



Issue 1 2022





Editorial

Evening readers, and welcome to the first issue of Cartwheel magazine! This has been a long time coming, with months spent planning, designing, and writing up what you see here today.

I would personally like to thank all of the writers and artists who contributed towards this issue. Without them, there wouldn't be any magazine to read!

As expected for a grand debut, we're introducing a lot of segments this issue, but we've neatly organised them into three categories:

In the news section, we'll be looking into this year's Victorian Model UN summit, as well as reflecting on this term's house competitions. We'll also take a look at events happening outside of school, such as recent environmental developments.

Later on in reviews, I'll take a look at a classic Australian comedy with equally classic cars, while Joshua Duncan spirals into an intricate, intergalactic drama.

Finally in creative writing, Mia Farrington spins a tale about a petrified princess, hidden in museum catacomb, as Jennifer Kreyts sees through the eyes of a true villain in customer service: Karen.

From all of us working on Cartwheel, we hope you enjoy this first issue, and are as excited as we are to see comes next!

- Tom Weir-Alarcon, editor and founder

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Ruby Weir-Alarcon
Friends and family of the team
And... you!

NEWS

Model UN Summit + RU	5
OK Day	
<i>Shae Preece, Tom Weir-Alarcon</i>	
Sports News	6
<i>Shae Preece</i>	
House News	7
<i>House Leaders</i>	
Science News	8
<i>Shae Preece</i>	
Art News	10
<i>Shae Preece</i>	
Maths News	12
<i>Shae Preece</i>	
English News	13
<i>Shae Preece</i>	
Environmental News	15
<i>Kirsten Harkness</i>	

REVIEWS

The Big Steal	17
<i>Tom Weir-Alarcon</i>	
Illuminae	18
<i>Joshua Duncan</i>	

CREATIVE

Karen.	20
<i>Jennifer Kreyts</i>	
Hidden Features	21
<i>Mia Farrington</i>	
Power	23
<i>Jennifer Kreyts</i>	
Bleed Alone	25
<i>Joshua Duncan</i>	
Meatlovers	27
<i>Juno Roder</i>	
Anagaposis	29
<i>Jennifer Kreyts</i>	
Milla	30
<i>Caitlin Davis</i>	
Writing Competition	31
Winners	
<i>Ruby Weir-Alarcon</i>	

LOOSE ENDS

Principal's Address	36
<i>Jenni Hodgins</i>	
College Captains' Farewell	37
<i>Ruby Boyd, James Webbers</i>	

Year 7's will be on camp from the 21st-23rd of November, so have fun Year 7!

Early Commencement starts on the 28th of November, and the last day of school is the 9th of December for Year 11&12.

There will be an assembly on the 17th of October, so make sure you come along!

Both the 31st of October and the 1st of November will be student free days, as we have a Professional Learning Student Free day right before Cup Day, so enjoy the extra-long weekend!

The 10th of November is the day for Year 11 immunisations, so make sure that you show up to school and get vaccinated!

The 30th of November is Awards Night, so congratulate those who get awards, and if you miss out, remember that there is always next year to get better!

The Year 6s will be joining us on the 13th of December, so make sure that they get a good first look at high school life! (Or in other words, don't start fights with the Year 6's!)

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Year 8, 9, and 10 will get to have fun with their End of Year Activities from the 13th-16th of December, with a Community Service Day on the 19th.

On the 18th of October, there will be a special breakfast held for Year 12's on their last day, so make sure to wish them luck on their adult journey! The Year 12 Valedictory will be held on the 20th of October, so hopefully it isn't all sad news for the Year 12's!

For any students studying Unit 2, the 14th of October is the last day to apply for a coursework extension, so make sure to apply for one early if you need it. All coursework for Unit 2 will be due on the 21st of October.

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We want to say farewell to all of the wonderful Year 12's as they finish school, and good luck to them in their future endeavours. We are sure that they will do amazing in whichever pathways they choose to pursue. While the Year 12's will likely hear lots of goodbye messages before they leave, make sure that you support them as they enter their exams, because we don't want them too stressed for the important bit!

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Year 10 and 11 exams are happening from the 17th-25th of November, so make sure to study and get some good sleep for your exams! VCAA examinations will be taking place from the 26th of October, so if you are taking a Year 12 subject, keep in mind that your exam period starts early.

(INTER)NATIONAL DEBATE

Students take to the stand in Model UN

Recently, a group of Mount Erin students were selected to take part in a Model United Nations - Planet Ocean forum.

The group took part in a simulation of the UN General Assembly. The Model UN Assembly runs according to the UN protocols and procedures followed by the UN General Assembly. Student delegates stepped into the shoes of a country ambassador to the UN to discuss global issues on the UN's current ways of addressing these issues. Each student and their allocated country had to present their country's position on Ocean Conservation and put forward amendment(s) to the Draft Resolution, seeking support from fellow delegates by collaborating, debating, and using your negotiation and diplomacy skills.



Students had to research an allocated country, the topic of Ocean Conservation and the national position of the country on this issue, while also needing to be familiar with the Draft Resolution.

Students composed their Position Statement and potential amendments to the Draft Resolution as if briefed by the country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Contributions on the day were based upon that country's national interests, international responsibilities and humanitarian obligations.

Students participated enthusiastically and gained valuable research skills while further refining their debating, diplomacy and communication skills. The two groups representing the USA (In full character) and Norway represented the college amicably and were clear leaders on the day.

Written by Mrs. McCarthy, transcribed by Shae Preece.



FEELING 'GREAT'-FUL 'R U OK Day' at Mt Erin

We make time to ask
R U OK?TM

Last week on Thursday, the 9th of September was 'R U OK Day', dedicated to mental health awareness and suicide prevention.

Mount Erin College's SALT team showed their support, by hosting a series of fun activities across a two day festival.

On day one, a four square tournament was held around D block at lunch, giving competitors a chance to earn points for their house group! Though it held the pride of many in the balance, many found it a fun and energising way to spend the lunch. For those more socially minded than athletic, a gratitude wall was held up in the DATS. Here, students were able to share what they enjoyed or valued about their lives, and discuss them with others.

Wellbeing Leader Leah Partington helped with setting up the wall, and later stated "it was incredible to see so many students participating on the day, sharing all the things they are grateful for."

On the second day, students could make a gold coin donation to wear freely dress in yellow attire. The proceeds of this donation went towards the 'It's Okay, Not To Be Okay' charity fund, who help run community programs around mental health, grief and suicide prevention.

While a mindfulness session was planned, the final event for the festival was a yoga session in C block, where students stretched and pulled their worries away (before returning to them in study, of course).

There was also a raffle held across both days, where students and teachers alike could win a range of merch packages. While this turned oddly competitive towards the end, it was great seeing people pitch in to support such a great cause.

"Overall, the event brought together the college community and was a great success!"

Written by Tom Weir-Alarcon, with anecdotes from Leah Partington.

Sports Update

This term we've been very busy in the sport domain, with many activities happening throughout the term! Let's have a look at everything that has been going on in the world of sport this term!

Division Athletics

This term Mount Erin Students competed in Division Athletics on the 29th of August! Congratulations to all students that competed and a special well done to the 12 students who made it through to the next round and will be competing in Regionals. These students are:

U12-13 Boys 200m - Oliver Southwell

U14 Girls 1500m - Jasmine Millar

U14 Boys 100m - Marco Papettas

U14 Boys 200m - Marco Papettas

U15 Girls 1500m - Nikita Harris

U15 Girls Hurdles - Kiara Wright

*U15 Relay - Haylee Parker, Jasmine Millar,
Kiara Wright, Nikita Harris*

U15 Boys Hurdles - Mason Morris

U15 Boys High Jump - Mason Morris

U16 Boys Hurdles - Lochlan Millar

U16 Boys Triple Jump - Aaron Phal

U16 Boys 200m - Aaron Phal

U17 Boys Javelin - Aaron Phal

U18-20 Girls Shot Put - Brianna Watson

Congratulations to all students who participated and made Mount Erin College very proud!



Wheelchair Basketball

Throughout this term, students have had the privilege of participating in Wheelchair Basketball thanks to Basketball Victoria. All year levels who have a sport class got to have the opportunity to learn the skills to play basketball in a wheelchair and even got to play a game! With a few wobbly shots and a lot of accidentally rolling backwards, students persevered and had a wonderful time!

Thank you to all the teachers who helped organise this and Basketball Victoria for giving Mount Erin this amazing experience. And a big well done to all the students for avoiding as many collisions as possible!



NEWS

Year 8 Boys Netball

This term we sent the Year 8 Boys Netball team to Regionals! These boys did a fantastic job representing Mount Erin and did exceptionally well, only losing the Grand Final by a point! Congratulations boys! Next year we know you have it in the bag!

Thank you to Ms Dexter for all the help writing this article and don't forget: there are a lot of sporting events coming up over the next term, so keep an eye out on Compass and get out there and give it a go!



Written by Shae Preece, with assistance from Ms. Dexter

HOUSE UPDATE

Red House

As we approach the end of Term 3, it is difficult to believe that Christmas feels as though it is just around the corner. This term provided many opportunities for Red House students and the College as a whole.

We began the team by welcoming Mr. Phillips into the leadership team. His contributions have been greatly appreciated and we now do not know who we ever got by without him.

Term 3 saw our Year 9's off on City Week and it was absolutely fantastic to join them for a number of day and hear all of all of their adventures.

