



# EYE OF THE TIGER

## It's not the end of the world

Although the world did not collapse on December 21, 2012 as predicted, Thornhill Secondary School has recently experienced two events that have raised some important issues. One of these events has impacted school life in the past month, while the other continues...



### Bill 115: a controversy

**What is Bill 115 and how has it affected everyone?**

**BY RYAN SUEN**  
NEWS CONTRIBUTOR

Bill 115, also known as the controversial "Putting Students First Act" was passed just a week after school started in September. Teachers and students alike became upset for various reasons. The Bill limited or reduced some benefits to teachers, enabled the government to curtail any form of strike action, and granted the government the power to impose agreements. Due to the growing objections, four education unions filed a court case challenging Bill 115.

Education Minister Laurel Broten maintains the government will withstand the union allegations of their bargaining rights being violated. That was four months ago.

Frustrated with the limited progress in the negotiation process during the fall, the elementary teacher union stepped up their fight of Bill 115 by declaring on one-day rotating strikes throughout the province in December, promising parents a three-day notice before the stoppage took place. That left parents frustrated with the need to find alternative arrangements for the day. Extra-curricular activities, such as team sports and school clubs, along with field trips and holiday celebrations, were halted.

At the high school level, three boards of education (Upper Grand, York Region, Hamilton Wentworth) reached tentative deals between their boards and teacher union; only Upper Grand successfully ratified their agreement.

In December, the union stated teachers would only perform their contractual duties of teaching and teaching only; the earliest they arrived at school was fifteen minutes before classes started and they had to leave immediately at the final bell. Ken Coran, President of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation has stated that "it is regrettable that the provincial government has chosen to continue down this path and not respect the rights of education workers." Students needing additional help from teachers could only obtain this in class or during lunch. As with the elementary teachers, extra-curricular activities stopped. Students wanting to continue school teams and clubs could not do so without teacher supervision.

On January 3, 2013, Laurel Broten and the government of Ontario imposed two-year contracts on all teachers since agreements were not reached by the December 31 deadline. Broten stated she could no longer stand by and watch the unions do as they please at the expense of the students. Coran has said that "OSSTF/FEESO members and leaders have repeatedly told the Minister and her government that they cannot legislate goodwill." However, she will also be moving to repeal Bill 115 by the end of January since it has fulfilled its purpose. With the imposed contracts, she hopes to see a return of extra-curricular activities.

At the time of this writing, extra-curriculars remain non-existent.

Bill 115 has affected many people: staff, students, parents, and the general public. Our schools play a huge role in society, and any disruption can have untold consequences. What does this change mean for our extracurricular activities? What are the consequences that could result from this move by Broten? How will this affect staff and students in the long-term?

These are questions that will hopefully be answered in the near future.



**Here's what really happened that day.**

**BY ADELE CHUI**  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Almost 1100 students and staff members of Thornhill Secondary School were waiting in the Thornhill United Church parking lot shortly after 11 a.m. on Monday December 17. This was not a field trip or a gentle excursion to view the lovely outdoors; rather, it was a full-scale evacuation that left students confused. What was going on?

Two words: bomb threat.

At approximately 9 a.m. that day, the York Regional Police were alerted to a possible bomb threat to the school. Dialogue between police, the York Region District School Board, and school administration quickly took place. Because of this, students were held in their first period class, before being evacuated to the nearby parking lot as a precautionary measure. Students and staff alike then took shelter in the nearby church while waiting for the police and their canine partners to sweep the school.

Teachers dismissed students once consent from a guardian was given, and many students quickly took advantage of the opportunity for a free day off. Social media sites, such as Facebook and Twitter, quickly took off with updates from students, many who left after waiting for several hours. Questions about the evacuation were gently answered by staff to the best of their ability.

The severity of the threat and the legal complications of the investigation meant that information could not be freely shared, leading to the general confusion that marked the beginning of the evacuation Monday morning. The day ended with students safely evacuated and the school cleared for investigation by officials.

Tuesday December 18 ended up remarkably similar, with school closed for the afternoon. The police had received new information regarding Monday's bomb threat, and were thus required to revisit the school on Tuesday. A brief summary of the happenings was given to students and parents in a formal letter sent home that afternoon. The doors of Thornhill Secondary were then closed for further police investigation after period two. Students, now accustomed to the possibility of an evacuation, simply vacated the premises quickly, taking the aforementioned letters and themselves home for the day. Both investigations on Monday and Tuesday revealed no suspicious parcels or bombs within the school.

Later, a 14 year-old male was arrested and charged with uttering threats to persons, property, and general public mischief. His identity is legally protected under the Youth Criminal Justice Act.

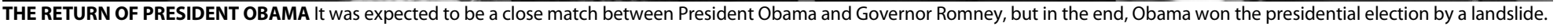
Though his identity remains unknown, students are abuzz with general speculation about the reasoning behind such a malicious act.

Of course, despite the startling beginning to an otherwise calm week before the winter break for T.S.S., classes proceeded as normal for the rest of the week. Another not-so-average time for T.S.S. students.

However, there are also questions that must be asked: how can we as a school better deal with situations such as these? Are there regulations that must be changed in order to more effectively communicate to students and guardians? Things to think about.



## Bomb threat: a disruption



He has earned himself another four years in office, and another four years to shape America as a strong and independent country.

I was not quite pleased with the answers that I received, however I hope that my presentation has helped encourage some commission members to reconsider a nuclear-powered future. I am grateful for having had the opportunity to attend the hearings in Courtice, and listening to the presentations of wonderful and inspiring interveners.



**DARLINGTON IMPACT** The hearings covered the various impacts of possible refurbishing of the nuclear plant.



# Cannabis legalization: a hazy mess

With marijuana legalized in Washington and Colorado, what does the future hold for Canada?

BY GUY ROMM  
NEWS CONTRIBUTOR

Cannabis, weed, pot, dope, grass, ganja; marijuana is a major influence on Canada. Over fifty percent of Canadians support the legalization of marijuana and many more support the use of marijuana for medical reasons. One in five Canadians 15-24 years old uses marijuana regularly. Recently, with the legalization of marijuana in the American states of Colorado and Washington, one must wonder if Canada will change its drug laws and by what degree.

Currently in Canada, marijuana usage is prohibited unless for medical purposes, for which one must get a license from the government. Marijuana use, however, has existed for a millennium, but it was only since the twentieth century that marijuana use became the taboo it is today.

In 1923, Canada criminalized the use of cannabis, and, until a few decades ago, restrictions have become increasingly tight. Today, in Canada, marijuana use is considered legal by the public and police rarely report the crime and usually

give a warning instead. Marijuana consumption is a much debated topic, but it is only recently that the pro-marijuana side is taking a leading role.

In the 2012 United States elections, in Washington and Colorado, two initiatives to the State Legislature were passed, legalizing the recreational use of marijuana. Albeit that both states only legalized the consumption of small amounts for adults, celebrations were held upon legalization. In Washington, four million people (79.27% of registered voters) voted, with 55.7% voting yes. In Colorado, of two and a half million people, 55.3% voted yes.

These proposals were an electoral first for both the United States and the world, receiving exceptionally high voter turnouts. The legalization of marijuana in these states will be legalized, with control on the quality of the product and taxes. The taxes will raise \$40 million in revenue annually to be used on public school assistance in Colorado. In Washington, revenue would go to healthcare and substance abuse prevention and education. Yet, both of these legislations face opposition.

Under federal law, marijuana recreational usage is still illegal, and so the federal government can per-

secute users or go to court against the states. It is being debated upon in the federal government whether or not amendments should be made to drug laws to fully expand legalize marijuana usage in states where legalized.

The United States previously declared a so-called "war on drugs". The "war" was declared by President Nixon in 1971, when marijuana consumption was commonly opposed by the public. Nixon's decisions caused a dramatic change. Before the act was passed, incarcerated Americans represented about 0.15% of the population, and this amount has been increasing ever since. In 2008, 0.8%, or 2.5 million Americans were incarcerated. In 2008, of the 2.5 million, 1.5 million were arrested for drug offenses and 0.5 million were imprisoned.

The "war on drugs" also saw funding given to groups in South America and Central America that fight against drugs in a war-like fashion. In 1989, the United States invaded Panama to stop drug trafficking. The consequence of this invasion was that the existing government was overthrown. As well, the United States government sponsors the spraying of herbicides over jungles in the area in an attempt to eradicate drug growth, but this has been criticized as being detrimental

to the local ecosystems. The "war on drugs" has been largely ineffective. Over the timespan of this "war", cocaine has become increasingly inexpensive and more and more Americans use drugs. In a 2008 study by a Harvard economist, it was estimated that legalizing drugs would save taxpayers \$76.8 billion a year.

Canada is much more lenient with drugs. Less than 1% of marijuana users are incarcerated when caught and most receive a small warning. Marijuana is also a large part of the country's economy. In British Columbia, marijuana is the third largest market. With such a large part of Canadians supporting marijuana usage, it is a wonder why Canada isn't taking steps to legalize marijuana.

One major problem is the side effects of marijuana. Pure marijuana consumption has never resulted in a death, although it may be the cause of related accidents. Those who drive when using marijuana have significantly increased risks. When combined with alcohol, the effects are drastic and clearly impair a driver. As well, marijuana use can impair memory, concentration and problem-solving, disrupting school tasks. In the short-term, the effects of marijuana are distorted perception, problems with

memory and learning, loss of coordination, troubled thinking, and increased heart rate with reduced blood pressure. Sometimes, marijuana can cause anxiety, fear, distrust, or panic. Smoking marijuana itself is harmful to the body. The tar consumed from smoking the substance is thought to cause lung cancer.

There are studies on both sides of the issue that show either marijuana is dangerous to the body or marijuana has medical benefits, such as decreasing risks of cancer.

In Canada, all political parties, except the Conservatives, support the decriminalization in Canada, including the Liberals and the NDP. Throughout the world, countries such as the Netherlands, legalized or decriminalized marijuana usage. In many more countries, cannabis consumption is illegal but often unenforced. The world is changing, and marijuana consumption is no longer seen as dangerous by the majority of Canadians.

With recent events in the United States, movement has begun to legalize or at least decriminalize marijuana in Canada.

The future may hold no change, but this is moment for Canadians to voice their opinions, whether for or against, because the future is being made.

## The Israel-Gaza conflict: A deep-rooted story of the Middle-East

An air-raid siren filled eight days with gruesome results.

BY ESTHER YONG  
NEWS CONTRIBUTOR

The recent continuation of the Gaza conflict with Palestinian's active resistance to military occupation by Israel in Gaza was no surprise. The battle over soil flared up once again since Israel's deadly Operation Cast Lead. In 2008, when Israel launched an air campaign on November 14, 2012 against the Islamist group Hamas, who governs the 1.5 million Palestinians in the Gaza strip. The Israeli airstrike blew up the vehicle carrying the commander of the Hamas military wing, Ahmed Al-Jabari, along with other targets.

Israel's actions were said to be in response to regular rocket fire from Gaza into southern Israel from rising militant groups, a persisting trend since 2001. Though Hamas has mostly held its fire and have struggled to rein in those groups, Hamas responded forcefully to the new assault, sending more than 300 rockets to Israel within 24 hours, some of them penetrating the heart of Israel's population around Tel Aviv.

Israel corresponded by carrying out their eight-day Operation Pillar of Defence with air raids that killed numerous civilians. All around the world, appalling photos of young Palestinian children, women and men alike lifeless on cement floors and dead bodies being dragged across roads went viral, gathering sympathy from the global community. On November 22, 2012, this short but gruesome war ended as the Israelis and the Palestinians bowed to US and international pressure, guaranteed by Egypt on the Palestinian side as a peace-maker. During those painfully long days, a total of 174 Palestinians, most of the civilians, and 6 Israelis, were killed. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad told the head of the Hamas government in Gaza that the eight days of cross-border fighting showed that Israel had no choice but to conform to Palestin-

ian rights. A ceasefire is being held and supported by both nations and peace negotiations are being made with corresponding mediating nations such as the US and Egypt and the UN.

The key to understanding the Gaza conflict is knowing its origin. Conflict in the Middle East, in particular with Israel and Palestine, has been prevalent throughout history since as early as 3000 B.C. More recently, after the formation of the state of Israel in 1948 and its war with the Palestinian Arab State, Egypt and Jordan, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were forced out of or fled Israeli-controlled territory and sought refuge in the Egyptian-held Gaza strip. The Gaza strip later passed into Israeli control in 1994, but was also partially autonomous under the Palestinian authority. Since then, the Gaza strip has been primarily under Israeli control and despite efforts to promote peace between neighbouring Palestinians, no mutual commitments were made or set timelines were met by the two nations.

Israel's objective has been to put an end to Palestinian attacks and international supervision of the Hamas Islamist group whom they consider terrorists. On the other hand, Hamas demands the cease of Israel's attacks and an opening

across the Gaza-Israel borders for cargo - a key to Gaza's survival.

Despite its direction toward resolution, the Gaza conflict is making many several nations as well as the Human Rights Watch, accuse Israel of committing war crimes during the conflict.

The last day of war killed many Palestinian civilians and Mohammed Jamal al-Dallu, a member of the Hamas police force deemed as a "terrorist." Even though Israel's army stated that they had targeted the terror activist, Human Rights Watch says Israel's attack was unlawful due to the large number of civilians killed, especially when a three-story building with al-Dallu and many civilians was bombed.

The Israeli army said that it strategized in order to minimize non-combatant casualties and blamed Palestinian militants for using civilian buildings as hideouts. Whether or not Israel will be convicted is not yet certain.

Tension between Israel and Palestine is far from gone as it is rooted deep in the nations' history. The world's leading nations will continually watch over them to prevent and reduce conflict in the future, but such progress is only possible when individuals become involved in protecting and voicing their opinions in the global community.



**TIGHT BORDER** The fight for Palestine continues, and is slowly heating up.

## Burning policies: the austerity riots

Governments insist that austerity is the way to save the failing economy.

BY DANNY ROMM  
NEWS CONTRIBUTOR

Over the past four years, more than half of Europe's countries have declared austerity, accompanied by two recessions in those four years. Approximately 27 European nations alone have enacted austerity measures, as part of a policy to cut deficit by lowering government spending through reducing public benefits. European nation's austerity policies are generally greeted poorly by the public; riots and protests are common results.

However, the question remains as to whether these measures can aid a country out of recession. Proponents argue that by cutting public spending, government's debts can become less severe. Opponents argue that this policy is economically ineffective and only serves to anger the people.

Regardless, the reaction to austerity is harsh, and the protests raging on for years now demonstrate the sentiments of the people.

Protests have occurred across continents, but are primarily focused in Europe, taking form in violent street protests.

While the reasons for the protests are not only based upon austerity measures, they are predominantly so.

One of the most shocking protests began in May 2011 with hundreds of thousands gathering in front of Greek parliament. This protest was, for a month, peaceful, until a violent police crackdown on the protestors.

Many cases of police brutality were reported to international organizations, and the pictures from the then turned riots seemed utterly dystopian. Police and protestors still clash; one of the more recent incidents being in February 2012, when hundreds of thousands gathered once more in anti-

austerity protests. Violence erupted with police using tear gas, flash grenades, and citizens using stones and Molotov cocktails. The casualties were 45 buildings, 25 protestors and 40 police officers injured.

Also in 2011, protests in Spain began, and continue to this day, growing more prominent as more austerity measures are enacted. Spain has a bleak future, with one in four families having no income and the youth unemployment rate being a staggering 52%. Once again, seen in these protests was riot police clashing with protestors.

Since 2010, England has faced austerity, and was met in outrage particularly in students. Rioters took to the streets and so began an infamous clash with police resulting in citizen deaths and thousands injured. Accompanying the sight of the two groups fighting were buildings and buses burning on the streets.

In a dozen more countries, both in Europe and around the world, it is easy to tell where the mindset of the masses lie. The governments however insist on retaining their austerity policy to return the recessive economy to a stable state. Some economists and analysts argue that austerity is not the way to go about restoring an economy, because it ironically results in the increase of unemployment and tax revenue, while others justify austerity by arguing that short term deficit is better than long term recession, and that debt liabilities take precedence.

The question remains with austerity's effectiveness, and as Europe is in turmoil, what happens next is anyone's guess.

*Regardless, the reaction to austerity is harsh, and the protests raging on for years now demonstrate the sentiments of the people.*

# Hero awards: are you a real hero?

On Saturday, December the 6<sup>th</sup> and the 8<sup>th</sup>, the annual Hero Awards took place, celebrating many heroes of our time.

BY LAUREN MALYK  
NEWS CONTRIBUTOR

It was an emotionally moving night as ten individuals were awarded for their achievements in making the community, and possibly the world a better place. Although each hero earns \$50,000 for their hard work, determination and cause, the first place prize for the most voted on initiative, earns a \$250,000 grant.

Did you know that 70% of African-American children can't swim? How about that 60% of Hispanic kids can't either? And neither can 42% of Caucasian children. Meet Wanda Butts, whom suffered the traumatic loss of her own son in 2006, when she was informed that he had drowned from never learning how to swim and not wearing a life jacket. Because of her loss she created the *Josh Project* in 2007, which aims to have children from Toledo, Ohio involved in low-cost swimming lessons. Due to her initiative the *Josh Project* has been able to teach 1,000 children how to swim. The two goals that were stressed by the creator of the project were to change the statistics for children who are apart of minorities and to be able to have an aquatic center for kids.

What happens when soldiers come back from war? They struggle. Mary Cortani, the veteran and creator of the non-profit organization *Operation Freedom Paws*, a service that works towards assisting veterans struggling to get back to everyday life says: "being able to help our veterans find the joy back in their life, it's priceless". Cortani came up with a solution to this problem; match these war heroes with dogs and teach them how to train their

very own service dog. Since the majority of soldiers come back with disorders like post-traumatic stress, these service dogs are trained to respond if the veteran needs assistance. To qualify for the program, an individual needs to have professional treatment of their disabilities and a letter or prescription from their family doctor stating that they would benefit from a service dog. The next step for the program is to start enlisting some of the veterans to train others in a mentoring program.

The next CNN hero was Catalina Escobar, who had a 12-year-old boy die in her arms while in a volunteering position at a maternity clinic. She became no stranger to tragedy as it struck her and another teen mother who had her children die in her company. A couple of days later, Catalina's own 16 month old died as well. This sparked something within this CNN hero as she started the *Juan Felipe Gomez Escobar Foundation* in efforts towards the goal of working with young teen mothers and children whom suffer from poverty. The miracle of this woman brought healthcare to impoverished families and for teen mothers, counseling, education and job training to help them become successful. Escobar lowered the infant mortality rate within her community and now she's at it again with her goal of breaking the cycle of poverty and trying to make "my girl's feel empowered".

There are 185 documented attacks against Afghan girls who seek out education. With the oppression of young girls, Razia Jan, decided to step up to the plate. These attacks can come in the form of acid being thrown at a young girls face or through her water being poisoned all to stop an individual from attending school. The *Zabuli Education Center*, was created to

make sure that young women in between the grades of kindergarten to grade 8 receive free education. In the community, 354 girls are able to take advantage of education and appreciate it. As for the curriculum, these children learn English, Farsi, Pashto, Math, Science and Religion. To address the attacks that occur, Jan has made sure to build a stone wall around the school and employ staff and guards to watch over the girls. Jan's simple goal is to be able to educate her students to create a better future for Afghan women and better the country altogether.

