the actions of people on social media—checking who a person follows, what they post, what they comment—the government is able to figure out which people to keep a closer watch on. While this information is generally based on publicly shared information, the RCMP and other public officials can still access private correspondence after obtaining a court warrant. To get a court warrant, all that the police require is proof that there is reasonable suspicion against the person in question, which they gather from anything a person posts online, whom they follow, or even internet searches.

See DIGITAL PRIVACY on P3

Coronavirus: Fight or Flight?

by JEFFERSON CHEN

Since its first appearance near the end of 2019, a new disease by the name of 2019-nCoV, better known as the novel coronavirus or simply the coronavirus, has taken the world by storm. But with all the rumors, what is the virus actually doing, and what can you do to not get infected?

Background

The Chinese city of Wuhan, a provincial capital and home to approximately four times as many people as Toronto, saw a cluster of medical cases displaying symptoms of pneumonia in which no existing treatment worked near the end of 2019. As of New Year's Eve, twenty-seven individuals had

already undergone treatment in hospitals, seven of whom were in serious condition. Initially, the outbreak was linked to the local Huanan Seafood Market as most of the infected worked there. This fueled speculation that the mysterious disease spread to humans from animals, similar to the SARS epidemic in 2003. Indeed, other known species of coronavirus usually prefer animals as their host, but are occasionally known to infect humans. All species that are known to infect humans can also spread from person to person.

See CORONAVIRUS on P3



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Cooking With the Cougars: Culinary Club Feature

by NISHA IQBAL



Photo: Allan Li

The Culinary Club was founded in February 2019 by Mishal Shaikh. Today, it acts as a welcoming environment for students to not only develop their culinary skills but also to learn about the changes they can make to consume a healthier diet.

The Culinary Club is made up of about thirty students including nine executive members: President Mishal Shaikh, Vice President Faareha Shaikh, Treasurers Meenadshi Varanan and Saaima Umar, Secretaries Tahira Hos-sain and Shaynah Tahir, and Social Media Convenors Abeera Sohail and Urooj Gondal. When asked why she started the club, Mishal stated, “We want everyone to have access to basic culinary skills so that, even if they cannot incorporate any hospitality courses during their high school years, they can at least learn it from an extracurricular program. We want this club to have a positive impact on the students of MGCI by teaching crucial and fundamental kitchen skills while spreading awareness of healthy eating.”

The club meets every Wednesday after school in the main kitchen. The first meeting of the month is set aside for deciding what to prepare, researching recipes, and gathering the required ingredients and materials. For the rest of the month, club members are divided into two groups; half the members assist with dressings for the salad bar and the other half is responsible for preparing the specific item chosen for that week. Along with these meetings, the club has two executive meetings each month, focusing on executing recipes and bake sales successfully and smoothly.

The club decides which dishes they will make based on suggestions from club members. In September, the members brainstormed ideas and formed a list of suggestions, which they often refer to for inspiration. Once the dishes are chosen, the students look for an adequate recipe, which is usually found online. However, members are encouraged to bring in their own recipes as well. Before finalizing a procedure, the club considers allergies and ensures they have vegetarian options. The weekly dishes that the club makes are consumed by the club members. Using this method, the club has made mango and strawberry smoothies, tiramisu, truffles, nutritious chocolate-coated energy balls, sushi, cold rolls, chocolate brownie cookies, strawberry-banana

and chocolate banana smoothies, and hot chocolate this semester.

The Culinary Club sells some of the food they make during the school Food Fiesta events. During the first Food Fiesta, the club baked tiramisu and Oreo truffles. In the second food sale of the academic year, the club sold cookies with whipped cream. The club ended up selling out all of their baked goods in both sales. All profits made during these sales go towards purchasing ingredients to use for future recipes.

Currently, the Culinary Club is in charge of managing the salad bar. The foods they made in semester one were part of a trial and error process for this semester’s salad bar, which will include items such as hummus, brownies, energy balls, sushi, and cold rolls this semester.

Secretary Shaynah Tahir said she thinks this club differs greatly from most MGCI clubs and stated, “When Mishal first introduced the idea of a culinary club, I knew that it would offer something new to our school! Once we got everything going, it wasn’t long before we had our first cooking day and later, new members. I wanted to stay because of the laid back environment in the culinary club that still upholds safety but where having fun is a priority.”

