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Bell High School's Student Newspaper

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# Christmas: Then and Now



By Alex McMorine

Recently my sister has been watching a lot of Little House on the Prairie. The other day a Christmas episode came on, and I noticed how different Christmas used to be. During that time, people were really happy to get one or two presents, and the real treat was spending time with family. Nowadays, we expect ten or fifteen presents, and family doesn't enter the picture much. Is this really how Christmas is supposed to be?

Today everything Christmas related comes with a price tag. Decorations, dinner, a plethora of presents, even the tree! It used to be that you would go cut down your tree yourself, as well as make most decorations. The only money was really spent on some dinner supplies and maybe a few presents with what was left over. Of course, money wasn't as plentiful then, but they still spent less than our equivalent.

Another thing that has changed is the family aspect. That used to be what Christmas was all about. People didn't really care that much about getting presents. Nowadays, family isn't the main attraction. Again, it's

what presents you get that are the main attraction. I know in the past I spent all my time trying out my presents. Talking to my parents or siblings? I kept it to a minimum. Shows how cool I am.

And Christmas is now about getting. I don't think anyone would admit to it, but that's kind of what it's about now. I shop for others because I have to. I open presents for myself because I want to. In a couple cases, I have really wanted to get something for a family member, but not often, although I suppose that's also part of the nature of being young. But really, how many of you actually want to spend money on your family members?

When you think about it, Christmas is pretty different that the Christmas celebrated by our ancestors. Christmas is a time for you to lose money, gain stuff, and for corporation heads to get rich. I know my accusations are a tad grave, but really, my points are true, to an extent. So are we really happier now that then? I think we are actually less so. If we don't get what we want, we get disappointed. Back in the old days, People were happy with anything they got, as long as they were with family. Are you?

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

- Dec 23: Holiday Assembly
- Dec 24-Jan 8: Winter Break
- Jan 18: LINK Cocoa Cookies and Cram
- Jan 25-31: Exams
- Feb 3-5: Leadership Camp

## Religion and Evolution May Have

### More In Common Than We Thought

By Soren Wainio-Theberge

Throughout the world and through every time period, only one thing seems constant in human civilization: religion. But why? Why has every human civilization developed its own religious beliefs? One neuroscientist from Laurentian University believes he knows – and most religious people won't be happy with his answer.

Dr. Michael Persinger believes that "God" is an evolutionary construct that we developed as we grew more self-aware. He has designed a helmet that, when placed on a subject's head, generates a strong magnetic field. This field stimulates the temporal lobes, an area of the brain involved in auditory perception and connecting words and images with their meanings. "In the laboratory, we have reproduced every aspect of the god experience..." says Persinger "from the rising sensation, to the feelings of ecstasy, to the feelings of a sensed presence, to the feelings that you're at one with the universe."

See **RELIGION**, Pg. 3

Publisher and Editor: **Bryan Wu**

# Square Dancing No More?

By Sarah Lum

“Do-si-do and promenade with your partner.”

Every year, I look forward to the week before the winter holidays during which we go down to the gym with our classes and square dance. However, I have recently been informed that square dancing this year might be cancelled (gasp). To all the grade nines who have not yet experienced this wonderful Bell High School tradition, square dancing may seem really random and unpleasant (because you have to hold boys' hands- ew) but trust me when I say that it's so much more entertaining than it sounds.

Square dancing is great because it forces us to pair up with seven other people that aren't necessarily in our tight group of friends. Once you get over the initial awkwardness, it doesn't even matter if you don't know your partner all that well. The dance moves aren't too challenging and it doesn't matter if your group isn't great at it- everyone's just there to enjoy themselves. Square dancing gets the whole school into the holiday spirit. If we don't have it this

year, what are we going to do with ourselves in the week leading up to the holidays?

**Editor's Note:** Apparently we do have square dancing. No worries, then. Just get out and dance!

## Short Story: The Seven Chairs

By Siham Torabi

The fifth one ended up in France.

I have left the mystery lingering in the air, like the faint smell of wood lingering in a lumber mill. The smell so strong, tingles the nose of my hair. Thousands of minds ponder to my pleasure, mwah!

That Peter Wenders! He had said he would be glad in purchasing my books. Now, I snort \*\*\*. That man is no true man, for he had broken his word. When I had first realized the true intentions of Mr. Wenders, I played marbles, complications, complications.

I remember that day so vividly, the memory stuck in my brain. That day on August 17, 1957 was a sunny and quiet afternoon. I had realized, he had noticed, what I had little

time to see and quickly looked away, that is why my stories had not shown. He has won and with no warnings given, the ominous force he had within him, which had been applied to every one of those seven chairs.

I am sorry to say that I was of no good contribution and I regret entering that crummy office, to this day. I had created those pictures with the intention of making those idiots around the world, think. This man, this treacherous man, he went and made those chairs into something much more! He had used those chairs as markers for sins.

“To bestow gifts”, he had said, when I asked. I remember the wheezy-hoarse, sound of his voice. “Those who demand for power, could be given it!”

- Siham Torabi

## Book Club: Automatic Prose-to-Verse Translator

**Editor's Note:** I found these poems dropped in my mailbox, with no note, no return address...nothing. How much they liked the books, I cannot say.. But they seemed good enough to merit the time and energy invested in writing the poems.

**Memoirs of a Geisha**

An orphaned girl  
Caterpillar freed  
Geisha love at last

**The Invisible Man**

There was a flash, he saw the light,  
An unstable jerk, without foresight.  
Theft, arson, murder; what a jerk!  
His invisibility did incite,  
Right before us all he did lurk,  
The science of fiction, society's plight,  
He thought himself invincible,  
But he was just invisible.