This term also saw some astounding sporting results with Red House being represented at the District Athletics and our Year 8 Boys Netball Team only just missing out on receiving a place at the state competition - an outstanding achievement. Notably, Jasmine Millar also achieved a fantastic result at the Regional Cross-country.

A huge congratulations to our Year 12 Red House students who are approaching the finish line of their secondary schooling. We wish them all the best for their upcoming exams and for whatever the future holds.

As we look to Term 4, we cannot wait for Year 7 Camp and a number of end of year celebrations.

-Ms. Harvey, Red House Leader

Yellow House

It has been a big Term 3 in Yellow House with lots of sporting events and it is great to be moving into the warmer weather. Yellow House seniors won the house against house basketball competition - well done!

We are going to enjoy celebrating the Yellow House successes in our house assembly. Congratulations to Jayde Doherty (7B) on winning the Smile Squad Voucher. We also have so many students earning Aspire awards (Bronze, Silver and Gold), with 5 students getting platinum awards: Sujin Campbell (8E), Thomas Owen (8E), Evelyn Marshall (8H), Kade Castles (12A) and Jasmine Jones (12A).

A tremendous effort from our Year 12 students who have worked hard throughout the year. We wish them all the best with the upcoming exam period and beyond.

- Mr Baker, Yellow House Leader

Blue House

Term 3 has proven to be a successful term for Blue House with a number of key events taking place. After placing second in the senior house basketball competition, Blue House was able to take the victory in the intermediate house basketball competition leaving them sitting comfortably in first place in the house sports competition at the end of term 3.

A massive congratulations must go out to the following Blue House students who were the winners of the fortnightly ASPIRE draw for term 3, each earning a \$5 canteen voucher:

Ryker Bean

Lucas Jansen

Ryan Nolan

Roianan Szczepanski

Blue House would like to congratulate all of the year 12's on their completion of the GAT and wish them the best of luck as they begin their final study preparations for the end of year exam period.

- Mr Mooney, Blue House Leader

Green House

Congratulations to all our Green House students who achieved the following ASPIRE award tiers this term:

Platinum awardees Emma E, Nikita H, and Georgia B.

Gold awardees Alex L, Harmony C, Jesse D, Alyssa N, Alexia G, Haylee-Jade K, Kiara W, Caley N, Dana A, Hope R-S, Nikita H, Isaac L, Eli A-D, Isabella C, Riley N, and Logan W.

As well as the many recipients of Bronze and Silver awards!

This is representative of the effort so many of our students have been putting in, both in and outside of the classroom. Let's keep this up for Term Four!

Green House staff and students would also like to take the opportunity to congratulate our inaugural Year 12 class. We wish you all the very best for whatever is coming next for you, whether this be exams, further study, work or any other adventure that awaits.

- Ms. Andrews, Green House Leader

Leaderboard as it currently stands:
95 DAYS LEFT!



Science

Year 9's have been shining a light on science as they investigate the properties of light! Here's what students in Year 9 science classes have been looking at this term and what they have learnt.

"We've been looking at the properties of light. We've used Light Ray boxes, concave and convex mirrors and prisms and colour filters to see how light travels and at what speeds using different things."

"We used the colour filters, Red, Green and Blue (the primary colours of the visible light spectrum) to create other colours like cyan, magenta and yellow"

"We showed that white light is made up of all colours and that an object's colour is because of the colour being reflected by the object."

Great job guys, Science is certainly looking pretty bright for Year 9's!

Year 10 Science pretty much cells itself this term, as students have been exploring the world of genetics.

To show their knowledge of dominant and recessive traits, student were able to create their own vegetable babies by randomly selectively the alleles being passed on by the parents for gender (potato males and onion females), eye type (pea or sultana), arm length, and feet (carrot or parsnip). It is clear from photos of the babies that not only are the characteristics determined by our genes but also by the environment. Just have a look at the photos, every baby is different, just like us!!

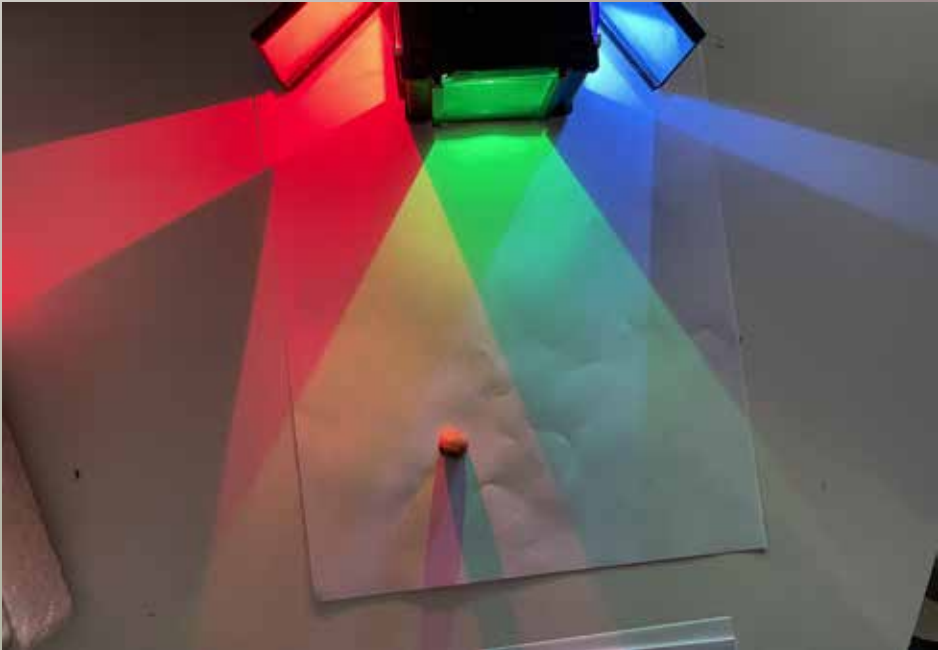


Put on your best designer genes, because Year 9 and 10 students headed to GTAC to investigate genetic sequencing and analyse DNA Barcodes to identify and discover species. Building on their knowledge from class, students were able to extract and observe DNA, with the help of GTAC mentors from Melbourne University. This excursion even gave students the opportunity to contribute to a scientific paper that will be published in a scientific journal! Here's what some students had to say:

"It was really fun, I learnt a lot!"

"Using the pipettes was really challenging but I loved every minute of it!"

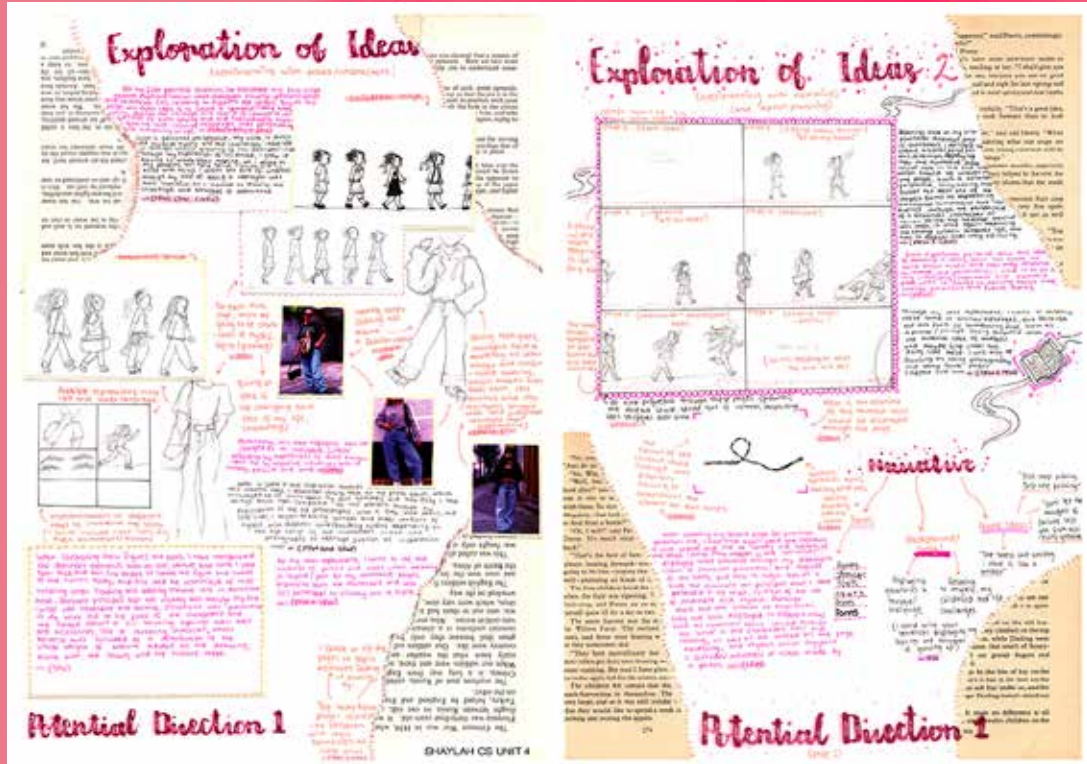
"I really liked the GTAC excursion, I really enjoyed looking at the DNA."



This term, we celebrated National Science Week, as teachers put together a range of activities themed around glass! Science Week had a big start by looking at small creatures with students using microscopes and glass lenses to observe microscopic creatures. Day 2 didn't disappoint with activities using lightboxes and glass lenses to reflect and refract light! There was also a daily quiz about science knowledge with opportunities for students to win prizes. Congratulations to all the students who participated in science week activities!