To the rest of Garneau, Mishal said, “We’re an inclusive space and encourage learning, so don’t feel hesitant about not having enough experience. Other than that, eat healthy, remain healthy, and try to substitute as many plant-based items in your meals as you can. It might surprise you how easy it is to enjoy the same things while also protecting your health.”

Fighting for the Future: OSSTF Battles for Better Education

by UROOBA SHAIKH



Photo: Ilhaan Jivani

In March 2019, the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario announced its plans for changes to Ontario’s education system. These changes, which consist of significant budget cuts such as those to special education, larger class sizes, and mandatory e-learning for high school students, have had negative impacts on the quality of education in Ontario. These cuts have sparked responses ranging from the student walk-out on 4 April 2019 to the job action of school support staff from the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) in November 2019. The everyday lives of students and staff have been disrupted by strike action, and negotiations between the Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation (OSSTF) and the Conservative government are showing few signs of ending anytime soon.

The contracts of 60 000 members in the Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation (OSSTF) expired in August 2019. Since then, members of the union have been fighting to reverse numerous changes that the Conservative government plans to introduce. The issues being disputed include the increase in average class size from twenty-five students to twenty-two students, the mandatory two-course e-learning program planned to be effective by September 2020, increasing pay by two percent to compensate for inflation, and cuts to special education.

After months of negotiations with the Conservative government, OSSTF declared a work-to-rule campaign on 26 November 2019. This meant that they would not be taking part in any supplementary duties such as providing comments on report cards, overseeing standardized tests such as EQAO, and attending unpaid staff meetings outside of school hours. Negotiations have continued, but little progress has been made in reaching an agreement. To further pressure the government, OSSTF declared a province-wide strike on 4 December 2019. This full withdrawal of services was the first in over two decades, the last being in 1997. Negotiations continued but were once again fruitless. Rotating strikes were held throughout December and January, with the first on 11 December, affecting the TDSB and eight other school boards. Another strike was held on 21 January.

Although teachers are the ones spending strike days on the picket lines, work-to-rule has also affected the lives of students. The TDSB cancelled all late starts and early dismissals, as these time periods were previously used for staff meetings. At MGCI, early dismissals on Friday have been temporarily halted, with school lasting until 3:15 pm like any other day rather than 1:45 pm. This has been a problem for many Muslim students who attend Friday prayers at the mosque. With daylight savings, prayer times start earlier, and students would have had no choice but to leave school in order to attend, which would likely result in missed classes. However, MGCI’s Muslim Student Association (MSA) got permission to use the MGCI library at lunch to run Friday prayers at the school. Many students have volunteered to help with set-up and takedown, which involves removing chairs and tables from the main library space and the East York room and setting down prayer mats borrowed from the local mosque. Turnout has been very high, with staff as well as students attending.

Student Activity Council (SAC) President Nelson Lee, who has been actively involved in advocating for prayer spaces in the school, stated, “We’re very grateful that MSA and other groups and individuals have made these prayer spaces possible.”

However, prayers have become a bit of a disruption for the MSA because it interferes with their meetings. Originally the meetings for the club were routinely held on Friday at lunch which was convenient for all members attending since it didn’t interfere with prayers. Now that the Friday lunch hour is used to run prayers, meetings have to be moved to another day of the week. With the Muslim Inter-Scholastic Tournament (MIST) coming up during the March Break, MSA needs to be able to hold consistent meetings in order to prepare for the tournament. However, the prayer rooms are often used by students to avoid missing prayer during the week as well.

Members of MSA are not the only ones having trouble due to the strike. Initiatives run by SAC have also been negatively affected. The annual Christmas Show, which usually takes place on the last day before Winter Break from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm, was canceled this year on account of rules about teachers not being able to supervise any activities unrelated to teaching during school hours. Going forward, events such as dances and pep rallies may be more difficult to organize and require longer discussions about what can and can’t be done due to strike rules. The job action also caused MGCI Arts Night, which usually takes place in December, to be postponed until 16 January, 2020. The teacher band performance, which is an MGCI tradition, also did not take place, which was a disappointment for many.

As of yet, club meetings and athletics have not been affected, only extracurricular initiatives that run during school hours. “We’re hoping that escalation is never reached,” added Nelson Lee.

While strike action has caused disruptions for both staff and students, it has also caused unity among the student body in order to work around the issues. MSA President Zuha Qureshi says, “Personally, I’m really happy to see so many students come together for prayers—“it’s especially significant that students worked together to make this possible because it highlights how important this is to our student body.”

