



WESLEY
METHODIST
SCHOOL
IPOH
INTERNATIONAL

WMSII Newsletter

Senior School

Inaugural issue: Term 3 (July 2022)



Photo Credit: Mr Aaron Lui

Editorial Board

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We welcome all contributions [in Word for text, jpeg format for images], but reserve the right to selection for print.

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The WMSII Editorial Board dedicates this inaugural issue to the memory of our friend, Syahsyah Ramu, who will forever remain in our hearts and in our thoughts.

The Editorial Board also wishes to thank everyone who has contributed in one way or another to helping make this very first issue possible. Special thanks to Year 10, 2021/2022, for their contributions and efforts.

SCHOOL HAPPENINGS

Staff Appreciation Day

On Friday, 20 May 2022, the school celebrated Staff Appreciation Day to recognize the efforts of everyone from teachers, to office workers, to the cleaners and gardeners, who all work industriously to make things run smoothly every day at Wesley Methodist School Ipoh (International). Teachers were encouraged to come to school on this day, dressed like a character from a movie or a book, all for the chance of winning a prize as best-dressed character. Junior school teachers dressed creatively and were quite impressive in their get-ups as fairytale characters, props and all, while the Senior School teachers came in various garb ranging from anime characters, scary-looking Jokers to characters from Men in Black and Toy Story.

The day began with Zoom chapel for the Senior school, followed by the Staff Appreciation Day program proper. After a message to all teachers from the Ministry of Education, and a couple of video presentations, guest speaker Mr Chelli Tamilchelvam, a retired public school teacher, shared his personal experiences with everyone. Among other things, he told touching anecdotes about the variety of influences his former teachers have had on him and how he has carried his memories of them through his life and actions.

After the Zoom session, students and teachers gathered in their respective homerooms to enjoy a mid-morning potluck with plenty of food to go around. Student leaders from the Boards of Prefects, Monitors and Librarians then took charge of organizing the entire school into mixed groups of both teachers and students, to enjoy the rest of the activities for the day. The student leaders had planned station games as well as team sports for everyone before early dismissal, but the hours went fast, and in the end, there was only enough time for station games.

After all the students had gone home, staff members gathered at the canteen at 1.00pm for a brief celebratory gathering followed by fellowship lunch with a few invited guests – the School Chaplain, Reverend Dr Timothy Ong and his wife Mrs Ong, and Mdm Cheong Fook Foon, who is Chairperson of the School Christian Support Committee. The school took this opportunity to appreciate staff members who have been in service with Wesley Methodist School for ten years or more. Heading the list was Mdm Philo (at 45 years long) followed by, from the Senior School, Ms Michele, Ms Nishabel, Pn Hafisah, Pn Faridah, Mr Francis and Mdm Phoon. From the Junior School, Mdm Julie, Mdm Sharon and Mr Vijaya were duly recognized for their long service. Finally, just before lunch commenced, each staff member was also gifted a lovely weaved basket or clutch bag made by the *Penan Women Project*.



Teachers who won the prize for Best Dressed Movie/Book Character



Mdm Philo shares her thoughts

This school has been like another home to me after serving for 45 years. During the early stage of teaching here, the students weren't very mature and exposed well. Now they are more mature and are very tech-savvy. What made me stay here for all these years is my passion for teaching and mingling with young minds.

Madam Philo



SCHOOL HAPPENINGS

Anti-Tetanus Toxoid Vaccination Program

On Thursday, 26 May 2022, a medical team from Pusat Kesihatan Klinik Buntong came to the school as part of their outreach program, to administer the anti-tetanus toxoid vaccination to students 15 years and older. 45 Wesley students, mainly from Year 9, took the vaccination and then listened to the briefing that followed. The tetanus vaccine is given to provide immunity against this life-threatening disease, caused by the bacteria entering open wounds from falls, scrapes, burns, punctures, or any other kinds of injury.



SPORTS ACHIEVEMENTS

Ng Wei Neng -
MSSD Cross Country
7th placing out of 100
runners for the Under-18
category

WOW!



Fan Jing Xuan -
MSSD Badminton
Second Runner-up
in the Under-18
category

(Pictured here with
MS Yvonne Chee)

Updates

Updates

Updates

Recent Upgrades

Upgrades were made to various infrastructure in the school to enhance the teaching and learning experience. Among others, the Lecture Hall was refurbished completely with new benches and flooring put in. The lighter shade of wood used compared to the dark wood that had been there before, brightens the room up significantly. The Science Labs have had the table tops replaced and repainted, giving the lab a fresher look. The Drama Room had a PA system installed to facilitate Listening exams held here. This new installation will save the hassle of carting the portable PA system about, as had been done before. Finally, Phase one of the school's Flood Mitigation Project was completed in February 2022 with the construction of Nehemiah Wall surrounding the field of the school area. With the existence of the wall, so far the school has not experienced the severe flooding it used to each time there was a heavy downpour.

