



the **EDGAR SENTINEL**

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| Editor in Chief | Alannah Tjhatra |
| Assistant Editor | Cassandra John-Whittingham |
| Staff | Selena Ly Hannah Balance Maycee Dammog Vyncee Dammog Rea de Guzman Lara Nacino Megan Villanueva |
| Layout | Editors & Staff |

| | |
|---------|--|
| Writers | Nicole Caran Jensine Aure James Bannister Aaliyah Roberts Emily Kuchurivski Erika Agpalo Catherine Chen Sandrine Adap Cassia Mohns Zarrish Bhatti |
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EDITORS' MESSAGES

ALANNAH
TJHATRA

EDITOR IN
CHIEF



Hello everyone,
Welcome to the Cedar Sentinel's May issue (and Cassie's first official issue!) It's crazy how the time has passed so quickly. I feel like it was literally yesterday that the first day of school took place. And with June coming around the corner, it won't be long before summer vacation.
We just need one last push to make it to the end of the year. James 1:12 says this: "Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love Him." This verse was talking about the trials and temptations that the early Christians faced. However, it can also be applied to our own lives. We can work hard, knowing that our ultimate goal is to meet Jesus in heaven. Things may get a little rough from here on out, but we will be blessed when we stand strong against the tests and trials that are thrown at us - whether it be relationship struggles, school stress, or anything else.
Happy reading and have a great week.
Alannah Tjhatra

CASSANDRA
J.W.

ASSISTANT
EDITOR



Happy May Kingsway,
This month has been pretty good for sports, especially for Toronto with our Raptors. The Raptors are currently second in the eastern conference and play their game against the Golden State Warriors soon. (It may have already passed by the time you read this.)
When it comes to May as a month, it has been living up to its status of being a "time of birth" -- a lot of the flowers and trees on campus are starting to become abundant and beautiful during this time of year!

- Cassie

CONTEST WINNER

Congratulations to Mathias Bruggemann for winning April's contest! Be sure to check Cedar Sentinel for more contests, games, and draws in the future!



MAY CONTEST

Solve the word search below. Email a picture of your answers to cedarsentinel@kingsway.college, or show your copy of the newspaper to Alannah Tjhatra, Selena Ly, or Cassandra John-Whittingham.
The first 3 individuals to correctly identify all of the words will receive a prize.

Topic: Strange Words

- Blatherskite**
a person who talks at great length without making much sense.
- Carphology**
plucking at the bedclothes by a delirious patient.
- Gobbledygook**
language that is meaningless or is made unintelligible; nonsense.
- Discombobulate**
to disconcert or confuse.
- Valetudinarian**
a person who is or believes himself or herself to be chronically sick; a hypochondriac.
- Agelast**
a person who never laughs; one who has no sense of humour.
- Peristeronic**
of or relating to pigeons.
- Macrosmatic**
having a well-developed olfactory apparatus or sense of smell.
- Obelus**
the division symbol (÷).
- Zoanthropy**
a form of madness in which a person believes he or she is an animal/beast.

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LEGALLY ~~BLONDE~~ BRUNETTE

Legally Blonde, an original award-winning film, is known as one of the most iconic films in history. The film begins with Elle Woods (Reese Witherspoon) a blonde, superficial fashion major, who is president of her sorority Delta New. Elle is in love with her boyfriend Warner (Matthew Davis); however, he is no longer interested in her because she is not serious about school. Elle is heartbroken and devotes all she has to become more serious in her academics in order to win Warner over once again. Elle studies hard and changes from a fashion major to a law major. Elle follows Warner to Harvard University and proves to him that she is smart. Warner still does not think she is serious about school, but Elle finally forgets about him and focuses solely on getting her degree. With hard work and determination, Elle Woods becomes the valedictorian of her class four years later.

Why is this story important? One may ask. It shows that persistence and determination can turn anyone's life around in order to reach their goals. In 2013, I was living life to the fullest. I was always laughing, talking with friends, and having a great time. Life was good. However, to every perfect story, there has to be a flaw. My flaw happened to be the subject of mathematics. Personally, I did not understand math, nor did I care to learn it. For the first four months of my grade seven school year, I got low marks on all of my math tests. I didn't care if I did well or not. My mindset was that I didn't need complex math in life - so why learn things that I would never need to do after I finished school?

However, I will never forget what my teacher would say after each test: "Please bring these tests back tomorrow signed by your parent."

I remember my palms al-

ways sweating - my mind would race with a million different ways I could show my mom the test. I could already see the disappointment on my sweet mother's face - sad, angry, and unhappy that I was not doing my very best. For every test I brought home, my mother would sit down with me and go through every question to make sure I understood what I did wrong. Back then, I hated every minute. Looking back now, I see how much she really loved and cared for me. My mother knew that I was a bright kid; she always told me that I was smart and that I could do anything that I put my mind to.

Then it happened.

The climax of my story. The breaking point. It was beginning to look like spring, around the month of March. I went to school, put my school bag on the dark wooden desk, and sat down in the firm blue plastic chair. The bell rang, and my teacher came into the

room and said that our most recent math test had been graded. I remember not feeling too confident about my last test, but it had to be around a C mark at least. I have always passed my tests; I never completely failed anything, so I had no fears about this test being any different from former ones. My teacher handed me my test face-down. I grabbed the crisp paper and saw a big red mark at the top right-hand corner. It read *forty-eight percent*. My heart stopped. How could I possibly get this low? What would my mother say? How much would my grade drop? Would I fail the class? I was shocked, and I went home to my mother crying that day. We went through the same routine of going through every question and making sure I understood.