**This month's books were:**

Memoirs of a Geisha  
and  
The Invisible Man



# What to Do While Waiting in Winter

By Sarah Lum

How are you going to spend your Holidays?

The lights are up, the songs are on the radio, and classes are wrapping up. The anxiously-awaited holiday break is finally near! This year, the break starts on December 23rd and runs until January 9th. Some of you may have big plans for the holiday—maybe going out of the country to visit family or maybe you're just going to use free time to take on more shifts at work and save up some money.

For the rest of us, the time will probably be spent sleeping in and catching up on our favourite TV shows. But that can get boring fast. Since we have a while between the family gatherings, massive dinners, and insane shopping before we have to head back to school, here are a couple ideas of what you could do over the holidays to keep brain for turning to mush.

## Get outside and enjoy winter sports

Once the snow starts to fall and outdoor rinks open up, there are so many new options for winter sports. From skating to skiing to tubing, grab a couple of friends or family and bundle up for the cold weather. At first the sub-zero temperatures may put you off going outside but once you get active, you won't even notice the cold! And the best part is going out for a nice Canadian hot chocolate afterward.

## Play Board Games

When's the last time you've played a board game? Probably a while. Get together with a couple of other people and pull out the classic Monopoly, Scrabble, or Risk. A day full of board game playing is a day well spent.

## Bake some goodies

Who doesn't love a nice warm batch of cookies? Use your free time to bake something! Here's an awesome gingerbread cookie recipe that you should try.

## Ingredients:

6 cups all-purpose flour  
 1 tablespoon baking powder  
 1 tablespoon ground ginger  
 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg  
 1 teaspoon ground cloves  
 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
 1 cup shortening, melted and cooled slightly  
 1 cup molasses  
 1 cup packed brown sugar  
 1/2 cup water  
 1 egg  
 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1. Sift together the flour, baking powder, ginger, nutmeg, cloves, and cinnamon; set aside.
2. In a medium bowl, mix together the shortening, molasses, brown sugar, water, egg, and vanilla until smooth. Gradually stir in the dry ingredients, until they are completely absorbed. Divide dough into 3 pieces, pat down to 1 1/2 inch thickness, wrap in plastic wrap, and refrigerate for at least 3 hours.
3. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). On a lightly floured surface, roll the dough out to 1/4 inch thickness. Cut into desired shapes with cookie cutters. Place cookies 1 inch apart onto an ungreased cookie sheet.
4. Bake for 10 to 12 minutes in the preheated oven. When the cookies are done, they will look dry, but still be soft to the touch. Remove from the baking sheet to cool on wire racks. When cool, the cookies can be frosted with the icing of your choice.

And if you're really, really bored, then maybe you should start studying for exams or finish your summative projects. But let's face it, who wants to spend their break thinking about school?

Happy Holidays!



## Religion: Is it all in the mind?

Continued from page 1

No two people respond to the helmet's influence in the same way. Some of them report visions of God, while some merely report something staring down at them from behind them, comforting them. One subject even had a near-death experience, reporting seeing "a sudden wave of darkness... there's a distant point of light". But 80% of the test subject report feeling some kind of a presence, whether it is God or merely the face of a dead relative.

So why would this device, no more powerful than a hair dryer, create such feelings in people? Persinger has hypothesized that as humans grew self-aware enough to realize their own mortality, they developed this collection of cells to help them deal with such an enormously stressful revelation. When stimulated, these cells induce a feeling of a presence, something greater than themselves, in that person, comforting them and perhaps convincing them that death is not the end. This model certainly explains the phenomenon of the "near-death experience", as well as providing an evolutionary basis for why every self-contained tribe of humans invented some sort of religion for themselves as they developed.

Persinger has come under fire for insufficient double blinding in his work, however. In addition, when a Swedish team of neuroscientists tried to replicate the experiment, they failed. Dr. Persinger says that they failed to set it up correctly, but the attempt remains a source of controversy. Regardless, many experts are reluctant to throw out Persinger's work yet, since it explains so much, and has already become used in treating depression.



# A Plea from a Desperate Citizen

By Audrey Tan

October marked the beginning of cold and flu season. This is a particularly difficult time of year for a virus fearing, germ abhorring person such as myself. According to urbandictionary.com, a germaphobe is “any person who is obsessed with cleanliness and defeating bacteria. These individuals will turn on faucets with their elbows and hand sanitize on an hourly basis.” For several years now, I have been living with a painful secret, but I can no longer continue hiding who I really am- I am a germaphobe.

I haven't been officially diagnosed but the signs and symptoms are there. When using school computers, I cover the mouse with a Kleenex, I refuse to share headphones or earbuds, I have a chronic fear of touching door handles, I always have a bottle of Purell in my bag and when someone sneezes within close proximity to me, I hold my breath and walk away faster than Snooki can apply self-tanner.

I'm writing this out of desperation. No matter how many bottles of Lysol or Purell I go through, I cannot eliminate every single germ nor completely rid surfaces of harmful bacteria. I cannot control who sneezes, who coughs, or who blows their nose. However, as collective individuals, we can.



The methods to improve our health conditions and the cleanliness of our surroundings aren't difficult or even groundbreaking. Here's what you do: when your lungs heave and your chest convulses involuntarily, or when your nose feels the need to spew clouds of vapourized mucus, raise your arm and cover the offending orifice with your elbow. For bonus points, you can even wash and sanitize your hands afterwards.

Please, please, please, cover your mouth or your nose when you cough or sneeze. Neither I nor anyone else wants to walk through a haze of your snot. That's just gross.