Up and Coming

Phase two of the Flood Mitigation Project involving the repositioning of Gate B as well as pre-mix work in Car Park B, will continue with Project Canaan. With the procurement and tendering process for Project Canaan finalized, work has begun.

SCHOOL HAPPENINGS



PROGRAMME

- Welcome
- March In by Girls and Boys Brigade
- Negaraku & School Song
- Opening Prayer
- Handbells Performance - She'll Be Comin' Round the Mountain
- Vanity Fair - Boomwhackers with Readings
- Doubting Castle - Primary School Drama
- Vocal duet - Prayer is the Soul's Sincere Desire
- Interval (15 mins) ----
- Handbells Performance- Zum Gali Gali & Good News, Chariot's Coming!
- Project Canaan - Q&A with WMSII Acting Principal, Mr. Choong Wai Seng
- Speech from Private Education Director, Mr. Lim Kah Cheng
- String Ensemble Performance
- Finale - I'm Blinded by Your Grace

History of WMSII

1924 School established to help academically weak students	1980s Largest private school in West Malaysia with 1400 students	2008 Vision for school by missionary Paul Bekk. Task Force from WMSI formed.	2012 WMSI rebranded as part of the WMS family of schools
1924 - 1972	2000s		2016 WMSI became an



Production 2022 - Towards Canaan!

Production again this year!

Rehearse, rehearse, and rehearse once more!

Yaay! Production today - Saturday, 23rd July 2022!

Production over. 😊

It certainly felt like the build-up to and the actual execution of School Production 2022 - Towards Canaan went by so quickly this year, but perhaps it only seemed that way after a two-year enforced hiatus, thanks to Covid-19. Whatever the case, WMSII was able to once again, under the superb guidance of Production Coordinators Mdm Yeoh Choo Swee, Mr David Chu, and Mr Samuel Zane, put on an in-person performance for the enjoyment of both the participants and an audience made up of parents, friends and other stakeholders.

Under a gloomy sky, the event kicked off on Saturday, 23rd July 2022, at 4.30pm with a march-in and presentation of flags by members of the Girls and Boys Brigades. Barely ten minutes into the performance, the skies let loose, lending a damp and somewhat noisier ambiance to the performance going on under the marquee. The theme of Towards Canaan - meant to be an adaptation of Pilgrim's Progress, a journey of man through trials and tribulations - was unintentionally enhanced in its setting and atmosphere during the 20-minute downpour. But the show must go on, and the performers gamely played their respective roles as already practised. Teachers, school support staff, and backstage student crew members in the meantime, stepped in smoothly to assist with umbrellas, moving the performers to and from stage positions as necessary.

As the show advanced from handbells to the boomwhackers, to literary readings to acting, to song performances and finally to the string orchestra, the audience remained willingly enchanted by the efforts of the participants right up till the end. And as the curtain came down on Production 2022 - Towards Canaan, it was clear that everyone had had a good time and had enjoyed the community and warmth of having been a part of the event. We look forward to next year as we anticipate seeing even more talent come to the fore.

Special thanks go to the unseen/background helpers - the ushers and greeters, the logistics helpers, the refreshment and clean-up crews - without whom the event would not have run as smoothly or as successfully.

quotes

Mr David Chu, on the whole event:

We thank God for a wonderful concert indeed. The students performed their parts well despite the rain. We are proud of them!

Ms Kee TP, on what backstage was like:

It was very busy. It started raining while the boomwhackers were performing. But I think the Year 9 kids, they performed very well even though it was raining very badly, and it was a hectic scene backstage but still they managed to perform, so it was very good.

Ms Ashley Wong, on whether she had been nervous performing:

A little bit; I haven't performed in a while!

Mdm Claren Chen, on what she thought:

This is a great day, despite the rain. The cooperation amongst the students and staff is fantastic. It is a great day to push the vision of Towards Canaan.

Wong Chee Soon, on his role and how it went:

My task was to guide our guests, as an usher. The sun was blazingly hot!

Mr Shimron Lim, on why he was acting:

I'm actually the backstage manager, and am replacing one of the students who unfortunately was not able to make it today. The student was involved in a car crash and has a bad concussion so he's on break, and there was no understudy. (Our best wishes to the student, for a speedy recovery.)