My mother said: "I am tired of having to go through this with you! You need to do better. I know you can do better."

That sentence has still stuck in my mind all these years later, and that day, something changed in me. I realized that I had to make the decision to try harder - not for my mother or my teacher, but for me. I remember my teacher telling me that I had exactly one week until my next test. I began studying math every night, taking notes in class, and I asked my teacher for extra sheets to practice my math skills. I studied and studied until I couldn't sit any longer. My back ached, my shoulders were curled in pain, and my neck was sore. It was something I had never experienced before - studying hard for something had never been part of my routine.

Finally, the test day came. I did my very best. I had studied a lot and I hoped that my best was good enough. My goal was a B mark. A

couple of days later, the results were in.

My teacher handed me my test face down and said, "I am so proud of you."

My heart began to race.

I turned the page to see an eighty-six percent in red ink on the right-hand corner. I was shocked. Had my work actually paid off? Did determination actually work? My heart was happy, and I was so excited to tell my mother about the good news. That night, my mother's face was beaming with joy. She told me that she had known I could do it. From that day forward, I learned my study technique and got above an eighty percent on every math test since.

However, something my teacher said a couple of weeks after my first A mark in the class changed my life. My teacher asked for the attention of the class, and she boldly declared:

"Nicole was not doing well in math, and she even failed a test. But she worked hard, studied, took notes, and even got extra worksheets. She worked her butt off for her test, and she got an A." She continued to speak, saying that anyone could get high marks if they put the work in.

The whole class turned around and looked at me; my cheeks were a rosy pink. It was the best recognition that I could have ever asked for.

As I go on in life, I always remember that warm feeling of success I had that day. I was a winner. I was like Elle Woods who got into Harvard when everyone else did not believe in her. I was determined. I was impacted to work hard and always do my best. I learned that my best is good enough and that anything is achievable with persistence.

Many today think that they do

not have what it takes to be a winner. Often times, they feel uneducated, unattractive, boring, or untalented. It's easy to fall into that trap and believe that you aren't enough. Many people fall into a deep depression because they feel worthless at the end of the day. I am here as proof to say that anyone can be anything they want to be. All you have to do is want it for yourself, put in the work, and have the determination to reach that goal. Don't ever tell yourself that you can't do a certain career due to your grades. Never let your dreams stay dreams - instead, create goals that you are destined to complete. Do not let anyone get in the way or cause you to feel that you cannot achieve it. It's vital to be strong and independent. Prove to yourself that you, too, have worth. Elle Woods graduated Harvard Law School being the valedictorian and getting lots of job offers. She found the key to success and she unlocked her future. To get to the top, you just have to wholeheartedly want it and to put your very best towards that goal. With persistence and dedication, anything is possible. According to Matthew 19:26 - "With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." With God by your side, you are undefeatable. No one can step in your way, because God is in front of you and He protects His children. Anything is achievable. Everything worthwhile takes work. Taking time to do quality work is the key to success. As you continue on your academic journey, don't forget to thank God for His blessings and care. ■



At first glance, this picture looks like a generic wallpaper type of picture but until closer inspection, you come to a realization that there are many different components to it. Most of the things shown in this picture are things you see throughout your life, but not all of them together at the same time which leads the viewer to confusion. One can picture this as nature's inner storm where it cannot decide on its own state, whether it should be a bright sunny day with plant life sprouting and reaching for the sun's rays or if it should be a cloudy and thunderous dawn as lightning strikes every few seconds. This image evokes a mood of conflict and yet can also express peace at the same time. The vivid coloured sky in the top section of the image appears to be like a mix of different weathers

all mashed together into one, like slowly blending fruits into a smoothie while one can still see separate small chunks of fruit hanging in the mix. There are also many dusk clouds filling the sky, an overflowing cup of murky water in the sink. There are two lightning bolts in the top left corner coming out together from the very top of the image, like two jagged white lines messily scribbled onto the background. There is a sun on the right side of the horizon just peeking out from behind the trees, like a baby popping out its head out from behind the wall of its crib. The sun's rays looming over some of the trees, just as an eagle's wingspan across the sky over the ground. It encompasses and wraps around you with warm and welcoming arms putting you at ease. There is a nice contrast between the two different sides of the picture.

In the middle part of the picture, there is a forest of trees across its whole width. Then there is also a small clearing where there are no trees at all, and you can see a little bit of the sky. The trees are a fence blocking danger from the precious beauty of nature. But there is an opening, a gateway for you to enter through. These trees could also be like nature's skyline, with different sized buildings scattered throughout the horizon. At the lower left part of the picture, there is a clear body of water that has a very pristine reflection of the sky and some of the trees. It as if the reflection of the water has given the sky a touch of beauty and has taken away the imperfections, like it photoshops the images that reflect off of it. The reflection of the sky seems bluer and there are also fewer clouds.