## University Food Solutions

By Kennedy Brooks

Heading off to university in the near future? Want a fool proof way to make friends? Learn how to cook! It's the fool-proof way to make friends, keep yourself healthy and be a genuinely better person to be around. If you think there is no way you could ever possibly make a legitimate meal, try this one on for size first:

### NO FAIL ALFREDO PASTA

Get yo' things together.

Tub of cream cheese [regular or herb and garlic if you want to step up the legitimacy of this sauce]

Parmesan cheese

Milk [or half and half/whole milk, if you want the rib sticking awesomeness]

Pasta [any kind you like, I personally like linguini]

Water

Get prepared to make food. This means: Boil water, put a little salt in there too

Get a sauce pot [that's a smaller pot, the size of a side plate normally] on medium heat

Mentally prepare yourself; it's sauce making time.



o. This is a side note. I am assuming you know how to make pasta. If not ... I cannot help you.

1. Make some pasta! Put your lovely pasta in to your boiling water and continue to the next step. But don't forget about it.

2. Put half your tub of cream cheese into your sauce pot. Stir it around until it gets all

melty, or at least half melty.

3. Add in around a quarter cup of Parmesan cheese, or more, or less. It's more of a “feel” thing.

4. Stir all that cheesy goodness around some more and add a bit of milk/cream until it become a little thinner and more like a sauce and less like a pudding...

5. Stir all that awesome around some more.

6. Drain your now cooked pasta [if you didn't fail step 1] and spoon/slosh/pour some of that awesome sauce on top.

And Viola! You have some awesome Pasta Alfredo. Read next edition on how to cook chicken different way and maybe you can slice some of that stuff up and serve it on top of this and win the hearts of everyone around you.

# Today's Christmas



*What ever happened to the holiday season? When did it go wrong?*

**By Larry Salloum**

Christmas. That magical time of year. You can see the children behaving for Santa, and the sleigh bells ring-ding-ding all throughout the streets while people sit down and relax with their families- oh wait – you can't.

Okay then. What is Christmas? Well, for many people, Christmas is that magical time of year where you draw up a big list of stuff you want in November for all of your loved ones with deep pocketbooks, and patiently wait until 6:00 in the morning on Christmas day to tear away your present and eat all the goodies while they last. After that, all members of the family scurry to their designated areas and begin having fun with whatever they got. Yay. Family spirit.

Does this sound familiar? When ever you have a family tradition like Christmas, it should be spent with the people around you, not the stuff you got. With pressure from commercial business and a consumption-crazy society, Christmas has completely changed from the core value of what it means, and I am not even talking about the religious meaning of Christmas. No, I am actually talking about family togetherness and the effects of consumerism.

The big problem right now is the current economic situation. It doesn't look that great. What better way to get people spending than to start the Christmas shopping as early as possible. Nearly 2 months prior in fact.

The holidays began in Zellers on November 1st. The holidays started in Tim Hortons on Nov. 5th. What is going on here? Well, with the magic of Christmas, people are

very materialistic nowadays; buying whatever they can as early as they can so they can get holiday shopping over with. People spend less time thinking about what they want to do with their family on the holidays and more on what they are planning to get for their families on Christmas. There goes the spirit. As soon as the materialistic side rears its ugly head, you lose the magic of Christmas family togetherness.

Well, that can't be the only reason right? You are correct if that is what you were thinking. There are other forces at work than a recession. Yes, before 2008, we were still consuming like societies have never consumed before. And this is thanks to a little something called constant bombardment.

Here is an example. If I tell you to go get me a glass of milk, you will most likely refuse. You are not my slave right? Well, what if there are two people? You might put up a fight and still get your way. Let's go nuts here. What if there are ten people all demanding you get me a glass of milk. Between the shunning, the yelling, and the ordering, you will give in and get me my milk. You might even bring some sandwiches too lest the mob give you dirty looks.

Well, in the world of advertising and society of comfort, a society where if we want it, we feel like we need it because an onslaught of advertisers on a screen told us to go buy it.

To add to the pressure, there will be friends branded and loyal to a company urging you to go purchase whatever it is. The most dastardly tool of all that you are most likely familiar with is fan-boyism. What happens

now is you will have two groups loyal to a product arguing about which is better. Most recent has been the Call of Duty – Battlefield 3 'debate'. With these two first person shooter games, there is a battle raging outside the actual game and on the internet and conversations of die-hard Call of Duty fans and Battlefield supporters alike. In the end, the advertisers win these debates seeing as they generate hype without spending a whole lot of money on ads. People just get worked up over a product and then vow to buy it and to praise it whenever they can. Wow. You just got played Mr. Gamer.

Now. Back to the meaning of Christmas family togetherness. How does that tie in here? Well, let's say you finally got what was the hyped product of that moment for Christmas. Suddenly, you feel an overwhelming rush of joy at the thing you got and then secondarily, you go to hug whoever got it for you. This is bad. To associate happiness with a thing and not associate the source of joy from the person will lead to a materialistic drive and not an emotional one ultimately leading you to locking your doors and messing around with your gift. Yikes. And all of this from some simple advertising hype!

Unfortunately for those of you concerned with the current state of the way families tie together, there is nothing you can do. Reject the system in place, and the people in it will reject you. Encourage emotional prosperity and hang around family while giving personal gifts and you will be overshadowed by the more gift-generous relations. So sad. Christmas may in fact be doomed. Don't bother changing it. Just enjoy your gift cards and turkey.

# Protest

Our own Dale Mulligan reports from the ground at Occupy Toronto.

By Dale Mulligan

On November 23rd, both the Ottawa and Toronto branches of the Occupy Wall Street were evicted from their month long homes in their respective parks. While, I was never able to visit the Ottawa branch, about a week before a hundred Toronto police officers walked into Saint James Park to evict the month long occupants, I was able to visit the Occupy Toronto protestors in their downtown home.