Another individual who is working towards educating youth is Leo McCarthy, who lost his daughter, Mariah tragically at the hands of a drunk driver. So he proposed a plan for students in Montana who are not victims or perpetrators. The plan detailed that if they give back to the community, talk to their parents and don't use drugs or alcohol for four years, then he will award \$1,000 scholarships to students. He named his plan the *Mariah Challenge* and has succeeded in engaging more than 140 youth in taking the pledge. To benefit from taking *Mariah's Challenge* all students need to do is sign up online, not be convicted of using drugs or alcohol, refusing to get into a vehicle when the driver is intoxicated. Then from there, students have the chance in their final year of high school to apply for the scholarship the challenge offers by submitting a three hundred word essay about how the challenge has affected their lives. Even older adults have pledged to be a part of the challenge, as they understand the meaning behind their fight; to stop drunk driving in Montana.

Thulani Madondo is the creator of the Kliptown Youth Program, which aims to help individuals stricken with poverty in the slums of Kliptown, part of Soweto, South

Africa. It provides academic support, as well as meals and activities for individuals in high school and has motivated kids to obtain an education and turn their lives around. The program requires that both students and parents sign a contract, which makes students stay in school and attend tutoring sessions twice a week in exchange for paying the schooling fees; as these families often cannot afford them. Madondo's goal is to simply encourage and inspire the next generation to reach their full potential.

Roughly 10,000 young people in Palm Beach County, Florida become the caregivers for their family. Caregivers are individuals or teams of people who specifically take care of people who are injured or disabled. These young caregivers, selflessly sacrifice themselves in order to take care of others. Connie Siskowski the creator of the *American Association of Caregiving Youth* seeks to assist them. The non-profit organization offers classes in helping teens understand and deal with their emotions as well as finances. The program even goes as far to provide overnight camps and educational, recreational activities. Siskowski's aim for the program is for kids to learn how to deal with loss, trauma and provide medical equipment to ensure the improvement of these caretakers. As younger and younger youth are fighting the everyday struggle of taking care of their relatives, themselves on top of school work; they lose hope in attending school and ultimately, drop out. *The American Association of Care Giving the Youth* aims to change the lives of these young heroes, for the better. Connie Siskowski's first goal is to make youth care givers feel like they're not alone. What happens to addicts after an overdose? Scott Strode, in 2007 created the *Phoenix Multisport Support Group* for addicts who want

to stay clean and have fun doing it in Boulder, Colorado. There are 50 programs per week, including yoga to ice climbing. Any person who has been sober for at least 48 hours is invited to join in the activities. With the support given to members they have the ability to focus on doing and being their best, instead of using drugs.

Ever wonder what happened after the Haiti earthquake? To answer the question; people went on a rampage, a rape rampage to be exact. Malya Villard-Appolon, a co-founder of the organization called *KOFAVIV*, sets out to change the lives of victims and get them the justice they deserve. Villard-Appolon herself has been a victim twice and her own 14 year old daughter was once affected as well. The non-profit organization has 66 female outreach agents and twenty five male security guards around their only shelter; the "tent camps". After a woman has been raped, she is taken to the hospital immediately and needed to undergo tests and procedures. The goal of *KOFAVIV* is too make Haiti safer for women and children and to obtain justice for victims.

Finally, the winner of the 2012 CNN Hero Awards was Pushpa Basnet, from Nepal who works to get children out of prison. As soon as a parent commits a serious crime in Nepal, they are sent to prison with their child. Since the beginning of her fight in 2005, 100 children have been saved. So she started a day care for children who ended up in prison by the name of the *Early Childhood Development Center*. Just two years later the *Butterfly Home* was established for these children. Her goal is to create a better future with opportunities for these children to succeed. Now the real question comes, after hearing all of these amazing heroic stories; what's your cause?

## Upcoming changes in Ontario's Liberal leadership

Who will replace Dalton McGuinty?

BY CRYSTAL CHEN  
NEWS CONTRIBUTOR

After Dalton McGuinty, twice re-elected Ontario Premier of nine years, resigned in October, many are asking "why?" "what does this mean?" and "who will be the next leader?"

On October 15, McGuinty announced his surprise resignation, saying "this is the right time". His move prorogued, or halted, the movement of legislature and would be enacted once his party, the Liberals, chose a new leader. The selection is set to happen in January 2013 and will hopefully yield the

"renewal" and new ideas McGuinty has talked about.

A reason for Dalton McGuinty's sudden resignation was never released, although dedicated observers of provincial politics may have their suspicions. Ontario's enormous \$14.4 billion deficit resulted in many spending cuts, a freeze on teachers' salaries being one of them. In return, a union work-to-rule has been enacted and is impacting schools in more and more regions. By proroguing the legislation session, labour talks are put on hold, and the Liberals have more time to create a strategy.

Other possible causes for McGuinty stepping down from office include scandals over Ontario's air ambulance service and power

plant cancellations, the change in administration style now that the Liberals hold minority government as opposed to their previous two majority terms, the importance of his family life for him, and the small possibility of running for federal leadership. Though the Premier alluded that the cause of his leaving was his daughter's recent wedding and denied it was related to the scandals at a news conference, family focus is a common tune for politicians who decide to depart from public affairs for a variety of more controversial reasons. As for a potential future at Parliament Hill, Mr. McGuinty told reporters, "I am not making any plans whatsoever beyond my duties here at Queen's Park." He will remain the MPP for

Ottawa-South until the next election, but he is under "enormous pressure" to run for federal leadership as quoted by Steve Mahoney, former leader of the federal Liberal Party. Now, the list of candidates to become the next Ontario Liberal Party leader holds seven people, all present or former MPPs who held cabinet positions in McGuinty's government. The next Liberal leader of Ontario is one of the following contenders: Eric Hoskins, Gerard Kennedy, Glen Murray, Sandra Pupatello, Charles Sousa, Harinder Takhar and Kathleen Wynne.

Among them, Sandra Pupatello believes the current runners and even PC leader Tim Hudak, are "too Toronto" and that they must

expand their appeal beyond the GTA to hold onto power. After all, it was rural Ontario that had little support for and cost Dalton McGuinty his majority government in the October 2011 election.

Kathleen Wynne however hopes the leadership contest does not "descend into Toronto-bashing". She has committed to serving as agriculture minister if elected Premier, and also warns of future austerity as she plans to limit all spending increases to one percent below gross domestic product growth even after the plan to balance deficits by 2017. Her fiscal prudence has helped her become one of the front-runners in the race.

The voters in this election, the Liberal Party delegates, have a chance to judge their choices in the on-going debates being held in Ingersoll, Thunder Bay, Ottawa, Durham Region, and Toronto, in that order, before the final vote during the leadership convention on January 25-26. Each candidate answers questions on different aspects, from the local economy to health care, while trying to win over the audience by reasoning why they are best suited for the role of Premier.

In the span of three months, Ontario's minority provincial government will undergo significant change. Each of the seven candidates vying for the role of Premier has a slightly different stance to differentiate themselves and the final decision will be left up to members within the ruling Liberal party. Competition leads to innovation, and hopefully, this turn of events will lead to improved tactics and benefits for citizens.



**A WAVE GOODBYE** Dalton McGuinty resigns from his job as Ontario's premier, leaving seven new candidates in a struggle for this new open position.





# Dancing it Gangnam Style

As Gangnam Style hits one billion views, the integrity of musical opinions is questioned.

BY DANNY ROMM  
OPINION CONTRIBUTOR

By the time you hold this paper in your hand, “Gangnam Style” will have surpassed one billion views. As I write this article, on the 12<sup>th</sup> of December, the viral Korean pop music video has at an astonishing 927 million views, and it’s rising by millions a day. On November 24<sup>th</sup>, South Korean artist PSY’s Gangnam style surpassed Justin Beiber’s “Baby” music video as the most viewed video on YouTube. Baby had 804 million views when PSY’s song skyrocketed past.

At this point, you’d figure the song would lose momentum and the view count’s rate of increase would start to wane; after all, the video was uploaded on July 15<sup>th</sup>, which is an eonago in internet time. However, the daily view count is actually still incredibly high, although slowing down slightly- but just slightly. Since passing Baby, it has gained an additional 200 million views in three weeks. What’s also noteworthy is that while Justin Beiber’s song has more than twice the amounts of dislikes than likes, Gangnam Style has a like-to-dislike ration of nearly 15:1.

The song itself is incredibly catchy, though at final count there are a total of three English words in the entire song: ‘sexy’, ‘hey’, and ‘lady.’ I doubt very many non-Korean speaking folk can understand the lyrics, but lyrics aren’t the most important factor when the distinctive audio and addicting



ONE BILLION VIEWS LATER... PSY’s journey to fame is raising some questions about what make music popular.

chorus hold enough to keep hundreds of millions entrapped.

More so than the music, the video also holds significant appeal. Something crazy and stereotypically ‘wackily Asian,’ the video has some odd scenes, including PSY seemingly air horse dancing, and PSY lying on the ground singing under the legs of a man who is thrusting his pelvis.

The video was shared within hours on sites like Reddit, Facebook, and Twitter for its casual absurdity, and within hours it went viral. However it’s arguably the video- not the music- that propelled Gangnam Style into the international scene.

Perhaps it is the catchy tune which entertains masses, or maybe it’s the ‘odd’ video. Maybe it’s the fact that it’s something new, not a

standardized Western pop video, or maybe it’s the fun and catchy dance. Regardless of the cause, the video’s popularity is as deniable as its innate likeability. From the ratio of likes to dislikes on YouTube, and partially from the countless parodies, flash mobs, and covers that have popped up in its wake, it isn’t difficult to tell that the West likes this song.

But, alas, like any major hit, there are downsides that come with popularity. The first thing is that once the song enters the ‘Top 40’, it’s the only thing you hear. In every radio station and in every store, the song seems to haunt you, following you wherever you go. To those who listen to the radio frequently, or traverse malls and shops often... I sympathize. Any song gets annoying and bother-

some after hearing it a million times. Gangnam Style is no exception. In fact, PSY himself has stated numerous times that he’s sick of performing Gangnam Style over and over again.

Additionally, there are changed perceptions regarding the public’s outlook on music. There are many people who hold the belief that mainstream music is automatically bad, and that any extremely popular song must be terrible. In relation to this mindset, there are two effects with Gangnam Style in particular: those who liked the song but now hate it because it gained popularity, and those who hated it from the beginning because it was already ‘mainstream’ and was just another ‘pop fad.’

However, ultimately, music’s

popularity shouldn’t- and doesn’t- determine its quality. Is most mainstream music generally bad? In my opinion, yes, because I simply prefer other genres of music. But does that mean that we should instinctively tune out and hate anything that is mainstream? No, because once in a while something good comes along.

Tastes in music vary, and four different individuals can enjoy wildly different types of music, none of which could be objectively ‘bad’. The point remains that music is subjective; it’s based on individual taste and not overall ingenuity. Music doesn’t have to be as complex and meaningful as Beethoven to be loved, and it doesn’t have to be as simple and fun as LMFAO to be loved.

Everyone has their own tastes in music, just like everyone likes different foods or even different art. Gangnam style is brilliant, not for the intellectual stimulation and creative perspective on life, but for the fun and simplicity that the song holds. Not every song has to be life changing, some can be ingenious in their entertainment value. And that’s what Gangnam Style is- an entertaining song and video. The video is sporadic and unique, and the now famous dance sold it.

It’s plain ridiculous to dislike something based on others’ opinions, because ultimately the most relevant opinion should be your own. Not all pop music is bad, and bad itself is a subjective term! So, to all the Gangnam naysayers, reconsider your opinion: is it based off the music and video itself, or what your mindset is for the type of music? If you give new music a chance, you just might find something you enjoy.

# Socializing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

Social networks: making conversations awkwardly unproductive since 2003.

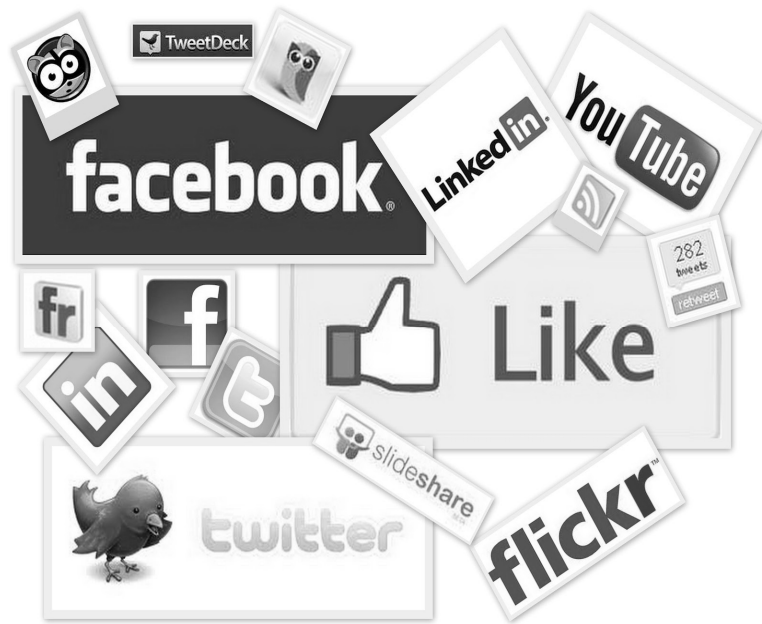
BY GRACE TO  
OPINION CONTRIBUTOR

As of August 2012, nearly 70% of people who are 18 years of age and older use social networking. The increasing usage of social media sites, like Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, and Google Plus, has reached an incredible level of popularity.

The ever-growing number of users of these social media sites has provoked numerous debates regarding the future implications of our methods of communication. It has changed the way humans communicate with each other on a daily basis. We can already see that this generation of youths are much more reliant on technologies to communicate to friends and families than ever before.

And why wouldn’t they be? It’s a fast, efficient, and fun way to socialize, without ever having to come face-to-face with the person. Now, people can just sit alone in a corner in their rooms with their smart phones, never setting foot outside, yet being able to feel as if they have been socializing for an adequate amount of time.

It’s evident that social net-



EFFICIENTLY AWKWARD? Social media affects how we talk face-to-face.

working sites will only improve with time, creating a more fast, effective, and efficient way to communicate thoughts and ideas. In a world that is now focused on the sharing of information, it is becoming increasingly important to find methods to do this in the easiest way possible.

Today, social media not only allows one to communicate with friends and families, but also al-

lows one to interact with celebrities, companies, and politicians in a way that wasn’t possible before. Social technology permits people to be updated on news and information almost instantaneously, aiding us in the current fast-paced world.

Using these handy services has not only given us the ease of communication, but it also gave us the comfort of not actually com-

municating face-to-face. As people, social network sites and technologies have caused some of us to forget how to speak to each other properly in person. Technology has given us more time to formulate a decent response for others when socializing, decreasing our ability for spontaneity in real-life conversations. Many are becoming dependent on such technologies at such a young age that it has, ironically, destroyed children’s development of social skills in real life.

The efficiency of social networks may not be completely effective in the communication of ideas because it remains difficult to fully connect ideas with others over the web. With the limited options online, it is sometimes difficult for one to find sufficient ways communicate our ideas, thoughts, and emotions in detail.

This aspect is slowly improving as many online users have switched to services, such as Skype, to feel more personally connected to others with the aid of a webcam and instant messaging. However, it may still be years until there will be the type of technology that the personal way to communicate that replicates the actual face-to-face human feeling of communication

Social networking on a personal level also has some negative

repercussions; it enables the users to hide behind their computer screens. The communications performed by youths are mainly to their peers, and many may be completely oblivious as to what content they have posted and the aftermath of their actions.

Due to the informal and anonymous way of speaking to people online, youth users often feel fewer consequences from posting negative and hurtful content towards others online. In addition, we are also sharing even more obscure and personal information online, risking catching the attention of online predators.

Being totally reliant on communicating online prevents one from building relationships on a more personal level. These useful tools can present potentially hazardous effects when one uses them on a very frequent basis.

However, the implications of social networks are not necessarily a bad thing and the future of communication is still bright. To many, the potential negative effects are not enough to persuade them to avoid using the tools since the positives clearly outweigh the negatives in the short-term. The key to using these social networking technologies for their intended purpose of communication is to use them responsibly.

# The new Facebook? Introducing Google Plus



**GROUPS AND GOOGLE** Google Plus is going to be the future of social networking. With its new services, communication with your friends has never been easier to do with productivity.

Google Plus users are rising in the millions, but is it a replacement for the popular Facebook?

BY ALEX WONG  
NEWS CONTRIBUTOR

Almost everyone has a Facebook. It is often their main way to keep in touch with friends, family or co-workers. With 900 million users, it is generally accepted as the most successful social networking site; everyone simply knows about it. It is not uncommon to immediately ask a new friend their Facebook account or perhaps check it multiple times each day for updates on your friend's friends, their location, or even what they're doing at the moment. However, amidst the success of Facebook, many overlook the true future star: Google Plus.

Google Plus is becoming more and more popular each day. Many say it's a ghost town, which is partly correct. Many people own Google Plus accounts, but simply do not realize it. With the creation of the common Youtube account (which Google now owns), a Gmail account or even the usage of a "Google App" such as Google Drive

(a cloud based storage alike to the popular Dropbox), a Google Plus account is created for you. Due to this, there are 400 million users online since September of 2012, but only 100 million are truly active. However, this is no small feat: Google Drive has only been alive for one year. The number of active users is growing by the millions, and by the way, Google has integrated Plus into all of its services; it is on its way on becoming one of the more recognized social networking sites out there.

But how does Google Plus do this "integration"? Google was once simply a search engine. It surpassed competitors such as Bing and other third party engines by miles; it was and still is recognized as the best. However, Google wanted more, so it created Google Apps, bought the ever so popular Youtube and created Google Plus. It is very likely that you are using one of these services, and in some way or form, Google is part of your online browsing experience, especially if you are using Google Chrome, one of the more successful browsers, soon to surpass even the ancient Internet Explorer in usage (many users are turning away from Internet Explorer to

Google Plus). Google views everything you do, may it be the videos you watch or the phrases you search. And through this, they give you suggestions of what you may want to see, or even change up your search results compared to another who searched the exact same thing, but Google just decided you had different interests. Google simply adjusts Google Plus to be your domain, based on what you like and what you want to see, and you just expand on that once you realize its potential, becoming an active Google Plus yourself before you know it.

So what are the true awesome features of Plus that not everyone knows about?

**1. Integration with Google Services.**

If you use Gmail, Picasa, Youtube or other Google services, Plus is a no brainer; everything's just integrated. Share a video directly to your Plus page, or share an important essay to your close knit study group.

**2. Circles are awesome.**

One of the features that distinguish Plus from ordinary sites is Google+ Circles. No more is the personal offense taken when unfriending an annoying classmate

on Facebook or the embarrassment of your mother commenting on your statuses. Circles change everything. Choose who you post to, may it to be your friends circle or your family circle, and they won't know the difference. It helps keep things strictly friend material stay with your friends, and family updates with your family. Circles are also where you can utilize that awesome Google Service Integration to work and share with your friends that hilarious cat video from the other day or where to hang out on Friday night.

**3. Hangouts: Chatrooms wherever, whenever.**

Want to just chat/video chat with some friends? Click that Hangout button, add your circle of friends, and you got yourself a hangout. All from your browser! With hangouts, there may soon be no more need for other video chatting applications.

On Google+ Hangouts, you can share documents, videos, etc. But Hangout's true forte is the interaction one can have with his/her favourite celebrities. More and more celebrities are using Google+, and are hosting hangouts more and more often. It is not uncommon to be able to hop into the chat of Jo-

seph Gordon-Levitt talking with Spielberg about his upcoming film, Lincoln.