Now on the opposite side

of the picture, there is another body of water, dirty water, one with duckweed floating on top of it and reeds sticking out from it. But there is still a small part of the water that is not being covered and that is actually also reflecting a little bit of the beautiful blue sky and the tall green trees. In the center of the picture, there is an old wooden bridge that continues into the depths of the picture until it reaches the entrance of the forest. The wood planks used for the bridge are starting to fall off, each one the size of the width of the bridge. There are also planks of wood down the long part of the bridge arranged in a messy line, appearing to be the connections between the other boards. Then there are small pieces

of wood stacked messily along the sides of the bridge. It can remind one of an old rickety piano with the keys falling apart, some keys broken and some simply missing from the piano. Looking at this picture, with many different elements of it

evokes a mood of conflict and yet can also express peace at the same time. There are peace and chaos which gives this picture balance, like a yin and yang. The frightening lightning and the welcoming sun are two separate things that come together to create something beautiful. The two bodies of water also balance, while they are being separated by the bridge, which is both the border and the connector between the two elements. All of these things create harmony, a symphony of colour which can excite the viewer. With this mix of different images, the viewer can feel a rush of many different emotions. ■



"ACCEPT YOUR DARK SIDE; UNDERSTANDING IT WILL HELP YOU TO MOVE WITH THE LIGHT. KNOWING BOTH SIDES OF OUR SOULS HELPS US ALL TO MOVE FORWARD IN LIFE."

GRASSY PANTS

We were going to have an awesome time. It was near the end of my grade for two years, and we were going outside to have an extra recess. Apparently, there was nothing else important we were supposed to learn, so the rest of the school year would be filled with all kinds of revelry. There

the air. The students wanted so badly to talk. We knew that if we talked, though, we might lose the wonderful time outside we were promised.

Mrs. Handy came out of the classroom behind us and led us into the stairwell. She said, "I don't know if the playground is open or not, but if it is not, I do not want to see

the pavement area by the playground. As soon as we were dismissed, almost all of the children rushed over to the gate of the playground to see if it was locked.

After a quick examination, one of the students announced despairingly, "The playground is locked!"

Of course, I had already decided this was an impossible situation, so I checked for myself. To my horror, the playground gate was indeed locked.

Disappointed by this turn in events, my friend Xamuel and I soon decided that we could play with the ants that gathered on the willow tree not far from the playground. We scavenged the area around the dumpster to see if we could locate some empty bottles that the high school students left from their purchases at the Adventist Book Center, or ABC. After successfully acquiring some suitable bottles, we headed off to the tree to try to locate some of those elusive black creatures.

After a while, we took a break from our hunt and looked around. In the playground, I saw the majority of my class. This was quite strange because no one was supposed to be in there. I looked at the teacher and saw that she did not seem to be paying any attention to the fact that the kids were in

the playground.

After a brief thought, I decided they must have gotten in at the spot where there was a little room under the fence. If they had gotten through unnoticed, so could I.

Xamuel tried to tell me otherwise, but I said, "Look, everyone else is in there." I continued to walk toward the fence. As I was getting down and starting my crawl under the fence, a whistle blew.

I immediately got up and heard my teacher yell, "Why are you in the playground? It is locked, and I told you, you cannot go in if it is locked."

We were forced to make a line outside and were given a firm talk. She walked down the line to inspect and question each of us as to whether we had gone into the playground. When she got to me and

saw my grass-stained pants, I justified myself by saying, "I did not really go into the playground."

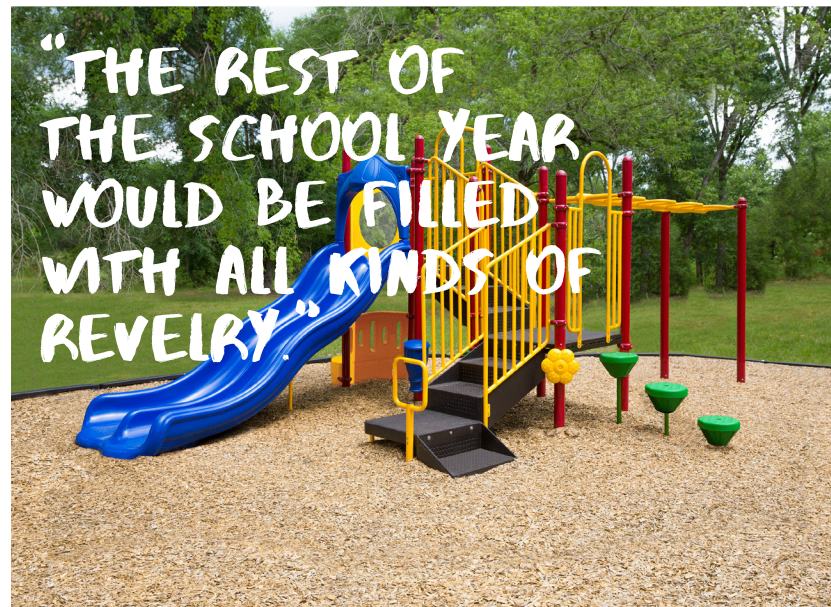
She responded, "Well, it most certainly looks like you did." To this statement, I had to concede that I had essentially gone into the playground.

After the talk, we were marched inside where we had to write a letter of apology to the teacher. We were to take this letter home and get it signed by our parents so they could learn about what we had done.

From this experience, I learned that if a person goes along with something — even half-heartedly — that the person knows to be wrong, it is the same as if the person does it with passion. As I tried to justify that I did not deserve punishment, I came to realize that I had indeed started down the path

that would have inevitably led to me breaking the rule my teacher had given. This shows that, once a person has started down a path toward something negative, it is very easy to take the next step in that wrong direction.