In addition, the OSSTF believes that taking action against the changes introduced by the Conservative government is necessary in order to prevent long-term negative effects on the education of Ontario students. OSSTF President Harvey Bischof stated, “I can tell you that the long-term damage to the system, if we allow the government to go down this destructive path, is far worse than a day lost to labour action” (CBC News).

As of now, negotiations have not made much progress, and until a deal is reached, staff and students will continue to work around the disruptions caused by job action in hopes of a better future for Ontario students, as they have done so until now.

SAC Sweater Sale

by RENA LIU

Every year, students and staff await the opportunity to purchase a sweater to show their school spirit. This year, sales began on 10 December 2019 and were promoted through social media, daily announcements, and posters. SAC members also walked through the school during lunch to advertise the sale.

“We experienced a number of unforeseen delays with starting the sales, so I believe something to improve for the future is being prepared for delays,” said External Affairs Officer Fatima Gulab, who was in charge of the sale. “To improve sales this year, I want there to be a more personal touch rather than seeing a post about buying sweaters on Instagram by having sample hoodies for students to have a first hand look at the quality they are getting.”

SAC also hosted a sweater design competition, which began on 10 September and lasted until 27 September. Approximately twenty entries were submitted, from which four were chosen by SAC. Students could vote on these designs via social media beginning on 10

October. Grade 11 student Unzila Shaikh’s design was selected as the motif for the 2019-2020 MGCI sweaters.

Sweaters were sold in front of the SAC office in the cafeteria for \$25. Students were allowed to choose between black and white, and could personalize the sweater for an additional fee of \$4. The committee also displayed a sample sweater at the bench, allowing students to view the material, size, and colour. Sales ended on 10 January 2020 with about fifty sweaters sold.

For many students, a school sweater is more than just a piece of clothing.

“School sweaters are not only a way to represent school spirit,” said Grade 11 student Maryam Mobashir, “They



Photo: Bilaal Bartaai

also represent being a part of the Garneau community that, over the course of time, has shaped me into who I am.”

When asked about what she enjoyed most about the sale, Fatima Gulab said, “I definitely enjoyed the student interaction I got. I have seen SAC sell sweaters for the past two years but never experienced it myself. It was nice to see the other end of things.”

A Word from Mr. Di Felice

ADMIN FEATURE
Continued from P1

Q: What has been your most memorable moment being an administrator?
A: I would say it’s a reflective thing for me. Sometimes as administrators we don’t even know the effect we have on students. So many years after I left, maybe five or six years after my previous positions of being a principal, I got a note from a young man who expressed his gratitude that I had not suspended him for something he had done, and he

told me how that changed his life. What fascinated me was that I did it, and I didn’t even know it would be something that would change his life, since many years later he told me it had changed his life, and how he hadn’t been suspended from school, it had changed his path, he had become a photographer, and had a family and kids. So I kind of always reflect on, sometimes the things we do as administrators, we may not even know

how we affect kids, and yet we do. Like when I found out, I was like I remember him, but it was not something where I felt I did this amazing thing. So I always have that at the end of my mind, that whatever we do in our jobs as administrators, sometimes we have an impact that we don’t even know we do!



Iran Explained

by NICOLE PERI KOLOGU

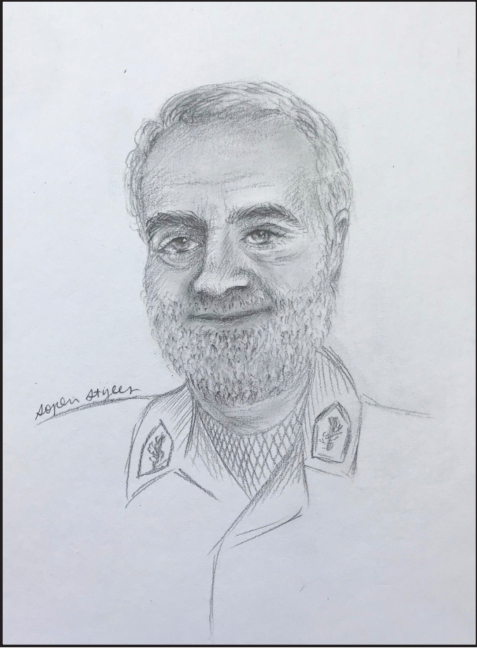


Illustration: Sophie Yang

On 3 January 2020, General Qasem Soleimani was killed by an airstrike authorized by US President Donald Trump. This controversial decision from the United States has caused worldwide panic regarding the future of Iran-US relations. Soleimani was the Major General of the Quds Force since 1998 and had a huge role in operations against ISIS. He was one of the most respected military leaders in the Islamic Republic, and by 2013, he had become one of Iran’s most important political figures. He was said to be second in power to Iran’s Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

How did we get here?