It was a rag-tag group of 20-somethings hipsters, playing guitars and writing on nearby walls and statues with chalk as they walked down Queen's Street, that first put me on to the idea of going to the protest. A friend and I had come to Toronto to look at universities, and we were touring the city when this motley crew passed us by, singing songs and handing out flyers. I reached out and grabbed a handout. As it turned out, this was an Occupy Toronto outreach team, and I had just taken an advertisement to come and join the cause at Saint James Park in the heart of Toronto's financial sector. My friend and I, never the ones to miss an opportunity to make fun of hipsters, decided to go to Saint James Park to see what all the fuss was about. What we expected to find was more people like those in the outreach team, anti-establishment hipsters and crazed burnouts, sitting around and

smoking god knows what. Yet what we actually found when we finally made it to the "tent city" of Occupy Toronto, was something completely unexpected.

Indeed, "tent city" was a very accurate representation of the Occupy camp in Saint James Park. Not so much due to the hundreds of tents that littered the park, positioned to form snaking paths through the mud covered ground (although that too, is a fine reason to call it a city), but more so because of the odd sense you got while walking in the park.

Walking into Saint James Park was like entering a different world, much like the feeling one would get as they walk into Central Park from the bustling metropolis of New York, or into The Vatican from the dusty streets of Rome. The bright neon colours of the tents clashed with the more neutral colours of the surrounding buildings, and even the neutrally dressed protestors themselves. The people too seemed to contrast the stereotypical idea of Torontonians: outside of the park, people wouldn't give you a second glance as they rushed by on their way to wherever they were headed, if you even dared to try and talk to them they would assume that you wanted money or something of that sort, yet there in the tent city we spent hours having actual intelligent conversations with many of the protestors

there. For the most part they were very friendly and were very keen to talk about what they were doing there.

True, Saint James Park had its fair share of younger hipsters and burnouts, protesting because they think it's cool to rebel, or just because they have nothing better to do, but last time I checked, every organization or movement has had these kind of people in some form or another. To base a movement as large as that of Occupy on such a small yet sensationalist portion of their population, might make for interesting television, yet it does not accurately represent the movement as a whole.

In truth, the majority of people in the park were middle aged folks who simply were tired of the system we have come to accept. During the tour of the park, I met a middle aged veteran who explained to me how he had been to many countries in the Middle East and had seen how many people did not have the freedom to promote change like we do here. In that regard he was very impressed by the movement willingness to peacefully promote healthy change and gives them his full support. I also had a nice conversation with a man in his early sixties about how the protestors were aware of the similarities between the current movement and the hippie movement of the 1960s and how they are very conscious about learning from the mistakes of that movement and go out of their way to make sure that they don't fall down that path.

But what surprised me most was how the community as a whole was organized:

"It's democratic" Kevin Konnyu, a protestor and member of the Occupy Toronto media committee and the anti-oppression committee, explained over a man playing an African drum in the park's gazebo behind him. "It's based on a direct democracy process that centers around something called the "general assembly" and works through committees, working groups, caucuses, and uses a horizontal decision making structure.

"The general discussions start around noon; we have everyday breakout groups. Topics will come up, proposals will be made in the evening general assembly the night before. Many times those refer to the next day's breakout groups, pressing issues



*A veritable tent city, hosting an eclectic mix of protestors: middle-aged, hipsters, burnouts, students, you name it.*



*Welcome to Occupy! A completely democratic protest that has even basic needs to look after.*

of the camp, logistics, etc. If urgent news comes up, breakout groups are then used to explore those. Throughout the day, committees meet to go over business and they discuss and come up with proposals that are then brought to the evening general assembly. At the evening general assembly, we go through an agenda that involves announcements and proposals from both committees and individuals. The proposals can either be passed by consensus or super majority, and if it's not, it will go back to a breakout group, working group, or committee, and the process is done over again."

And strangely enough, the system seems to work. Despite the lack of a traditional leadership structure, the protestors of Saint James Park had made great progress in their cause. Not only had they created their own newsletter, countless flyers and handouts, and had set up a 24/7 live stream of the camp, but they have also undergone much larger projects such as creating a public library in one of the yurts to protest the municipal government's closures

of multiple libraries in the city. At the time of the eviction, the library had accumulated over 1,000 books on multiple subjects, all donated by both protestors and citizens. Also at the time of the eviction, the protestors were working on the construction of a makeshift theatre.

If anything can be learned from this protest, it's that there are other ways to organize a community than the traditional hierarchical method. In some ways, the tent city was less of a protest, and more of an experiment of the horizontal decision making organization structure that it incorporated. "We don't have to wait for or demand the change." Konnyu said "We can be the change and we can make the change".

That being said, the system is far from perfect, mostly due to the unsustainability of the tent city itself. The protestor's funds either come from charitable donations from those who support the movement, or from their own pockets when the need is urgent.

Yet as full time protestors, the occupants of the tent city will eventually not have enough disposable income to maintain the average maintenance that the city needs, and as the protest drags on, the lessening of media attention as news coverage shifts to more current issues will significantly lower the amount of donations to the cause. The unsustainability of the protest without some way to gain sufficient income begs the question: how long would the protestors have even been able to sustain the protest even if the city were on their side? Another month? Through the winter?

Although the answer to that question won't come from Toronto or Ottawa, the movement is still going strong in other parts of the country despite the massive country wide shutdowns of most of the tent cities. As it stands now, Windsor, Fredericton, Winnipeg, and Saint John's are the only cities in Canada who still have occupy camps. How they will fair in the long run will certainly be great test of community and commitment, and of great interest to follow.