I also learned just because everyone around me seems to be doing something, I should not assume that it is morally correct. It is important to consider what rules and guidelines have been laid out, and stick to unchanging principles. If a person follows what others are doing, that person will be pushed around without a firm sense of direction. This lack of a foundation leads to a wasted life that could have been used for so much more. ■



was going to be so much to do when my classmates and I got outside. We could go on the swings, slide down the slides, or play grounders. What a difficult choice this was going to be.

"Line up and wait for me in the hallway," directed our teacher, Mrs. Handy. "And be quiet in the hallway, so you don't disrupt the other classes."

We hurried to get our shoes changed and rushed to line up. There was so much tension in

anyone in the playground. Am I understood?"

"Yes, Mrs. Handy," the class replied.

This could be a serious problem, I thought. What will I do if the playground is not open? Almost all the fun activities are inside the playground. Perhaps the playground is not closed, though. Yes, the playground is open, surely.

The class followed our teacher outside in a mostly straight and quiet line out to

Edited by:
Alannah T.
Selena L.

Formatted by:
Cassandra J.W.

AALIYAH
ROBERTS



Edited by:
Maycee D.
Cassandra J.W.

Formatted by:
Cassandra J.W.
Alannah T.

Hold on, let me set the scene. "Wait!" Person One cries out.

"Do not tell me. You are...Marcia?" I would smile sweetly and shake my head saying, "No, sorry, I'm Aaliyah."

To which, if my sister was nowhere near me, they would proceed to ask, "Where's your sister?"

These are a few anecdotes that explain what it's like to be an identical twin.

NEVER KNOWING WHO IS WHO IN BABY PICTURES

I kid you not. For the majority of my life, I had no idea who was who in my baby pictures. Until I was recently told of the one difference (that has never changed since birth): I was always lost.

“WHO’S OLDER?”

I am. However, when people ask exactly how much older, the conversation generally goes two ways. I am often asked, “How many minutes apart are you?” or “When is your birthday?” These questions are fun to answer when I want to brighten my day because both answers generally bring a baffled look to the asker’s face. To the former question, fourteen minutes is the answer. And to the latter, the sixth and seventh of February. The foolish ones that ask, “Why? How?” etc.

Goodbye.



BEING LABELLED. YOU ARE A WALKING, TALKING, ‘SPOT THE DIFFERENCE’ GAME.

As soon as people learn that my sister and I are twins, one of the automatic responses that we receive is, “How do people tell you guys apart? What’s the difference?” Then the next words to come out of their mouths are, “Stand next to each other.” Then they proceed to say things such as, “Who is taller? Who is smarter? Your face is bigger,” etc. To be honest, I have no helpful ideas on how to tell us apart, so I have to rely on asking my friends, how they tell us apart. And chances are that they have known us for so long they’ve forgotten how they told even us apart in the first place.

(Fun facts: people have told me they know who’s coming by our walking pattern, our shoes, the sound of our voices, and even our breathing.)

PERMANENT PLUS ONE.

A permanent two-for-one deal. Whenever my sister and I are invited anywhere or are roped into doing something (being voluntold), nobody ever just asks for one of us. Although, I have to admit that it isn’t that bad because there are two of us. It’s comforting to know that if I have to do something, Marcia normally has to do it too.

ATTENDANCE.

When attendance is being taken in class, it’s always, “Marcia and Aaliyah?”, “Roberts?” or “Twins?” What if one of us isn’t actually present? Welp. Not my fault.



MATCHING OUTFITS.

I swear this one is somewhat mandatory for twins -- identical twins, at least. My sister and I are no exception. Parents just can’t seem to resist dressing their twins in the exact same outfit, with little variations sometimes. (For example, colour variations or slight differences in pattern or neckline.

“DID YOU EVER SWITCH PLACES?”

Nope. I guess we were too afraid of getting in trouble. And it also takes a lot of work.

BEING SO DIFFERENT YET VERY MUCH ALIKE (TWIN MOMENTS, TWINTELEPHY, TWINTUITION).

Marcia and I have quite different personalities. Yet there are some things we do that are the exact same. One of my previous teachers often witnessed these moments in which we would do something at the same time, and she called them “twin moments.” We would go and ask her the same question that nobody else asked, etc.

THE SUITE LIFE OF Aaliyah & Marcia

YOU HAVE MORE THAN ONE NAME.

There are some habits that I have picked up over the years. (I do not know if this is the same with other twins.) One habit that I have picked up is responding to either Marcia or Aaliyah. For people who cannot tell us apart, calling our names is no help. But over the years I have just gotten used to people calling me the wrong name when they clearly meant me. I’ve just gotten used to responding to either name.

“CAN YOU FEEL EACH OTHER’S PAIN?”

I never know how to answer this question. There is empathy, which, yes, I feel. On the contrary, physically feeling other people’s pain is a bit more on the creepy and stressful side of life.

I can tell when something is wrong generally. But long story short: no. I can’t feel my twin’s pain. Just because we are identical does not mean we are identical in feelings.

“THERE’S TWO OF THEM?”

When we were in kindergarten, one of the teachers for the older grades thought there was only one of us. She would start a conversation with one of us and continue the conversation with the other. When we looked confused, I think she just figured that we either forgot, or we were just shy. It was not until an assembly that she finally saw Marcia and me together. She proceeded to go, “There’s two of them?”

“HAVE YOUR PARENTS EVER MIXED YOU GUYS UP?”