Back in 2005, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was elected president of Iran. He supported Iran’s right to develop nuclear technology as long as it was peaceful. To combat Iran’s nuclear development, the P5+1 (US, Britain, China, Russia, Germany, and France) proposed an agreement to Iran to suspend its nuclear enrichment program in 2006. Iran refused. As a response, the UN, USA, and EU imposed sanctions on Iran. Iran was told that an agreement regarding the sanctions would be reached only if they suspend nuclear enrichment. In 2012, Obama pressured foreign banks to reduce imports of Iranian oil, causing a major descent in the Iranian economy. In 2013, Hassan Rouhani was elected as the president of Iran. Talks about “the nuclear issue” began amongst US and Iranian officials. On 23 November 2013, the P5+1 created the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). According to the JCPOA, Iran had to give up 97% of its enriched uranium, most of its centrifuges, and would be under surveillance by inspectors. In return, the US, UN, and EU would not impose sanctions on Iran. The plan was adopted on 18 January 2015, and implemented on 16 January 2016.

Then things started to sour. In 2018, Donald Trump walked away from the nuclear deal and reimposed sanctions on

Iran. He said that the deal had not limited Iran’s missile program, even though evidence showed that Iran was complying with the deal. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps was declared to be a terrorist organization by the USA in 2019. In May, Iran reported that it would continue its nuclear enrichment program. Tensions increased between Iran and the US, not just politically but militarily as well. In December 2019, an American contractor was killed on a US base in Iraq. When Trump found out about the American contractor’s death, his advisors provided insight on how to respond. Out of all of the options, Trump chose the riskiest one: an airstrike on Qasem Soleimani. Trump had authorized the killing of Soleimani 8 months ago in June 2019, but only if “Iran’s aggression resulted in the death of an American.” On 3 January 2020, Gen. Qasem Soleimani and Gen. Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis were killed by an airstrike authorized by Donald Trump. The attack had no congressional approval. Al-Muhandis was one of Iran’s top lieutenants in Iraq, and was a highly influential figure in his own right. He had also fought the US and ISIS before, and was in charge of military forces that helped the fight against ISIS. Some have called out the Trump administration’s decision, saying that the airstrike was illegal, and should be considered international terrorism. International law declares that a country can only kill as self-defense, with clear evidence that the target is an imminent threat. The Pentagon had blamed Soleimani for a rocket attack that killed several American service members and a civilian contractor. The Pentagon also said that Soleimani had plans to attack US diplomats and service members that were located in Iraq. However, they failed to show a specific plot Soleimani was part of, and thus, were not able to prove that Soleimani was an imminent threat. In a statement after the attack, Trump said, “We took action last night to stop a war. We did not take action to start a war.” The airstrike was deemed irresponsible by many, including Trump’s political opposition, as it could’ve led to a major conflict in the Middle East.

Aftereffects of airstrike

People had different opinions on Soleimani. Those who supported the Iranian regime saw him as a hero, while others despised him for being part of it. Nevertheless, Soleimani’s death triggered national grief in Iran. Crowds flooded the streets and chanted “Death to America.” Approximately 56 people lost their lives in a stampede. Anti-ISIS operations in Iraq were put on hold after Iran and its allies demanded revenge for Soleimani’s death. On 5 January 2020, 180 legislators in the Iraqi Parliament voted for the US military to be removed from Iraq. This would call for the ending of the 2014 agreement