As for the protestors of Occupy Ottawa and Toronto, they have made it quite clear that they will not be deterred. The communities have become much more internet based, yet general assemblies are still held in person and protests and marches still are continuing in both cities. Will they still be as effective as the close knit tent communities?

Only time will tell.

**Editor's Note:** Although both the occupations for Occupy Ottawa and Occupy Toronto have been cleared out of their respective parks, both hold peaceful protests on the streets of Toronto and Ottawa. They just have no place to stay.

# Confessions of a Raving Left-Wing Nutcase



NOW ABOUT OUR  
TAXPAYER'S MONEY  
IT DOES NOT GROW  
ON TREES

SO DO NOT ABUSE IT...

By Soren Wainio-Theberge

The government of Canada (indeed, I refuse to call it the Harper government out of my last vestiges of hope for this country) introduced a bill on Tuesday that was intended to phase out the federal per-vote subsidy, which gives every political party two dollars per vote they receive. This subsidy costs \$27 million dollars annually, and will be whittled down to nothing by, conveniently, the next election.

Let me get right to the ranting, because that's what this column is all about. First of all, when the Conservatives make a big deal over the 27 million this costs, they better have a good explanation for a few other things. Firstly, their shameless promotion of their action plan, which focused more on how rosy everything was under the Conservatives' steady hand rather than what the actual rebates would be, cost \$53 million – about twice as much as the per-vote subsidy.

Don't even get me started on the G20, either. \$50 million was spent on gazebos as kickbacks for Conservative ridings – also nearly twice the amount spent on the subsidy. \$300,000 was spent on sunscreen and bug spray. \$14,000 went to buying bloody glow-sticks. Of course, this is perfectly justified. If world leaders didn't have glow-sticks, they wouldn't be able to see the fake lake so generously prepared for them, at our expense.

Furthermore, we're spending 35 billion on fighter jets that don't come with engines. I'd look elsewhere in your budget before cutting the subsidy, Mr. Harper. Like, say, at the other party subsidies.

Yes, you heard me. There are more. Let's say some poor sap donates 400 of their hard-earned dollars to the biggest fundrais-

ing machine in Canada's history. They get 300 of those dollars back. Indeed, for the first \$400, a donor gets a rebate of 75%, a 50% rebate for donations up to \$750, and a 33% rebate after that, to a maximum donation of \$1,100. This costs 46 million dollars yearly.

But there's more. Parties get a 50% rebate

on everything they spend during an election. For that matter, riding offices are reimbursed 60% if they win so much as 10% of the votes. This costs 55 million during an election year.

All personal expenses are reimbursed, too – and Conservative MPs are no sissies when it comes to personal expenses. Peter MacKay recently spent \$200,000 flying to a repatriation ceremony, and then back to his vacation, on the government's Challenger jet. In total, these trips have cost almost \$5 million.

So why would Harper cut this subsidy, and not others? Because he has the best fundraising capacity. Despite the per-vote subsidy benefiting him, other parties will be completely strapped for cash when it's gone, so Harper's advertisements will dominate the airwaves. Who said anything about left-wing propaganda?

## Nouvelle: Mon petit secret

By Audrey Tan

...C'était ma médecine. Après que je l'ai vu, j'étais nerveuse et mon visage a commencé de se rougir. Tu vois, pendant ma dernière visite, elle m'avisait d'arrêter de faire quelque chose. Et qu'est-ce qu'elle a vu que je faisais? L'exacte chose qu'elle m'interdit de faire. Quelle façon de commencer mon matin!

Permettez-moi de m'expliquer. J'ai une obsession. Et je dois vous confesser que je suis toxicomanaque des ventes de garage. Tous mes problèmes ont commencé quand j'avais quinze ans. Une samedi matin, j'étais un peu triste et j'ai décidé de me promener dans mon quartier. Mon voisin vendait des articles dans son garage. Deux de ses articles étaient des chaises. Mais ils n'étaient pas des chaises normales, ah non, ils étaient des chaises extraordinaires! Avec un regard à leur couleur rouge brillant, je suis tombée en amour. Après que je les ai achetés, mes pensées sombres ont disparu!

Chaque samedi matin après ce moment, j'ai demandé à mes parents de me conduire partout dans notre quartier en cherchant pour les placards. Quand j'ai vu des mots « vente de garage » à l'extérieur d'un maison, j'étais comme un alcoolique avec une

bouteille de vin, ou une mouche avec une lumière. Il n'y avait rien qui peut m'arrêter d'y aller. Malheureusement, mes parents aimaient leurs sommeils et ils me disaient que je ne pouvais pas les lever à six heures pour aller aux ventes de garage.

Mon dieu, je n'ai pas aimé ça. Donc, la prochaine fin de semaine, j'ai volé les clés pour la voiture et je m'ai conduit. Tout allait bien jusqu'au moment où, dans ma voiture, je me suis déroulée sur une vieille dame dans mon excitation de voir quelque chose. Quelques heures plus tard, au station de policier, le chef m'a dit que j'avais deux options : de visiter une médecine pour m'aider avec mon obsession, ou d'aller au prison. J'ai choisi le premier. J'ai visité la médecine chaque semaine pour trois mois et je sais que j'ai commencé à guérir mon toxicomanie. Mais un jour, j'ai trouvé une petite vente de garage à l'extérieur du dépanneur. Je n'ai pas vu ma médecine et ce n'était pas qu'après que j'ai acheté une chaise et un livre et un chandail et une fourchette, que j'ai rendue compte qu'elle était là. Quelle surprise!