Where does bad light end up? In a prism!

Year 12s in Visual Communication, Art and Media have all handed in their Unit 4 SAT folios and final artworks / designs at the end of this term. We were really excited to see the completed works and to have them up on display for the Arts Extravaganza evening early this term.



Year 10s have undertaken a mini photography portfolio. They have brainstormed and derived inspiration, created thumbnail sketches and undertaken production exercises as means of preparing a sequence of photographs representing a chosen theme or idea. They have produced contact sheets and made considered editing choices and reflected upon this process. They are currently undertaking a depth study of Alfred Hitchcock's seminal 1960 film Psycho.

Students are currently drafting a script and gathering source material for a video essay that deconstructs a chosen scene from the film.

Year 10 Visual Communication is a design subject where students design across a variety of areas creating not only aesthetically pleasing but functional and purposeful designs. Year 9 students have created a design based around their name, house colours and imagery, then they designed their own unique Travel Mug and our last project was architectural based finishing with a 3D model the students created. They did a FANTASTIC job and we can't wait to see how they progress with their ideas.

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Year 7 art students have been exploring Narrative Art and have completed an artwork in which they created a visual story around 4 prompts: a robot, a plant, a musical instrument, and a building.



Year 9s have worked collaboratively to build a website that showcases their photography and print design skills. They have met a series of mini design briefs based around the principles of photography and composition: texture, leading lines, the rule of thirds, contrast, pattern & repetition, colour, balance, symmetry and depth of field. They have learned basic editing skills in Photoshop, including using adjustment layers and cropping to photos to enhance their aesthetic and narrative qualities.

Additionally, by applying the conventions of each form, they have used selection, type, move and blending options to create a film poster and a magazine cover in a style or genre of their choice.

All of the artworks shown here and more were showcased at the Art Extravaganza on the 11th of October. The Seniors' VCE works were held in the DATS building, while the Juniors' works, along with many performances from the music and Arts Academy team, were shown in the PAPE.

In year 8, art students across the school have completed their unit focusing on Possum Skin Cloaks. In this study, students explored the Aboriginal tradition of Possum Skin Cloaks and then went on to make a symbolic artwork based around their investigation.

Year 8

In algebra, we have learnt ways and formulas of how to add, subtract, multiply and divide algebraic expressions - Ollie & Ash 8B

Year 11

In Year 11 Foundation Mathematics, we were instructed to plan a trip to New Zealand. While completing this task we covered areas of research, travelling, food costs, accommodation and a treasure hunt. This task was set out to be completed in the duration of 4 weeks. - Phoebe and Molly

Year 9

In Year 9 maths, we have been working on statistics and algebra. In statistics we were set a project to complete on the heights of AFL Ruckmen and women. In algebra we have learnt about factorisation and quadratics. - Ava & Autumn 9A

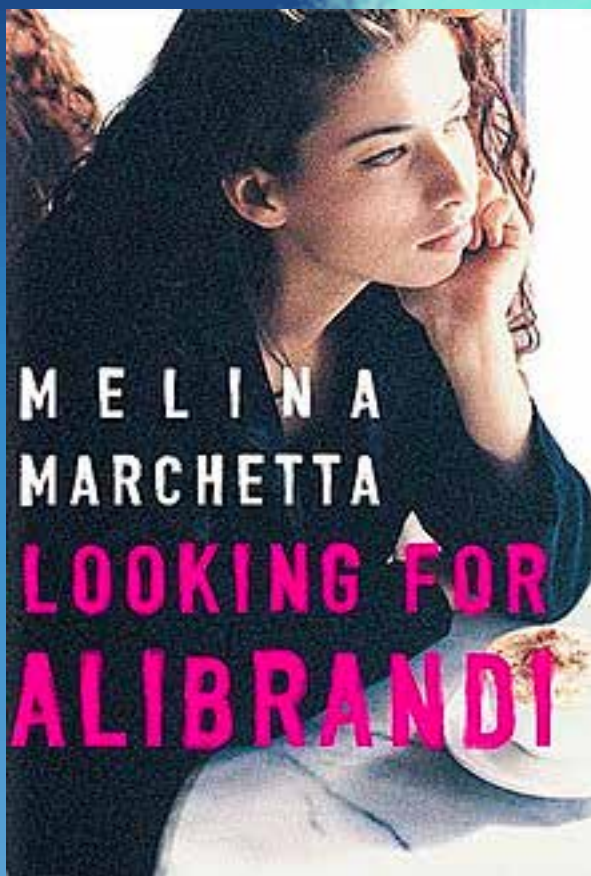
Australian Maths Competition

This year I signed up to compete in the Australian Maths Competition to push myself and test my ability to solve challenging questions. I found it a good opportunity to extend my maths skills beyond what I learnt in the classroom and test my ability to problem solve. It was a very fun experience and I am very grateful for the opportunity because of the teacher's hard work to organise, encourage and support us throughout the competition. I am very excited to find out how I went and look forward to entering the competition again next year to see if I can best my own results! - Shae Preece, Year 10



MATHS

ENGLISH



It is a very exciting time for our Year 12 English students. On Friday 9th September, the Year 12 class of 2022 completed their final English SAC ever! It was a very successful day co-ordinated by our English Domain Leader Simon Ross. We are now moving into exam revision mode until 26th October, the final exam date. All scored Year 12 students will be completing their English trial exam on 26th September, on the school holidays. We wish all of our unscored Year 12s the very best as they wind up their schooling this week. As for the scored students, you've got a lot of study ahead of you. Study hard and remember that Mr. Ross, Ms. Pratt and Ms. Tsimbis are here to help at any time.



In Year 11, we are a few weeks into our final outcome for 2022, reading and comparing the film *The Help* and the novel *Looking for Alibrandi*. Students have responded positively to *The Help* and are enjoying analysing the cinematography, lighting, costume, and acting in the film. As we end the term, we are beginning to make thematic connections between the two texts and are analysing and comparing key scenes from the film with key passages from the novel.

YEAR 8

This term in Year 8 English we have been focusing on our Text Analysis unit, where students have studied the novel 'The Giver'. 'The Giver' is a dystopian story that takes us on a journey through the eyes of a twelve year old boy named Jonas. Jonas lives in a community that is presented to readers as a perfect world, however as the story continues both the readers and Jonas discover that this community is not as perfect as we thought. It is a story that explores the importance of memories, emotions and freedom and choice to the human experience, highlighting the implications for one's life if these aspects are taken away from us. The Year 8's have really enjoyed the elements within the text and have been able to explore what they think is a perfect world through reading this text - it has definitely made for some great discussion points in class! Students were also able to watch the film in order to consolidate and solidify their understanding of the characters, plot and themes presented in the text. We have now been working on essay structure so students can write an analytical text response essay, exploring the text - unfortunately students did not get much practice at this last year due to COVID.

YEAR 10

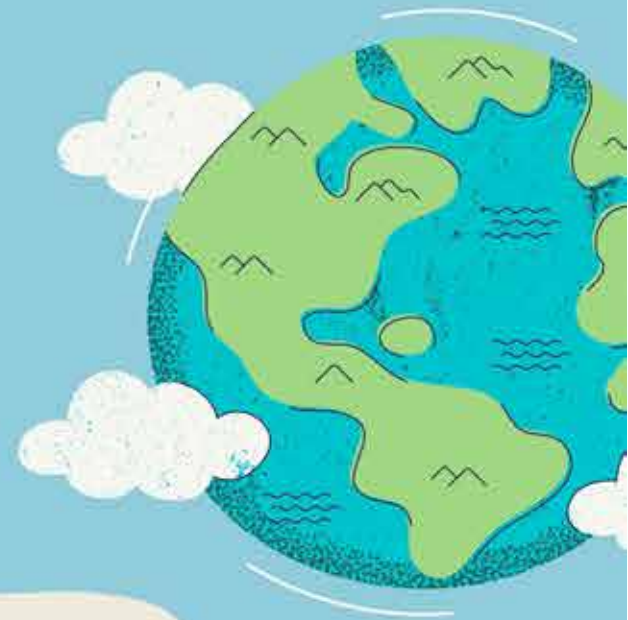
The Year 10 English students have just finished their Analysing Argument unit by completing an assessment task in which they were required to analyse a persuasive text and write an analytical essay in response. The issue the Year 10 teaching team selected was about the importance of AFLW - an issue that resonated with many students and proved to be a meaningful selection. In the final week of Term 3, we are beginning our film study unit with some fascinating films on offer for different classes- Hunt for the Wilderpeople, Atonement, and The Phantom of the Opera.

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Environmental news

NEWS

As we can all appreciate, the protection of our environment is a major concern in the world today. Although climate action is vital, this topic can often be depressing and overwhelming to consider. But, it doesn't have to be... here are some positive environmental stories from this month.



World's most endangered sea turtles hatch for the first time in 75 years

The tiny Kemp Ridley sea turtles hatched again for the first time off of the Louisiana Chandeleur Islands! This great news highlights the need to protect these sensitive environments for the conservation of other similar marine animals...



German train line cuts CO₂ emissions

A local train route near Hamburg, Germany is the first to run hydrogen-powered trains. This project aims to save about 8 tons of CO₂ emissions each year and could create a 'zero-emissions solution' for trains around the world that still use diesel. Wow!