that allowed the US to send troops to Iraq for anti-ISIS operations. The vote was not binding, and the decision would be up to the Iraqi Prime Minister’s office. In response to the Iraqi Parliament’s opinion, Trump threatened Iraq with sanctions. The US State Department advised that Washington and Baghdad should work on fixing their alliance instead. The 5 000 US troops will, most likely, not be removed from Iraq. NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg stated that they (NATO) condemn Iran’s support of terrorist groups. They did not criticize Trump’s decision of authorizing the airstrike. Hours after Soleimani’s burial, more than 12 missiles were launched from Iran. They were aimed at bases in Iraq that housed US and coalition troops. Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdel Mahdi said that the attack was imminent, and only targeted areas with US troops. Brig. Gen. Amir Ali Hajizadeh stated that the attack had not intended to kill, and was only meant to hit military machinery. Several US service members were injured; however, there were no casualties. On 8 January, the Ukraine International Airlines flight PS752 was shot down after Iran launched missile attacks on US bases in Iraq. All 176 people on board lost their lives. The missiles were retaliation from Iran, in response to Soleimani’s death. Iran initially denied that they were responsible for the missile, but later took responsibility for the tragedy. An announcement was made on 11 January that stated: “The Islamic Republic of Iran deeply regrets this disastrous mistake. The Armed Forces’ internal investigation has concluded that regrettably, missiles fired due to human error caused the horrific crash of the Ukrainian plane & death of 176 innocent people.” The acknowledgement of the tragedy by the Iranian government triggered protests against the Iranian regime in Tehran. Many of those who lost their lives were Canadian-Iranian students returning to university after winter break. A total of 138 were connecting from Kiev to Canada.

Now what?

The Iraqi military said that military operations against ISIS will resume. This statement was made three weeks after operations were paused. The Canadian government stated that families of victims would receive financial aid for travel costs and funerals. They expect Iran to compensate these families as soon as possible. Canada also turned to the UN Aviation Agency to get the black boxes from Iran to conduct an analysis. So far, it seems like possibilities of war has passed, and the crisis has calmed down. It mostly depends on how the US will choose to respond to the missile attack, if they respond at all. There’s also the possibility that Iran is waiting for the right moment for Soleimani’s revenge. Either way, only time will tell.

A Growing Pandemic

CORONAVIRUS
Continued from P1

Chinese scientists were quickly able to isolate a strain of the coronavirus and publish its genome for further research. The genetic sequence was found to be very similar (80%) to the 2003 SARS epidemic, and nearly identical (96.2%) to a bat coronavirus, further strengthening the argument that the virus started in an animal host. Similarly to SARS, the virus is known to be quite infectious, spreading far and wide as millions of Chinese travelled across the country to spend the Lunar New Year with their relatives during early January. Other countries, primarily China’s major trading partners, became infected as well, the first being Thailand on 13 January. Canada was first confirmed to have an infected person within its borders, on 25 January. On 30 January, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the virus outbreak to be a Global Health Emergency after eighteen countries became infected with a total of just under 8 000 confirmed cases. As of time of writing, on 8 February, there have been just under 35 000 confirmed cases and over 700 dead.

Affected Areas

The following countries have less than five confirmed cases of the coronavirus as of the time of writing: India, Italy, the Philippines, Russia, Britain, Cambodia, Finland, Nepal, Spain, Sri Lanka, and Sweden. Most of these patients are quarantined in hospitals until they eventually recover. As of right now, these areas of the world are still relatively safe to travel to. However, none of these countries can compare to where the outbreak originated. Official Chinese sources claim approximately 34 000 confirmed cases and 27 000 suspected ones. Out of all the deaths so far, all but one have been in Chinese territory, the last death being a Chinese man who arrived in the Philippines days before he died, on 1 February. Fortunately, over 2 300 individuals have been cured of the disease, proving that although the virus can quickly take someone’s life, it can also be cured just as fast. Most people who have been discharged from hospitals fought off the disease on their own, but the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, along with other research centers around the world, is currently developing a vaccine against the new disease.

Preventing Infection

Although there are only 7 confirmed cases in Canada, how can you prevent the spread of disease? Is the coronavirus even worth worrying about in the first place? Masks do indeed help protect you against the coronavirus. However, different types of masks will have varying effects. Cotton masks, while offering good protection against dust and providing good warmth, do not protect against

pathogens. The blue medical masks that most people wear offer marginally more protection, but are lower in effectiveness than surgical masks, which are designed to protect the wearer against bacteria and viruses. The best choice are N95 medical masks: single-use masks designed and tested to block out 99% of all microscopic particles. Unfortunately, these masks are not readily available at most retailers due to their specificity. They also offer poor ventilation, making them dangerous for those who already suffer from respiratory illnesses. Even though they can be helpful, masks are not a way to secure your immunity—the virus can enter through your body from any opening, including your eyes and nose. The best way to prevent infection is to stay away from the infected in the first place. Going to high-risk areas such as large public gatherings, events, and parties in already infected areas will sharply increase the likelihood of catching the disease, spreading through body-to-body contact or bodily fluid contact. Disinfect your hands after touching public items such as elevator buttons, cash, etc., either through a powerful disinfectant such as rubbing alcohol or by washing your hands with soap and water. Finally, watch your diet! Raw meat and bushmeat make good homes for the coronavirus—cook your food properly before you eat it. As a final level of assurance, Canada is half a world away from the epicenter of the viral outbreak. All diseased patients are currently confined within hospitals. For now, Canadians are safe; the media is once again overexaggerating on a world event. Unless a major change occurs, the virus should be of little concern for people living in Canada—and it appears to be business as usual.