Surprisingly, not that much. I asked my dad, and he said that the only time he and my mom may have gotten a little confused was when Marcia and I when we were younger. For instance, my dad said that my sister and I each had a dark blue jacket with white and blue polka dots. When we were wearing those jackets and he could not see our faces, a mix up was quite possible. From the information I gathered from my parents, the only way they ever mixed us up was 1) when we were little or 2) when we were dressed identically and they could not see our faces.

THE LOOK! THE DOUBLE TAKE!

Whenever my sister and I go out, there is always at least one person that stares or takes a double take.

A CONNECTION WITH OTHER TWINS.

It's nice to meet other twins because, depending on the situation, there are a lot of things that do not have to be explained - it would have already been mutually understood among us.

YOU CAN GET FREE THINGS!

One time, a lady bought my sister and me giant lollipops from Bulk and Bits (the expensive version of Bulk Barn). We were just leaving the store when she stopped us and gave them to us. She said she saw us admiring them while we were waiting outside the store. I believe she also had twins of her own.

"WHAT'S IT LIKE BEING A TWIN?"

Whenever I get this question I generally freeze because I do not know how to describe what is like to be a twin. To me, it's like you have a permanent buddy for life. Regardless of what happens, you know somebody will always have your back - sort of like an important body part, like the heart or the lungs. Generally, a twin is with you wherever you go. Half the time you do not even think about your twin being there, but when you do, you appreciate it a lot. ■



each knew perfectly well that this was the right thing to do.

The right thing... It's funny how so much of the time we know perfectly well what it is, but our pounding hearts and the people "bowing" around us intimidate us.

At once, one of the guards noticed and his jaw dropped.

"Who do they think they are?!" He probably asked himself. Grabbing the boys, he scurried all the way to the throne, where the (conceited) king was sitting.

"These boys didn't bow down to you!" He frantically told the king. The king's face twisted, and I can imagine him turning bright red.

"Is that true?" He asked the nervous boys.

You're always given another opportunity to compromise.

The boys had the chance to say, "Naahhh, we have no idea what this guy is saying. We were practically laying on the ground." And nothing serious would have happened. Instead, they said this. (I'm quoting the Bible because this part is just so awesome):

"O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter." [Savages.] "If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up."

They basically said that their worship is not depending on *what* God does, but who *God is*. And

because God never changes, their praise would never change.

Something that I've learned about God is that when you choose to serve Him, you sign up for trouble. Look at Job, Daniel, Esther, Abraham, Stephen, and so many more others. Their lives were not

"The right thing... It's funny how so much of the time we know perfectly well what it is, but our pounding hearts and the people 'bowing' around us intimidate us."

easy! Have you ever considered that the things you're going through, the battles you are facing, are because God referred YOUR name to the enemy? Have you considered that when Satan was

looking for someone to tempt, God looked at your life, your relationship with Him, and saw that you were worthy of a trial?

Have you ever considered that God needed you for an opportunity to make Himself known?

One of the many lessons from this story is not to run from an opportunity to make God known. The things you go through, the trials you face, are the greatest evidence for the glory of God.

The King was so mad that he probably had veins popping out. "Turn up the fire." He commanded. When your faith goes up, the fire goes up.

So the three boys were bound up and thrown into the fire.

Hold up. Why would they need to be bound up if they were being thrown into a fire? Was the king afraid of something or Someone? I believe that this is a spiritual symbol. Before we go into any and every fiery trial, we go inbounded. We go, bounded by our bad habits, our

toxic relationships, our addictions, and just the fact that we were born into sin. Satan uses these against us to make us feel overwhelmed and to shake our faith. But God is with us in the fire.

God is with you in your fire.

And the best part is this: God uses what should have destroyed you to set you free.

At this point, everyone was watching them. They were so curious to see what would happen next.

All of a sudden, the king was like, "...There are four men walking around?! I thought we only threw three guys in... THE FOURTH LOOKS LIKE THE SON OF GOD."

It's amazing how, when the children of God are in the fiery furnace and refuse to give up their

"The things you go through, the trials you face, are the greatest evidence for the glory of God."

faith, people who have never seen God will see God in them. Not only were these guys' chains gone, but they were walking

around in the fire.

The fire didn't destroy anything but their chains. Not a single hair on their head was burned; they didn't even smell like smoke!

When Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out, everyone was amazed. There was probably dead silence for a couple of minutes throughout the whole kingdom. Their God was the reason why these boys were alive, and everyone knew it. God made their faith fireproof, and He can do the same for you.

I can imagine the three boys looking at each other again and nodding. ■

EMILY
KUCHURIVSKI



[Notes From A Sermon By Dr. Charles Wesley Knight]

So there was this know-it-all guy who thought he was some god or something - not that uncommon nowadays, but back in Bible times, this guy was a sweeter man. His name was King Nebuchadnezzar - "Nebby" for short. He made a HUGE image of himself and ordered everyone - prime ministers, principals, math teachers, janitors, even the garbage collectors - to bow down to it, or they would be thrown into a fiery furnace. At the sound of the trumpet, everyone in the kingdom knelt down. With every bow, the king sat up a little bit straighter; he was really feeling it. That is, until some young boys - only teenagers - decided to be savages. They each took a deep breath. And with their hearts pounding inside of their chests, they stood up as straight as humanly possible. I can imagine the three boys looking at each other and nodding. They

Edited by:
Maycee D.
Selena L.

Formatted by:
Cassandra J.W.
Alannah T.

MEXICO?

