

Issue #1 || 2013/2014

The Lyon

Dark
interesting

Powerful

Misunderstood
Funny



Ask. Challenge. Form Opinions.
Read. Rant. Roar.

FROM THE LYON'S DEN

Mackenzie, it's been a while since I've had the pleasure of addressing you all. The last time I spoke to you was June of last year, finishing my first year as Editor-In-Chief of The Lyon. I left you to your summer celebrating the changes you made at Mackenzie and the lessons you learned – carrying you to your next challenge.

This year, I am more than honored to once again be representing Mackenzie, using the written word to inspire change, deliver information about issues you want to read about and make a difference. This is my last year in high school and I have what seems like a world of problems on my shoulders about where I want to go next year and what I want to do.

I keep telling myself that there's time left to make those decisions. I'm telling you that too. You have a lifetime ahead of you to make stupid mistakes, get back up and learn from them. You still have time to apply to a university or college program and then change your mind about it – and then change it again. Or maybe you'll get a job, become an apprentice or even do a little traveling. You've got a ton of people that will pick you back up when you fall – and guide you head first into the most rewarding situations. To all of you that are stressing about assignments, exams, applications and general teenage problems; you have time to figure it all out.

The Lyon is here for you. We're here to put together a student voice that you want to read, that you want to talk about. You have free time to make your life choices; we're here to fill it in and try and help you make those informed choices from what to read, to what to do with that last minute assignment and how to get through the winter break without being bored.

Here's to another great year, possibly the best one yet. There's a place for everyone at The Lyon, there's a place for everyone at Mackenzie. Just don't forget to look forward and ask, challenge, form opinions, read, rant, roar.

-Shenhab

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FEATURED LYONS

JEREMY MOLKO



Jeremy Molko is a very bright and positive individual. He enjoys reading novels and is known for making bad puns. Jeremy like many of us, enjoys ice-cream, his favourite flavor is cookies and cream. Apart from playing video games, he enjoys sleeping! Jeremy's been at Mackenzie for four years and loves the school! This is his second year writing for The Lyon and he plans to pursue a career in Business and art. Check out his article in this issue, The Evolution of Gaming on page 6!

JULIET DANG



Juliet Dang is a Grade 12 student here at Mackenzie! She enjoys gaming, drawing, and knitting. Walking in the halls, she always has a smile on her face! Juliet enjoys watching anime online, though she does not watch TV, her favourite movie is Coralline. This is her first year as the Graphic Designer for the newspaper, which is also what she will pursue as a career in the future.

STACY MA



Stacy Ma is a Grade 10 student who has been The Lyon's layout designer for two years. She is a well-rounded individual with a vivacious personality and angelic voice! In addition to singing, her hobbies include reading novels, watching Korean dramas and anime. Stacy enjoys listening to Japanese and Chinese music. Stacy lives in the moment, and is waiting to see where the future takes her.

MR. WEISBERG



Mackenzie welcomes our new Vice Principal

Mr. Weisberg who is coming to us from Yorkdale Adult Learning Center. Though he had a great time at Yorkdale, he is excited to be back at a school that caters to students grades 9 through 12. His experiences at Mackenzie, so far has been great. He commends all the students for their involvement in the various extracurricular activities. "This school is very warm and welcoming, everyone is always doing something!" says Mr. Weisberg. His favourite color is red and he enjoys playing video games, notably 'Assassin's Creed'. Mr. Weisberg is always smiling and telling jokes. We are confident that he will keep Mackenzie at its best!

CRANK UP YOUR READING

BY SHENHAB ZAIG

I thought that the only books I like to read were the ones that were light and funny romantic comedies that always have a happy ending. Only one day, I came across a book called *Crank* by Ellen Hopkins and decided to give it a go. It was a dark and deep novel written in free verse poetry about the story of her meth-addicted daughter.

With a little research and reading I found the sequel, *Glass*, which was just as intense. It continued to tell the story of her daughter who is now raising her baby after her rape.

Authors like Ellen Hopkins write about everyday issues that many teenagers go through that are often not written about, such as; suicide, self-harm, drug use, homelessness and prostitution. Her writing is heavy but exciting and provides an interesting perspective of issues that are considered somewhat taboo.