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Watching the Watchers

DIGITAL PRIVACY
Continued from P1

Since there is little to no regulation of these agencies and they hide their actions from the public’s view, there is also no accountability for their actions. CBC News also reports in another article published in 2016 that Public Safety Canada has approved many requests from the RCMP, CSIS, and the Defence Department to license some companies to manufacture, sell, and possess devices which intercept communications. When further asked on the topic, these security agencies remained silent about the type of devices used; however, most people who work in the field believe that the device is a Sting-Ray or an International mobile subscriber identity (IMSI) catcher (5). These devices can track people through a mobile device’s ID—which is unique to every device—and has allowed the interception of communications based on signals emitted and directed to and from the device (5). This means that government agencies like the RCMP and CSIS know where you are every second

of the day, which websites you search, the pictures you look at, the text messages and emails you send; these agencies can intercept signals sent out by every single digital action people do. No one knows exactly what devices these agencies use, and the deafening silence on the topic is highly disturbing. What is also disturbing is that agencies like the RCMP and other public officials do not need approval from Public Safety to use such devices, nor do they need authorization from Innovations Canada, a requirement for anyone outside these agencies (5). The RCMP, CSIS and similar agencies apparently do not need to explain themselves to anyone. There is no regulating the unseen or taking action on injustices that no one knows exists. At 2019’s Borovoy Law Conference, Nadia Z. Hasan, the Deputy Director of the National Council of Canadian Muslims, conducted a workshop on CSIS. She mentioned that CSIS determines targets based

on a person’s race and religion, essentially racial profiling (6). She conducted an interview with a few CSIS agents and the answers she received were astonishing. CSIS openly states that they specifically target Muslims when collecting data, regardless of whether or not they are actually involved in any criminal proceedings (6). Obviously, this blatant discrimination is not only applicable to surveillance of Muslims, but other minorities in the country. This is high level discrimination at an agency level. The fact that public servants don’t seem to be acting in the best interest of the whole public is a deeply troubling matter. What is appalling is not only that such discrimination exists, but that a government that prides itself on diversity has not done anything to hold CSIS accountable for such actions. Yes, there are some laws in place as a half-hearted attempt to regulate these government agencies; however, there is absolutely no accountability. How is it even possible to regulate and hold a government

agency accountable if there is hardly any transparency regarding their actions? While CSIS does not have the power to arrest people, it does have the power to destroy lives, such as by shutting down someone’s bank account (6). The people who they target may never know that CSIS caused the sudden upset in their lives. Without the person knowing who was responsible for the turmoil, there would be no way to hold CSIS accountable for all the damage that they caused. It is possible for citizens to sue CSIS, but it is almost impossible to gather enough evidence for a substantial case. Canadians are treated as prisoners in their own homes, constantly watched for any signs of misconduct. There’s a huge lack of transparency on the issue of what information is collected and how exactly government agencies use it. It is important for Canadians to push for legislation that holds government agencies responsible for breaches of privacy based on discrimination and racial profiling. These agencies

must be held accountable for their actions and must not be able to sidestep the law to wrongfully enter the private lives of Canadian citizens. They’re watching you. Are you watching them?

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Self-Destruction

Valentine’s in Candyland

by SADJA ZAHIR

A small glass mosaic hangs in the corner of my room. A single red rose is pictured, it’s in a glass case that illuminates the gleam of the rose into the night, similar to the one the Beast kept in Beauty and the Beast, the one that lost one petal at a time when time was running out.

The first time a piece of the mosaic broke off was when I was eleven years old. It was a small, yet distinguishable piece that came off from the corner after it was hit by a soccer ball. The soccer player who kicked the ball laughed; I remember trying to play off my concern by laughing with him.

I quickly glued back the piece when the soccer player left, before the mosaic could be destroyed any more.