Grade twelve was supposed to be the year of trips: Burman trip, Mission trip, Andrews tournament, Choir Tour, y'know. I was really looking forward to everything until one small change occurred back in October...

Andrews University changed the time that the

To be honest, I was not looking forward to the mission trip and I dreaded each day that brought me closer to the departure date.

I did not expect anything from the event, and that was a bad mistake. Mission trip opened my eyes and made me realize that there is more out there that we as individu-

also hurt. But the process is what makes us stronger and wiser, what makes us into better people.

We were in Mexico for nine days. Great memories were made and friendships were strengthened. There were some problems along the way, but that made the trip even more unique and extraordinary. It might've seemed like a mess to others, but the trip itself brought everyone together. Bonding through the chaos, the trip was a blessing for everyone, even for those who didn't expect the most out of it. Each individual had a different experience. And as for me, I can say that going to Mexico was a great experience. Not only did I gain insight on what it's like to live there, but I also learned how to kinda, maybe, speak



tournament was to be held, and it ended up being on the same dates as the mission trip. The sad part was that the \$700 I gave for the mission trip was non-refundable. I ended up going on the mission trip. As the months passed by, it started hitting me that I was not going on the basketball trip - and knowing that this is the last year for me to go on it, I was all over the place. Confused. Mad. Depressed. Heartbroken.

als need to experience. We are stuck in this comfortable bubble, and when things change, we become uncomfortable. We lash out at anything and at anyone, blaming everything on the blameless. Life is life, and there is nothing we can change about it. God puts us through things so that we gain something from it. We might not like it at first, but that is because we only see a piece of His great plan for us. Yes, it can be tough, and yes, it can

Spanish.

Vamos aloz tacos and *Vamos alaz nyebes* were the two sentences that will forever be stuck with me as I go through life.

I met the students at the school who became a special part of my life, and I loved every second I had with them. I got to share music, play games, and teach songs to kids. It made me realize how many advantages we have in Canada. We complain about all of

these first-world problems when there are people out there struggling and trying to survive, people who find the greatest pleasures in the smallest things; I think we all

should find the beauty and positivity in the smallest things as well. The children were happy with paper plates as toys, and quite honestly, I wanted to be as happy as they

were. I can't stress how much of a blessing it was to be able to go on the trip. Although it required one big and hard sacrifice, I was able to recover from the loss. I learned so

many valuable lessons that I know I can't gain from anywhere else and I was glad that God gave me a chance to go.

Like all good things, the trip had to come to an end.

We had to say our goodbyes, and I was bawling my eyes out because I knew that this might be the last time I would be seeing my new friends and family. It was a very hard and bittersweet moment and it hurt to move on. I wanted to stay longer, bask under the

hot sun, and be stress-free from school.

I still wanted to go to Andrews, but there was nothing anyone could do about it. Life happens and we pick everything up and move on. Needless to say, my time was well-spent. I would not trade my amazing experience for anything. ■



Edited by:
Selena L.
Alannah T.

Formatted by:
Hannah B.

THE FESTIVAL

Have you ever thought about the factors that make people become friends with each other? From a certain point of view, I believe that ethnicity and favourable opportunities are the reasons. Friends play an important role in our lives, especially in the lives of those who leave their families. Leaving someone who you're familiar with can cause loneliness and depression. The feelings are extremely magnified when you undergo a similar experience with new friends.

I still remember the first Chinese New Year I spent in Canada. It was only five months after I came to Canada. I made friends in school, but sometimes I felt there was an estrangement between us. A few days before Chinese New Year, I was particularly missing home. The existence of the Chinese New Year is like Christmas for Canadians. During the Spring Festival in China, all the relatives will assemble together for a reunion dinner. The older ones will prepare dishes for us, giving us red envelopes and watching fireworks together. My friends and I missed the time we spent with our family, so we decided

to celebrate Chinese New Year by ourselves.

We were very excited to spend our first festival abroad. I remember the first class was the ESL class. All of us opened our tablets. Mrs. Tosi was teaching at the front of the classroom, her arms and feet moving like she was dancing. We were listening to her, but we glanced at the tablet from time to time. Most of us were watching the Chinese New Year broadcast live on a website. To be honest, the show was long and joyless, but it was the only connection we had with China right then. That day was beautiful even the air was full of happiness. Everyone said "Happy New Year" to me even though I could not remember their names very clearly. I became extraordinarily outgoing on that day, I felt that I could spend a whole day talking with Chinese or local students who I scarcely knew.

When the last class was over in the afternoon, we rushed back to the dorm and started cooking for our dinner. We shuttled back and forth between different rooms. We were sitting on the floor in a circle like kids, and there was a lovely table in the

room. We took several pictures of the dishes, and massive amounts of selfies to post online. As the conversation between us became deeper, we found many similarities among each other. I was so happy because I felt that our relationships had become much closer than before.

It is the most memorable and meaningful story I have from high school. People are easily affected by their surroundings; friends can help us get out of our difficulties and help us become more optimistic. When I look back at this story, I learned a couple of things. People from the same ethnicity or similar background are more likely to attract each other or becoming friends. Sometimes, it is easy to get on well with other people. All we need is a turning point. In my story, the turning point was the Chinese New Year. It helped us to get to know each other. If you are lonely or suffering any difficulties, please do not give up - you never know what kind of luck is waiting for you. ■

Edited by:
Megan V.
Alannah T.

Formatted by:
Alannah T.

FADING BLOSSOMS

They're gone. It's done. It's over.