It is exactly these issues that got her uninvited from a school in Oklahoma. Her books were pulled off the shelves of all middle schools in the district. Hopkins was celebrated during Banned Books Week, an event every year that celebrates the freedom to read books that have been censored. According to the National Coalition Against

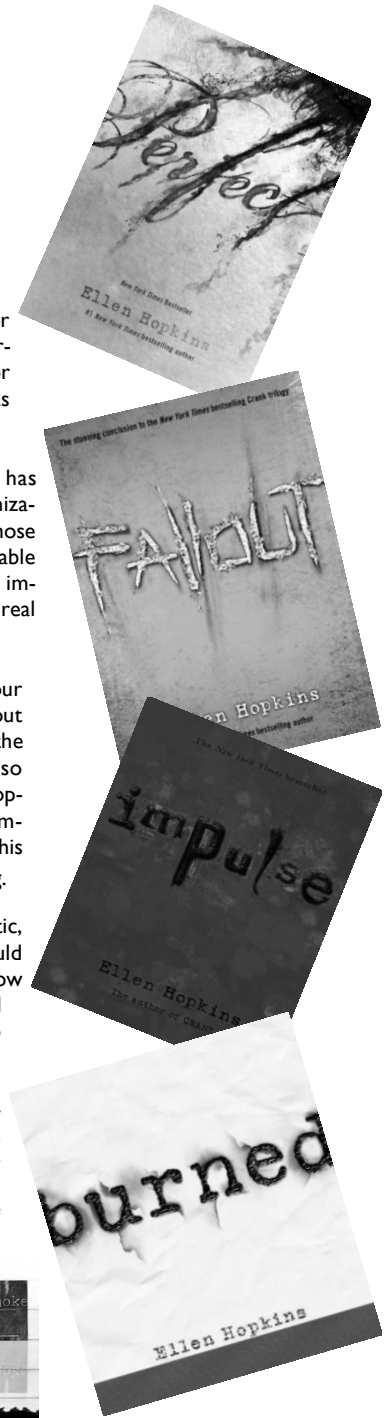
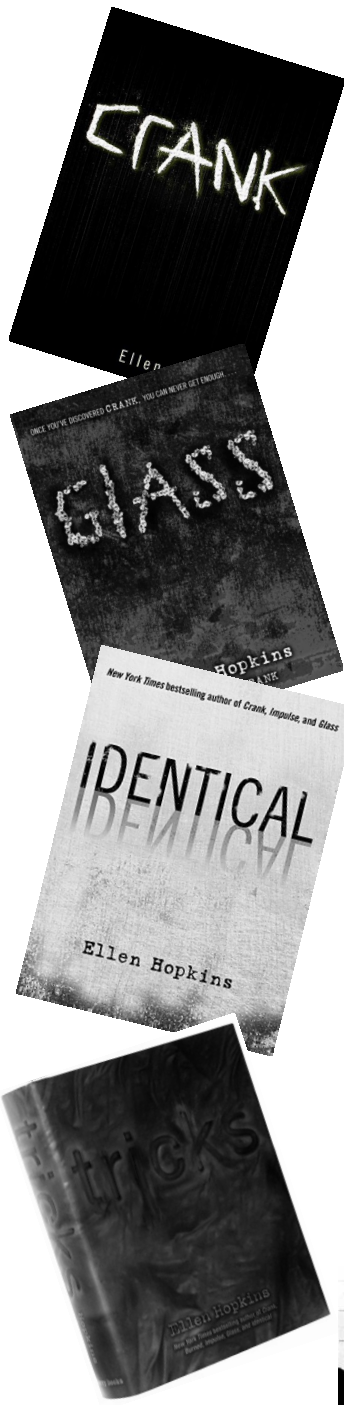
Censorship, removing an author from an event because of a difference of opinion with the ideas or content in their books counts as censorship.

Since then, Hopkins has become an advocate for both organizations, fighting for her books and those of other similar authors to be available to young people. She believes it is important that teens are exposed to real issues that real some teens face.