Two years later, the same broken piece that I glued on was being picked at by someone who all my friends called ‘The Beast’, but this Beast was different from the one in the fairytale. His bloodshot eyes mocked me when I asked him to stop destroying the mosaic so I let him do as he pleased, even knowing there was no goodness in him.

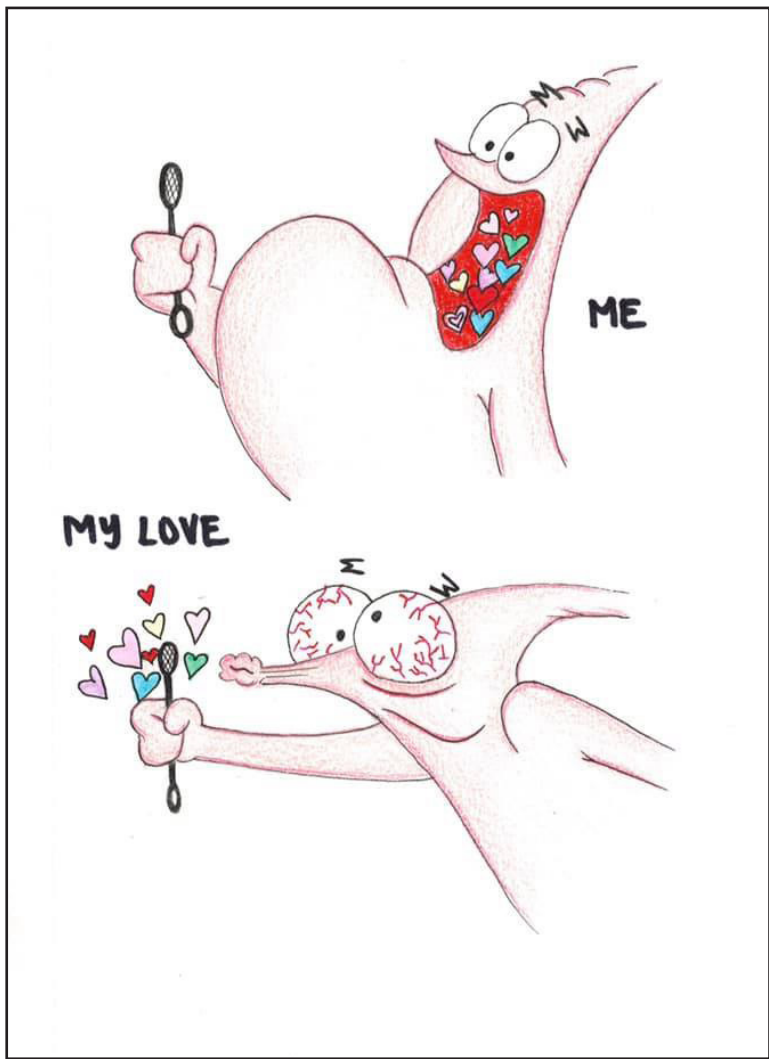


Illustration: Lucy Qi



All My Love and Support

by SOPHIE YANG



She Loved the Colour Red

by ANNIE XIONG

She loved the colour red. It reminded her of raindrops on rose petals, the sweetness of a home-grown strawberry, and the warmth of a scarf during a bitter Canadian winter. It was the colour of her favourite childhood dress, the one she wore when she met her best friend; her lover. It was a place where she could seek shelter and gather her thoughts, like the hearth of a home. She loved the colour red, but that would all come to change.

Today was Valentine’s day. The entire school was drowning in a mesmerizing rainbow of red; scarlet, cardinal, and vermilion filled the halls. Her shade at the moment was a blissful, pure, coral. He had just gifted her a sweet-smelling bouquet of red anemones, the flowers of eternal love. She was racing to the front yard as a friend told her that he would be outside. She burst through the entrance, wanting to thank him for the flowers, and more importantly, his love.

Instead, she found him hand in hand with another girl, lying down and gazing at the clear blue sky. Her heart shattered into a thousand pieces, the empty hole inflamed with a blazing numbness. She stared helplessly at the anemones that once held such hope and happiness for her. She let them crash into the cold hard pavement and walked away, tears forming in her eyes.

She would find out later that anemones were a double-edged sword. Yes, their popular meaning was compassion but they also had a second, lesser known meaning. When Aphrodite cried, anemones sprouted from her tears. Adonis’s blood dripped onto their petals, staining them red. From then on they would symbolize the death of happiness; forsaken love. For her, that would change how she saw the world. The world was blue, and so was she.