Oui, j'ai une toxicomanie. Non, ce n'est pas dangereux. Il y a beaucoup de chose plus pire à faire avec mon temps et mon argent. Au revoir médecine, la prison, j'y viens.

# Abandoning the Call of Duty

## The Teenage Voter Demographic, or the Lack Thereof

By Larry Salloum

Government is often a word many young people look down upon. Government brings up images of old men wearing stiff, monotone suits, quickly whispering sharp words to each other with the occasional shouting. Young people do not see government as the single most important aspect of their lives, but rather, an institution unwelcome and irrelevant to the younger side of the population. In the days before political bore, children would accompany their parents in a good ol' fashioned political rally. These days however, the kids drag their parents to go pay \$10 to see the latest kiddy adaptation of Romeo and Juliet. What happened? Why do younger people carry such an ignorance of the very establishments controlling everything everything ever does in a day?

Ask the average teenager in Canada if they truly care about politics these days, and the answer will often result in a flat out "No". While this phenomenon is often attributed to the over-saturation and over-exposition of information to the modern teen-age mind, this explanation does not really account for the teens of the 80s or even the 90s. The answer to this question lies in the views of the teenager. The politics of Canadian Parliament are as much of a culture shock as it is for an immigrant arriving in a country on the other side of the globe. Everything is different, the people there aren't entirely sensitive to your culture, and the people living there often speak an entirely different language altogether, so there is little to connect to for the newly arrived immigrant. Just like the teenager, that immigrant feels alienated and alone in a world he does not accept as his own. The Canadian Parliament is chiefly composed of old, loud men who talk of unfamiliar words such as 'foreign affairs', 'stimulus package', 'coalitions', and a guy in a high chair named 'Mr. Speaker'. There is little perceived connection between the teenager's life and the politics on Parliament Hill. The truth that many teenagers do not realize is that everything around them is connected to government, ranging from the air we breathe (regulated by emission by-laws), to the shoes on our feet (taxes and import restrictions). Everything.

Politicians have only now started to reach

I DON'T FEEL,  
and neither do I care to.

-Apathy

*Do we have to prove that we are not the post-ideological generation? That we still care? Or do just don't?*

out to the highly in-active 18-25 voting population. The leading milestone towards engaging youthful voters is President Obama's

Facebook campaign. His political team had invested heavily into this profound idea with high hopes. Unfortunately, no meaningful changes were made to number of students who actually voted.

The young voting population is a barren, empty wasteland where election candidates have little hope for survival. It is unproven ground, and will continue to be due to the never-ending cycle of uninterested voters and unwilling candidates. Issues such as day care and involvement in countries where older teens and young adults feel they have no impact on their daily lives end up losing interest and continue contemplating what their next Facebook status should say.

Some Canadian parties have made half-hearted attempts to address young people's concerns to little avail. Thanks to the seeming lack of care from election candidates and increasingly cynical generations of young voters, teenagers and young adults have become deaf to politicians, drowning the political jargon with oversized headphones. Youth have simply stopped listening. Youth these days are bombarded with ads carrying

transparent messages and everything teenagers see is often viewed under scrutiny as a result of this cultural vanity and false messaging from ads. This critical vision does not stop at the ads or businesses; this view applies to the politicians and government. What is simply an appeal to the audience is now interpreted as an attempt to twist and patronize a young mind for selfish means. Young people do not want to hear anything the politicians want to say, and this creates ignorance to a system designed to change and control our lives for better or for worse.

No country can possibly hope to continue functioning as a society that gives worth to mutual betterment and voice in one's own affairs if even one of the members gives little thought to the establishment controlling their lives. The young population of today tomorrow should remember that the government is like a bus; if you don't pay attention to where it's heading, you may just miss your stop.

# Hide and Seek Champion: Big Bang - December 12, 2011?

By Bryan Wu

Well, the game is up. Higgs Boson, you have been found.

What is the Higgs Boson? Glad you asked.

As you know, quantum physics is quite confusing, even at the best of times. Theoretical physicists currently create “models” in order to describe the observations of the universe. Usually, the simpler the model is, the better, and occasionally, they predict the existence of particles that have not been discovered yet.

The Higgs Boson was predicted in a paper published in 1964, and was a fundamental to the theory.

Everything becomes quantized in theoretical physics. Electromagnetic force is ascribed to photons, protons and electrons; weak force to the W and Z bosons, and strong force to gluons. All of which have been observed in laboratories, and proven to exist.

But for the last, elusive force of gravity, no

particle could be found. Physicists theorized a “Higgs Field”, which drags most particles as they move through space, creating a gravitational distortion. However, such a field would create a massive particle whenever something slowed down as a result of the field, due to the Second Law of Thermodynamics. And thus, the particle was dubbed the Higgs Boson.

The particle has been given the nickname “The God Particle” by the media, because it was so elusive. Physicists had even theorized that the Higgs Boson “might be so abhorrent to nature that its creation would ripple backward through time and stop the collider before it could make one”. The particle was so difficult to find that they were even contemplating time travel and an order to nature to explain its lack of observance.

Why is it so important that we have found it, finally? Scientists have been searching for it because its existence would confirm the Standard Model of physics, which as been, well, standard for sixty years.

So important was finding the particle that

they built the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) for 7.5 billion Euros (9.9 billion USD), to try to discover theoretical and new particles, taking fifteen years to do so. Remember when it threatened to create black holes when it first started up? Yeah, those were the days.

On the topic of the LHC, there are a couple of funny stories. Back in November 2009, a piece of baguette was found on in the components of the collider, causing the collider to overheat and failsafes to kick in.