As young people, it is our job to read a variety of books about society that not only show us the beauty of the life ahead of us, but also the dangers of it. Authors like Hopkins challenges what the literary community deems as acceptable and this is what makes her novels interesting.

Her stories are realistic, reflective of what some teens could be going through. Her books allow her readers to start a dialogue and form opinions about issues that do exist and should not be hidden.

Hopkins' novels have certainly opened the eyes of her readers, and for me at least, given me a beautifully written, thought provoking series that will forever be on my bedside table.



THE POWER OF THE SPOKEN WORD

BY MAHFAM NIKOO

The first time I saw her... Everything in my head went quiet. All the tics, all the constantly refreshing images just disappeared. When you have Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, you don't get quiet moments.

These are the first few lines of a spoken word performance by Neil Hilborn, a poet with OCD who shares the difficulties of his anxiety disorder through a love poem. His recorded performance instantly went viral and now has almost 5 million views on YouTube, making spoken word sound less like a coffee house act and more like a Frank Ocean concert.

Spoken word is definitely not your typical paper and pen sonnet, but rather a new freeform style of contemporary poetry that uses different beats, sounds, volumes, and actions to convey a prominent message. This type of act has gotten a substantial amount of recognition since then, and the world is being shown all types of people with all sorts of things to say; anywhere from an Emerson college student using his lisp for mastering tongue twisters to a moving piece on what it's like to be a woman of colour.

Much shorter than a speech and more rhythmic than an essay, This performance medium has made itself one of the most captivating ways to get a point across. These days, getting a large group of people to truly listen to what you have to say can be tough, and spoken word poets have put themselves close to the top of the list of influential speakers, giving rise to a new and unmistakable power.

As teenagers we are undoubtedly passionate and opinionated

about what we believe in, these poetry acts are a great way of getting into topics of personal interest and sharing the emotions they evoke. So what do the students right here at Mac want to hear about? A survey of 40 students from all grades, 18 said they would want to bring more awareness to the issue of sexual assault, 7 for homophobia, and 5 for bullying, among other topics such as feminism and mental disorders. Coincidentally, these three issues are also some of the most popular spoken word poems, and can be viewed on YouTube, specifically on the Button Poetry channel, which records a various spectrum of performances. One piece done by Terisa Siagatony and Rudy Francisco, entitled "Sons", takes a new look at "rape culture" and its teachings, raising questions in regards to how offenders and victims are exposed to society and treated. Another piece called "Blenders" performed by Oakland high schooler Jade Cho, simply reflects on the ways in which many teenagers think of themselves.

While spoken word does bring light to many heavy topics, it doesn't solely revolve around controversy either, and a great way to experience all types of these performances is to see them live. Toronto is a major hotspot for spoken word poets, and there are also specific shows catered to teenagers. The most popular youth poetry competition in Toronto is the Youth Slam. It runs on the second Wednesday of every month downtown, and is a great opportunity to either watch or perform at a cheap entrance rate of five dollars. So whether you want to get involved in this growing movement or just spend a Wednesday night doing something new and interesting, spoken word performances can add a little extra perspective to your life and are definitely worth checking out.

For more information, visit torontopoetryslam.com.

WHY I STILL CAN'T GET THE HANG OF HIGH SCHOOL

BY HELIN ULUTAS

"I'm in grade 12 now." This is what I tell myself as I push past the ocean of shoulders and bags. A senior. An alpha Lyon in its den and I still have trouble opening my lock. I never got better at high school. I still run into people when I open the washroom door, I've tripped on the stairs plenty of times in spite of my sensible shoes, and not to mention, walking into the boy's change room with 'O Canada' proudly booming in background. But I've learned to cope. With each passing year, I've learned something new, like which staircase is closest to my first period classroom and which teacher gives out full sized candy bars during Halloween. High school is a wonderful journey of exploration and discovery. We all have to start somewhere, unfortunately with little to no knowledge of what to do or how to do it.