*The ivory blooms have fallen.
Howling gusts have now dissolved
To mellow, humble whispers.*

Alone.

*Suspended by a feeble stem,
One last rosy flower
Extends her petals far and wide
To savour one last time
The atmosphere.*

They're gone. It's done. It's over.

*Her memory was the last of it.
The bittersweet was on repeat
Within the depths of mind.
Her lovely world?
Obsolete.*

*The tiny blossom, in her mind
Travelled back in time.*

*To days and weeks of constant growth
Before the peak of season,
When floral leaves of hers unfurled
Amidst her fellow blossoms.*

*Then golden rays bright and warm,
Just as what was promised.*

*Floods of flowers, jolly trees,
Avenues of pink.*

*Floods of people, jolly folk
Witnessing their peak.*

Peak of season, height of time

When all the branches bloomed.

"Showcase beauty!" One had said.

"Give it now your all!"

It lasted for but many days—

A week of heightened joy.

Then ending came, swift as hawks

Who ambush

And then the fall of all things beauty:

Her fellow blossoms faded.

Carried by the western winds,

They danced a downward dance.

Gone were seas of milky cherry,

Replaced by common green.

The petals fluttered, a rosy blizzard,

To places mysterious and unknown.

Gone were blooms that endlessly frolicked.

Gone were buds that swayed.

Gone was the flower who budded beside her

Who gingerly cared her as would a mother,

And coaxed her fears away.

"Grateful," thinks she, the lonesome blossom,

"Grateful, grateful I should be

For friendships made and games we played

Memories unforgettable.

But, alas, come next year

My bosom friends will not be here.

It will not be the same."

Never again the same.

They're gone. It's done. It's over.

Her solemn cries drain her hue

Paler paler petals fade

Oh, rosy colour, adieu!

Now her stem, at final strength,

Can hold her but no longer.

The little blossom, now she knows

It's time to move on.

A last glance to

The stem that holds her

And then

She lets go. ■

Edited &
Formatted by:
Alannah T.

TREASURED MOMENTS

It was 2014. I was awakened at 4:24 AM on a brisk Sunday morning in October. I rolled over and rubbed my tired eyes, trying to understand why my parents would wake me this early. Were we going on an early hike? Was there a bear outside? Did we need to pack up our trailer and leave? I was too tired to try and answer these questions, but I reluctantly got up. I looked at my mother and saw her eyes filled with sorrow and my Dad's eyes red and full of lament. I looked around at each of my four other siblings, who all had tears racing down their faces. All I could hear were sad sobs of regret, sorrow, and pain. I was so confused. What happened? None of these emotions were going to justify the event that had happened moments before.

"Mom, Dad, hurry up!" yelled my siblings and me.

We just wanted to leave so we could get to our campground as soon as possible. It was time for my family's

annual camping trip - as requested by my younger sister, Kalyssa - for her birthday. We would drive up to Algonquin and camp there for three days every October. We had no care for the cold breezes, or the lakes not being warm enough to swim in. However, we did care about getting to our campsite early enough so we could walk around and pretend that we were Indians. It was our third time doing this trip, and our second time bringing our dog, Rusty. I was so ready to make a campfire and roast marshmallows, collect all the pretty fall-colored leaves, and just relax.

It took us three hours to get to our campsite, but by the time we put our trailer in place and had something to eat, it was too dark for us to go outside and play; so we stayed in and played some board games. Personally, I thought I was too old for board games, so I crawled into my bed and wasted my time on my iPad instead. I slept on the top

bunk, with my sister Kianna, and we had a small skylight above us. I loved to lie on my back and just look up through it, gazing at the tiny twinkling stars. I imagined that I was able to fly up and sit on the edge of a star, look down to Earth and watch my family. I loved being able to escape the loudness and busyness of my family through that small skylight.

The next day, my family went on a short hike that led to the top of a mountain with a beautiful view that overlooked the campground. When we got to the top, I walked to the edge, hoping to make my Mom scared and nervous that I was going to fall off - but also because I wanted to see the still, placid and glassy lake below us.

That night, I had one too many s'mores because I woke up with a tummy ache and had to stay in the trailer all day. That day happened to be a Saturday, so I had to watch a Sabbath show or listen to

Adventures In Odyssey. When my family got back, they came in wet from the surprise downpour and my sister, Kalyssa, started freaking out about how Rusty was not feeling good. They brought him in and dried him off. We tried to feed him and get him to drink water, but he would not even open his mouth. He just stayed standing, with his head hanging low like he was wearing a weighted collar. His stomach started to bloat, and it looked as if he was pregnant even though he was a male. We could all tell he was uncomfortable and in pain, but my parents said that it would pass and that Rusty probably just

ate part of a dead animal again. Nobody wanted to go to sleep that night, so we turned on a Panda documentary. A couple of hours passed and then the inevitable happened - all five kids fell asleep. We did not intend to; none of us wanted to sleep. However, my dad knew that we needed to sleep and that is why he chose to play what would be considered the most boring movie to children; a documentary. We were set up to fail and we did not even know it.