Google Plus is not a service to be overlooked; more and more users are piling into this social networking bandwagon each and every day. Facebook is still the primary social networking website of the lives of many, but Plus should not be something easily pushed aside when deciding your social networking choice. Google lives off the data it collects from you, the user, may it be from your Youtube video searches to your search results on their search engine, making your Plus experience better. Google uses this information and suggests websites you may want to visit or products you may want to buy. They advertise, but they advertise in a way appealing to you, their customer. Plus provides useful features that may replace popular applications due to its growing popularity. Plus has circles and hangouts, two unique features of a high caliber that not many other networking sites have accomplished.

Google+ is being recognized by more and more people as their go-to networking site, and sooner or later, you will have it.

# Do classics really matter?

The purpose and significance of the dreaded classic novel.

BY HYEWON SONG  
OPINION CONTRIBUTOR

By high school, we are all familiar with at least one work of classic literature. Most of us have read at least one of Shakespeare's works, among them plays like Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet, Macbeth, Othello, and Julius Caesar; you can all probably remember having to analyze every other sentence found in To Kill a Mockingbird; many essays have been written on trying to figure out what fire symbolized in Lord of the Flies. Students are later given the semblance of choice by selecting an ISU novel to read- though we are given a options, those options are limited to what society considers "classics". A lot of students complain about having to trudge through long, arduous classic novels that clearly aren't important or relevant to their everyday lives. However, the truth? Classics are still important, and there is a reason that classic works are still read and studied today.

Classic literature is important because its works have good themes that are universal and understandable by all; everyone can learn from them. Shakespeare's plays were written in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, and yet they deal with themes that every human, from all cultures and time periods, can understand. Romeo and Juliet deals with difficult relationships; Macbeth has to do with misaimed ambition; Othello is all about jealousy. Though all of Shakespeare's works are about 4 centuries old, their themes are so

universal that they continue to be relevant in the modern day. After all, there's a reason that Shakespeare's works are so frequently alluded to in other works, and why there are so many "modern interpretations" of his plays. A novel dealing with a more specific theme- one that is not easily relatable- can still be powerful but lacks the universal message that everyone can understand. Classic works may be old and sometimes just impossible to read, but they are important because students will be able to get something truly worthwhile from connecting to the literature.

However, while a work's themes may be timeless, many aspects of the work can also tell us a lot about the time period in which it was written. Attitudes and opinions of time periods can be reflected in writing, which can be a way to learn about past culture and society. While some may think that history is unimportant (incidentally, many of these individuals also complain about the necessity of studying classic literature), it is important to learn about the past as it expands our worldly views. As Albert Einstein put it, "Somebody who only reads newspapers and at best books of contemporary authors looks to me like an extremely near-sighted person who scorns eyeglasses. He is completely dependent on the prejudices and fashions of his times, since he never gets to see or hear anything else." Reading classic books, which come from the past, teaches us about the human mind from different points in time. This decreases our ignorance, and thus allows us to think from different points of view- an

important and useful skill to have.

Classic literature is also great because of the richness of its language, mechanics, and structure. Classics often have a great vocabulary. Even if you don't realize it, you pick up words you don't know as you read through the novel's context. This is pretty important in an age where our vocabulary is limited to internet slang, text speak, and smiley faces. Having a large vocabulary is like having a toolbox with more tools in it: you'll be able to communicate faster, and with much greater efficiency and accuracy. Plus, you'll get to sound intelligent. Grammar, spelling, syntax, and styles are impressive in classic literature; you'll absorb these skills subconsciously when you read. If you're going to learn the English language by reading, why

not learn from the best there is, the ones that have been great for centuries? In an epoch where we are losing the ability to understand and utilize English, reading should become as important as ever. Classic novels should stay relevant as they are great teachers of the English language.

While classic literature is relevant and important, a lot of students say otherwise. In order to keep an interest in classic literature, it should be made clear that they are not being read just so you can memorize what symbolism and vocabulary to spit it back out on tests. It should be made clear that it is being learned in class because there is a lot you can learn that genuinely impact your life, all for the better. It can provide life lessons that you can use throughout your whole life, no

matter what age you are or where you are from. It can be a great way to learn about the past and expand your worldly views. It can also help greatly with vocabulary and other core mechanics of writing, something that is somewhat lacking in today's youth.

Classic literature should also be taught in a way that is fun. Today's education system promotes a systematic, ingest-regurgitate way of learning: we are taught that we learn simply to get good marks on tests, which shouldn't be the case at all. We need to learn in order to apply knowledge in the real world. Classic literature has plenty of knowledge that can be applied in the real world; after all, language is how we all communicate. Without it, we wouldn't have a human world to live in.



**A GREAT READ** Despite the thoughts of many students, classic novels provide a rich experience for the reader.



# Public transportation: The pass, the presto, and the busing future

A look into how many TSS students get to school.

BY PAUL MILLER  
OPINION CONTRIBUTOR

Getting to school is probably the most important trip you make every day of the week (that is, of course, unless you prefer going home. Take your pick). Many students choose to walk, since they live in the immediate area. But because of all of TSS' feeder schools, many students (myself included) live pretty far from the school, so getting there can be a pain.

York Region Transit appears to hold the answers. Bus routes travel all over York Region, stretching as far as Stouffville. But the daily traffic jam outside our school seems to indicate that many students aren't taking the bus - they're getting driven. Why?

I know a couple of students who get driven from only a few blocks away when they oversleep. Not a big problem, unless they oversleep every day - which is a problem. But even still, the bulk of them walk and there's still a traffic jam every morning, so the people can't all be coming from the surrounding area.

The only people who are left to fill the space are those who live pretty far away, so that it's really too far to walk. Okay, so why are they getting rides when we have a fantastic bus service open to us? Some say it's too expensive (as if gas isn't). Others say that they would have to wake up earlier, and one student claimed that buses sucked.

Buses suck? That's news to me. In 1971 when York Region was officially formed, there were five separate bus networks running in very close proximity to each other. For the next 30 years, York Region leaned on them to all merge into one collective bus network. And in 2001, they did. That's pretty impressive considering that there wasn't going to be much money in it for any of the five at the time. They still did, and they formed one of the best bus

services of all time.

You can be anywhere in Thornhill within half an hour when you ride the bus, if you get on at the right time. Still, the most I've ever waited for a bus is another half hour, which isn't a whole lot of my valuable time.

So why don't people use the bus?

One student who lives close to Don Mills said to me that he doesn't like the bus because there are no direct YRT routes down Steeles Avenue. Toronto Transit, however, runs down Steeles avenue right beside his house. If he used the TTC, he'd be at school in ten minutes.

There's just one problem; he would have to transfer to a YRT bus at Yonge Street if he was going to ride all the way to school. Because TTC and YRT have different fare structures, for one trip to school, he'd have to buy two separate fares. It's certainly not the most convenient thing in the world.

But there is a light at the end of the tunnel! York Region Transit, Go Transit, and TTC are adopting a program known as the Presto Pass! Presto is like a credit card that you tap to ride when you get on a bus. It's quick, easy, and you don't need to carry multiple tickets.

The bad news? It's still going to charge you multiple fares to ride a TTC bus and a YRT bus. So for now, Presto is good, but not great.

The Ontario government has been planning for years to one day make a province-wide transit system and incorporate everything. But considering that it took York Region 30 years just to merge five small bus companies, that won't be happening any time soon.

I'm all for buses, and I'm going to continue riding them for the rest of high school. Someday we're going to have a perfect public transit network - and even if that's not today, I hope you all do the same. Ride the York Region Transit. C'mon, people - Get rid of that traffic jam!

# An art attack



SHOWING THEIR TRUE COLOURS Arts schools are a vital resource to our community and how students learn.

How the battle against funding of the arts should come to an end.

BY DANA RADOVANOVIC  
OPINION CONTRIBUTOR

When we think of the arts many choose not to associate it with schooling and education. These individuals are not solely comprised of opinionated parents, but also of a shocking number of influential and powerful people that have close ties to education. Recent news has been emphasizing the number of schools that have not had support in the funding of arts programs.

So we enter the age old debate of whether or not it is worth allocating more funds towards the Arts in schools. It is pertinent to understand exactly how much the Arts can impact the lives of students in a school environment and why it would be a great investment to the school.

First off, it is important to note that the Arts not only involve the typical drawing, painting, crafting, but also include other branches of literature, music, dance and theatre. Arts programs are virtually unlimited with various ideas for school courses that are capable of encouraging students to expand their creative horizons. Numerous high schools, like Westmount, Earl Haig, and Unionville, within the GTA have arts enriched programs with courses like sculpting, improvisation, ballet, and creative writing.

So why is funding for more arts courses still an issue? The main and only argument that opposing individuals declare is that skills involving basic mathematics and literacy should be addressed

first, prior to teaching the arts. In the United States an act had been passed called the "No Child Left behind Act", which focuses on the frequent assessment of children's basic skills, bringing the Arts into education only if each child is reading and writing at grade level. However, in comparison with the high schools previously mentioned with others across the GTA without enriched arts, arts enriched schools had higher passing rates in both the EQAO and the OSSLT, proving that it is possible to have great focus on both basic mathematics and literacy as well as the arts.

Now the issue I find with the way that many school boards see "The Arts", is that they do not recognize or utilize the program as a tool. Mathematics and literacy are extremely important, but there's no "right" way to teach a subject as long as it works for students. So why not use the Arts as a learning guide in tandem with these subjects? We live in an era where education is not so black and white, and we can dare submerge ourselves into the gray areas where subjects overlap, which can be used to increase the quality of the content that's taught. Not only would it increase the level of enjoyment but perhaps also offer practical ways to apply the knowledge learned, for example, musical notes can teach fractions, school plays can delve into historical events, etc.

We must remember that the human brain is not only dominant in one hemisphere of language, logic and numbers, but also creativity, music, and expressing emotions. What's great about arts programs is that they can be affordable with the right budget, and mouldable to focus on whatever

the school chooses, making the possibilities endless for curriculum integration.

Consequently, there have been many studies showing that involvement in the Arts produces gains in cognitive ability, critical thinking, verbal skill as well as improved confidence, concentration, teamwork skills and motivation. In 2006, the Guggenheim, a well-known museum in New York City, launched an arts program called 'Learning through Art' and conducted a study involving third graders, both of those who participated in the program and those who had attended regular public schools. They found that students involved in the Arts program achieved greater results in six categories of literacy and critical thinking skills than the children who were not involved in the program.

The potential for these skills to be cultivated cannot be taken for granted, as the study clearly shows how students can achieve success in the many other subjects that they learn at school.

So what reason is left to not increase funding for the Arts? The cost of doing so is of course an important factor in deciding the allocation of funds, however there could be many ways of being cost efficient if only someone looked for them.

So if students are willing to accept alternative applications and methods of learning in "non-Arts" subjects, or to have a diverse exposure to the Arts in courses of their own, then the board should try to accommodate for them. Perhaps finding ways to balance a new budget and revamping the olden ways of thinking can allow teachers to focus on producing great future leaders.



TAKING THE BUS Why more of our students should embrace public transit.

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# Todd’s bullying video infuriates child’s parents

Should there be a limit to cyber bullying?

BY LAUREN MALYK  
OPINION CONTRIBUTOR

In the Durham region, parents were shocked and heated when they heard that their ten year old children were shown a video made by Todd reciting her story of bullying in class. But this incident brings up the issue of how far is too far when tackling the subject of cyber bullying in the school system?

The story of the young fifteen year old Amanda Todd is a tragic one filled with wrong decisions made, bullying, drugs, alcohol, sex, fights, mental health issues and the implications that followed. When Todd’s famous video of her life story done on cue cards was shown to a class of ten year old children at the Goodwood Public School, parents were furious. Some parents stated that their children arrived home in tears because of the harsh content featured in the video.

After the video was shown, then the teacher directed that the students should have a class discussion. Parent Paul Kreutzer recalls that the discussion that followed included “information of a sexual nature”. It is said that the teacher reported who showed the video had previously been a Social Worker. She then proceeded to share information about a case she had dealt with in the past. This particular case was said to be of a father who murdered his children one day. Since the incident, the B.C. Ministry of Education has sent out a notice to all schools detailing that they should not present the video in class because of its content. With both cyber and regular bullying being controversial topics, it was no surprise that the teacher showed the video to the class. The teacher wanted to raise awareness, but she reached out to her class in what parents thought was an unsuccessful and inappropriate way.

Recently on YouTube, “TheFineBros” who own Fine Brothers Productions, produce videos on the social video site.

They have a number of popular series, one in particular being ‘Teens react’, which shows one video and the various teens are filmed reacting to it and stating their opinion. “With the continuing issue of bullying and cyberbullying resulting in depression and suicide, we felt it important to address the issue by talking to teens about this recent video/tragedy in hopes it will help provoke more discussion about the severity of the world wide problem.” Is the opening to the video and goes on to state that if you or someone you know is a victim, you should talk to someone about it.

The video proceeds with teenagers looking wide eyed and shocked when it came to watching Todd’s moving video. One teen when asked about Amanda Todd and the video replied that “I feel like she made two little mistakes and that’s not fair.” Seventeen year old Rumour was asked about what her school is doing about it and went on later to say that “At the beginning of the year they kind of talk about it. And then there’s big stuff like this, that’s going around and is pretty viral then they talk about it, but other than that, it’s not really brought up in school’s which sucks because everybody thinks that there is so much that gets done for it. And there really isn’t. It really feels like you’re alone and like nobody cares.” The other teens like Rumour said that their schools were not doing a lot to stop bullying. One even continued on by saying that he is still bullied, even though there is an anti-bullying club at his school.

With similar cases to Todd’s coming into the light, it’s no surprise that people need to be made more aware of the consequences that come along with bullying. School’s and teachers need to tackle bullying with a head on approach to get it to stop. Teachers should try their best to spot signs of bullying. Although we couldn’t save Amanda Todd, we can save other like her by spreading the word and remembering that it does get better.

# UAE ban: losing face

Why did the UAE ban the wearing of the infamous Guy Fawkes masks, and what does this mean for the future of protests?

BY DANNY ROMM  
OPINION CONTRIBUTOR

Wearing a Guy Fawkes mask in the United Arab Emirates is now illegal. Naturally, this decision was proclaimed when officials had most reason to fear the iconic mask: before December 2<sup>nd</sup>, the UAE’s National Day, during which many protests groups were planning to make their presence known. Over the past couple of years, the mask has come to symbolize rebellion from a tyrannical regime due to its association with Alan Moore’s *V for Vendetta*; more recently, the mask was adopted by the collective “hacker group” known as Anonymous.

The mask has two purposes, the first of which being handily doing what a mask does: covering one’s face. In some countries, such as Canada, it is illegal to cover your face during an ‘unlawful protest.’ The justification for this is that in the case of a riot (or other unlawful protests), the police should be able to identify potential criminals.

However, this law in the United Arab Emirates is exclusively for the Guy Fawkes mask, which indicates that there may be more than local police officers behind this law.

Guy Fawkes was a 16<sup>th</sup> century man who was convicted of high treason after attempting to blow up the British parliament. Over time, popularized by the comic V for Vendetta, his name began to symbolize anarchy, and subsequently freedom, liberty, and rebellion against the government. The actual mask’s aesthetics comes from the movie V for Vendetta, a 2008 film which explores the ideas of anarchy, protests, and freedom from a tyrannical government. Over the last few years, the Guy Fawkes mask has come into an important role during the protests occurring world-



THE INFAMOUS GRIN Guy Fawkes masks have gotten themselves a ban.

wide. The iconic grinning black and white mask is worn not only to become anonymous (or as part of Anonymous), but it also communicates a message: that the wearer of the mask is not satisfied with their government’s policies and politics, and that they demand change.

The Guy Fawkes mask and Anonymous came into substantially significant roles during the ‘Arab Spring’, a key string of protests and revolutions taking place over the past few years which, in many locations, ultimately resulted in freedom from a former tyrannical government. In banning these masks, the United Arab Emirates appears to not only fear an Arab Spring of their own, but particularly those that associate with Anonymous.

Trying to justify the bill’s approval, a Dubai Police official stated: “Using any symbol that insults the country or instigates unrest against its system is not allowed.” The symbol, of course, being the anti-government attitudes associated with the Guy Fawkes mask.

The UAE fears the masks, and fears Anonymous. Effectively, by installing this ban at such a key moment, the country made anti-government protests that much harder to carry out. By eliminating the masks as a unifying factor among protestors, they will be easier to identify, but they will also appear less as one unified group and more as individuals. While Anonymous can still play a digital role on National Day, the thousands who in other countries who wore the mask to identify as part of an anti-nationalistic movement could no longer do so by the same means.

Perhaps banning the masks will soon become standard. I presume that this action will be lim-

ited to the more dictator-oriented countries, but perhaps Western democracies could start taking up the practice. After all, the recent bans on masks in unlawful protests in Canada was instated conveniently before November the Fifth, Guy Fawkes Day, during which Anonymous was planning to have a public demonstration against the Canadian government. Is singling out Guy Fawkes masks really that far behind?

The problem is clear: freedom of speech and expression is being suppressed in a very specific way for a significant group of individuals, and these efforts are directly targeting anti-government or anti-nationalist protests and protesters. Ultimately, the reasons for mass protest can only be because a large group of people believe something is fundamentally *wrong* with the country. Suppressing this prevents that form of expression.

In the UAE, banning the Guy Fawkes mask clearly shows a fear of government protests, also re-establishing the well-known fact that something is very wrong in the United Arab Emirates. Preventing this form of protest also summarizes the future of their regime: one of strict and forced obedience. This additionally shows that action must be taken to prevent the government- and future governments- from suppressing its citizens.

As the Guy Fawkes mask grows more and more prominent in the revolutionary scene, will other countries follow suit with the UAE’s ban? Now that masks are banned during ‘unlawful protests’ in Canada, are further bans expected? Unfortunately, it appears as if the answer to both is yes. The world needs to stand up for the UAE’s citizens, lest we may find ourselves in their place.

# Noteworthy nerds: no longer neglected

Are nerds the new cool?

BY VIVIAN ZHANG & PRISCILLA LEUNG  
OPINION CONTRIBUTORS

Nerds. What’s the first thing that comes to mind? For most, it would be the image of a small, scrawny boy with an aptitude for academics. Back in the day, jocks were seen as “the cool kids”, the ones younger kids aspired to be. They “ruled the school” because they flaunted their physical abilities, and sat at the top of the social hierarchy. Nerds were pushed aside and disregarded because of their lack of social skills, looked down upon because of their thick rimmed glasses and high-waisted pants; they were stereotyped, and misunderstood. They were seen to be “know-it-all” and snobby, but this is not the case today. Now, the tables have turned; the definition of a nerd as well as their social standing has changed. Nerds have changed from being this stereotype to individuals who are intelligent and successful in school, as well as apt with technology. Jocks today are assumed to be unintelligent, and with society’s growing appreciation for the intelligence, nerds have risen to the top.

In a world where innovation is essential, the need for aptitude has grown. Intelligence is now linked to success, because the way to acquire future economic stability is to make academic achievements throughout education. In the past, a high mark was met with ridicule from peers because it was associated with a lack of social interaction. In modern day society, a high mark is the cause for celebration, and is the root of admiration. Society requires thriving individuals to sustain our economy and to lead our corporations in a new era of technology.

With new forms of technology being hoarded by growing materialism, the need create and invent is at its prime. We are constantly unsatisfied with our existing possessions, always looking for devices that are newer, faster and better than what we own. With this demand, we are in dire need of inventive individuals who excel and think above and beyond, in order to feed society’s drive for new products. Take Mark Zuckerberg for instance, though he is a nerd, he is well respected because of his ability to create new innovations, and therefore gain success.