My elementary school teachers all told me high school was the end of my slacking off. I saw my social life and impeccable sleep schedule flash before my eyes. When grade nine passed, much quicker than I thought it would, I realized that I spent the year without being forcibly pushed into a locker. The workload was definitely larger and harder than what I was used to but it wasn't ridiculous. Sleeping later and less became a part of the experience. Teachers were friendly and I made loads of friends. I even managed to slack off once in a while.

Projects, tests, exams, and strange terms like "full disclosure day" leave us feeling overwhelmed but they're nothing compared to the pressures of what's to come. Since grade ten, I was told to figure out where I wanted to go and what I wanted to do, quickly. Luckily, I already had an idea. Now, it's easy to see how fast time flies. Visit open houses and school fairs! Look up the programs, apprenticeships, and careers you're interested in! Don't wait to make this decision.

Grade twelve so far has been amazing. After three years of practice, I've chosen courses that I genuinely want to take and I didn't join every single club that gave me candy at Club Crawl. Over time, I've come to better understand myself as a person and as a student.

Mackenzie, it may be tough when it's ISP season and exams are on their way. It may seem impossible when you have to volunteer the weekend before two tests and a presentation. It may seem like life is playing a cruel joke on you when there's not enough sunlight to power your calculator and your sweaty palms are rubbing the answers off your physics test. I've been there. We've all been there. Remember, high school is short and the beauty of it is the little mistakes and slip-ups you'll make on the way.

INDEPENDENT MUSIC, INDEPENDENT CHOICES

BY YASIR PIRACHA

““And if the bass shakes the Earth underground, we’ll start a new revolution now”- ‘King for a day’ by Pierce The Veil

It starts with a song. Casually hearing a masterpiece on your friend’s iPod, going home to look up the artist, and you can’t listen to anything else. Before you know it, you’re standing in a lineup downtown, stomping your feet against the cold, beside a backdrop of graffiti-covered walls, waiting to hear this band no one has ever heard of – welcome to the world of underground music.

The hottest trend among music-engulfed youth of the decade is discovering unknown artists bearing nonsensical names, and being the first one to discover an artist. Making earth shattering music out of a garage, dripping with passion, intensity and honesty, these bands are independent from any record label, but many have demonstrated success; and there’s only one force strong enough to make that happen: the angst and rebellion of misunderstood youth.

The underground music revolution’s mystique and allure has caused music-lovers to drift away from the easily accessible radio into a world of unknown singer-songwriters. The trend of the unknown has been rising rapidly as people discover the glamour of underground music, with truly relatable lyrics and fresh new beats.

Elaheh Sajadi, a student in grade 10 at Mackenzie said, “Underground artists aren’t sellouts. Music typically played on the radio has no meaning.” Contrarily, alternative underground artists are grounded, are ‘real’.

“It makes my personality more distinct.” said Medhavi Gautam, an avid underground music fan. She explains the distinction you get from non-conformity. “Listening to what everybody else listens to means you’re not being yourself.” It’s almost like claiming ownership; after you discover an artist, it’s yours to introduce, spread and recommend. And then, they make it big.

Some indie bands do make it big. Death Cab for Cutie, the international indie sensation, is the poster model of a band that went from basement jam sessions to main stage fame. Starting with a small gang of amateur musicians, Death Cab employed the underground trend to its advantage and morphed into Grammy nominations and certified platinum albums.

A commonly known recent rags-to-riches musician from New Zealand is sixteen year old Ella Yelich-O’Connor, better known as Lorde. Starting as an unknown underground artist, releasing her debut EP, *The Love Club* on SoundCloud in November of 2012, she gained a small but proud fan-base, and eventually exploded onto the scene in March 2013, with her song *Royals* debuting at number one in four countries.

Interested, yet? Want to hear some live alternative music? Toronto has a wide variety of underground venues open to high school students. Legendary venues like the Mod Club boast concerts from underground bands such as Wilco, Calexico and Stars. The Drake Underground is by far best known for its underground music selection, with many of their performers exploding into popularity months after performing. Other venues for lesser-known artists include the Phoenix Concert Theatre and the Opera House, known for its small, all-ages heavy metal concerts.