4:24 AM on Sunday morning came, and I reluctantly got up and tried to understand what was happening. I was so tired and did not want to get up, so I rolled over angrily. My mom was waking up my younger sisters and brother. Reluctantly, I sat up and just stared at my dad. He was crying. Up until that point, in all my thirteen years of living, I had never seen my dad cry. I honestly did not think he was able to physically produce tears, but he was crying. His eyes were

red and his cheeks were blotchy from the tears streaming down his face. Then I looked at my brother, who was also crying. I did not even have to turn around to look at my younger sisters to know what they were doing. People around the world could hear them. All I could think was how annoying and weird my family was at 4 am. I went over to my older sister who I assumed was cool and thinking the same thing I was. However, she clearly was being possessed by whatever

"We could all tell he was uncomfortable and in pain, but my parents said that it would pass."

was taking over my other family members. What was happening? What did I miss? I turned around to see what they were all looking at. And then I saw it. I saw him. He was lying there, helplessly not moving. He was in the middle of the floor. How did I miss him? How could I not see him? Why did I let this happen to him? Why did I not spend more time with him? Why did I always push him away when he came and rested his paw on my lap? Why did I loathe walking him in the morning? Why would I take him on short walks and not let him enjoy his time outside? Why did I not love him enough? Rusty died that night, he was only 5 years old, basically still a puppy. He still loved to chase after squirrels, birds and other dogs who clearly did not care about him. He still loved to eat out of the garbage pail and lick the dirty dishes in the dishwasher. He still loved to eat the flies that were being held captive in our house. He still loved to go on his walks, even the ones that he knew were too short. He still loved running through the waterpark and rolling around in goose poop.

He still loved us. We drove home that day, with Rusty in the back of the car, wrapped up in his favourite blanket and a tarp around that. The way home seemed as if it took only ten minutes to drive home. We were all crying and all of our eyes were red and puffy. Instead of driving straight home, we drove to my grandparent's cottage, Rusty's favourite place to go. We buried him there that afternoon. The clouds were crying with us, and the sun was mourning our loss too as it stopped shining, and allowed the dark and sobbing clouds to cover it.

Even though I didn't realize it that day, I learned to always cherish the moments we have with the people or animals whom we love. I learned to always part on good and happy terms because you never really know when you will see them again. I learned that we all lose someone we love and it hurts greatly. I learned that it takes time to get over not having them in life. I learned that even if someone dies or leaves us, we do not need to give up on our life - we need to stay motivated. Not only do we need to stay motivated for ourselves and our health, but also for the person, or pet, that we lost. When you stop being motivated for life, you are letting bad days, enemies, or death win. By staying motivated, we have the ability to become stronger individuals. Staying motivated through the good days and the bad days is part of the secret to having a successful life. ■

Edited by:
Lara N.
Selena L.

Formatted by:
Alannah T.
Hannah B.

A NEW BEGINNING

People usually ask why I never tie her hair up in a hot day. *Why is my left ear always covered by my hair? When I braid my hair up, what is that black device in my hair?* Well, in this article, people will get their answers.

On August 13, in Pakistan, a family was blessed with a baby girl. That was me. As soon as I was born, doctors and nurses went in a corner and started whispering to each other.

My mother (looking stressed) said, "Is everything okay, doctor?"

One of the doctors turned to her and said, "I am sorry to inform you, but your girl has

been born with her left ear closed."

My mom smiled and said, "It's okay, doctor. As long as she's healthy, I am happy."

As I grew up, I attended lots of doctor's appointments. Every time, we would go through the same thing.

"Block your good ear with your finger, my child," or "Can you hear me with your left ear closed?" I would always nod, the doctors would tell me that my ear just needed to be opened, and the appointment would be over.

I grew up with people calling me words like "witch" because I was born differ-

ent. I always felt insecure about my ear. This made me feel left out; I felt bad for being born with one ear closed. I almost got my surgery (to get my ear opened) in when I was younger, but there were some complications.

I turned 15 and moved to Canada. I was recommended to the SickKids hospital. I went through a lot of appointments. I was taken into the "testing room" and got my ear blocked with an earplug. After years of testing, I was told that I was born half-deaf and was offered to get the newest version of cochlear implant done. Before the day came, I was told that I would be the first one in Canada and the youngest one in the world so far to go through this surgery. I was asked if I would be okay doing news interviews. I agreed to it and decided to go for my first ever "90-minute" surgery in the May of 2018. After 3 hours, I came out of a successful surgery - there was now a piece of metal in my head.

Getting prepared for the surgery (8:00 am) ▼



I was able to get discharged and go home on the same day.

After a month, when my wound was starting to heal, I finally got a research device of the new and modern version of the hearing aid. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to do the news interviews because I was the person people were doing the

research on and they didn't want anything to get out there before all the research was done. After that day, I faced a lot of changes, one of them being that I could hear with both ears.

Even after getting my surgery done and having the hearing aid, I still feel insecure about putting my

hair up in a ponytail or doing any of the fancy hairstyles I used to do before the surgery; I am scared that people will stare at me, I will be in the centre of attention. But something positive that has happened is that now I am open to talk about it when people ask me questions. ■



◀ Last-minute procedures before going into the surgery



The day after the surgery ▼



◀ After 3-hour surgery; just before gaining consciousness



◀ The night of the surgery; got discharged and was able to walk around

A close-up photograph of a green bird, likely a Japanese White-eye, perched on a branch of a cherry blossom tree. The bird is facing left, and its body is in sharp focus. The background is filled with numerous pink cherry blossoms, some in focus and some blurred, creating a soft, bokeh effect. The sky is a clear, light blue. The word "blossom." is written in a white, elegant, cursive font across the middle of the image, partially overlapping the bird and the flowers.

blossom.

05-2019