Society’s value for intelligence has increased; the desire to

gain knowledge and be academically successful is no longer looked down upon. Nerds feel more comfortable with showing their true colours and their intellect, because society has become more accepting of these values. Consequently, there has been a rise in subcultures surrounded by “nerdy” values such as Harry Potter fandom and Nerdfighteria. This is due to the fact that society has put more value on success, and people now know that success needs to be achieved through intellectual ability.

The media has also contributed to the popularity of nerds. They glorify them, and make them appear to be more funny and lovable, which in turn makes nerds more comfortable with themselves. Sheldon, the protagonist of The Big Bang Theory, exhibits neurotic behaviour, yet he is liked by the general public because he is successful and humorous. This allows the reserved “nerds” to be more comfortable with expressing their genuine selves, because they see that society has grown to accept them. Media’s change in the portrayal of nerds, from annoying and snobbish to lovable and funny, influences society’s perception of them and impacts their

socialization among various groups.

So the next time you see a stereotypical nerd in the halls, consider the different ways they are perceived. Instead of looking down on them, remember that they are the ones making the most significant contributions to society.

Nerd cultures are huge, becoming more widespread as more individuals begin to identify with

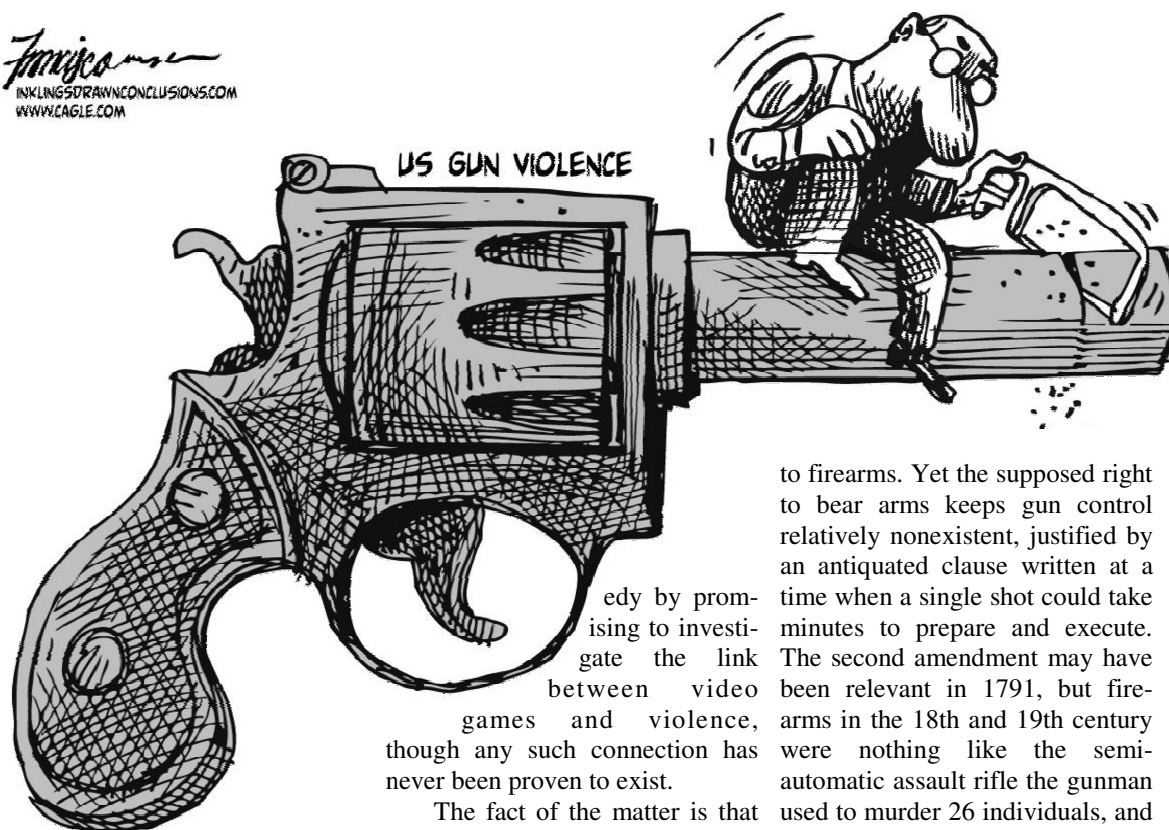
the label. They continue to alter the ways we live our lives, challenging our thoughts and behaviours in a meaningful way. Overall, nerds have come a long way, and the least we could do is to give them the respect they deserve. In fact, not only should we respect them, but we should look up to them as they are the foundation of our society. Respect the nerd. Embrace the nerd. Love the nerd. And MAY THE FORCE BE WITH YOU.



RISE OF THE NERDS Being a nerd is no longer a bad thing, but valued.

# America's gun laws: time for a change?

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After a devastating shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School, is it finally time for the United State to reconsider their restrictions on firearms?

BY JORDI KLEIN  
OPINION EDITOR

SOLUTIONS

edy by promising to investigate the link between video games and violence, though any such connection has never been proven to exist.

The fact of the matter is that America's violence issues do in fact stem from a lethal combination of the aforementioned three problems: lax gun control laws, poor resources for the mentally ill, and a contributory media that glorifies violence. However, only one of those issues has a simple and logical solution: an increase in gun control laws. Yet the discourse following tragedies like Columbine and Sandy Hook consistently sidesteps the gun control debate in favour of less imposing scapegoats. It's a predictable dance that the United States unfortunately knows all too well, having danced it 8 times just in 2012. It's also a dance that seems to be unique to the United States.

After a 1996 school shooting in Scotland during which 17 individuals were murdered, the Scottish government banned most firearms besides sport rifles. There has not been one firearm massacre since. In Japan, where guns are heavily restricted for civilians, officials report that gun violence is "virtually a thing of the past". Canada's deadliest school shooting occurred on December 6, 1989 at L'École Polytechnique, when a 25-year-old gunman killed 14 female engineering students before turning the gun on himself. The tragedy ushered in stricter gun control laws in Canada; since then, there have been five school shootings with a total death count of 8. In that same time, the US has experienced 52 school shootings, with a combined death count of over 200.

America's lax gun control laws leave much to be desired: guns are cheap, plentiful and easy to obtain, allowing individuals who may not meet qualifications in other countries to have easy access

to firearms. Yet the supposed right to bear arms keeps gun control relatively nonexistent, justified by an antiquated clause written at a time when a single shot could take minutes to prepare and execute. The second amendment may have been relevant in 1791, but firearms in the 18th and 19th century were nothing like the semi-automatic assault rifle the gunman used to murder 26 individuals, and the need for personal protection was much more pressing in war-era America than today. The right to bear arms didn't protect the children of Sandy Hook, but it did assist a mentally ill individual in committing murder.

While it's impossible to say whether this or similar tragedies would still have occurred in the face of stricter gun laws, it's also important to examine America's treatment of the mentally ill. Mental illness and mental health treatment in America is stigmatized to the point where many individuals don't seek treatment out of shame. Any number of things can go wrong if a person does decide to seek treatment: the hospital beds are full, the medication is too expensive, the specialist had to be booked a year in advance. On a larger scale is a disconnected collection of facilities and programs that many are hesitant to call a "system", where every mental healthcare facility- whether hospital, residence or therapist office- is underfunded, understaffed, and overlooked.

It's still unclear whether the gunman suffered from any kind of mental illness, but that hasn't stopped many from attributing his actions to poor mental health. The mentally ill are an easy target, and given how frequently violence and mental illness are found together, it's easy to understand why many jump straight to that particular conclusion. However, the vast majority of mentally ill individu-

als are inherently non-violent and would never "snap", and reflexively blaming the mentally ill only adds to the stigma surrounding mental health. Furthermore, justifying the tragedy by way of someone's mental illness means that it is no longer viewed of an act of human violence- committed by an average individual like you or me- but as an isolated event unrelated to the larger picture of gun violence.

Still, none of this has stopped the media from tearing into the gunman's life like a starving dog on a shank bone. Starting just a few hours after the tragedy, reporters scrambled to get any information they could on the shooter, even wrongly accusing a man in their haste. While the Sandy Hook community itself was in shambles, the media was mostly focusing on the man responsible, soon turning the cameras away from crying parents and children to discuss the gunman- his childhood, his hobbies, his school life- ad nauseum. It's just one more footstep in the dance that follows each of these tragedies. To potential aggressors, the message is clear: if they commit an act of violence, they will become immortalized in the national consciousness. For days or weeks after the tragedy, their face will be on television 24/7. Experts will be called in to discuss every minute detail of their life, from their troubles in grade school to the prophetic ramblings they posted online. Former classmates will tell the world, trembling, how they wish they'd been nicer. They will be feared; they will be famous. By effectively glorifying the aggressors and their violence, the 24/7 media cycle takes the focus away from where it should be: on the victims and their families, not on the gunman's senseless actions. The story should not focus on blaring sirens, body counts, the aggressor's favourite foods, or forcing the killer into an anti-hero. Experts say that when-

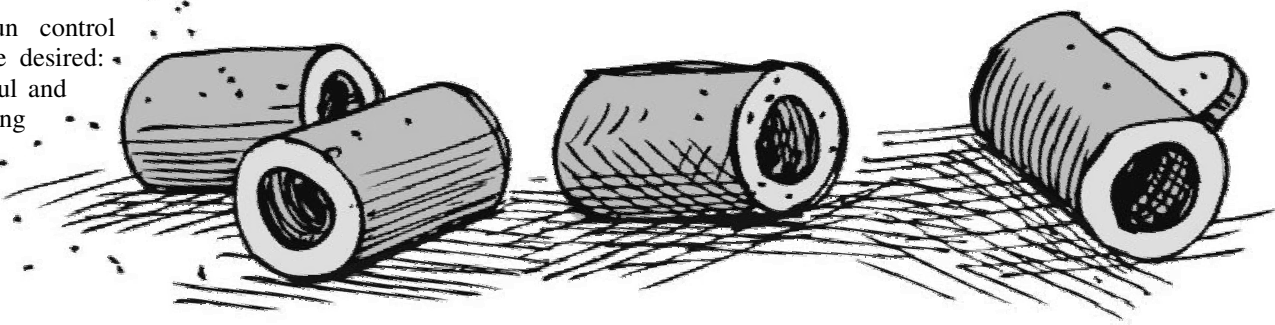
ever there is intense saturation of coverage of a mass murder, they expect to see "one or two more within a week". It's easy to see why: to self-destructive individuals, it seems justified and appropriate to go out in a proverbial "blaze of glory". Nearly any American can name the two high school seniors responsible for the Columbine shooting, but far fewer could name a single victim.

The man who murdered 26 individuals on December 14, 2012 has not been named anywhere in this article because he is, at last, unimportant. Nor were the two high school seniors who were responsible for the Columbine massacre. Unfortunately, it is all too likely that what happened at Sandy Hook will happen again- if America continues to go unchanged. While gun control isn't the only thing responsible for these tragedies, it's no longer acceptable to skirt around the gun control debate. Simply moving on isn't good enough. America and the world must instead move forward, rebuilding from the bottom up to ensure that the way violence, mental health, and tragedy area handled in the United States undergoes a major change. In the meantime, it's important to remember not the killer but rather his victims.

There were 26 individuals that died at Sandy Hook Elementary School, but they are not a body count. Remember them as 26 individuals: Charlotte Bacon, Daniel Barden, Rachel Davino, Olivia Engel, Josephine Gay, Ana M. Marquez-Greene, Dylan Hockley, Dawn Hochsprung, Madeleine F. Hsu, Catherine V. Hubbard, Chase Kowalski, Jesse Lewis, James Mattioli Grace McDonnell, Anne Marie Murphy, Emilie Parker, Jack Pinto, Noah Pozner, Caroline Previdi, Jessica Rekos, Aviella Richman, Lauren Rousseau, Mary Sherlach, Victoria Soto, Benjamin Wheeler, and Allison N. Wyatt.

*While gun control isn't the only thing responsible for these tragedies, it's no longer acceptable to skirt around the gun control debate.*

In 1999, media was the prime target, with violent video games and movies, media coverage, moral decay and satanic music all key scapegoats. This time, mental health has been skilfully added into the mix, though not much else has changed. While many expected the NRA's press conference to offer a conciliatory perspective and a step towards the banning of assault rifles, the pro-gun organization's week-long silence was concluded by suggesting the implementation of armed guards in schools; Vice President Joe Biden responded to the trag-



# EYE OF THE TIGER

## from the editors

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# Should GM foods be the future? Changes!

» **Jordi Klein**

Genetically Modified” is a scary term, and it’s no surprise that many consumers are rejecting GMOs in favour of friendlier-sounding “all-natural” or “organic” foods. The irony is that many of these same consumers will happily wolf down a hamburger with 48 of its 49 ingredients beginning with “processed” or “modified”, simply because they have been conditioned to accept those terms. GMOs are already everywhere- in our vitamin-enriched bread, in our 99¢ apple pies, in increasingly larger and cheaper steaks- but widespread public acceptance is the only thing that will allow their continued development so that they can be used at their full potential.

Contrary to popular belief, GMOs are just as safe as comparable traditional produce. Some GMOs are actually better for you, as specific genetic modifications eliminate the need for harmful pesticides, fertilizers, and the like.

The blueprints for a genetically modified organism are created by taking one organism’s genetic code and splicing in the gene sequence of another; for example, some strains of wheat are given the genetic sequence that allows fish to produce omega-3 fatty acids, giving the wheat the ability to produce these oils and giving consumers “omega-3 enriched bread”. GMOs can also be used to increase crop yield: corn naturally produces one ear per stalk, but genetic modification has allowed corn to produce 3 or 4 ears per stalk, allowing the farmer to produce more food in the same amount of space.

Additionally, they can also be used to increase the size of the produce itself, which is why the strawberries found at Costco are

so much larger than the ones at the farmer’s market.

GMOs don’t contain any harmful chemicals, they don’t require more resources, and they’re not the byproduct of some mad scientist’s nightmare. In fact, GMOs have enormous potential to do good. In the early 2000s, a group of Swiss researchers developed a strain of rice enriched with lots of beta-carotene, which they planned to distribute in parts of the world most affected by beta-carotene deficiency blindness. The “Golden Rice” was met with too much protests from anti-GMO activists and the project lost its funding, but it provides an excellent example of what genetically modified foods can be used for. Theoretically, GMO crops could be engineered to survive in hot, drought-like conditions, allowing famine- and drought-stricken African countries to grow their own crops.

They could also be engineered to thrive in waterlogged conditions, which would allow flood-prone countries to have a more stable food source. GMOs can be engineered to resist diseases, pesticides, environment changes, competing organisms, and much more.

As the world population surpasses 7 billion, it’s clear that “traditional” foods just aren’t going to cut it anymore. Food production is going to be one of the biggest issues of the next 50 years; we will need to be able to produce good food efficiently, and there’s no better way to do that than with GMOs. A crop that resists disease, pests, drought, and produces a greater yield in less time will be much more valuable to future farmers than an organic apple lovingly raised by hand.

Like it or not, efficient food production is going to become one of the most important technologies of the next few decades, and GMOs are the way to do it. There’s simply no other option.

## NO

» **Guy Romm**

Genetically modified (GM) foods seem like a dream come true for humanity, but this is not the case. While GM foods can be more resistant to the elements and more nutritious, the damage GM crops and animals create clearly outweigh the benefits. GM foods are said to be more nutritious, have higher yields, and support scientific endeavors. The most important concern is the amount of pesticides, fungicides and herbicides one consumes.

These harmful chemicals are meant to destroy organisms. All crops, GM or not, are sprayed by these substances, but GM crops are sprayed with larger quantities and harsher chemicals. GM crops are modified to make them resistant to certain pesticides and herbicides. These certain chemicals are stronger than organic pesticides and herbicides. They kill absolutely everything that normally digests crops, such as insects, weeds and small animals. Herbicides are shown to be lethal in certain cases and are linked to an increase in cancer and Parkinson’s disease. As well, insecticide produced by GM corn was found in the blood of pregnant women and their unborn children. In any crop, it is close to impossible to remove all traces of pesticides or herbicides before consumption.

Consuming GM foods simply exposes you to more of these chemicals. These chemicals are also damaging to the ecology around farms. Use of herbicides is shown to have negative impacts on bird populations due to toxicity. Some pests are becoming resistant to the chemicals, requiring heavier doses of already heavily used toxins. These poisons are carried by rain water to large bodies of water, polluting the world’s most impor-

tant resources.

GM foods are claimed to be healthier than their organic counterparts because of gene modification with this purpose, but animal studies have shown GM foods can cause organ damage, gastrointestinal and immune system disorders, accelerated aging, and infertility as shown through observing rats and mice in controlled experiments. It is commonly believed that GM crops result in larger yields, but a report by the IAASTD, backed by 58 governments, shows that GM crops do not result in increased yields, and, in some cases, decreased yields. On the other hand, natural agricultural methods can be used in developing countries to increase yields by 79% or higher. The last major concern is the idea of a few companies controlling the entire agricultural industry. Ten companies control 67% of the entire seed market, the top two being Monsanto and DuPont. Creating these types of monopolies on farming and nature is dangerous. These companies have complete control on farmers, due to laws which state that if a GM crop owned by a company is found on farm land, and the farmer doesn’t have permission from the company to farm the crop, they may be sued. This makes it impossible for farmers using GM crops to stop doing so, because their land already contains old husks and seeds from GM crops. Believe it or not, farmers were sued for having a neighboring farmer’s GM crops naturally spread and grow in their farm. These companies do not only have total control on the farmers, they also have control over nature itself. Patents for specific genes have been passed and used as evidence in courts to secure a monopoly over GM crops. This is life we are talking about.

The power to own life is absurd. These patents also limit the ability for science to use these genes to gain further knowledge in the field of biology.

## Be hesitant to provide Google your information

Why privacy needs to be considered when using Google.

Almost everyone in Thornhill Secondary School uses one or more of Google’s services, and we can make this claim with warranted confidence. Google’s specialty is crunching data, a skill that has made their search engine the most popular in the world. By using Google’s products, over a billion people provide the company with details such as what they searched, their browsing history, and their emails.

Google uses all of this data to their benefit, which is why almost all of their products are free. It allows them to improve their products, and some services exist solely for this purpose. GOOG-411, for example, was a free and automated telephone service that Google released in 2007 as a Canadian and American business directory. GOOG-411 ran for 3 years without making Google any revenue, but its purpose was to collect data, not profits. All the calls were recorded

and used to become the foundation for Google’s voice recognition technology.

Information is also used more directly for Google’s benefit, as it allows them to generate advertisements tailored to a user’s interests. For instance, Gmail scans every email to provide related advertisements within them when someone reads it. These targeted ads are a very valuable commodity for corporations, and advertisements make up the vast majority of Google’s profits. Corporations are Google’s customers, and your information is their product.

The question stands, then: can Google be trusted not to abuse their wealth of data? Clearly, the average person thinks so. That is, they believe that the risks of misuse do not outweigh the benefits of using Google’s products. After all, the information one provides to Google allows them to keep making and improving useful services. A trade-off is only to be expected. Furthermore, Google has a relatively good track record of goodwill and corporate responsibility. The company consistently ranks high

on the Corporate Social Responsibility Index, which is based on the public’s perception of a company’s citizenship, governance, and workplace practices. Evidently, most consider Google’s possible abuse of information to be a non-issue.

However, this line of thinking lacks foresight. Google is extremely successful at present, but may not retain its customers forever. Once Google stops making high profits, can they still be trusted to be responsible with their horde of data? Their reputation for corporate responsibility benefits them now, but this can always change, and their main objective will be profits, and not responsibility.