Our Great Barrier Reef is recovering!

According to the Australian Institute of Marine Science, the majority of the Great Barrier Reef has shown the most extensive coral cover in almost 40 years. Climate change has been detrimental to the vivid marine ecosystem but the recent improvements in coral cover are stark!



So, how can we help?

It's inspiring to read about the climate re-cooperation occurring around the globe, but, what about if we think a little closer to home? What can we do at Mount Erin and in our local community to contribute further to environmental protection?



Avoid car travel

As the weather starts warming up again, a simple way to help our environment is to avoid travelling to school by car where you can. If you live close to school, consider walking or riding your bike to school! Not only will you get to enjoy some fresh air and exercise, but you will also help to cut greenhouse gas emissions and your personal carbon footprint.

Look into sustainable lunches

Next time you're thinking about your school lunch, try to avoid plastics where possible! Instead of plastic wrapping your sandwich, consider using a sandwich box or reusable food wrap. Avoid buying single-use bottled water and swap it out for a reusable drink bottle. If you must have some single-use packaging in your lunch, make sure to dispose of it responsibly. Picking up your pieces of rubbish not only helps to prevent water, land and air pollution but also contributes to our school looking cleaner and more inviting to work and study in!



Reduce your personal power usage

Although as students we can't necessarily control power use at school, we can change how we personally use power. For example, when you're finished charging your laptop, remember to turn off the power switch at the wall! This is a way to stop 'stand-by energy use' - energy can always be saved when you are not using the powerpoint.

WE CAN ALL MAKE
A DIFFERENCE

Global environmental news sourced from happyeconews.com. Images sourced from www.pexels.com

Written by Kirsten Harkness.

THE BIG STEAL

Take Me For A Joyride

It feels like only recently that Australian movies have been able to step into the Hollywood spotlight, spurred on by the popular works of Baz Luhrmann (such as *Moulin Rouge*, or more recently *Elvis*). Thanks to this, we've had a lot of big American studios film and produce movies here, which has encouraged greater media funding from the Australian government.

But I think this recent success with Hollywood has obscured Australia's long and treasured history with cinema. Hell, in doing research for this review, I found out that 2018's *Peter Rabbit*, of all things, ranks as the eight highest grossing Australian movie of all time. That felt *disgusting* to read.

There's a lot to discuss on the topic, but for now, I want to touch on one particular movie that I think, despite its success, has been largely forgotten by the Australian public: 1990's *The Big Steal*. Directed by Nadia Tass and written by her husband David Parker, the movie follows Danny (played by a young Ben Mendelsohn) as he tries to win over the heart of Joanna (Claudia Karvan), who he foolishly thinks will judge his worth based on if he drives a cool Jaguar. This leads to a string of misfortunes, all tied around the shady cars-dealer (Steve Bisley) who trades him the Jag for his father's old Nissan Cedric, which has gives the young man even more problems to deal with.



My first introduction to this film was while scrolling through JB Hi-Fi's Australian movie collection, but it didn't really grab me until I was sifting through the sludge that is Amazon Prime. And man, do I wish I had watched it earlier! While it seems like a simple affair, the events of this movie escalate so far beyond what I could have expected. The shady car dealer gives Danny a dodgy deal? Let's set up an elaborate plan to steal his car engine while he's out getting drunk at a mud fight! Better yet, let's have that mud-fight orchestrated and even *promoted* by Danny's friends (it makes more sense in context, I swear)!

Even the core plot motivation of getting a car to impress Joanna is absurd, as this lofty 'requirement' is just founded in his own pride. She barely even cares about cars! This isn't even spelled out in a major twist either, Joanna outright tells him this the minute he asks her out.

This sounds like I'm describing basic comedy set-ups and structure, but it's been so long since I have watched a comedy flick just go bonkers with its story and actually amuse an audience. That said, a lot of this movie's most absurd moments are built up over time, so this will feel like a bit of a slower watch. In between the film's insanity though is some clever back and forth from Parker, which is strengthened by all-round great performances. Steve Bisley absolutely steals (heh) the show here, selling his sleaze in all the best ways. Some of my favourite moments, however, actually came from Joanna's father, played here by Marshall Napier, whose life absolutely falls apart in this movie.



I was also pleasantly surprised by the character relationships in this movie. The romance between Danny and Joanna, while cheesy, was filled with some surprisingly intimate and playful conversations. Even his relationship to his family has more development than what you'd expect from a film like this. Going by the writer and director's previous collaboration, *Malcolm*, this definitely seems like Tass and Parker's strong suit.

To top it off, the movie is wrapped and packaged with a pure passion for the city of Melbourne. For younger viewers especially, it provides an almost unfiltered look into the city's past; both in its grime and bright lights.

I've barely even touched on the cars that get shown off in this movie! If not for its comedy, car enthusiasts should get a kick simply out of all the classic vehicles on display here, including a 70s era Jaguar XJ6.

By no means do I suggest this movie is a perfect gem, nor a cornerstone in the history of Australian cinema. However, I would strongly argue that this simple, charming comedy is essential viewing in Australia's sizeable filmography.

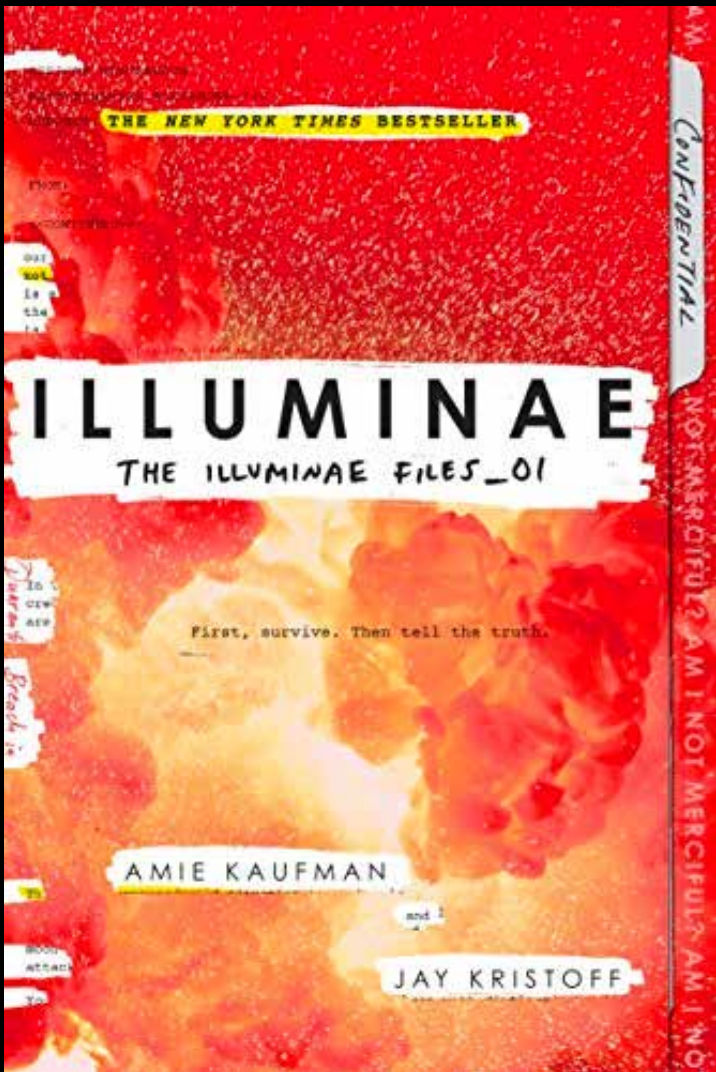
The Big Steal is available on Blu-Ray and DVD from Umbrella Entertainment and is currently streaming on Amazon Prime (as of writing).

Review written by Tom Weir-Alarcon.

REVIEW

ILLUMINAE

An Illuminating Report



Authors: Amie Kaufman and Jay Kristoff

An egotistical, self-absorbed AI has taken control of the biggest starship in a fleet of fleeing vehicles. Kady Grant must figure out how to survive its wrath while also surviving through a pandemic that makes her crewmates go crazy, and as a deadly battleship speeds after them.

Illuminae is an amazing sci-fi novel told through an epistolary storytelling style, where the story is told through many kinds of documents such as emails, chat logs, transcripts, etc. It is an interesting take on this kind of storytelling experience, and while it can be difficult to follow at times, it allows for an interesting way to experience the world (or universe as the case may be). The epistolary storytelling style allows readers to have information that we wouldn't normally have in other kinds of stories.

I picked it up because I had never read an epistolary novel before, and this seemed like an interesting sci-fi story that I could get lost in. Kaufman and Kristoff

do an amazing job at getting me invested in a world and its characters. It can be a difficult book to get into if you're not that into reading documents like the ones I mentioned earlier. But the documents make it much more realistic. The cussing has been redacted, but they explain why on the first page, which personally makes it feel all the more realistic.

Most of the twists are executed amazingly, with only one or two being obvious to me as a reader. But I feel that I was able to see them coming because I was able to put pieces together that Kaufman and Kristoff had put down. Personally, as well, I don't feel it's bad when I'm able to figure out an upcoming twist. It makes me feel smart that I was able to figure it out, and Illuminae allows for that sense of feeling smart.