As more people stray away from the pull of top forty songs and popularized artists, indie is ironically becoming mainstream, contrary to its very name (indie, meaning independent). The trend of alternative music has spread infectiously, and discovering new artists every few months is becoming socially expected among friends. Many people think this is a mockery of underground music, as people devalue its true purpose. Others think it’s reflective of change, and how people are finally listening to what they want to listen to. Either way, the future of underground is up to the youth of our generation, and we’re realizing that indie has nowhere to go but up.



THE MACKENZIE SHUFFLE

COMPILED BY
WINNIE SHI

“Dance Dance” by Fall Out Boy
-Dewmi Seneviratna, Grade 9

“Love Somebody”
by Maroon 5
-Sahra Shams, Grade 10

“Wrecking Ball” by Miley Cyrus
-Elena Dybner, Grade 12

“Head Over Heels” by Abba
-Horatiu Lazu, Grade 10

“Wake me up” by Avicii
-Stephan Geleriu, Grade 9

“Wu Tang Forever” by Drake
-Sabrina Lee, Grade 11

“Follow Me” by Muse
-Patricia Martin, Grade 10

“Nothing Lasts Forever” by Drake
-Prapphan K., Grade 12

“I’m Yours” by Jason Mraz
-God Frey, Grade 9
“The Monster” by M&M
-Noah Matsui, Grade 12

THE EVOLUTION OF GAMING

BY JEREMY MOLKO

Gaming no longer looks like pixels moving across the screen. The gaming industry has become a large and lucrative industry mainly due to the technological advancement of graphics. Back in the 1980's, when gaming was first gaining popularity, graphics were never a selling point. Developers focused on story, level design, and game play to sell their games.

Today, many companies center the focus of game development on graphics and special features to sell their games rather than the game itself.

Although graphics maybe better for the bottom line, the gaming industry does not play without a little controversy. Some disagreement lies within the violence, but the reality of the situation is that violence has always been part of video games. Games back in the 80's and 90's such as Contra, Mortal Kombat and the Doom series displayed many gory images. When students were asked why games seem more violent these days as compared to previous ones, the general consensus was that games today look more graphic and realistic, making them appear more violent.

With these seemingly more graphic video games, we have more people who consider the impact it may have on the gamer's behaviour. When Juliet Dang, a student in grade 12 was asked her opinion on this she said, *"The entire argument is [nonsense]. Everyone is in control of their own state of mind."*

However, concerned parents are the ones leading the conversation; wondering how video games affect their children. In contrast to the 80's and 90's, we now have a rating system to provide some guidance for parents on games that may have more mature content. All mature games have an intended audience of persons 17 and older. In spite of this, we still see many young children playing these games and are being exposed to what even the industry may rate as graphic violence. *"I find the rating system to be ineffective because children can easily acquire any game nowadays"* says Angela Jeong, grade 10.

There are plenty of games on the market that are much less violent and yet children still go back to playing what is now considered violent video games. Is it because it's cool? Or fun? Or they enjoy it more than other games? The reasons are endless; ultimately the gaming companies only care about how much money they make not where it's coming from.

As the demand for improved technology increases so will our varying perceptions of what is good and bad in the gaming industry. In the end it all boils down to what each person enjoys in their gaming ritual and that's up to you. All I know is that I'm going to get back to my controller.



RATE MY TEACHER?

BY CHRISTINA VUONG

After receiving a blue timetable on the first day of school, most students would likely wonder what their future holds for them. Who are these teachers and how will they impact my learning? I'm sure that many Mackenzie students have at one point in their lives checked RateMyTeachers.com for some reassurance. A recent Mackenzie poll shows that a little more than half of the students at Mackenzie still use this site. Rate My Teachers is a site established in 2001 that allows students to anonymously review and grade their teachers based on easiness, helpfulness and clarity. From harsh angry rants to kind praise, it is all public.

Ever since discovering this site in middle school, I've always wondered whether or not teachers read their ratings—whether they grin or chuckle while scrolling through absurd feedback by students. “I haven't been on it for several years but it is very gratifying receiving feedback and I did find the website useful because it gave me [just that]. However, the comments are so brief and are not linked to a particular class or school year and without that context, the comments have limited usefulness,” says Mr. Regan from the English department.