Gmail’s privacy policy once stated: “residual copies of deleted messages and accounts may take up to 60 days to be deleted from our active servers and may remain in our offline backup systems.” This clause was removed, giving users no indication as to when their emails are actually deleted. This is an example of how Google’s policies are continually changing, yet their stockpile of everyone’s information will still be theirs.

This is akin to a benevolent dictatorship; just because a dictator has benefitted the population under their rule does not make dictatorships the ideal form of government. When CEOs, profits, and policies of a corporation can change so easily, it’s short-sighted to trust Google with one’s information so readily.

This does not mean everyone needs to boycott Google. After all, Google is not alone in mining people’s data, and in many instances, Google’s services are superior to their competitors’. What users do need is to be conscious of what information they enter online and consider where that information is going. They must also consider the implications of a corporation that amasses everyone’s data and the influence over society such a corporation could have.

As Google continues to grow, so should concern about their control of the public’s information. Using Google’s services poses legitimate risks to one’s privacy in the long run, and internet users must not underestimate the importance of this privacy.

Everyone’s changing, everything’s changing... including our exams.

January 24<sup>th</sup> to January 30<sup>th</sup>: exam week. Everyone is getting ready to face the final test of everything that they learned over the semester. It’s arguably the most stressful time for students, but at the same time, it’s relieving that you get to finally conclude another semester’s worth of hard work and effort. However, as many of you are probably aware, exams have been moved. Compared to last year’s 10:00 a.m. exams, all exams will be moved one hour earlier to 9:00 a.m. Is this better or worse for the students?

On the plus side, exams are now essentially the same time as regular school day starting at 8:50 a.m.; there’s not much difference between that and 9:00 a.m. Students have taken the responsibility to be punctual every day to school, so ideally, there shouldn’t be any problem or difficulty making it on time for the exams. There’s also the argument that students are able to think more clearly in the morning. Once you wake up and get ready, eat breakfast (highly recommended that you do so every morning), the daily routine and consumption of nutrients trigger the brain to start its daily activity. Especially after a good night’s sleep (again, highly recommended, especially the night before an exam), the brain is ready to think, therefore, encouraging success in a student’s performance.

Even though students are expected to come to school on time at 8:50 a.m. every morning, not everyone is always able to do so. Yes, it’s the student’s fault for being late, but being late on the day of an exam has bigger consequences than being late on a regular school day (not to say that being late on school days isn’t a big deal, either). Although it is highly encouraged for students to get a good night’s sleep and eat breakfast, this isn’t always the case. Students are nervous and anxious about their exams; therefore, they sometimes miss the cue to get sleep on the night of an exam. This also applies to students who are unable to find the time to eat breakfast on the day of an exam. An additional hour to their routine could help a student become more physically and mentally prepared for the exam.

Students have been used to the exam times being at 10:00 a.m. for the past two years. The year before that, the original exam times were at 11:00 a.m. before the decision to make it earlier by an hour occurred. It has happened again. People may not believe that it’s that big of a deal, but as students, we want as much time to be able to prepare for our exams. It’s an exam day, not a regular school day; for many, the extra hour is a necessity.

Either way, students will have to write their exams at 9:00 a.m. this year, and in the near future. It’s true that change is always needed for the betterment of anything, but it doesn’t seem like this change is necessary for the exam times. However, students will have to adjust to this time change, and hope that this will not negatively affect anyone’s performance on their exams.

Good luck to all T.S.S. students on their exams!



# Jays give up stale fish and catch fresh Marlins



**IT'S A WHOLE NEW BALLGAME** A blockbuster trade give baseball fans back home here in Toronto a lot more to cheer about. With these spectacular players, playoffs for the Jays are in sight.

It is safe to say our patience was wearing thin... until now.

BY JOSH PETERS  
SPORTS CONTRIBUTOR



Anthopoulos is now known as the genius behind the infamous blockbuster trade that electrified sports fans in Toronto and sent Marlins fans into a fit of anger. However, this is no feat of luck. It is not a coincidence that Anthopoulos is behind a trade like this. Behind the scenes, he has formed the Toronto Blue Jays into a very respectable team with a ton of All Star talent and potential, and a farm system that any team would be proud of. All they needed was a little push to be considered a legitimate contender. It is safe to say that with this trade Anthopoulos did more than just give them a little push to get them headed in the right direction.

Instead, with one trade, the Jays GM singlehandedly picked them up and threw them directly where they need to be.

While the big move did favour the Jays heavily, it was not as one sided as it has been made out to be. A lot of young talent has been moved off of the roster and we can only hope it does not come back to haunt us in seasons to come.

So who exactly did the Jays give up? Firstly, and probably most

needed for the Jays organization, Yunel Escobar. At 30 years old, the shortstop has officially worn out his welcome on two different teams. The Atlanta Braves got fed up with him after he demanded he was better than he was given credit for and so Yunel parted ways with Atlanta and made his way across the border. Escobar often frustrated fans with his extremely streaky play and reached the tip of the iceberg with his embarrassing situation last year when he wrote profanities against gay people on his eye black. With the way the Jays handled it, it was clear Yunel was on his way out. The Marlins will be getting a vet and a good defender in Escobar, but the Jays will not miss him.

Joining him on the Marlins are 22 year old pitcher Henderson Alvarez, 23 year old 3<sup>rd</sup> baseman Adeiny Hechavarria and backup catcher Jeff Mathis. Alvarez had some bright spots last season but essentially got knocked around giving up 29 home runs in just over 187 innings. Not the greatest numbers for one of your top starting pitchers. Hechavarria, on the other hand, may be a big loss.

He is still very young and has proven himself on the defensive side of the ball. If he can find his offensive game, he will be a major loss for the Jays.

Not only did the Jays give away their young players from the majors, they gave away some key mi-

nor league prospects as well. Anthony DeSclafani, Jake Marisnick, and Justin Nicolino are all headed to South Beach as well. DeSclafani is nothing more than a projected future bullpen arm, however those last two names are a bit more. Marisnick is a talented center fielder and Nicolino is a top of the line pitching prospect. They both tore up the minors last year with unreal numbers.

In any other trade giving up this amount of talent would be unheard of and Jays fans would be furious.

However, it is clear to see why the complete opposite occurred. The names of the Marlins that Anthopoulos managed to reel in require little explanation.

Headlining the deal we have Jose Reyes, a speedy leadoff man with tons of pop in his bat. Add 4 All-Star appearances and a National League Batting Championship in 2011 and you have a very special player. He will fit right into the Jays' already fast and powerful lineup.

Emilio Bonifacio adds depth and more speed to the Jays lineup. At 27 years old, he is the main reason the Jays did not mind giving up Hechavarria. Toronto also acquired catcher John Buck, an ex-Blue Jay. This makes the loss of Jeff Mathis very minimal. Without even talking about the pitching the Jays got in this deal, it is already clear who

won this trade... but let's talk about the pitching.

The 2012 Jays pitching staff was shaky to start the season. Their biggest name coming out of the offseason was a closer in Sergio Santos and he got injured almost immediately. The actual Jays starting rotation had a lot of question marks surrounding them. At the end of the season the Jays were left with a mentally and physically beaten pitching core with less than stellar numbers. The "ace" Ricky Romero went 9-14 with a 5.77 ERA, the worst in his career by far. Brandon Morrow had his bright spots and so did Alvarez. Even the young Drew Hutchison had a few good games before he got injured. However at the end of the season it was clear that a change was needed. Alex Anthopoulos responded to these concerns by acquiring two pitchers with a combined 6 All-Star appearances and one perfect game - Josh Johnson and Mark Buehrle. Not bad, Alex.

Josh Johnson has spent his entire 8 year career with the Marlins. He did not play up to his potential last year but picked up his play in the second half of the season. One concern is that he had Tommy John surgery in 2007.

However anyone who thought that it affected him was proved wrong when he went 15-5 in 2009 and 11-6 in 2010, while posting a career low 2.30 ERA. He is still only

27 and is a fantastic pickup for the Jays. Then there is Mark Buehrle - how can you think about him without thinking of his perfect game with the White Sox in 2009. The 33 year old averages 14 wins per season which adds much needed stability to the Jays rotation.

So after all is said and done it is very clear the Jays won this trade. Sure they gave up some young talent but one look at who they got says it all. But what is really exciting is to look at what these new additions are being added to. Jose Bautista, after a season plagued with injuries, is ready to hit monster home runs and be the star every Toronto fan knows he is. And even if he doesn't, all of a sudden the Jays have another power hitter who emerged in 2012 in Edwin Encarnacion. Brett Lawrie is another major bright spot as he just seems to be getting better and better. Add fan-favourite manager John Gibbons into the mix and you have yourself a team.

While there are still a ton of questions to be answered this season one thing is very clear. The GM of the Toronto Blue Jays has the fans' backs and will do what it takes to win. He has put together a great team, and something tells me he's not quite done yet.

However, keeping in mind that Jays have to knock off the Yankees, Red Sox, Orioles and Rays... I wouldn't start the parade just yet.

## Weird and wacky sports: the sports you haven't heard of

Which one of these will you be trying?

BY ISAAC TAM  
SPORTS CONTRIBUTOR

Sports! The world loves sports because it is a display of athleticism. We love to watch people who are able to play a sport well and make it look effortless. We get caught up in the heat of the game and struggle alongside our favourite athletes. Of the most popular, we have soccer, basketball, baseball, hockey, and the list goes on. But for whatever reason, I thought to myself one day, "What about those sports that nobody really watches or are not as well known?" So I did a little research and came up with a list of three sports that I found really bizarre. Here goes.

The first bizarre sport is chess boxing. It is a hybrid sport that combines the intellect of the sport of kings, and the physicality of boxing. In a full match, there are 11 rounds, alternating between a game of chess (fast rules are used), of which there are 6 rounds, and a boxing round, of which there are 5 rounds. Each round of chess takes 4 minutes long while the boxing rounds take 3 minutes. There is a one minute break between each round. The match ends if there is a knockout during a boxing round or a checkmate during a chess round. As well, competitors may lose if they run out of their twelve minutes in the chess round. The game begins with a chess round. The sport was conceived by French comic artist Enki Bilal, and was featured in the comic book *Froid Équateur*. It is governed by the World Chess

Boxing Organization (WCBO), whose motto is "The strongest (wo) man in the world". Most chess boxers play chess on an expert level. Chess boxing is gaining popularity in Russia, Germany and Britain.

The second bizarre sport is water hockey, or Octopush. This is essentially a game of underwater hockey. Two teams of up to ten players compete, with only six from each allowed on "the field" at once. The sport is played in a swimming pool, with a goal on each side. Players are required to wear a snorkel, a diving mask and flippers and are given a water hockey stick (really just a short piece of plastic) and a protective glove to wear on the striking hand to avoid injury when playing. From there, it is really just like hockey, except it is much harder to spectate since the competition is underwater. Octopush

originated from Britain in 1950 and has since gained mass popularity. This sport is governed by the World Aquachallenge Association (WAA) and holds world championships.

Lastly, there is a bizarre sport known as the Cooper's Hill Cheese Rolling and Wake (or more popularly known as cheese rolling). This sport traditionally takes place at Cooper's Hill, near Gloucester in England, where the slope of the hill is extremely high. The basic idea of this sport is that all competitors start at the top of the hill and must race down the slope. A cylindrical block of Double Gloucester cheese is rolled from the top of the hill, signifying the start of the race. Ideally, the point is to catch the cheese; however the cheese can go up to speeds of 70 km/h, which can injure a spectator upon contact. The first person to cut through the

ribbon at the end of the race wins the cheese. This sport is one of the most dangerous sports because of the environmental hazards. Competitors don't simply run down this hill (it's impossible), they roll and bump down the irregular slope, easily injuring themselves in the process. Bones are commonly broken in pursuit of the cheese and ambulances are always ready. As well, traditionally the cheese is to be returned to the pith at the top of the hill by the winner, symbolic of the never-ending struggle of mankind for its dairy products.

And there you have it. Chess boxing, Octopush and cheese rolling, the three weirdest sports I was able to conjure from my research. I suppose there are weirder sports that I haven't found out about but those are the ones that stuck out for me.

# Gregg Popovich’s “Restgate” method?

As an extension to our editorial debates, two of our writers have written a faceoff on the recent decision by the head coach of the Spurs.

## YES

» Kevin Chan

I fully support Spurs’ head coach Gregg Popovich and his decision to rest four of his five starting players on a nationally televised game against the Miami Heat. There are two main reasons why I believe NBA league commissioner David Stern should not have punished the Spurs for this decision:

First and foremost, Gregg Popovich is the head coach of the San Antonio Spurs who is one of the most respected figures in the sports world. He has proven his success in the NBA and is a coach that knows what he is doing. I would split the responsibilities of a coach of any sport into two sections: the micro-management, which includes the coaching of the team through a specific match by drawing up strategies, and the macromanagement, which includes the long-term management of the team’s players and their well-being and development. Popovich’s decision to rest four of his starting players is based on his considerations of his team’s circumstances. Firstly, the Spurs have one of the oldest rosters in the league, with their four highest-paid players (Tim Duncan, Manu Ginobili, Stephen Jackson, Tony Parker) having an average age of 33.75. Secondly, the Spurs were playing their fourth game in five

days, which was the result of unfortunate scheduling. Furthermore, they were playing a well-rested championship-caliber team in the Miami Heat, who had not played for four days. Finally, factor in Popovich’s consideration of the team’s long-term well-being and health, and it becomes easy to understand why he chose to rest his players.

Also, the league has allowed such actions to occur before without punishment, including the Spurs sitting out their starters in three regular season games last season. Earlier this year, the NBA’s deputy commissioner Adam Silver, indicated that the league would not discipline teams for resting their players: “The strategic resting of particular players on particular nights is within the discretion of the teams,” Silver said then. “And Gregg Popovich in particular is probably the last coach that I would second-guess.” It should be noted that the Miami Heat and Boston Celtics also rested key players towards the end of last season. The \$250,000 fine that David Stern has suddenly imposed on the Spurs is the first of its kind.

After looking at the rationale behind Popovich’s decision to rest his players, I believe that his actions were fully justified. While he may not have chosen the best circumstance to do so, he should nevertheless be allowed to make decisions regarding his team, especially when they benefit the team’s ultimate long-term goal of winning an NBA championship.

## NO

» Victor Li

No, Gregg Popovich should not have rested his star(ter)s during a nationally televised game many were looking forward to.

Although the Spurs did have a tough road schedule, there were numerous opportunities for them to rest their starters in other games. Looking at the situation from a fan’s point of view, Pop’s decision would surely anger the people who spent their hard earned money to see stars play. Ticket prices are more or less expensive in different games, depending on which teams are playing. The Spurs vs. Heat game would have been a marquee matchup, attracting diehard and casual fans, and mainly because of name value.

People pay to see LeBron, Wade and Bosh play Duncan, Ginobili and Parker, not Nando de Colo, Tiago Splitter and Gary Neal.

*The fact that the game was actually close and rather entertaining was a mere consolation prize for those who wanted to see the San Antonio stars.*

Regardless of the quality of play, people pay to see stars; the NBA, more than any other league, is star driven.

Basketball players are the most marketable athletes, nationally and globally. Basketball players are treated like rock stars, and people pay money to see stars, sometimes regardless of on court performance.

For example, even if Indiana Pacers forward Paul George outperforms Dwyane Wade on the court, there is no doubt that Wade is the main attraction in fans’ eyes and Wade will generate more money for the league.

Therefore, people had the right to be upset when they found out that the stars they paid money to see would not be playing.

The fact that the game was actually close and rather entertaining was a mere consolation prize for those who wanted to see the San Antonio stars.

It doesn’t seem fair, but that’s the way the NBA works. For those who love basketball, the game was still worth seeing, but for those who only watch the NBA for its stars, it was a big disappointment.

Needless to say, Stern’s fine was a bit of an overreaction, but Pop’s decision was made without the fans in mind.

In the end, Pop did what was best for his team, but not necessarily what was best for the fans in Miami and around the world who were anticipating this game and all the star power that would have



# Andrea Bargnani: why he’s finished

Bargnani will be remembered as yet another disappointment in Raptors and Toronto sports history.

BY PETER SOTIRAKOS  
SPORTS CONTRIBUTOR

Seven. It is the number of total All-Star appearances made by players selected in the 2006 NBA Draft consisting of three appearances from former Blazers guard Brandon Roy, selected 6<sup>th</sup> overall, three from Boston Celtics point guard Rajon Rondo, taken 21<sup>st</sup> overall, and one from the 2<sup>nd</sup> overall pick in 2006, Portland forward LaMarcus Aldridge. Seven is also the number worn by the one player who was taken ahead of all the others, Toronto Raptors big man Andrea Bargnani, drafted 1<sup>st</sup> overall in 2006. In what is considered one of the weaker draft classes in recent history, a draft class that included the likes of accomplished players like Roy, Rondo, Aldridge, current Raptor Kyle Lowry, Memphis forward Rudy Gay, the Jazz’s Paul Millsap, and role players like

the Suns’ Shannon Brown, 2011’s best 3-point shooter Steve Novak, and Jazz guard Randy Foye, the Raptors’ President and General Manager Bryan Colangelo looked to Bargnani, a 20-year-old unproven talent from Italy.

Right away, Bargnani drew comparisons to the Mavericks’ Dirk Nowitzki for his shooting ability and versatility as a 7-foot forward, and was seen as the best player in a weak draft. Now, as Andrea Bargnani plays through his 7<sup>th</sup> season with the Raptors, he has little to show for what he has done for the team that took him first overall.

After a good but not great rookie season, in which he was selected to the All-Rookie 1<sup>st</sup> Team and the Raptors made the playoffs (though Bargnani was injured and did not play in the post-season), Bargnani has had his ups and downs with the Raptors, including disappointing 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> seasons and a career-high 21.4 ppg in 2011. The Raptors as a team have only regressed since the arrival of Bargnani, having made the post-season in his first three seasons,

but not since 2008, and heading into the New Year they are on pace for one of their worst seasons in the Bargnani era.

Regardless of the quality of the draft class, the team with the top pick expects to receive a player that, in some point in the future, will be able to carry his team to at the very least multiple playoff berths. But unlike other 1<sup>st</sup> overall choices like Derrick Rose, Dwight Howard, LeBron James, Blake Griffin, Tim Duncan, and Allen Iverson among many other players who have made lasting impacts on whichever franchise chose them, Andrea Bargnani has been unable to deliver as the proverbial “franchise player” since the departure of Chris Bosh to Miami prior to the 2010-2011 season. Bargnani, though he has been able to put up decent scoring numbers, hasn’t been able to lead his team to any general success because of his play style.

Offensively, Bargnani has shown that he can score in a variety of ways, from mid and long-range jump shots, to posting up, to the

occasional drive to the basket, and do so effectively, though not at the same level as the oft-compared Nowitzki. But it is his game on the other side of the ball, defence and rebounding, that leaves Raptors fans with a bad taste in their mouth and questioning Bargnani as the franchise player. The “effort” statistics through Bargnani’s career seem to tell the tale of the tape, as he has averaged less than 5 rebounds per game in his career, significantly less than what a 7-foot forward is able to do, as well as less than 1 block per game and under 0.5 steals per game. His statistics over his career and play thus far seem to dictate that he is a one trick pony, a shooting 7-footer, who is not incapable but rather unwilling to change his play style, and also that Bargnani is not the type of player to lead a team.

So far in the 2012-2013 season, Bargnani has looked awful and a shade of his early 2011 self that had many thinking he should be an All-Star selection before a left calf injury sidelined him for more than half the year. His shooting percentage (40% through November) and points per game (17.0 ppg) are the lowest he’s had since Chris Bosh left, and his general nonchalant disposition has left Raptors fans turned off and asking management to make some changes.