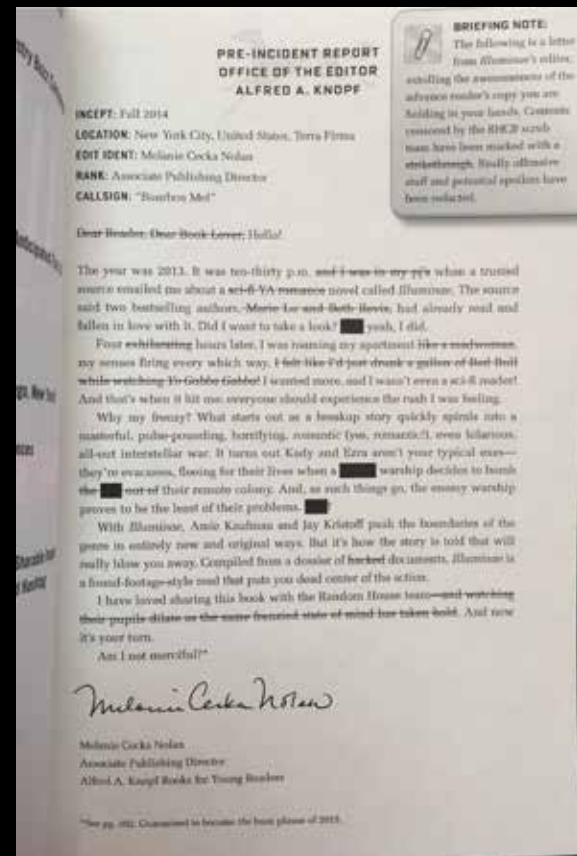
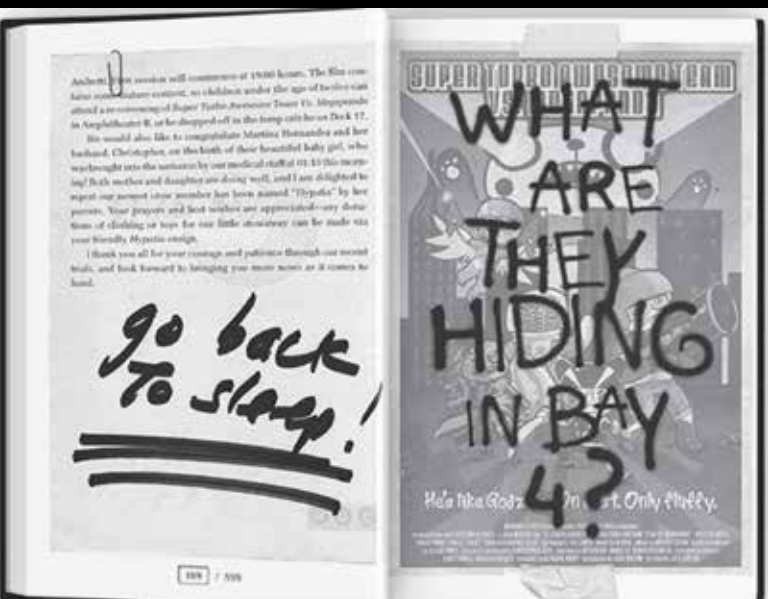
The cast of characters can become tedious at times, making sections of the book tough to read for stretches of pages. Kady feels extremely well-written and well-rounded. Being more aggressive allows for her to get somewhere, to get to the point and propel the story forward. Ezra Mason, Kady's ex-boyfriend, is cocky but also caring, and his deep sorrow for reasons that are never fully explained allows for him to truly develop as he also attempts to survive the dangers. The A.I, AIDAN, is one of the most annoying characters in the book, but that's part of the charm, and makes sense with why it makes certain decisions. It feels as though this could be a legitimate course of events that would happen in a bit over 500 years.

Personally, the ending left me satisfied enough, but I did feel a bit numb after finishing. I suppose that was mainly due to the amount of information that is thrown at you as you're reading it. There aren't definitive chapters in Illuminae, so you do have to pause in between files, which can be easy, but can also make it harder to remember where you last left off when you next pick it up again, as there aren't any definitive places to stop and take a break.

Overall, Illuminae is an entertaining sci-fi novel that will enthrall you with its level of commitment to its world-building. I'm unsure how I initially managed to find the series, but it managed to introduce me to Kaufman and Kristoff, two excellent authors that I am glad that I found. The sequels to Illuminae are amazing as well, as they expand upon the worldbuilding setup in this book while being able to stand as their own stories. That may be a bit more difficult for the third book in the series, but it can still stand.

The book is a decent read, and you'd be familiar with Kaufman and Kristoff's works if you've read Empire of the Vampire by Kristoff, the Elementals series by Kaufman, or the Aurora Cycle series written by both of them. You may have some other books of theirs on your bookshelves without realizing, but still be sure to check this book out if it sounds interesting to you. It is certainly a different type of story from the majority of both their other works, but you can still tell that it is both of their writing styles in the book.

Illuminae is available at all leading booksellers, with an audiobook edition available on Audible. Review written by Joshua Duncan.





Karen.

Written By Jennifer Kreyts

CREATIVE

It was a normal day, as long as you could ignore the fact it wasn't. Karen strangled her mayonnaise-coloured hotdog fingers around the ceramic mug unforgivingly and lifted it to her nonexistent lips. Her snail-trail-grey-hued eyes narrowed when she realised she'd forgotten to ask for a manager.

She had never forgotten before. Karen was never a name; but more a rank she had earned. That's why you never see a baby named Karen.

Karen's Earthworm slivers of eyes observed the puke coloured mug that rested in her chubby sausages. Her egregious meat sacks for hands were set into hard bricks that resembled a dying blobfish, and her eyes set into daggers. A non-sympathetic expression glazed over the orbs that the greasy haired woman owned - they looked as if they would cut through anyone's bones without hesitation. Karen could feel rage burning like a deep red blaze in the depths of her hypothetical heart, mind swarming with complaint ideas like bees to a hive.

The fading tinted Chanel sunglasses covered her laundry tablet hued orbs as they glanced down into her currently choking mug. The steaming brown liquid swirled at the halfway point. Her cheese slice shaped earrings dangle low. Bringing attention to her meaty long sack of meat otherwise known as a neck, though the difference from neck to head looked like it has been forgotten - almost as if her Sailor Moon transformation from butchered meat to humanised butchered meat had been cut short. A gasp escaped out of Karen's paper thin lips that looked as if they would just sink back into her thick skull any second now.

A bee had delivered its honey.



Hidden Features

Written By Mia Farrington

Trigger warning: Sexual themes, strong violence

There is a bit of history even those who believe in the unknown, thought of as fantasy. History that has been long forgotten for what it was and simply turned into a fairy-tale. History that left an unknown kingdom forever unknown and lost. That kept the twisted secret of a king hidden and that forgot the most enchanting bit of royalty the land had ever seen.

This old wives tale is that of a young princess soon to be married to the king who was favoured by all, even the princess herself. Her heart was full of hope and happiness for the wonderful life she was to live next to her husband as queen. Hope that was taken for granted. Hope that was lost the night she walked into the king's chambers to find another maiden held in his arms, skin touching skin. The king didn't want anyone to find out about this affair, how would the people react to this? Their trustworthy king, holding a woman that wasn't his queen. Fear and anger soon filled his mind blocking out any bit of sense and logic. He could've simply talked to the princess, could've simply apologised and never done it again. He could've avoided the blood that would permanently stain his hands no matter how clean they seemed.

The castle halls were filled with screams of terror that night. The princess running for her life as whatever was left of the king chased her, with eyes of a killer beast, its anger set on her and her alone. Left to her own chambers the princess hid, holding nothing but a letter opener in her hands as protection from a force that was too strong for her. She tried to talk to the king, to convince him. Her face that held so much beauty, disfigured and torn apart in seconds. By the very blade, she once held. The king's anger cut her skin so deep it shattered her bones. Her body laid upon the marble ground. The once satin blue dress turned a sickly purple, her fine skin dangled like string from the flesh, her lips torn in two, her nose crooked and her bones revealed themselves to the moonlight. All that managed to survive was her crystallised eyes. Holding nothing but sadness as they watched the king bury her still body in the dungeons, among the twisting halls of the damned. Among the forgotten

A young artist was enamoured by this tale. So much so that they went to the ruined grounds of the castle, that held the lost memories. The soil the young artist collected would be a part of the fine sculpture they'd spend endless days and nights carving and forming. The statue held every ounce of love the artist had for the story, the material used for the dress, the time they took to carve her delicate eyes among the gruesome state of her face and the silk sheet that wrapped her head and hid her face. The final product was enchanting. It was as if the princess herself was set in stone to keep her elegance forever.

After months and possibly years of work the statue found its home in a museum, centerpiece of the elegant room. Many visited the beauty, to try to catch a glimpse of the terror hidden underneath the silk. Yes the princess was adored once more even in death. As much as her beauty was popular among the artist community, complaints started to pile. Some said they could hear cries when walking past, others had the sound of rock moving filling their ears when they looked away and some even say they swear they can feel the statue staring at them. No matter how much attention the princess made, the complaints were too much. After years of showing her elegance to the world again, she was stuck behind walls once more, hidden underground.

Originally, the plan was to return the sculpture to the original artist. But the artist was nowhere to be seen. Some say they ran away with a new identity, others say they took their own life in madness over the statue. With the owner gone and no one willing to hold the haunting masterpiece, the museum was forced to hold her in storage. No matter what was spilling in and out of those long, twisting rows of art. The princess remained, reaching out for someone. But to no avail... she was lost.