Jonah Strub, a grade 12 student at Mac said, “I feel that Rate My Teachers is unnecessary and can be hurtful. One shouldn't judge a

teacher before having them, as everyone will have a different opinion. I also don't think it is very adequate considering how students are most likely to use the site to give negative feedback.” A poll which surveyed 40 RateMyTeacher.com users from Mackenzie showed that approximately 60% of students felt that they would be more likely to use the site to leave negative feedback rather than positive.

Being vulnerable to comments and ratings on the site, there have been times when low ratings have caused me to schedule appointments with student services as an attempt to switch classes. After several unsuccessful attempts to switch classes, I've realized that these teachers who are apparently “terrible and cannot teach” are actually very intelligent, knowledgeable individuals who try their best to help students—it's usually a matter of whether or not students take the initiative to listen and “ask questions,” as teachers often say.

So next time you see that one star teacher on your timetable, don't automatically trust the rating. I mean, some of your favorite movies have low ratings too, don't they?

READING WITH SPEED NOT SPEED READING

BY CINDY NGUYEN

We all know that feeling of being short on time with a long reading list of essays, articles, and books looming. Reading with speed is about *control* and not rushing your reading. With these tips you can increase what you get out of your reading.

1. Relax your face and expand your gaze.
2. Run a pointer along as you read can help you avoid backtracking.
3. Keep distractions at bay! If you stop less, then you'll get through the text quicker.
4. Believe it or not, but we hear our voices while reading, either from actually mouthing or hearing the words your head. If you are able to train yourself to stop this, you'll read much faster.
5. Slow down if something is more difficult. Spend time on the more important parts; this will make you a more effective reader.

STUDENT AND STAFF CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE TYPHOON RELIEF IN THE PHILIPPINES

Guiuan, was the first town in the Philippines to be hit by typhoon Haiyan on November 8, 2013. Haiyan has been recorded as one of the most powerful storms to hit land. The United Nation estimates that 11 million people have been affected by the typhoon. 4000 people are dead, 1200 missing, and approximately 500,000 are without homes. Many are in dire need of clean water, food, and shelter.

International aid is gaining momentum. Many countries are helping by sending food and funds to the affected areas. At Mackenzie, staff and students took action by contributing what they could to assist the relief effort. Student Council sold snacks and baked goods to raise funds. Athletics, various clubs, most notably the Filipino Council have also taken action by hosting several fundraising events including a teacher vs. student dodge-ball game and a talent show. The Athletic Council also donated \$2 from every Mac Sweat sale to the typhoon relief. All proceeds were sent to the Canadian Red Cross.

A storm like Haiyan not only affects the people of the country but the many families and friends who are living abroad. The exact impact of the storm is difficult to assess. It will take many years to rebuild what was lost. It is the hope of the Mackenzie community that all people affected by the typhoon will soon find safety, peace, and return to calling their land a home.

Do you prefer mainstream or indie music?

I like indie because the music is more meaningful. Also, the music is not influenced as much mainstream is.”

- Michelle Le, Grade 12

COMPILED BY PELING SONG

I prefer mainstream just because its really popular.

- Sloane Lester, Grade 12

I like mainstream music because I know it well and can always sing along!

- Shenhab Zaig, Grade 12

I prefer indie music because the quality of the music is better. They don't have companies to manage them either.”

- Susie Son, Grade 9



I like mainstream music because there are more genres of music in the mainstream category. I like different types of songs.

- Jasmine Ou, Grade 9

I like mainstream. You hear it more often and in more places.”

- Shiri Gawrielman, Grade 12

I like mainstream music because it has better background music and electronic sound effects.”

- Cynthia Lou, Grade 11

I prefer indie music because mainstream is mostly pop music and it hurts my ears.

- Fatima Hussain, Grade 9

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Lions, do you have something to roar about?

We're looking for guest writers for our upcoming issues! If you're interested in writing for *The Lyon*, email our editor at lyon.mac@gmail.com for more information!