While Bryan Colangelo is one to admit and correct his mistakes (trading Jermaine O’Neal and Hedo Turkoglu halfway through the season after it became clear that each experiment did not work), getting rid of Bargnani will be accepting the greatest mistake of his tenure as Raptors’ GM. But if he decides to take responsibility for drafting Bargnani, the struggling L.A. team (for once it’s the Lakers, not the Clippers) and their PF Pau Gasol may be the best solution. The rumoured Gasol for Bargnani, Calderon and one other player deal seems like it is the best case sce-

nario for both teams on many levels, as the Raptors would get a rejuvenated Gasol, one of the best passing big men in the league who commits to both sides of the ball and would mesh perfectly with Raptors centre Jonas Valanciunas. The Lakers would receive Jose Calderon, a solid backup point guard who would flourish in newly named coach Mike D’Antoni’s 7 seconds or less system (not to mention fill in as starter for the aging Steve Nash), and Bargnani, whose versatility as a 7-foot three-point shooter is exactly what D’Antoni and Lakers GM Mitch Kupchak are looking for to pair with Dwight Howard in the frontcourt. But at the same time this potential trade doesn’t make sense for the Lakers on one level: the L.A. media would chew up Andrea Bargnani for his lack of effort.

If Lakers guard Kobe Bryant wanted the struggling Gasol to “put on his big boy pants”, it is hard to fathom what he would want Bargnani to do when he struggles (I imagine all Andrea owns are European-style pantaloons).

So while trading Bargnani seems unlikely, the most probable outcome of this unfortunate situation is that Andrea Bargnani leaves when Colangelo does, and it is hard to see why the owner of the Raptors and Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment would pick up the option on Colangelo’s contract at the end of this season unless the Raptors and Bargnani make a miraculous comeback from their terribly slow start.

Unless Andrea Bargnani can change his current career trajectory, when Bargnani inevitably leaves the Raptors, whether it’s through trade, leaving as a free-agent when his contract expires in 2015 (or 2014 if the Raptors take the early termination option on his contract), or even retirement, he will be remembered as yet another disappointment in Raptors and Toronto sports history.



AN INEVITABLE TRADE Bargnani has served his time on the Raptors, but the young team is looking to move on.

# Big game hunting: MLB free agents

The winter meetings provide big changes and bigger dollars.

BY DANIEL GRENIER  
SPORTS CONTRIBUTOR

First and foremost I want to say congratulations to the MLB for being the only Big Four league in North America to not have a lockout in the past two years (Bud Selig, you're doing it right). The Giants' World Series party is long from over (remember that announcer that called them the 49ers?) and the free agent talks have been absolutely swelling over the past few weeks. There have been the predictable moves, the dark horses, and even some backstabbing heart-wrenching four-letter-word moves that left fans in disarray. Basically what I'm going to do (because I'm such a giving person) is give you a little breakdown of the big moves, and the ones that will end up in the firings of certain general managers, if you know what I mean.

Top 3 Signings of the Off-Season (so far)

### #3: Melky Cabrera to the Toronto Blue Jays



The Jays have shook Toronto sports to the core with the off-season they've had. That massive trade with the Marlins that gave them Reyes, Johnson, Bonifacio, Buck and Buehrle for nothing except some prospects and a homophobic shortstop was nothing short of genius on the part of Alex Anthopoulos. A week later he has the cojones to sign free agent Melky Cabrera. At first I was a skeptic when this all came through; I kept thinking that the reason Cabrera had such a successful 2012 was solely based on the testosterone. But to put it in perspective, his years before that were effective as well; a solid .275 hitter and 12 homeruns per season, a solid effort in the number 2 hole. This addition gives the Blue Jays one of the deadliest batting orders in the majors, with Reyes, Cabrera, Bautista, Encarnacion and Lawrie rounding out a solid first five. Expect Cabrera to start in left field, unfortunately replacing Rajai Davis. It's going to be hot in Toronto this summer, with all the Reyes of sunshine; good thing we'll have some cold Melk to cool us down (I promise something that lame will never be seen in one of my articles ever again). Most importantly, the Jays are out of excuses, because let's face it... if the Orioles can do it, anyone can.

### #2: Josh Hamilton to the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim



Huzzah! My horrible procrastination has finally paid off! Three days past my article deadline and Josh Hamilton has snaked the Rangers and signed with the rival L.A. Angels. On the negative side, everyone who jumped on to the Rangers bandwagon in late 2009 has jumped off without a second thought. Ryan Dempster and Mike Napoli have jumped ship to Boston and now their franchise cornerstone has been captured by their biggest rival. Expect the Rangers to have trouble contending in a now hyper-competitive AL West, with a star-studded Angels lineup and a *Moneyball*-esque A's team. On the plus side, Hamilton joins an Angels lineup that looks like the first round of a fantasy draft with All-Stars Mike Trout and Albert Pujols. With

this addition comes questions: firstly how are they going to fit all of those egos into their outfield? Mark Trumbo, Mike Trout, Kendrys Morales, Vernon Wells and now Hamilton will all be jockeying for a starting job come April. Angels owner Arte Moreno stated at the beginning of the offseason that the Angels were "tight on funds". As ex-Angel Torii Hunter said it, maybe Arte "pulled some money out from under the mattress". It must've been quite the mattress, because he shelled out \$125 million over 5 years. With this addition, the Angels have become a front-runner for the AL Champions, and possibly World Series favourites.

### #1: Zack Greinke to the Los Angeles Dodgers



Travelling man Zack Greinke was a solid pick-up for the L.A. Angels last year, going a very reliable 6-2 with a 3.51 ERA in 13 starts. The Angels expected him to re-sign, but he pulled a Benedict Arnold, packed his things and took a taxi down the freeway to the rival Dodgers. The Dodgers, whose payroll has surpassed the Yankees (first time that has been done in 14 years), have pieced together an excellent rotation with the insane cash they've been handed. Greinke joins perennial Cy Young candidate Clayton Kershaw and new South Korean import Ryu Hyun-jin as one of the more dangerous pitching ensembles in the National League. The Dodgers have everything to lose coming into 2013; with the extensive funding and caliber of players, they are expected to dethrone the World Series Champion Giants and take control of the NL West for years to come.

Top 3 Signing Busts of the Off-Season (so far)

### #3: Russell Martin to the Pittsburgh Pirates



Does anyone else remember when Russell Martin was relevant? No? Just me? Well, anyways, the Canadian catcher has been on a slow downward spiral over the past couple years, putting up very catcher-like numbers ever since joining the Yankees. It's been a rough two decades for the Pittsburgh Pirates: an epic collapse at the end of last year saw them finish with a 20<sup>th</sup> straight sub-.500 winning percentage. I know they are thin at the backstop position, and I know the free agent catcher pool is even thinner, but at least spend on someone who is going to get better, not worse. If he were named Rusty Martino and played for the Mets instead of the Yankees, would anyone even think of giving him a three-year deal for more than \$7 million a season? Beyond the home runs and positional scarcity, there isn't enough substance to warrant it. The Pirates disagree, signing him to a two-year deal for \$17 million.

### #2: Shane Victorino to the Boston Red Sox



At the seasoned age of 32 years old, Shane Victorino a.k.a. the Flyin' Hawaiian made a name for himself as one of the most clutch Philadelphia Phillies in recent memory. But as an athlete gets older, his skills deteriorate, which is exactly what happened to Victorino when he joined the Dodgers in late 2012. What irks me the most is that Vic-

torino is walking into a Red Sox team that shot itself repeatedly in the foot last year, and is receiving 13 million dollars a year. The Red Sox already have a good youthful outfield quarterbacked by Cody Ross, and Victorino's batting average against left-handers has plummeted since 2009. If Victorino can improve his contact against lefties, he becomes one of the big free agent steals of this offseason. But that is still a big if.

### #1: B.J. Upton to the Atlanta Braves



I tell everyone who will listen that I believe B.J. Upton is one of the most overrated centre fielders in baseball. Speed isn't everything in the field; he lacked vision, he didn't communicate well with other players, and he didn't seem like he was interested in playing. The Atlanta Braves, one of the most respected teams in baseball, who already have a solid trio in the outfield consisting of Martin Prado, Michael Bourn and Jason Heyward go out and blow \$75.3 million on a B-list fielder. In my opinion the only hope that the Braves have is if Upton was holding back in all of those years in Tampa, and is ready to explode in his new environment. The Braves are apparently willing to take that risk.

### Honourable Mention (Best Signing): Kevin Youkilis to the New York Yankees

This one is more of a logical move if anything. Alex Rodriguez, even if he is one of the greatest third basemen of all time, is starting to drag himself to the finish line. His 2012 post-season was brutal, hitting .111 and eventually being benched in favour of Eduardo Nunez. A-Rod is in the process of undergoing hip surgery, and Kevin Youkilis fills an empty void in the Yankees infield. Sure, Youk hasn't been the machine he was a few years back in Boston, but he brings solid defense and good plate discipline, a perfect fit in the #7 hole in the Yanks lineup.

### Honourable Mention (Worst Signing): Dan Haren to the Washington Nationals

Don't get me wrong: Dan Haren is still one of the best pitchers in baseball. Although his velocity has considerably dropped over the years, he's a proven winner with a deadly arsenal, and he can eat 7-8 innings per game if needed, which is a deadly combination. However, this needs to be mentioned as a bad signing because I believe the Nationals could be putting funds into something more necessary needed in their lineup. This team consists of unquestionably the best rotation in baseball, a young one to boot. Stephen Strasburg, Gio Gonzalez, Jordan Zimmermann, Drew Storen, and Ross Detwiler will manhandle the NL East next year anyways, meaning Haren is just a surplus to them. It's not a disastrous move, as Haren does provide a veteran presence within the rotation; I just believe the money could have been put towards improving their bullpen or acquiring a solid middle infielder.

So with all of these pieces being put together, the contenders are starting to separate themselves from the pretenders. These are just the opinions of some Grade 11 schmuck who thinks he knows what he's talking about.

If your opinion differs from mine, come find me and we can have a civilized debate about how wrong I am.

Lunch C in the caf, I'll be waiting.

# Tim Tebow never stood a chance

New York Jets are no long in playoff contention.

BY VICTOR LI  
SPORTS CONTRIBUTOR

No surprise there, huh? However, for those who believe in a certain #15 on the Jets roster, this season was an affront to football. When Rex Ryan announced that QB Mark Sanchez was benched after a terrible, turnover laced game which officially knocked the Jets out of the playoff hunt (not that they were ever truly contenders with Sanchez under center), everyone assumed that the Jets' big name free agent signing at QB would be given free rein at last. Well, sike! That's the wrong number. Turns out #14, Greg McElroy will start, and Sanchez is likely his backup. Seriously? After all the offseason hype for Tebow and the Wildcat Offense and what not, the man doesn't even get to back up a 7<sup>th</sup> round pick? The Heisman-dual-threat-QB-winner miracle worker and season saver won't even get to be the primary backup? Unbelievable. Where did the Jets and Tebow go wrong?

When Peyton Manning surprised the world by choosing Denver as his new home, the first question that many asked was obviously about Tebow. The man who had just led the Broncos to a division title and playoff win was being replaced by one of the greatest QBs of all time. So what was to be done with Tebow? Would he be an understudy to the great Manning, and be a backup spark plug off the bench? No way, not the great Timmy T! After what he did with what had essentially been a lost season in Denver, Tebow deserved to start. So John Elway and the Broncos, who had never truly wanted Tebow to be the future of the franchise, had to send him somewhere else where he could shine. Where would that be? So many franchises could use a quarterback who had proven himself a winner. So naturally it was a great shock to everyone when Tebow was traded to the Jets for 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> round picks.

Arriving in the bright lights of the Big Apple would surely have blown up Tebow's already large media presence. With everyone in New York already familiar with Mark Sanchez's struggles, it seemed like only a matter of time before Tebow stepped in and saved the Jets like he did the Broncos. All throughout the offseason, people debated Tebow's anticipated role with the Jets. Would he work the Wildcat formation on offense? Would he be a special teamer? Would he eventually start when Sanchez inevitably started struggling? No one knew. People waited with bated breath for the Jets' first game of the season, eager to see what would become of Tebow. Whether they loved or hated him, he was on people's minds.

As it turned out, the Jets blew out the Bills 48-28 in one of Sanchez's few good games of the season. Tebow's debut was unspectacular. He opened the game as a slot receiver, but worked mostly behind center on a handful of plays. He didn't attempt a pass and finished with 11 yards on five carries. He did recover an onside kick, but that meant little to the Jets. Perhaps they could still become contenders and compete. Not so fast. The Jets rapidly disintegrated, and entered their bye 3-5, not quite out of the hunt, but in great danger of missing the playoffs. This would be a perfect time to hand Tebow the reins and let him save the sea-

son, as he had done before. Certainly, he couldn't have done worse than Sanchez, who struggled all season with turnovers. Even people who didn't believe in Tebow felt he deserved a chance. The worst thing he could do was lose, and that was what the Jets were already doing.

Even worse, if at all possible, was the outside comments about Tebow. Everyone who knew anything about football had something to say. Analysts, fellow players, retired legends, fans; everyone was talking about Tebow and the Jets. When one of his teammates anonymously called him "terrible", the already fragile Jets locker room likely blew up completely. Tebow, to his credit, did the right thing and played down everything, but everyone knew. He was hurt, and whatever he was, he didn't deserve this treatment. Bringing in Tebow had already decimated Sanchez's confidence, and now the Jets had hurt Tebow's as well. And still the Jets didn't let Tebow do his thing. They must have known, as soon as they signed him, that there would be public outcries for Tebow to play the moment the Jets started struggling. Yet Rex Ryan stood firm in his belief that Sanchez was the man for the Jets. After a Week 14 win against the Jags, bringing the Jets up to 6-7, the playoffs were suddenly in sight. All they needed to do was beat Tennessee on the road the next week. No surprise, the Jets lost and were eliminated from playoff contention. Tebow never had a chance to do what he was expected to do. With the season lost, Ryan finally decided to bench Sanchez, far too late to save the season.

So here the Jets are, entering Week 16 with nothing left to do but play for pride, which is something the organization has never been lacking. But when Ryan finally benched Sanchez, he dropped another bombshell in a season full of them. Instead of playing Tebow, and potentially making himself look stupid for not doing so earlier, he named Greg McElroy as his starter, and Sanchez as his backup. And now everyone knows. Tim Tebow was never given a chance. Despite multiple opportunities, he was never given a chance. Rex Ryan has made it abundantly clear that Tebow was not part of his plans for the 2012 season, and is very likely not part of the future for the Jets. Tebow has never publicly challenged Ryan's decisions, or even spoken more than sparingly about his feelings. But it's evident. He is frustrated. A season of his career has been wasted, and he'll never get it back. The Jets' experiment proved to be a monumental failure, where no one emerged as a winner.

So looking to the future, what's going to happen with the Jets? McElroy is the current starter, and is likely the only one of the Jets' three quarterbacks to remain with the team. Who would have thought coming into the season that the 7<sup>th</sup> round pick would be the QB most likely to stay with the Jets after the season ended? There are rumours that they're looking to trade Sanchez, but with his poor play and large contract, the market for his services is likely very limited. Tebow deserves to leave New York, but who in the NFL is willing to take him, and the controversy that he brings on? Maybe his hometown Jaguars? Maybe he could come up north and join the CFL? Who knows? But wherever he goes, expect the media to follow him and the drama to unfold. Tim Tebow never deserved what happened to him in New York, but the only thing he can do is move on.



# And this season’s winner is... NFL playoff preview

As the 2012 NFL season approaches the end, the play-off picture becomes clearer.

BY VICTOR LI  
SPORTS CONTRIBUTOR

After 13 weeks of NFL football, some teams have already clinched spots, and we can safely assume others to make it to the postseason, but there’s still enough late season intrigue as teams battle for wild card spots. Let’s take a look at the NFL and predict the outcome of the playoffs.

NFC Wild Card Round  
3. Green Bay Packers (proj. 12-4) vs. 6. Seattle Seahawks (proj. 10-6)  
The 2012 draft class of quarterbacks already looks like it could be one of the best ever. Russell Wilson might not be as heralded as fellow rookie QBs Andrew Luck and Robert Griffin III, but he’s reliable and he gets the job done. Aaron Rodgers and the Packers might be beat up at the moment, but if they can be healthy come January, they are still top playoff contenders. They’ll have plenty of motivation after last year’s playoff collapse against the Giants and the “Fail Mary” in Week 3, and the botched call which cost them the win... against none other than the Seattle Seahawks. Seattle’s defence is strong, Marshawn Lynch is talented, but few can rival Green Bay’s pass attack when everyone is healthy.  
PACKERS 24 – SEAHAWKS 17

4. New York Giants (proj. 10-6) vs. 5. Chicago Bears (proj. 11-5)  
The defending champs face a challenge in the tough Chicago Bears, who I think to be a difficult matchup for them. The Bears’ D,

which looked invincible earlier on in the season, piling up on turnovers and converting them into points, has let up since then, but is still tough for teams to beat. The Giants, though, have Eli Manning and his talented receiving corps, as well as a decent rushing attack, so they have the offensive variety to keep the Bears’ D on its toes. I think this matchup comes down to how well the Giants’ D can restrain the Bears’ offense, especially Brandon Marshall and Matt Forte. If the G-men can get it done defensively, I think they will be able to win and make some more playoff noise.  
GIANTS 17 – BEARS 10

NFC Wild Card Byes  
1. Atlanta Falcons (proj. 14-2)  
Matt Ryan is having a career year with the Falcons, who look like serious contenders for the first time in his tenure with the team. The one knock is that they haven’t won a single playoff game with Ryan under center. Their record is boosted having possibly the easiest schedule in the NFL, and even then, they’ve had some close calls against teams which had no right to keep things so close. Still, W’s are W’s, and the Falcons have their bye. My prediction would have them facing the Giants, in a rematch of last year’s wild card game. This one will be tough to call, but it will depend on which QB (Ryan or Manning) is more clutch down the stretch in what should be a close game. I’m leaning towards Eli and the Giants pulling off another upset, but this one can truly go both ways.  
FALCONS 17 – GIANTS 20

2. San Francisco 49ers (proj. 12-3-1)  
So, Alex Smith or Colin Kaepernick?

nick? After Smith’s concussion and Kaepernick’s subsequent success, this question is hard to answer. Personally, I think Smith’s experience and reliability will be better for a playoff run, but the call belongs to Jim Harbaugh. This QB controversy has to be resolved in the regular season, or it might be too late to fall back on the resentful Alex Smith during the playoffs if Kaepernick doesn’t pan out. Their D will keep them competitive, but it all comes down to how their offense does. They need answers before they play the Packers, and I don’t know what they’ll get.  
PACKERS 17 – 49ERS 14

AFC Wild Card Round  
3. Baltimore Ravens (proj. 12-4) vs. 6. Pittsburgh Steelers (proj. 10-6)  
There’s nothing better than a Wild Card playoff game between two bitter division rivals. These two teams have no shortage of history and success, but both teams are hurting as of right now and are missing their leaders. The Steelers are playing without Ben Roethlisberger, who has led them to two Super Bowl titles and is their only hope if they want to win it again this year. Big Ben is probably going to be back in time for the playoffs, but the time off due to injury might hurt his play. The Ravens, on the other end, are hurt mostly on their defence, missing star LB Ray Lewis, as well as having nagging injuries to other key defensive players. I give the edge to the Ravens because they’re playing at home, where they haven’t lost since December 2010 (except their Week 13 loss against the Steelers).  
RAVENS 16 – STEELERS 13

4. New England Patriots (proj. 11-5) vs. 5. Indianapolis Colts (proj. 10-6)

Can you believe this? Who would have believed that the Indianapolis Colts would be in the playoffs so soon after letting Peyton Manning go and finishing the 2011 season 2-14? Andrew Luck is something special, and has succeeded expectations, even though he was the first overall pick and was stepping in some pretty big shoes. Luck and the Colts have a tough matchup against the New England Patriots, one season removed from losing another Super Bowl to the New York Giants. The Patriots still have an explosive offence, enough to cover up the inconsistent play of their defence. Tom Brady wants that fourth ring, and his time is starting to run out. This could possibly turn into a shootout, but I see New England coming out on top.  
PATRIOTS 31 – COLTS 27

AFC Wild Card Byes  
1. Houston Texans (proj. 15-1)  
The NFL’s newest franchise celebrates its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary with its second playoff berth and first wild card bye. This team has never looked so good in its brief history, with a balanced offence and a fearsome defence. One year removed from their first playoff spot and win (with a third string rookie QB to boot) they look to improve upon their success with a roster that will probably be fully healthy by playoff time, especially if they clinch the bye early and can rest stars late in the season. Matt Schaub, Arian Foster, Andre Johnson, J.J. Watt and Co. look to lead this talented team into their first Super Bowl, and I think they can do it. I have them playing the New England Patriots, which should be a good test to see whether this franchise is ready for the Big Game, and like I said before, I think they are.