Word spread fast between workers of the hidden statue. Many attempted to search for it but the fear of losing their way pulled them back. The once peaceful story twisted into one of madness. Instead of an artist making something for a story they loved, it was an artist so obsessed with the beauty they never got to meet they went mad trying to make the perfect statue. People nearly forgot the very story the princess came from. During long days, the workers would entertain themselves with these stories of forgotten art pieces lost to storage, the princess intrigued one worker. So much, they went further into storage, further than most had ever gone before.

They had been walking for hours at that point. Their feet were tired, their eyes weary and the torch in their hand grew heavier by the second. Slowly becoming a weight after holding it for so long. They were close to giving up. They were the last one left in the museum, beside nightshift but they never make it an hour before they fall asleep. They were truly alone, walking aimlessly around the hallowed halls, too far to go back and retrace their steps. They were lost. Truly, completely lost! They could've sworn the wails they heard were their own... but, it was too pained. Too broken. The cries of someone grieving of what once was. They found her.

Their feet burned. The torch was a weight but their eyes were wide. They found the princess. They could hear her cries! Now, all they needed to do was follow the sound. They ran, further and further into storage, slowly losing their way to the impossible labyrinth. They followed the cries and the pleas for freedom until finally, after what seemed like forever... there she was. The princess, sat on the floor, hidden under a dust filled sheet. The broken lights above granted no sight, only the moon that leaked from a window above. As cliché as it was its rays glowed on the princess, revealing her hidden silhouette underneath. The worker stepped forward. Hesitant, slow steps that plucked from their curiosity. The weight dropped from their hand, clattering to the floor, its sound echoing in the silence. With a held breathe the worker reached forward and grabbed the sheet. Ripping it away with a tug to reveal the statue. Her dress still glimmering with no dust or stain in sight. The stone had no cracks. The jewellery and crown decorating her skin shimmered like stars and the black silk still hid the face underneath. With delicate hands, the worker lifted the silk to reveal the horrors within and gasped.

...she did not run. She dared not scream... no, how could she. The worker stared at frozen eyes, how gorgeous they were for cold stone. She was too enamoured by the carved stone that she never noticed it move, not until she had the weeping and shaking form of the princess in her arms. The two looked to one another, stunned frozen. The once cold stone now hot to the touch, a solid heart pacing with new air filling old lungs. The princess's face shifted. Instead of torn flesh hanging from loose bones it shifted and glowed, sealed in lines of gold. The two ladies did not speak. Did not breathe... but the princess moved. She cupped the workers face and started laughing; laughing until her cheeks turned red and her chest ached for air it was barely granted. She was far too excited that her cares disappeared as she held the workers face and pressed her cold lips to warm ones. She was found, she was finally found.
The princess was free.

POWER

Written By Jennifer Kreyts

A wise man once said,
If you give power to the few,
They would oppress the many.
And to the many,
They would oppress the few.
Who are the few?
Who are the many?

If you give power to someone
On the streets
They can oppress no one.
Who has the power?
Who is the minority?
Who are the few?
Who are the few?
The same few that,
You hear in the news.
Oppressed.

Who conjures up in their mind.
The few and the many.
Congealing with bias.
The real few lose their grip.
Losing their reality.
Joining the many.
Losing themselves.
Now, they are gone.



BLEED ALONE

CREATIVE

Written By Joshua Duncan

Anything could've happened, but why was it that? Brave warriors risking everything and all for a fight they would never win. Couldn't there be some sort of higher power to intervene? Doesn't anyone care what happens at all? Everyone is gone, but I still can't believe that it happened. It happened too quickly to realise the consequences.

Suddenly, footsteps boom from the deep wood behind, interrupting my reverie. Growing closer and closer, it almost seems familiar, but I don't want to take the chance, so I run. Run as fast as I could through the ruffling leaves and broken branches, while still maintaining an air of silence as to not be discovered. Hiding in the branches of the millenia-old trees, I search for the footsteps' owner intently. I know that if I make a single sound, they will find me, whoever they are. Jumping them from above and behind will probably be my best bet.

Leaving the sanctuary of my tree, I take the leap. Must have been my sudden attack which caused one of them to stagger backwards into a hole. I wonder how he's going to dig himself out of that one. Never one to miss an opportunity, I use the distraction to sweep the other one's leg.

Of course, as soon as I recover, I recognize who it is; Henry. Painfully, he lands with a grunt, the pins on his shoulder pads digging in. Quickly, I lean down to help him up.

"Really sorry about that, man." I offer along with my hand.

"You're fine Gen, you've got to do what you got to do, but I'm guessing that the Nightingale Army's still looking for the materials?" Henry asks, as I pull him up.

He glances around the clearing, taking in the rusty old signs from millenia ago; and paths beaten into the grass by hundreds of worn-out boots.

"I'm not worried, but they've never given any indication what they're planning," I say with a shrug.

"Underestimating them might not do you any good you know," He voices, a weird look of concern painting his face.

"Very 'Elder Aiken' of you." I say, letting out a huff of laughter.

Henry turns to face his friend, helping him get out of the hole. His friend, who I now realise is Byron, grasps firmly on Henry's shoulder, then gestures to Henry to help him walk over to a tree. Byron slowly lowers himself to the grassy floor, holding the side of his chest, groaning as he does so.

"Why would you go out in the forest on your own, anyway? You know it's heavily monitored by the army. The patrols don't even come this far into the woods."

Henry turns back around to face me, walking closer while avoiding any of the other holes left by the army's incessant digging.

"Xill asked me to switch patrols with him. Millennium Forest freaks him out. Something about the size of the trees at night," I lie, trying to turn away from Henry. He can always tell when I try to twist the truth.

He grabs me by the shoulder and turns me back around, his hand firm.

"Ylenna told me that you were going to stay with your normal patrol route, that was last night. I know you two are close, but I find it hard to believe that she let you two switch," Henry comments as he stares me down, his eyes burning into my soul, "so tell me what's going on here or I will go to Aiken myself."

"Zephyrus' gusts, I snuck out! Are you happy now?"

"Why? You know it's dangerous to be out here."

"Because every second I'm not trying to figure out what the Nightingale Army is doing, is another second I risk people's lives. And if I don't figure it out, all those people who have gone before, they will have died for nothing." My eyes begin to tear, and I quickly wipe my eyes to look back at Henry.

Henry's shoulders go limp in acceptance, his sigh reluctant to show his annoyance with my persistence.

"I understand that feeling, Geneviève," Byron chimes in, still resting against a tree. He climbs himself up the tree, his right hand still clenching the left side of his chest, and he walks over to Henry and me.

"You believe that not enough is being done about the danger presented by the Nightingale Army, and you're worried because no one will listen to you about this danger," Byron continues, his face stern, "and I can see where you're coming from, something needs to be done."

He lowers his right hand from the side of his chest, and a loud bang goes off as I feel a sharp pain course through my stomach.

"But it won't be done by you, or your ragtag team of self-righteous rebels."

I look down at my body as I pull my hand away from my gut, fingers gradually dripping red. I look back up at Henry and Byron, both with cold expressions on their faces.

"We should go back and report our preliminary findings to Commander Belova. She'll be glad to know how we're getting along with our infiltration," Henry asks Byron in a deadpan tone.

I drop to my knees and gasp, clinging to each of my breaths, expecting each to be my final. I struggle to speak as my throat tightens, clenching with all of its physical might, making breathing an even more difficult task.

"Affirmative, but what should we do with her?" Byron jerks his head towards me, his voice cold and stern.

Henry looks down at me, his eyes giving me a disgusted once-over.

"Dump her into one of the empty holes, she can bleed alone out here. It's what she deserves."

I meet his stare, but I don't try to say anything. It's hard to do that anyways, but nothing I would say would be able to convince him to help me. Byron puts his gun away and picks me up, carrying me to the hole he fell into earlier. He casually throws me in, and it doesn't take long for the darkness to close in around me.

Meatlovers

Written By Juno Roder

Trigger warning: Horror themes

You stand at the foot of your apartment, fiddling with your keys, flipping them over in your hand, over, until you find the right one, you push it to the lock but the door just swings open slightly, you push harder, letting it swing open until the ajar gap widens, the hallway's yellow glow beaming into the somber flat.

Glancing about the room you realise it isn't yours, the place is darker, almost, more empty, and with an emanating smell of atmospheric mold, and something else, almost rotten, that seems to sweep around the air.

You take a step back, embarrassed, and somewhat disgusted, when your eye catches the corner of the room, a flicker of movement in the stationary dust.

Squinting your eyes you see it clearly now, a man, hunched over, barely moving, huddled against the greying walls.

But then you hear it, the repulsive sound of flesh, pulling and twisting with it being devoured and chewed, in a drunkenly unholy manner.

Your jaw drops open slightly as your eyes adjust to the dim light and you see the horror unfold before you.

Stepping back you walk into the door frame, elbows clashing with wood, the noise echoing about the room, painstakingly.

The man turns his head, slowly, he's blank-faced, but almost curious, conflicted, almost considering you, watching you.

You run, tearing around the bend, running away from the room and the terrors within it. The man stands, stretching his body upwards until he reaches full height, he strides across the room, glancing outside, watching as you pelt down the hall.

Stepping back he slams the door shut, carefully turning the lock as he does.

He embraces his room, flicking the light switch, engulfing the room in a shallow glow.

He blinks slowly, hazily he reaches for another slice of pizza.