And in April 2010, a man named Eloi Cole was arrested at the LHC, claiming to be a time traveller from the future, who was attempting to sabotage the LHC before it could create the Higgs Boson. He claimed that the discovery of the Higgs Boson lead to “limitless power, the elimination of poverty and Kit-Kats for everyone”, turning the world into a “chocolate communist hellhole”. Eloi Cole later disappeared from prison.

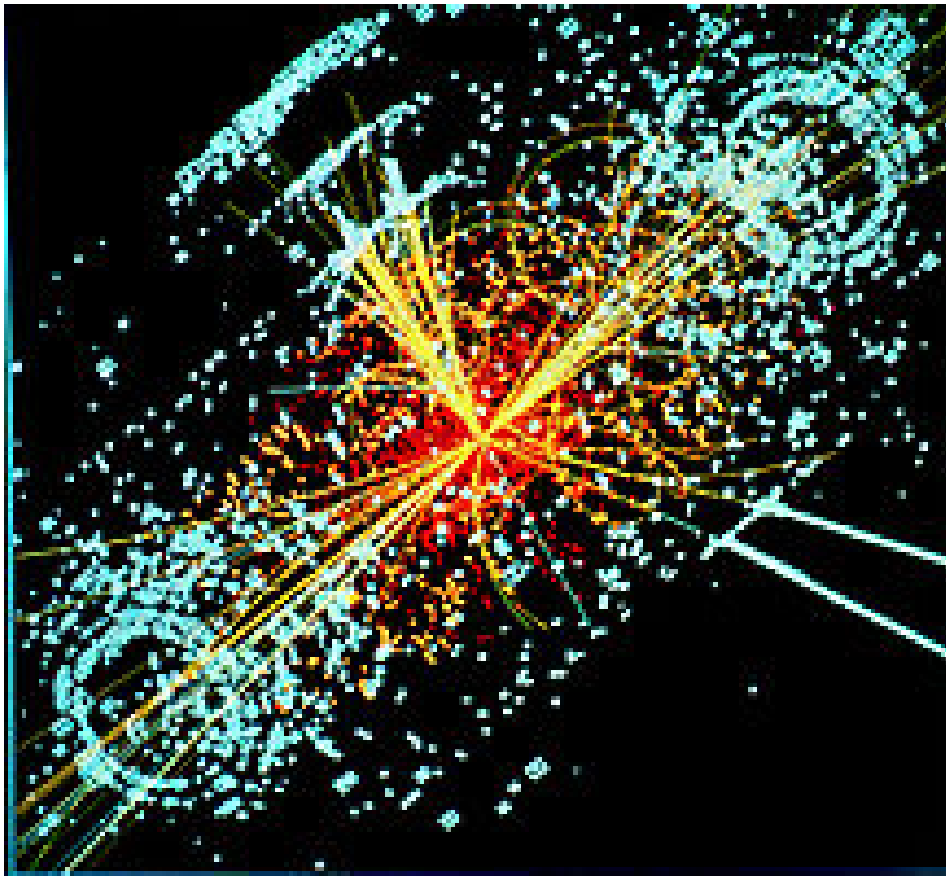
In addition to these strange oddities, the LHC also aided in the recorded observation of faster-than-light neutrinos earlier this year. Discussion is still ongoing whether or not the neutrinos were actually travelling faster than light, or if it merely was a timing error, or something completely different.

But back to the Higgs Boson. While smashing protons together on December 11th, the scientists at CERN discovered a tantalizing signature of the Higgs Boson, existing at 124 or 126 gigaelectronvolts (GeV) (as energy is mass, the two use the same units). However, the team claims nothing, only stating that they believe that there is a 95% probability that the Higgs Boson exists within the 115-130GeV range.

What does that actually mean? Well, they’ve already established that the Higgs Boson cannot exist with energy levels less than 115GeV, so, not much. But the two different detectors at the LHC, ATLAS and CMS, will be compiling their results, and hopefully we’ll have an answer out by next year.

Well, congratulations physicists, you’ve finally found the Higgs Boson. You can rest now; the Standard Model of physics is safe now. Safe enough.

Now what are we going to do with a 27.7km long particle accelerator?



*Looks exciting, but what exactly am I looking for?*

# More Book Reviews

## The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo

“Horrible”, “Depraved”, “Scarring”. It is under complete consensus that the Girl With the Dragon Tattoo has been no more than a graphic, explicit and rather obscene read.

While being the subject of praise and criticism among popular culture, the book fared less than favourable review in the Bell Book Club. The book was described by nearly all members present as too extreme and not much else.

The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo’s extreme nature was a put-off for some Bell readers, in some cases to the point where they are unable to finish.

The book does not bring new ideas to table in any new or creative ways, and is not enjoyable and far too obscene to bother remembering without cringing.

In short, the Bell Book Club has agreed on an accurate review of two thumbs down. Do yourself a favour and ignore the hype around the book. Why not settle for something less appalling such as the Lord of the Flies?

Bruin Rating:



2 Paws Down

## Shelf Monkey

Shelf Monkey, while interesting and has a simple social comment on the sheep-like behaviour of the consumer, star-struck masses.

The book, although ridiculous and littered with swears, gives promise to an enjoyable time with the other Shelf Monkeys and their passionate hate towards trash literature. The book pokes fun at organizational groups like Oprah, almost as much as it pokes fun at itself.