TEXANS 28 – PATRIOTS 24  
2. Denver Broncos (proj. 13-3)  
Peyton Manning’s renaissance begins, as he leads Denver back into contention (sorry Tim Tebow, your Broncos were never true contenders). The MVP favourite has talented receivers and a good defence, but an injury to starting RB Willis McGahee could hurt them. McGahee isn’t due back until the AFC title game at the earliest and could be rusty even if he does return. However, the Broncos should still be able to beat the Ravens on the strength of their passing game and their defence...or maybe not. This is another one of those games which could go either way.  
BRONCOS 21 – RAVENS 20

SUPER BOWL XLVII PICKS  
AFC 1. Houston Texans vs. NFC 3. Green Bay Packers  
Aaron Rodgers would play in his second Super Bowl, while the Texans would be playing their first since the franchise was created. I predict Houston to finally get some revenge on Peyton Manning’s Broncos after he dominated the Texans so much during his tenure with the Colts. On the NFC side, I predict the Pack to beat the G-men after their embarrassing upset last season. The Big Game will probably be won by defence, since both teams have superb offences, but Houston has a clear edge on the defensive end. They also have a superior running game to complement their passing attack, which should keep Green Bay’s D on the alert. I think this variety and flexibility on offence and their standout defence will give the Texans their first ever Super Bowl win at Super Bowl XLVII in New Orleans.  
TEXANS 24 – PACKERS 20

## Checking the naughty and nice list twice: the best and worst

The surprises and flat out busts of this year’s season.

BY DANIEL GRENIER  
SPORTS CONTRIBUTOR

Without a doubt, this year’s NFL season has been nothing short of superb (and believe me, it’s not just because my Broncos are playoff bound). The rookie class is cashin’ checks and breakin’ necks, Adrian Peterson is gunning down rush defenses on the way to the all-time yards in a season record, and for once I don’t have to bang my head against the wall knowing that the Patriots are leading the AFC.

With the holiday season just behind us, I thought I’d get in on the festive hoopla and give you my own version of Santa’s naughty/nice list, with an NFL flavour. Disclaimer: easily offended Jets fans please stop reading! I know when this issue hits newsstands in January the whole theme of this article will be irrelevant, but play along, why don’t ya? And just to note, I’m not choosing the best players and coaches statistically, but the ones that I feel have made the greatest contributions to their teams this year.

**Nice Quarterback: Andrew Luck, Indianapolis Colts**  
Andrew Luck has been terrific this year, not only as a player but as a leader on the Colts team that finished 2-14 in 2011-12. There was a reason why he was heralded as the most NFL-ready college quarterback. He’s rallied his troops after head coach Chuck Pagano was diagnosed with leukemia in September, and the Colts are prime in the wild card race sitting at 9-5. Luck has not had incredibly eye-popping statistics: 20 TDs and 18 INTs and a decent 3,978 yards isn’t MVP worthy, but tell me you

thought that the Colts would be in the place they are in at this moment when the season started. “That’s right you can’t.”

**Naughty Quarterback: Mark Sanchez, New York Jets**

Listen, I understand as much as the next guy how tough it must be to play in a market like New York City. But every other team in the Empire State seems to be doing just fine; the Rangers had the best record in the East last year, the Knicks and Nets are in the higher class of NBA teams, and the Yankees... well they’re the Yankees. But the Jets have been bloody awful in the past years, especially in 2012. Mark Sanchez has been the second biggest problem for Gang Green in these years (the biggest problem is coming up - stay tuned). If running into your offensive guard’s buttocks and fumbling the ball for six points isn’t enough, then the game against the Titans in Week 15 was (five turnovers for Sanchez). I’m sorry Tebow fans, but he isn’t getting the nod anytime soon either. The point is, something’s got to be done, or the Jets may become the Bills of 2010.

**Nice Running Back: Doug Martin, Tampa Bay Buccaneers**

No question this guy has been my guy for the 2012-13 season (51 fantasy points in Week 9 wasn’t so bad, right?). The Boise State product has exploded into the NFL rather comfortably, as he basically single-handedly carried the Buccaneers offense this season. Martin, nicknamed the “Muscle Hamster” (probably the worst nickname in pro sports at the moment), is merely a rookie, but this guy has already proven he has what it takes to play in the NFL. The guy is built like Maurice Jones-Drew, breaks tackles like Jerome Bettis and has the versatility of Brian Westbrook. Believe me, if this guy was in a mar-

ket like Chicago or New York, his merchandise would be flying off the shelves. It’s just unfortunate he has no supporting cast to accompany him. Josh Freeman is lame-ducking as usual and the defense is no better. But you never know, he might be the centerpiece of my next article describing how the 9-7 Bucs shocked the world and won the Super Bowl.

**Naughty Running Back: Ryan Mathews, San Diego Chargers**

The Chargers have been terrible this season. As enjoyable as it is for me, a lot of people expected these guys to make a ton more noise in the AFC West this year. Coupled with Norv Turner and Philip Rivers crumpling into fetal position at the worst time, the NFL’s “Sexy Pick” is falling flat on its face offensively (I mean seriously, they only scored 6 points against the Browns). Young gun Ryan Mathews was expected to be a prize this year for the Chargers, a team who hasn’t established a solid running game since the departure of LaDainian Tomlinson. Mathews has averaged 3.8 per carry and 59 per game, and only has one touchdown through 14 games. Until he turns it around (or gets replaced), the Chargers will have to stick with their zero-dimensional offense (because Philip Rivers is, you know, Philip Rivers).

**Nice Wide Receiver: A.J. Green, Cincinnati Bengals**

The Bengals are stuck in wild card limbo, playing in one of the toughest divisions in football. But they’ve held their own, with great defensive play and a solid offensive attack... that offensive attack being QB Andy Dalton and WR A.J. Green. Give me the name of another wide receiver on the Bengals... go on, I’ll give you three seconds. Exactly. Green has been stellar for the Bengals, as he ranks sixth in receptions, eighth in yards, and he’s caught the most

touchdowns of anyone this year. The Bengals are primed to earn a wild card spot this year, and have a shot at the division if the Ravens fault in the final weeks. They have Green to thank for that, but seriously, maybe it’s time to draft someone to anchor that left side of the field other than Mohamed Sanu (who?).

**Naughty Wide Receiver: Antonio Brown, Pittsburgh Steelers**

The Steelers have dealt with a roller coaster of a season so far. I don’t think I’ve ever seen a more beaten up team in recent memory. Roethlisberger went down, and then Leftwich broke his ribs, and the ageless wonder third stringer Charlie Batch made a surprise start and actually won. It’s been a carousel of running backs, with Mendenhall, Redman and Dwyer sharing touches while the others were on the bench clinging on to whatever strength they had. Defensive leader Troy Polamalu has been gone as well, so you’d think that the remainder, the wide receivers, would step up. That hasn’t been the case, at least with Antonio Brown, who was designated as Pittsburgh’s No. 1 receiver this year. 668 yards and three touchdowns wouldn’t be horrible for a low market team, but for the higher echelon Steelers, its eye-popping numbers or bust. Steelers fans shouldn’t expect a Super Bowl push this season, as an offseason of recovery should prime them for next year. As for Brown, he could easily be replaced by 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> stringers Mike Wallace and Emmanuel Sanders.

**Nice Head Coach: Pete Carroll, Seattle Seahawks**

I was planning on having Marshawn Lynch as the “Nice Running Back” but he isn’t putting the team on his back a la Greg Jennings in 2010. The Seahawks have been a well-oiled powerhouse this year,

the defense is in the top 10, Russell Wilson in my mind is right there for NFC Rookie of the Year along with RGIII, and it’s all because of Pete Carroll. When this guy took over in 2010 I thought he was absolutely insane, the way he bounced all over the Seahawks sideline. But he’s onto something - the Seahawks have been quietly successful during Carroll’s tenure (I mean they won the division with a 7-9 record in 2011... THAT is something special). Carroll, who coached the powerhouse USC Trojans for the entire 2000s decade (six bowl wins and four coach of the year honours) has the Seahawks set for future years. They’re contending in the playoffs this year, and they may even end up as division champions. Consider these guys a threat in the coming seasons.

**Naughty Head Coach: Rex Ryan, New York Jets**

Jeez, I just have this vendetta going against the entire Jets organization, don’t I? I can’t think of any other coach in the NFL who has screwed up harder than Rex Ryan has in New York. I’ll concede that he started out really well; back-to-back AFC Championship games are no easy task. But it’s been a slippery slope for the Jets over the past two seasons. With all of the problems the Jets have had this season, it all comes back to the leadership factor, or lack thereof. Ryan is the primary reason for the Jets’ struggles recently, botching key decisions when it counted the most. Let’s be serious, am I the only guy thinking it’s Tebow Time in the Big Apple? The decision to even draft Sanchez was brainless, and the fact that he remains their quarterback is only going to lead them to more last place finishes in the AFC East. With the team and the city’s media starting to pick up on his antics, I believe it’s only a matter of time until Rex is out of a job.

# A first look at The Hobbit



**AN UNEXPECTED JOURNEY AWAITS!** Lord of the Rings fans will be thrilled to view the latest installment of the series. The exciting adventure has already been released and loved by many!

A look at the new movie through the eyes of the original book.

**BY ISAAC TAM**  
ENTERTAINMENT CONTRIBUTOR

Well, the current day that I have written this article, December 8, 2012, is one week from the release of *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey*, which had been released on December 14, 2012. Seeming that I haven't watched the movie at this point, I've decided to review the book, the inspiration for the movie and its two other parts. *The Hobbit* is a children's book, written by J.R.R. Tolkien and was first published in 1937. This book was one of the first fantasy books of its kind and gained much acclaim, being nominated for the *Carnegie Award* as well as being named the best juvenile fiction book by the *New York Herald Tribune*. Because of the success of *The Hobbit*, fans and publishers begged Tolkien to write a sequel. *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, originally planned to be a single volume, was the result.

*The Hobbit* is tale of Bilbo Bag-

gins, a hobbit who lives in a comfortable home dug into the side of a hill in the Shire, as was customary of the hobbit race. Hobbits are tiny little people, no bigger than a child but are not to be confused with dwarfs, whom are of similar height but do not share a hairy beard, a dwarf's pride. Instead, hobbits keep their hair on the tops of their feet along with leathery soles that help them tread lightly. Bilbo Baggins belongs to a wealthy family and like all hobbits, is fond of food but dreads adventures. However, the Took family, of which Bilbo's mother belongs to, are notorious for running off and seeing the world outside the Shire, causing other hobbits to view them in an unfavourable eye.

One day, as Bilbo was smoking his pipe outside his home, Gandalf the wizard (if you've read *The Silmarillion* by Tolkien, you'll know he's actually not a wizard) appears, donning his grey attire. He invites Bilbo to go on an adventure with him, whose invitation Bilbo refuses. The morning after, dwarfs of many personalities, sizes and culinary preferences, show up at his doorstep. 13 of them bumble

through his front door, along with Gandalf and the legendary Thorin Oakenshield, son of Thráin II, King under the Mountain.

After a feast of cakes, coffee, ale and pies, Thorin finally explains the reason for the disturbance. Many years ago, a dragon named Smaug invaded their home in the Lonely Mountain, killing many dwarfs in its glorious underground halls. Gold, silver among other treasures were kept within the halls of stone by Smaug, and no one has been able to recapture them since. Now, they have formed this band of dwarfs to retake their home, hoping for Bilbo to join them. Without Bilbo's consent, Gandalf had apparently told them that he was a burglar for hire and would be very useful on their journey. Bilbo at first is reluctant on going on an adventure, but continues with the guise, ashamed of looking cowardly in the presence of the dwarfs. And with that, they set off on an epic quest to reclaim the treasure stolen from the dwarfs.

This is one of my favourite books because of its simple bedtime story feel. This book is light-hearted compared to most fantasy

stories nowadays, but is probably more memorable and endearing. As you read, you will connect with Bilbo as he ventures out into the dark world because he is naive and afraid of the evil things that inhabit Middle-Earth. His insecurities of trying to be helpful or trying to fit in are also our insecurities. His fears of the unknown are our fears of the unknown. Bilbo becomes us. But what surprises readers is that he is able to muster the courage to face these dangers, showing us that there is hope even when one is afraid or lost, and that there is good left in the world. There is never a dull moment in *The Hobbit*.

*The Hobbit* is also a very important book because it is the setup for *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy (spoilers ahead!). Bilbo finds the Ring of Power in the depths of a mountain, reviving an ancient and evil power that had lain dormant within the lands of Mordor. Gollum leaves the mountain in search of his *preciousssss*. All those good open-ended topics are continued in the next three books.

So, should you read the book? Yes, read the book, before the movie comes out (hold on, it al-

ready came out)! I guarantee you will love this book. It's only 400 pages on most editions and you won't be able to put it down until you're done because there is always something new and unexpected with each page. After *The Hobbit*, you'll want to read more Tolkien so then I recommend you read *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy. After that, if you want to find out the lore of the whole Tolkien universe, read *The Silmarillion* and *Unfinished Tales*, though they are both heavy reads.

Also, watch the movie if you haven't already! (I know I have). It looks visually stunning and you can't go wrong with Peter Jackson, the director of *The Lord of the Rings* movie trilogy and winner of an Academy Award for Best Director in *Return of the King*. Martin Freeman does an amazing performance as Bilbo and so does Richard Armitage, who plays Thorin Oakenshield. Ian McKellan, Hugo Weaving and Cate Blanchett reprise their roles as Gandalf, Elrond and Galadriel respectively. The visuals are extremely detailed and gorgeous and are definitely worth a watch.



# Songs for the chaotic end of the world

Angry, dark, and wild. You've got it all.

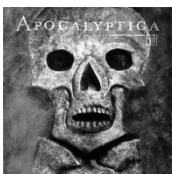
BY ADELE CHUI  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Despite the rampant rumours of the apocalypse, December 21 did not prove to be the last day for Earth. However, if the world were to end, these songs would be playing in the background. Raging breakdowns, screaming vocals, and powerful melodies, these all perfectly describe the chaos that Armageddon would bring.



**The Human Condition – Chelsea Grin**  
A gorgeous guitar melody starts this song off, setting up for a powerful interplay between three guitarists, extremely precise bass and double bass drumming, all accompanied by powerful lyrics. The contrast between the shrieking vocals and the deep bass growls only increases the turbulent and incensed emotions that play out from this song. Chugging breakdowns ground the

speed-burst riffs as the brutal song pounds away. This is the song playing when building fall and fire erupts around you.



**Romance – Apocalyptica**  
This instrumental piece builds slowly, starting with a saddening melody that builds in volume and tempo to one that speaks of water roaring over continents and the gorgeous but heart-wrenching fall of human civilisation. Though there are no powerful lyrics, the instruments speak for themselves; rising to include a powerful bass and three cellos, masterfully intertwined. Picture cities falling as the ocean rises above and sweeps it aside: this would be the soundtrack.

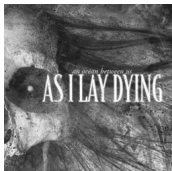


**From Dusk Till Dawn (ft. Nate Johnson) – Upon a Burning Body**

This song starts off hard and brutal, with a deep roaring scream and pounding guitars relentlessly following as vocals are growled out. “Blood will fill the oceans and turn the skies red as it crashes down” is the first line of a song that simply does not stop raging, the power behind an apocalypse. The end of the world is not a measly earthquake but an all-encompassing disaster that does not stop, even at the very end, just like the roaring lyrics which finish with the line: “Blood will fill the ocean.”



**A Day For Night – Circle of Contempt**  
Stop-go guitar riffs and roaring lyrics create a stunningly efficient spiral of brutality intermixed with a period of instrumental gold. The powerful music creates a picture of looting buildings and angry citizens utterly lost in the sweeping end of the world as they know it. It is the choppy stop-go riffs and pounding drums that follow which perfectly describe the erratic events that characterise the fall of our civilization.



**Nothing Left – As I Lay Dying**  
A calm guitar quickly builds into a rapid melody highlighted by rattling drums, later interwoven with guttural lyrics that scream their way through the song. Gorgeous guitar solos fill in the gaps between the sparse lyrics. Though the beginning of this song is rather empty, it builds to a powerful conclusion with a lead guitar that spirals upward before one last rendition of the chorus. The words “Like those gasping for their last breath, we cannot hide that there’s nothing left” appear again and again, reminiscent of the repetitive prayers of those caught in the destruction of the apocalypse.  
Just like this song and its final fade into silence, there will be nothing left after the world fades to black.  
There are natural disasters... And then there is the world ending. Raging, powerful, and always destructive, these songs are a perfect match for any Armageddon that may occur.

# Les Mis singing a miss?



Was the new soundtrack a change for the better? Or for the worse?

BY ERICH RENNIE  
ENTERTAINMENT CONTRIBUTOR

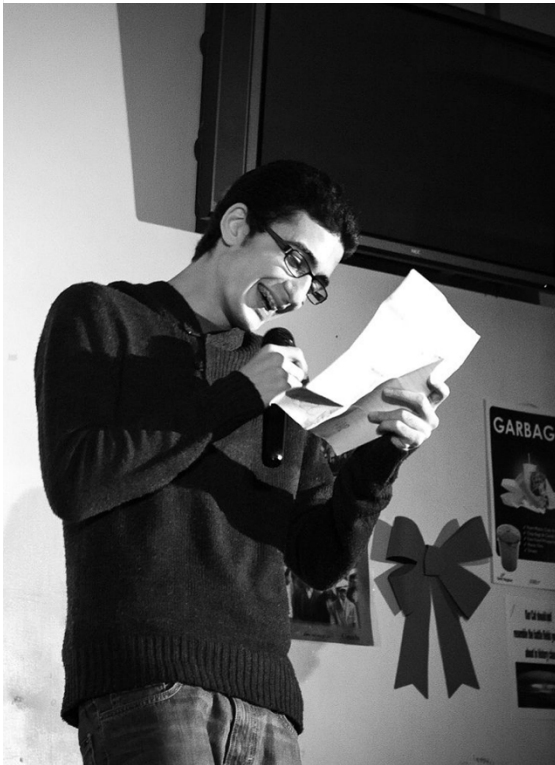
One of the greatest musicals ever made, Les Misérables, has been adapted to the big screen for Christmas. It is a highly anticipated film for millions of people that have fallen in love with the emotional and inventive musical. Following the life of Jean Valjean, a man who spent 19 years in jail for stealing a loaf of bread, this musical is completely and utterly phenomenal. As a result of the success of the original musical, the film has so much to live up to, but even more so, the movie’s soundtrack needs to be just as phenomenal as that of the musical.