"Crazy Vegans," He mutters.



Anagapesis

Written By Jennifer Kreyts

The wooden planks that were once admired, that used to be adorned by a once white fluffy carpet, now had layers of clothes that rolled sullenly in slow folds from the daybed, and settled down in colourful, grimy pools on the muddy wood.

A stench clinged around the room, a coating of grease laying gently on her unused desk.

A mouldy mirror sat in the corner, piled under numerous objects that had been strewn around.

She observed herself, her pewter-colored hair was set in a ruthless bird's nest and her large moist eyes looked so rusty and worn out, yet still glistened from tears.

But then again, mirrors were never to be trusted.

Milla

Written By Caitlin Davis

CREATIVE

Jimmy hasn't visited for a few days now, but that's ok, I enjoy the company when it comes. Most days I go about my business as usual, but when he walks in, I'm not lonely anymore. Its good having a young man like Jimmy around. Even if I'm an old woman, he seems just as young as when I met him. I guess he just bloomed with his age.

"Milla? Hey, it's me, Jimmy." He's standing there at the door, and I can't imagine anything better.

"Ready?" Ah, yes, we were going to a party at the church. I remember him telling me a while ago. Goodness its so easy to forget.

He always knows how to make me happy.

His car is old and unreliable, but it was a nice gesture. The drive was short, but it was lovely speaking to him again. The party guests are average people I've seen hundreds of times before, but it's nice to see them all happy like this. Usually, they're so sad and alone, but now that they are together, they seem to be friendlier, even if it only lasts a moment. It's nice here.

The church isn't as clean as I remember, but it brings back memories. The place is full of conversation and joy, as well as people, so Jimmy finds me a vacant seat. It's a shame he can't sit with me. The young girl next to me is lovely though. As the main event starts, I feel quite at ease. I wonder what these people would be like if they didn't have their depressing lives awaiting them after the beer is gone. At least I have my Jimmy; this poor girl has no one but her young son. He listens patiently as the rest of the room begins to sing and party. I know so many young families like theirs and it makes me sad. I wish Jimmy and I had children, but we're getting too old for young ones.

As the room empties out onto the street, I find Jimmy. We stand together for the happiest moments I've had in a long time. The ladies spot me in the crowd, and we talk for ages. I haven't spoken to them in years. Maybe that's why they don't recognise Jimmy. Alice tells me all about her grandchildren, Emerson and Blake. I didn't realise she was married. I guess my memory isn't as good as back then. They seem to love Jimmy, and after a quick introduction he charms them easily; though they aren't the hardest people to charm. He was always popular with the girls.

Jimmy goes and sings karaoke with some of his other friends and I sing along with him. We dance and sing for hours and it's the best thing in the world. Jimmy dances with other girls as well but I don't mind. I know he is here for them as much as he is here for me. Everybody's drinking around me, even some of the kids. At least they're having fun. When it is time to go home, he drives me again and I let him go back to pack up at the church. He's so helpful; I don't expect him to come back later. When I go to bed my dreams are brightened with his face. How long has it been since we last danced? It doesn't matter.

Writing Competition Winners

CREATIVE

Last term, a school-wide writing competition was held, organised by Education Captain, Ruby Weir-Alarcon, in collaboration with the English team. Writers based their pieces off of one of four prompts; two for persuasive and two for creative. With a winner from each age bracket and writing style chosen, we have four pieces to show off here today. Congratulations to the winning authors!

Junior School Creative

Jennifer Kreyts, Year 7

“And as the mountain shifted, a hand appeared, stretched out towards us.”

The sun appeared like deep red, setting the sky ablaze as puffs of pewter coloured smoke drifted by. Rough stones outlined the setting sky and formed artworks that twisted and turned leaving paths for many years to come.

Black paws slapped against the stoney maze as a dog's fur appeared like silk and his black colouring shone, absorbing the sun's finale of light and reflecting it back like a pure, dark mirror into the night sky. Black converse seemed to be what the dog was following suit to, black converse that would kick rocks into the river below, black converse that would pound unforgivingly against the natural world it wandered on.

Plunk...

Another rock had fallen to its pitiful death, screaming and wailing as it fell down. Its crying echoed, bounded from each of the stony edges. A screeching sound occurred in the distance almost akin to that of a ramshackle house's door.

Dollup...

And so another one joined the sea of death, as it swallowed the grey stones like a spider's nest. The sounds of ravenous squawking echoed.

Plop...

Unforgiving wailing.

And as the rough stones shifted, a hand appeared, stretched out towards the two. Deep grooves etched themselves into the formation, carved precisely. Mould coated from its nails to its palm, leaving patterns of stone, moss followed its journey and travelled around and around the object.

It was only at this sighting did the shaking girl look around - the atmosphere had changed. Completely. Mutilated carcasses designed and decorated all the walls and floors, the stench clinging about as it wafted throughout every crevice of the overgrown mouldy rocks. A squelching noise was all it took to take the female's attention.

A squawking crow dug deep into the flesh of a meat sack. Greasy sausage fingers bending every wrong way, a fat swollen neck with numerous cords hanging out of it, the whole body was coated in the ichor of mankind almost as if it was an art project with watercolour. Strands of brown curved around its scalp as it dropped over the edge.

Budup...

Her heart slapped against her chest, almost as if it was mutilating her bone structure entirely, only to take a break for less than a microsecond.

A hungry, hungry spider, that river was; and a frightened, frightened girl, that girl was. Hairs on end, shaking converse darted to venture backward. But which way was back? The mountain was like a maze that threatened to eat them whole, comfort seemed possible yet as a pale hand reached out, it seemed impossible.

The darkness seemed like a curtain that was slowly blanketing over the two moving figures, stars littering the sky reflected light onto the corpses that dangled. The female looked desperately for the outline of a dog. Yet did not find one.

And so the pattern continues, each second, each minute, each hour, each day, each week, each month, each year, curiosity did kill the cat.

Writing Competition Winners

CREATIVE

Junior School Persuasive

Emily Cooper, Year 7

“Social media does more harm than good.”

Social media. Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat. So much of our population has at least one form of it. Although is social media the best thing to be spending our time on? No! I truly believe that social media does more harm than good. Social media leads to cyberbullying, insecurities and inappropriate content. Why do we spend so much time on social media knowing the hurt it can do?

Social media can lead to cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is someone or a group of people harming someone through the internet. It is honestly sickening. Knowing that people experience this every day makes me feel nauseous. Throughout my years of schooling, I have been bullied myself. It is one of the hardest things to possibly go through but I was lucky enough to have my home as a safe environment. Unfortunately due to the internet and cyberbullying, that can't be the case anymore. Your phone is always there. Even if you silence your phone or put it away, the comments are still there. If social media didn't exist, think of the relief children can have coming home after a rough day. Imagine how much happier life would be if the posts were changed.

One of the main purposes of social media this day in age is for influencers to post content. It never used to be but things have changed. Young children in our community have social media to follow these celebrities. However people are starting to become insecure after comparing themselves to them. The mindset of people are beginning to change rapidly and its not OK. People should be happy and proud of who they are because we are all special in our own ways. No one should ever be disappointed with their appearance. Social media should be used for sharing memories with friends, not bragging about how skinny they might be or how clear their skin is.

Finally it is appalling to see the posts on social media. Especially the ones with inappropriate content. The members of the community don't want to see disturbing pictures on a daily basis. Think of this like you are watching TV. You are wanting to start a new series and you are browsing waiting for something to capture your attention. You find a show and realise it is rated M or higher. There is even some information listed below. You think to yourself that it is not appropriate, so you continue searching. How many people have done that? Although how would you feel if it didn't have a rating or a description? What if you began watching that series? Then, what if something appeared on the screen that scarred you for the rest of your life? Now think back to the young children who come across things like that on social media. How does that make you feel, and how would you feel if you saw it too?

Social media is an amazing way to interact with family and friends but never take it for granted. Cyberbullying creating insecurities and inappropriate content is not what social media is about. Start making a change to this now. When you want to post something, think about it first and then ask yourself "does this post do more good than harm?"

Senior School Creative

Shae Preece, Year 10

“And as the mountain shifted, a hand appeared, stretched out towards us.”

Centuries ago, gods roamed amongst people and were the celebrated creators of all desired. Everything from wealth and riches to time and power was provided. All that was ever asked for in return was that they maintained the balance of the world, which gave the gods their power.

But as time grew on, and the gods provided more to the people, it created a bounty of selfishness amongst the power-crazed people, who were left hungry for more. So much more that even the almighty gods could no longer supply for the evergrowing masses.

So the people defied their agreement to maintain a balanced, peaceful world and began to take what they believed was their destined right. The wealthy desired more, so they stole from the poor and built an empire of riches. Those that desired more time ripped it away from others, slashing away at their futures like the reaper. Power-hungry people created rulings, which left many powerless to their kingdoms.

The people continued to take and take; never satisfied with their earnings. This continuous destruction of the balance left the gods powerless to the people, who no longer relied on the gods. This ability to steal and take shifted the lands into a place of horror. As empires of riches grew, cities toppled into ruins. While time was stolen, so were lives, leaving devastation in its wake. Even the few powerful humans were overthrown by the many powerless, chaos and destruction burning through civilisations and society.