Overall, the book finds a good spot for the members of the Bell Book Club; however the book falls short of little more than a big, book of well-known references. The book sometimes has less to offer on its own as it does from other known works. In the end however, the book does have a clear message (albeit a blunt one at that), but still manages to give the reader good reason to keep reading. Overall Approval rating from the Bell Book Club:

Bruin Rating:



\*All ratings are a total # of paws out of 2 Paws of Approval



## Book Review: Incarceron

Catherine Fisher

By Alex McMorine

Incarceron is a book about two young people, one in a prison and one out, who gain contact by chance. The boy, Finn, lives Incarceron, the prison. Incarceron has been sealed for centuries, and its prisoners live in a fake world that is essentially filled with poverty and despair. The girl, Claudia, is the daughter of Incarceron’s warden, and is doomed to an arranged marriage to someone she hates. While Finn is trying to get out of the prison, she is trying to find a way in.



The dual narrative of this book, as well as the way each world is portrayed, certainly made for an interesting read. The plot takes some unexpected, yet interesting twists that eventually explain why Incarceron needed to be built, and how it was done. Finn’s traveling companions also add some color, as none of them trust each other.

This book has received many positive reviews from establishments such as Booklist, Publishers Weekly, The Times, and The New York Times. A sequel has also been written, as well as a movie by 20th Century Fox, starring Taylor Lautner and Emma Watson, which is still in production.

Incarceron was published in 2007, so it is still in some large book stores, although it is almost certainly in the public library system. This book is definitely for anyone who likes steampunk, although anyone who likes a mystery adventure would probably like this book. If you’re any of those things, this book is for you.

# From the Editor...

Christmas. Don't get me started.

Actually, no. I don't really have anything against Christmas itself. It's a symptom, not a cause, and the fish rots from the head, so to speak.

The rot that I speak of is Consumerism, and it is an affliction upon the entire human race.

I skimmed over this topic in my last editorial, but when else is there a better time to talk about the culture of consumerism than during a holiday which has become solely dedicated to it?

Christmas is a holiday to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, who most definitely was not born on Christmas Day. First a pagan celebration of the winter solstice, the holiday was hijacked by Christians and turned into the holiday called Christmas.

But even then, Christmas was not about giving gifts. It was feasting and caroling and getting together with the community and church. Only in 1822, when Clement Clarke Moore published *'Twas the Night Before Christmas* did Christmas become a holiday for gift-giving, supplanting the tokens of goodwill that were once given freely but now saved for holidays and celebrations. And now look what it has become.

The celebration can barely be called Christmas anymore. Gone are the family gatherings, the gratitude, the thankfulness. Nowhere in society extols those values any more, except perhaps those donation boxes which open every year.

## Contributors Wanted!

Have an opinion to share? Want your article to get published? Want your club/class/team to get some extra attention?

If you said yes to any of those questions, come out to Newspaper! Drop in on a meeting, or just send your article this way!

Our email is [roar@bellhs.net](mailto:roar@bellhs.net), and **come to meetings most Fridays at lunch in room 124.**

## The ROAR is Online!

Visit <http://roar.bellhs.net/> to view this issue and the archive!

No. The holiday spirit can now be summarized in these two lines, written by Tom Lehrer back in the 1950s.

*Angels we have heard on high  
Tell us to go out and buy!*

Indeed.

What other message do we hear blasted at us over the entire holiday season? Holiday sales! Price cuts! Gifts for Mom! Gifts for Dad! The kids will love it! Perfect present! Buy this! Buy that! And this other thing!

No matter where you look, the entire holiday has been commandeered by consumerism, presenting the obligation of giving gifts, not anything handmade or second-hand, but something brand new, tightly fit in its plastic packaging, wrapped in disposable wrapping paper. This year's holiday season is expected to reach \$465.6 billion dollars, making up 20% of all the retail sales of the year.

But why? Why do the corporations continuously tell us to buy things, not only during the Christmas, but during the rest of the year, too?

Yes, we can blame it on corporate greed, but the blame lies mostly on the economic system itself.

Let us look at the current economic system. People in the system trade money. Where does the money come from? Money is created when banks give out loans which are backed by capital. But banks charge interest for loans, thus creating more money owed than exists, making it literally impossible to pay back all loans.

However, if the banks can lend out more money than the amount of money coming in, then nobody defaults on loans, and everyone is happy. Except those loans also collect interest, resulting in the same feedback loop.

But at the same time, the new loans require new capital in order to be taken out. Thus, an ever-increasing amount of capital is required to ensure that the system runs smoothly.

But capital can only be increased through production, and demand must exist in order for the increased production to be profitable.

Hence, the corporations want you to buy more so they can make more money so they can take out more loans to create more money to allow loans to be paid off to allow the economic system to continue to run smoothly, all the while forcing consumption to climb higher and higher.

But this growth isn't linear at all. As interest rates are exponential growths, so must the production, and by extension consumption.

Conclusion: Consumption must continue to go up exponentially, in order to keep the system running.

Must continue. For an infinite amount of time. Infinite exponential growth of consumption.

And unless we can shift our consumption habits from material goods to services (imagine: 90% of the world employed as butlers. Yeah, not going to happen), we're going to end up in a society eerily similar to Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, where everyone is told to consume as much as possible and inventions are only approved if they are less efficient than their predecessors.

Not only that, but the natural resources of this planet would be completely stripped, attempting to provide for our insatiable appetite. Unless we can expand to other planets at exponential speeds, this infinite exponential consumption will ruin both society and the Earth.

And we call this economic growth.

Whose growth? The only growth that I see are the coffers of the rich, the debt of the poor, and the endless tonnes of garbage being sent to the landfills each year as a result of our consumerist lifestyles.

So when you're out Christmas shopping (if you haven't done so already, I know I haven't), take a moment to think about what you're getting someone. Do they actually need whatever it is you're buying? Can you make something yourself?

Or maybe, instead of subscribing to the impulsive, compulsive buying, you could instead settle down with your family around the tree and celebrate what the holiday is really about.

Pagan tree worship.

- Bryan Wu