Being someone who is fully emotionally invested in this musical, I couldn’t contain myself to find out that I would once again get to see it, but this time, in theatres. From this excitement, I decided to stay up till midnight on the morning of the 21<sup>st</sup> of December just so that I could purchase the new soundtrack. My expectations for the music were so high, and from the previews of the film that I had seen, I thought my expectations would be met. After listening to the entire album consisting of twenty songs, I felt let down. There was so much inside that went unfulfilled in terms of the music. The undeniable emotion, power, and strength in the original songs, simply disappeared. I understand that the directors wanted for the music to be pure and vulnerable, but having the actors sing live, as they acted the scenes, was a risk that feel didn’t pay off. I believe that there was too much freedom given to the actors in what they could do with the songs. A musical with so much success as Les Mis is one that needs not be changed. Both the loss of certain songs, sections of songs, and adding in both new lines to songs, as well as writing a brand new song all contributed to my disappointment.

My disappointment was also delivered in the performance of Sacha Baron Cohen as Mr. Thénardier, a shady, scummy, and vile inn owner. The fake French accent that he sings with, makes it seem the songs are a joke. Overall, the casting for the film didn’t seem to be focused on the actor’s voices in many cases. I feel that the cast of the film don’t fully support the songs and make them to be what they are. Although the album did not provide what is required for a film of such magnitude, the movie will still be one that people should most definitely see, I know I will.

# T.S.S. Open Mic Night

Everyone’s favorite event returned this fall with a whole new array of performances ranging from bands acts to poetry to various forms of dancing. Everyone enjoyed yet another successful display of the many special talents we have here at Thornhill Secondary School! Photo credits to Eric Bai.



# Winter 2012

The undeniable emotion, power, and strength in the original songs, simply disappeared.



# The Cage Full of Birds: a review

La Cage Aux Folles has come to town. But will audiences be banging the cage for more?

BY LAUREN MALYK  
ENTERTAINMENT CONTRIBUTOR

Why should you go see a musical called "*The Cage Full of Birds*"? Because the renowned actor George Hamilton is back. The smash hit comedic musical follows the premise of a drag club located in St. Tropez, featuring the famous golden tanned George Hamilton as the master of ceremonies. Georges has been with his partner and star act "Zaza" (also known as Albin) for years. The trouble comes in when Georges son Jean-Michel returns home to announce that he is in love with a girl. The girl in question is Anne, whose father is the head of the "Tradition, Family and Morality Party" which plans to abolish all drag queen clubs. In a twist of events, Jean-Michel reveals that Anne's parents are coming to visit tomorrow to ensure their daughter is marrying into a 'normal' family. But what will happen to Albin and the night club? And how will Georges and his family pass off as 'normal'?

For the younger generation, the tanned Mr. Hamilton began his film career in 1952 and has been a part of more than forty or so television and cinematic films. It's an inspiration to see a seventy-three year old man who graced the

screen be able to sing and dance his way into the hearts of Torontonians. His partner in crime throughout the musical was played by Christopher Sieber, who quickly became of the favourites in the song and dance show. Although a successful musical overall, the relationship between Hamilton and Sieber seemed forced at times, like in the finale. Although Hamilton strives to make his character warm and likable, he comes across as rigid. Their relationship is contrived at times, due to the lack of emotion and empathy Hamilton has for his character. Hamilton attempts too many exaggerated expressions in the play, which although off-putting, had its moments as well. The good part is that he was determined to make the audience feel for his character and enjoy the musical.

In particular, this is evident in the finale with the couple sharing a kiss; it was easy to see the hesitation as Hamilton kissed his male co-star.

Christopher Sieber offered a wide variety of emotions for his character, after all he was a drama queen. The moving numbers within the show were *Song On The Sand* and *Look Over There*. *Song On The Sand* details a heartfelt moment when Hamilton's character realized that he was in love after hearing the tune of a simple song.

While *Look Over There* showcases that there will always be someone taking care of some-

one and loving them. This song is played specifically for Georges and Jean-Michel as tensions arise within the family. Comedy kicks in with the *Masculinity* number as the audience cry out for more, as it references a famous figure in masculinity for men. It also called on the ridiculousness of Albin's character, and how he tries to learn to be a man.

In an age where it's difficult to be accepted by others, the song that hits the heart full on is *I Am What I Am*. This is where the star drag queen, Albin, sings his heart out about not being accepted by the world, but how he truly accepts himself. Despite the controversial and racy topic of transvestites, the musical is working to make audiences accept these people for who they are through the use of catchy songs.

In short *La Cage Aux Folles* fits in with Toronto's atmosphere in being diverse and multicultural. This musical features some heartfelt musical numbers and performances by two characters that you're sure to love. Both stars' funny interactions set the tone for the play. Moments do shine through where any individual can admit that they have been in the same position of either Albin or Georges., whether that be in trying to convince someone you love them or in not being accepted by others.

Despite the musical's lighthearted nature, it goes into the deep idea of acceptance. However, it's sure to make you laugh.



A PERFECT FIT FOR A CITY LIKE TORONTO *La Cage Aux Folles* offers a formidable show for all audiences to enjoy.

# Ask Vlad

Vlad is back again, with the second part of our famous advice column. Vlad Boshoe himself continues to answer your questions on everything from the end of the world to the makeup looks he enjoys. If you have any questions that you would like answered, check out our Facebook page or send us a message at [eyeofthetigerchiefs@gmail.com](mailto:eyeofthetigerchiefs@gmail.com).

BY VLAD BOSHOER  
COLUMNIST



are-yummy

A: Honestly, zombies are more annoying these days than Twilight. It's as if in the past five years the movie industry, game industry, and book publishing presses have all gotten infected with this pop culture phenomenon of zombies. We're even getting a zombie rom-com this year! I shake my head.

In answer to your question, even if we did have a zombie apocalypse, it would in all probability be extremely short-lived and disappointing as literally EVERYONE in the world knows how to kill zombies at this point and what to do in the case of a zombie apocalypse. It's really not a threat at all.

**Q: My friends are being all lovey-dovey and I feel like a disgusting third-wheel. What do I do, HELP! Sincerely, don't-kiss-in-front-of-me**

A: I completely feel ya there. It's happening to everyone around me, so I end up being like a third wheel cubed. It's not the best feeling, especially when all of my imaginary girlfriends are courtesans. These days I'm starting to talk to my stuffed animals, and I don't think that's healthy.

So yeah, being a third wheel isn't fun. I can't exactly help you out in this situation, I'm afraid. My Tickle-Me-Elmo is restricting me from it.

**Q: How to get a guy to fall in love with you in three easy steps, go! Best wishes, advice-please**

A: 1) Be interested in his interests.  
2) Be witty, funny and flirty all at the same time.  
3) Don't act expendable.

**Q: Do you think it's reasonable for a person to get so stressed out she has to get a 95 average and do everything? Thanks, stress-is-my-middle-name**

A: Absolutely not. I've always been a firm believer that you're simply wasting away the rest of your sad and empty social life by straining your efforts in high school to achieve the highest marks.

As far as I know, the only reason to get high marks is to get into a good school and the highest marks are usually not mandatory for what you want to do unless you're one of those posh private school kids who want to be part of some elite high mark club. It is pointless. Live your life and have fun while you can, and you will get into a good school with an 80+ average.

Save your efforts for when you actually get to university or wherever you're going, because that's where you really need it. High school's just a warm up.

**Q: Why didn't the world end? Thanks, december-21-2012**

A: I'm disappointed myself, but the reality was inescapable. A better rephrase of your question, I think though, is "why didn't America end?"

Obviously that's what everyone's looking for, according to Hollywood (whose word is a purely indisputable fact). Nobody cares about poor little Australia who would be the first guys caught up in the mess.

Of course, every two years there will probably be another announcement that we are reaching our impending doom, so you can jump on that bandwagon if you want.

**Q: How did you end up becoming a columnist? Sincerely, tell-me-please**

A: Settle down children, it's story time. On a regular temperate day in the early autumn, a young Russian fellow was down in his dumps. Could it be because he decided the study of mathematics was an absolutely ruthless subject or that the newest Spider-man movie was a huge pile of gobbledegook? Nobody really knows.

But anyway, this young Russian (aptly named after a national journalist) was suddenly inspired to reach out to millions with his words and ideas. He would be like a sun casting light upon all the planets of his solar system. Why did he feel this way? How was he inspired? Well, what happened was he saw two angels. Was it a dream... or was it real? He couldn't decide. It was so... real.

They called unto him, "O most respectable fellow of graceful features, doth thou desire to spread thy magic word to the people of Thornhill?" To which he replied, "Yeah." And that's how I ended up becoming a columnist.

**Q: Why are people so uptight about their music? Thanks, all-genres-are-lovable**

A: It is frustrating. Sometimes I would attend parties and I absolutely don't mind any of the music they play. But when I request one measly little Cannibal Corpse song for everyone to enjoy and chill out to, I get the evil eye from everyone! I really don't understand people these days.

**Q: How do I live? Best wishes, need-a-motto**

A: By the sword. Conquer or die!

**Q: Are we ever going to see a zombie apocalypse? Thanks, brains-**

## Do you know about the Thornhill Secondary School Alumni Association?

The TSSAA is active at Thornhill! Every year we:

- Provide scholarships/bursaries to graduating students
- Present achievement awards to junior students
- Support school fundraising initiatives

Connect with us and get involved!

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Visit our website at [www.thornhillalumni.com](http://www.thornhillalumni.com)

*Did your parents, grandparents, or relatives go to Thornhill? Have them connect with us too! They may be eligible to join our Half Century Club - this is for alumni who attended Thornhill 50+ years ago.*

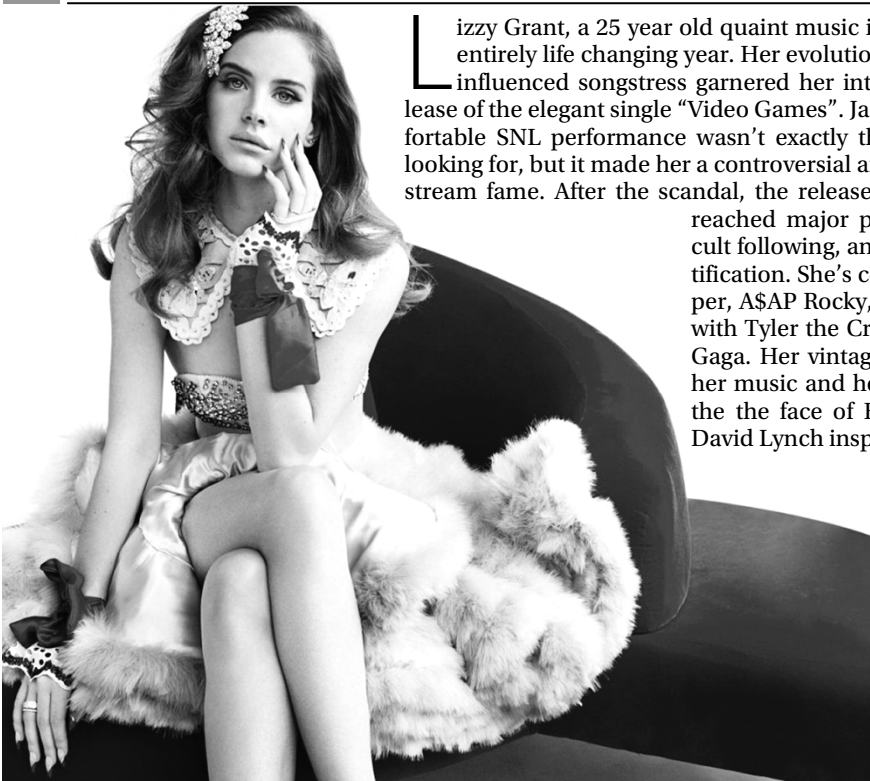


# Albums + Artists of 2012

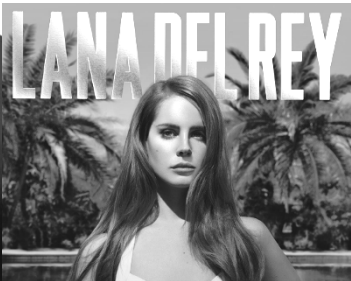
2012 was a year in which bands and artists flocked or flew. A brief glance into the people that got it right and a look at some albums deserving of recognition, and why.

Andrea Howard.

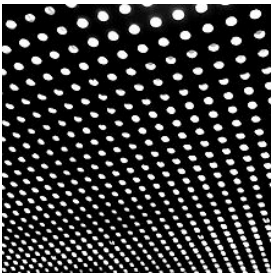
**Artist: Lana Del Rey**  
Releases album "Born to Die" on January 31, 2012



Lizzy Grant, a 25 year old quaint music industry outsider, had a fruitful and entirely life changing year. Her evolution into sultry, husky voiced, hip-hop influenced songstress garnered her internet fame, especially after the release of the elegant single "Video Games". January 14th, Grant's flat and uncomfortable SNL performance wasn't exactly the sort of critical opinion she was looking for, but it made her a controversial artist and skyrocketed her into mainstream fame. After the scandal, the release of her debut album, Born to Die, reached major popularity, gathered a crazed, near cult following, and then went on to achieve gold certification. She's collaborated with the respected rapper, A\$AP Rocky, and is rumored to eventually work with Tyler the Creator, Frank Ocean, and even Lady Gaga. Her vintage aura, which emanates from both her music and her personal style, has landed her as the face of H&M, performing Blue Velvet in a David Lynch inspired commercial for the brand.



**Album: Bloom (Beach House)**  
Released: May 15, 2012



Victoria Legrand once again triumphant in the production of an album chock-full of mortality, death and general eeriness, while contrasted with delicate plucking of guitar and organ chords. Her deep gentle voice washes over songs such as "Across the Sea" but delves into deeper concepts of solitude and fear of demise. Prettiness with a punch.

JANUARY

FEBRUARY

MARCH

APRIL

MAY

JUNE



**Artist: Skrillex**  
Won 3 Grammys on February 12, 2012

Admittedly, I've never been one to "drop the bass", but one must respect what newcomer Sonny Moore has done for the music industry. The unpolished electronica, more commonly referred to as 'dubstep' was formed in British club scenes within the late 90's, and laid dormant until an explosion of popularity in North America. This recent mainstream success of the genre, and its evolution from grungy breakbeat, to the offshoot sub-genre 'brostep' (which consists of more experimental, metal influenced beats), can be attributed to the revolutionary himself. Not only has Moore paved a place in history for himself, he has an eclectic range of experience within this past year. Appearing in a plethora of diverse festivals such as the likes of Bonaroo and Lollapalooza. Collaborations from Katy Perry to the remaining Doors members, Taylor Swift to Rihanna. He's done it all, and seen it all, in an effortlessly cool manner (did I mention he opened a food truck in L.A. called 'grillex', what's cooler than that?). Don't like his music? Not a problem, but you've got to give our half-haired friend some solid recognition for his efforts.



Artist: Grizzly Bear  
Performs “Sleeping Ute” on *Late Night with Jimmy Fallon*

The Brooklyn-based 4, have had a whirlwind year, and deserve phrase for their momentous strives as a group. When releasing an accompanying *Blue Valentine Soundtrack* for the Oscar nominated indie film, they entered 2012 in an upward stream of fame. They then released their 4<sup>th</sup> studio album *Shields*, in September. Its rounded arrangements and intricately layered instrumentals had reviewers and critics alike, clamoring to their attention. Rolling Stone mentioned their album as one of the best of the year. More powerful and aggressive than their previous works, Grizzly Bear still managed to to please faithful fans (such as myself), while wooing new-listeners. Following *Shield's* success, they embarked on a world tour, the first of which in over 4 years. Reaching Toronto’s Massey Hall, where they strummed out old hits, new jams and wrapped up with a cheery, acoustic version of “All We Ask” (a personal favourite). Humble and pleasant, they graced interviewers such as Stephan Coblert and Jimmy Fallon with as much poise as any respectable band might muster. Truly, a year I am proud of for this little band that could.



TAME IMPALA  
LONERISM

Album: *Lonerism* (Tame Impala)  
Released: October 5, 2012

Psychedelic-electronica “trip pop”, takes a modern and undeniably catchy take in Kevin Parker’s *Lonerism*. Less crunchy and grungy than previous works, songs are vibrant and uplifting, with impossibly contagious melodies, consuming synthetic keyboards and guitars and cheery vocals tying it all together. “Be Above It” is shockingly reminiscent of *Revolver* era Beatles. Experimental, trippy and simply wonderful.

JULY

AUGUST

SEPTEMBER

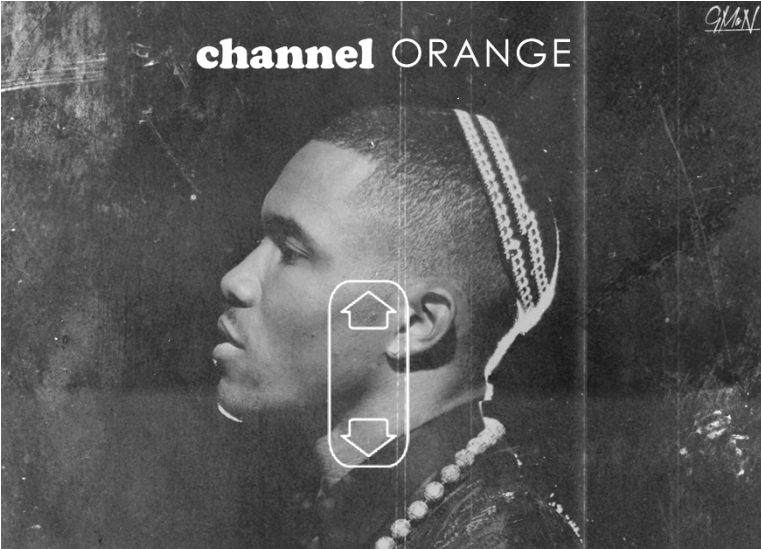
OCTOBER

NOVEMBER

DECEMBER

Album: *Channel Orange*  
Released: July 10, 2012

A second album, using Ocean’s his usual minimalistic approach, which is reflected on obviously personal and dark experiences over plush beats. Most notable to me on this album was the track “Forrest Gump”, which is thought to detail a love he shared for another man, making him this first openly gay artist in the hip-hop community. Massive, controversial, and not to mention, a lovely song of vivid lyricism and lingering echoing qualities. A perfect fit with the flow of the entire album.



FRANK OCEAN



Artist: *One Direction*  
Releases album “Take Me Home” on November 9, 2012

Alright, so putting obvious opinions aside, these guys have it together. The British five have seen overwhelming success in 2012. They’ve climbed to the top of charts, as well as adolescent girls heart’s. They’ve even been compared by Mick Jagger himself to the ‘early Stones’. They began on Britain’s *X Factor* as solo competitors, and in a stroke of luck, were united to form a boy-band, possibly the most primitive, but successful form of selling music. Nothing new really, a bunch of cute British boys who have nice hair and sing decently, but undoubtedly, the creative directors, song writers and producers behind the pack have done their job remarkably well. They’ve created boppy, stick-in-your head songs and a persona of wholesome, fun loving lads, which has worked time and time again. With only one record under their belt, it seems the only direction these boys can go from here, is up.

ONE DIRECTION



# SLITHERLINK

Horizontally or vertically connect adjacent dots to form a path that forms a single loop, without crossing itself, or branching. The numbers indicate how many lines surround each cell (only 0-3 are permitted).

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