Few have seen a god since the unbalance ensued, only the few people who carried themselves not for their own gain, but for the benefit of all. Think back to the unselfish, the kind, charitable people who helped so many. They made such large contributions with the assistance of the gods, who recognised the one desire that was truly unselfish, the desire to help others. Those that truly believe in gods, know of the one place that humans will always be welcomed by these gods. It is known as the end of the line, a place where a balance of the good and bad is found. It is a place of high mountains and low valleys, towering trees and the smallest leaves.

It is said that when your time has run out, you find yourself there, in a place of pure balance. There is no stealing wealth or power, for there are no riches to take or people to rule. There is no time to take, as there's nothing left. It is just you, perfectly in balance. The balance stirs the gods, your presence known. And as you stand there, content and peaceful, the gods will come collect you to take to another world, one where balance still remains.

And as I stand here and the mountain before me shift, revealing a hand, the hand of a god. I leave this world in perfect balance, guided by the gods into a world where everything is at peace.

Writing Competition Winners

Senior School Persuasive

Kirsten Harkness, Year 10

“Social media does more harm than good.”

In the 21st century, our days revolve around the use of information technology, whether through the use of mobile phones, computers or tablets - there is a plethora of ways for persons of all ages to access the internet and all its 'perks'. Many could not imagine a day without interacting in some manner with technology, however the harm of engaging in certain facets of the technological world pose great detriment to our society today. The impacts of social media use can be otherwise in person of all ages and origins, causing a magnitude of concerns about the welfare of those who regularly partake in the use of these online platforms.

Have you ever been mindlessly scrolling through your social media feed, your one escape from your already hectic life, when you stumble across content that stops you in your tracks Social media sites such as Instagram, TikTok and Snapchat can all too often condemn the posting of inappropriate, graphic and outright harmful content. Social media platforms promote their safety features including the privatisation of accounts or the ability for users to 'block' or 'report' distressing content. Many of these online platforms pride themselves on their ability to remove content, however all too often these comments, videos, and messages 'slip through the cracks'. Technology that was once meant to spread online community engagement is now the weeding ground for damaging content. If social media companies cannot address these concerns in a more pressing manner, I urge you to boycott your favourite social media apps. For who wants future generations to grow up in a world where online hatred and profanity is rife?

Another concern that many have in regard to the safety of social media is the unrealistic expectations that are nurtured by these platforms. Social media, in particular Instagram, is renowned for the heavily filtered content that is promoted ongoingly. In a short scroll of these sites, it is not uncommon to witness the products of Photoshop, FaceTime, and a wide variety of other appearances morphing technologies. Instagram is no longer the innocent, candid platform that it once was and is now littered with unnatural images of models and 'influencers'. As one would expect, influencers have a great influence and impact on those who engage in their content. Therefore, influencers who only publish the most staged and edited images of themselves inherently contribute to mass complications with self-esteem in those who consume their media. Body dysmorphia and eating disorders are all too common in young people today. This is only worsened when these young people are fed a diet of phony and posed images and videos when scrolling their feeds. Eating disorders are highly competitive illnesses. Those who have already fallen down the rabbit hole of adapting their dietary and exercise behaviours to change their physical appearance are only encouraged to continue these deadly behaviours when they are forced to compare themselves to Instagram influencers. Those who fortunately have not succumbed to negative body image ideals are more likely than ever to follow the path of self hatred as a result of the content they are immersed in on social media. Instagram is a blatant breeding ground for anorexia and bulimia and must undergo urgent reform to become a safe haven again for young people and those around them.

Many frequent users of social media may propose the positive benefits of such platforms. It is well-known that social media was born as a way for users to connect with their loved ones, especially in long-distance circumstances. Those who are fond of these apps may argue that social media is a place to capture and share happy memories with friends and families and reaps more benefits than it does harm. We all wish that was the case. Any one who has spent more than a brief moment engaging with social media would be extremely well aware of the havoc that is wrecked on users by these technological companies. The content that is ever so readily accessible to all users prevents social media from being a place of optimism and safety. Social media could once have been considered a highlight reel, accentuating the best moments in one's life, but now can only be regarded as a trauma factory, mass-producing the most distressing moments in a user's life.

Next time you are scrolling your phone, I implore you to heavily consider the implications that social media has on your own life. What are you truly gaining from these outlets, and what harm are you being exposed to? Do benefits of social media really outweigh the harmful aspects of these platforms in your life?



Illustrated by Stephanie Begbie

PRINCIPAL'S ADDRESS

Jenni Hodgins



I am thrilled to be writing the first Principal's report for the Cartwheel Magazine! First and foremost- what an amazing initiative from Tom Weir-Alarcon, for conjuring up the idea as well as bringing it to fruition. I hope this is the start of many editions of the Cartwheel Magazine.

Term 4 is one of my favourite times at a school. The weather is warming up, days are getting longer and there is a raft of events happening. Our Year 12s are furiously preparing for their end of year assessments, as well as making the important decisions of what they are going to dress up as for their last day or wear to Valedictory. On a serious note, I am beyond proud of the work ethic of our senior students, how dedicated they have been to their studies and how committed they are to their academic success. I have observed them consistently working hard across the year to make the most of every opportunity they could in order to place themselves as highly as possible by the end of the year. I wish them all the best of luck as they round out their final year and I know they deserve all the successes they achieve.

The Year 12 teachers have been tireless supports for our Year 12 students and without their diligent and caring approach, our students may have struggled to reach such lofty heights. I want to acknowledge the endless hours these teachers have spent across the course of the year preparing for Year 12 classes, reading drafts and providing feedback, marking practice exams as well as providing general advice and encouragement to their students.

Already this term, MEC has hosted two events where parents and the community have been welcomed into the College. Our 2023 Year 7 Parent Information evening was well attended by new and returning families. I thoroughly enjoyed meeting our new students and their families while sharing with them information about their journey into and through the College. I look forward to seeing all of our 2023 Year 7 students for the State-wide Orientation day on Tuesday the 13th December.

Our second event was by far the most impressive school event that I have ever been involved with. The Arts Extravaganza was a superb demonstration of the stellar skills our students have in the areas of Arts, VCD, Media, Performing Arts and Music. Students of all year levels and all experience levels showcased their works for the audience. The range of creations was impressive and the quality was astounding. I wish to extend my appreciation to all of the incredible staff and students that were involved in coordinating the gala.

I wish to recognise the patience of our students and families as we navigated our way through what is fast becoming a national crisis of teacher shortages. We have unfortunately been short staffed in our English Domain and have relied on the aid of Casual Relief Teachers, as well as our own teachers taking additional classes to provide for these students. I want to assure our community that MEC has been taking every action possible to fill these places and provide support for our students. The educational outcomes and wellbeing of our students is always at the forefront of every decision that we make as a College.

I love building relationships with the MEC Community and a few weeks ago I had the pleasure of spending the morning at The Baxter Village with my two young sons to enjoy their Open Day Fete. A number of the MEC musicians performed there as well, and received ovations for their efforts. The inviting nature of the residents promotes a welcoming environment, and I hope we can continue to engage in these shared opportunities.

Term 4 is in full swing and preparations for the end of year events are well underway. Please keep an eye out for important dates and information. It'll be Christmas before we know it!

Congratulations and thank you to all students who have had their works published in the first edition of The Cartwheel. I hope you have enjoyed this publication as much as I have, and will be sure to look out for the next edition later in the term.

COLLEGE CAPTAINS (Almost) A Last Address



Hello all,

Before the year comes to an end, I would just like to give an insight as to what we have achieved this year, my after school goals and my final tips to the future school captains.

This year my aim was to make sure that the students had a say in how the environment they work in is orientated. So far we've made plenty of progress, having one on one conversations with the principal team to express the thoughts, ideas, and opinions of the whole school cohort. We have voiced changes to the presence of a home room, ran events for year twelve (which will hopefully continue in the future), and found problems to issues that students may be facing in day to day learning.

A bit about me, I'm someone who strives to learn more and more about myself and the world around me. I enjoy the sciences (controversially chemistry) and, as cringe as it may sound, to challenge myself through problem solving. I would consider myself an all-rounder, delving into sports like track and field since I was 6, and riding motorbikes since I was able to walk.

My plans for the future are to get into biomedicine at the University of Melbourne, so that I can enter the research field working on cures to who knows what. For the future elected captains, make sure to do whatever you can, wherever you can do it, and strive to voice the opinions of the people around you, as without criticism there is no progress.

- James Webbers, 2022 College Captain



My name is Ruby Boyd, and I am one of the 'College Captains' for 2022. I applied for this position as I wanted to use the platform to address the issues among both my cohort, and the rest of the school, as well as to aid in the introduction of the new house structure in the college this year. During my time as College Captain, I have achieved this through assisting at house competitions, as well as organizing fundraisers and events for my peers to participate in.

This year, I have been able to use my position in the 'SALT' team to the best of my abilities, helping extend our team, and coordinate a large range of events, such as the school swimming and athletics carnivals, year 12 'Spirit Week', as well as our major fundraiser for 'It's Okay Not To Be Okay', which took place in early September.

I am interested in the health and education sectors, and this is what I want to pursue. As an avid netball player, having this be a part of my career in some way is extremely important to me. Next year, I aim to attend university and complete a course with these areas of interest in mind.

A message to future captains; Always strive for more than you think is possible, and always ask questions. The best way to make things happen, is to be both assertive and direct, but accommodating.

Thank you to the Mount Erin College community for giving me this opportunity, and I wish you all the best in the future :)

- Ruby Boyd, 2022 College Captain