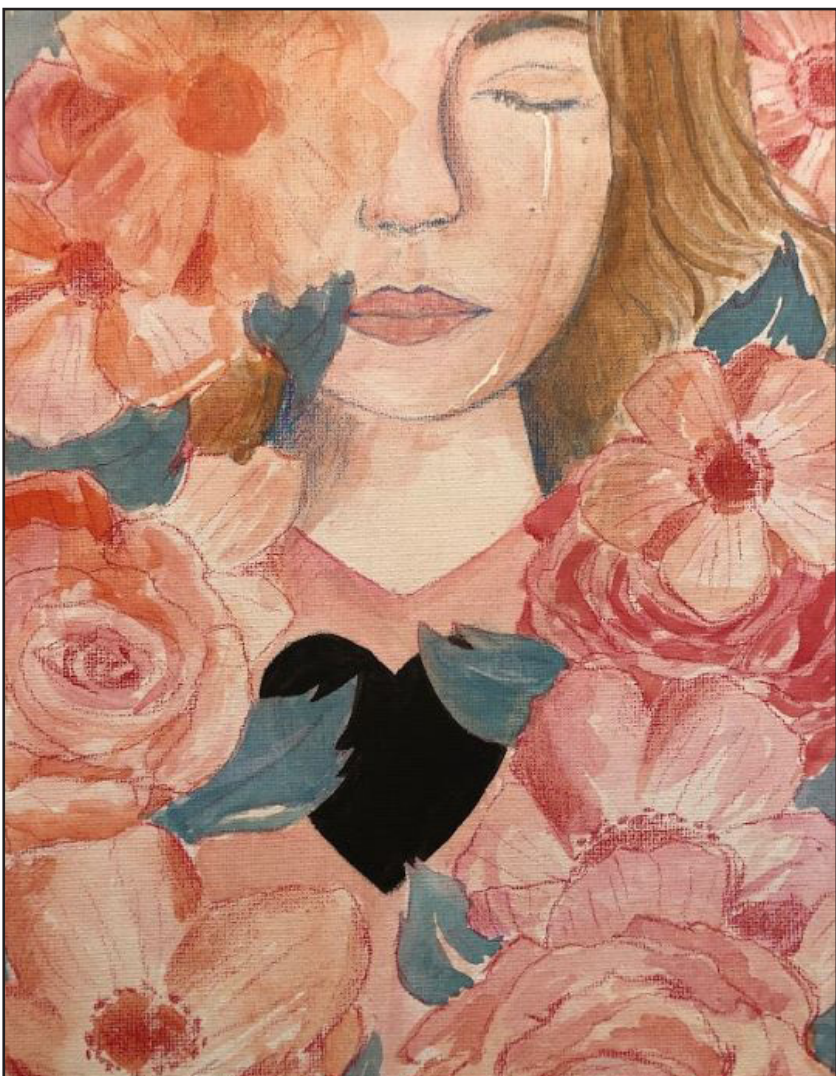


Illustration: Colleen Chang

A Letter to My Pet Butterfly

by SHERYL PERIS

To my pet butterfly,

It’s been a long time, hasn’t it? Since we last saw each other, since I last held you in the palm of my hand and we went to the park for an evening stroll.

You were a special one. Probably the best pet anyone could have ever asked for.

I remember seeing you for the first time in my garden. You were perched on top of a beautiful, blooming orange rose, although it could never be compared to your splendid magnificence. I remember you spreading your vibrant wings to

land on my outstretched hand. And that day, I made the best decision of my life: to keep you...

Yet our time spent together was so short. It was a beautiful afternoon, just a few weeks ago. I remember that because it was around that same time, a year before, that we had first met. As usual, you were flying right next to me, when somebody decided it was okay to chuck a giant football right at you.

I remember bawling my eyes out at the sight of you, your once marvelous wings shredded to the point that it dared to dawn on even me that, well, there was no hope.

My only solace is the belief that you are somehow still alive and enjoying your life, or that maybe you have been reincarnated as some other form of life. No matter what the case is though, I hope you are doing okay.

These cold winter months have caused me to relive this part of my life. Although it pains me to write this, thank you for all the wonderful memories you left me with. A lifetime of memories for me to cherish forever. I’ll never forget you.

I miss you. Please come back.

The Reckoner

of Marc Garneau C.I.

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