MasterChef

Results

CATEGORY: Years 7 and 8

COOKING TASK:

Sandwiches and Drink

1st place - 8G

2nd place - 7G

3rd place - 7L

CATEGORY:

Years 9 and 10

COOKING TASK:

Fried rice and Drink

1st place - 10P

2nd place - 9L

3rd place - 10G

SCHOOL HAPPENINGS

Post-Exam Activities



Skit - Time Travel: The Adventures of 7 Love



Talentime

Results

CATEGORY: Years 7 and 8

1st place - 7 Love

2nd place - 8 Grace

3rd place - 7 Grace

CATEGORY: Years 9 and 10

1st place - 9 Love

2nd place - 10 Love

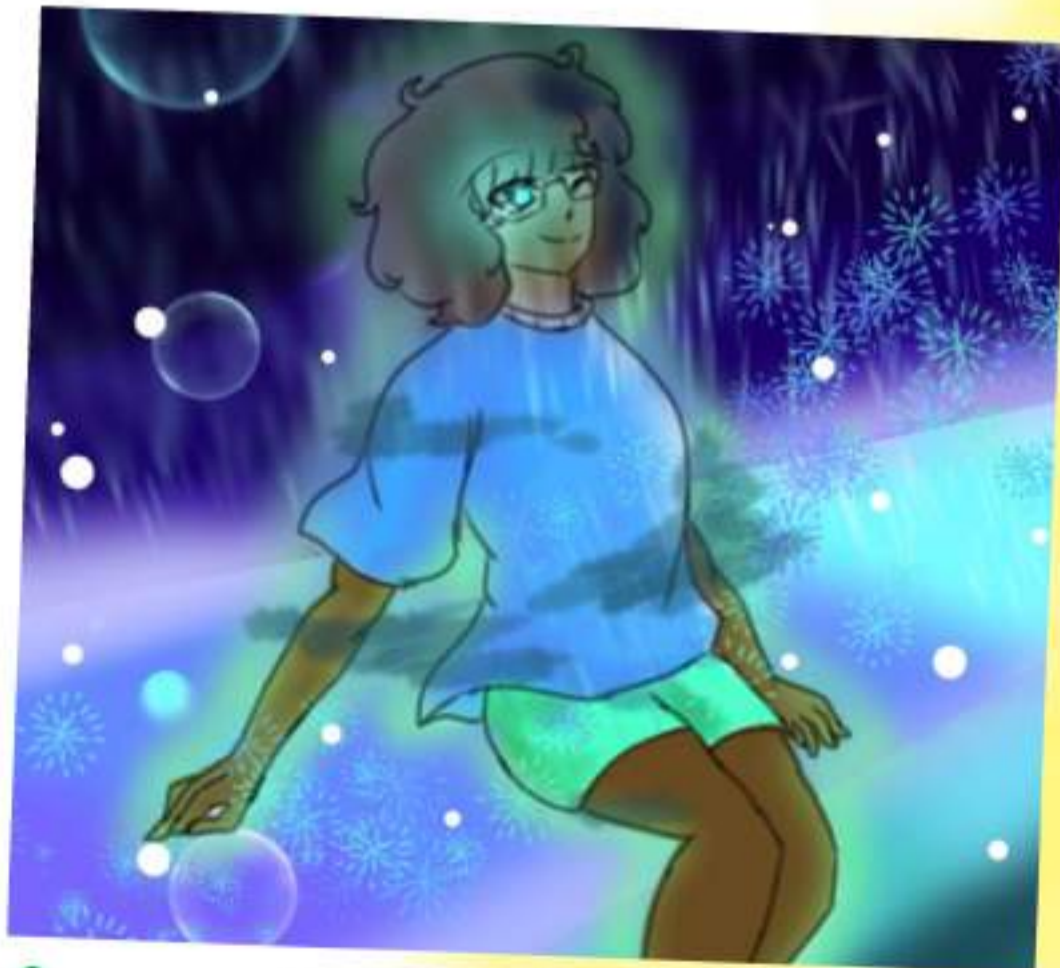
3rd place - 10 Purity

Post-Exam Activities

Every year, post-exam activities are organized for students to unwind after a long academic year of study and assessments. This year, students occupied themselves with preparing for and participating in two main activities: MasterChef and Talentime. Those who did not wish to cook were encouraged to perform, and vice-versa, with the focus being on having everyone take part. Both events proceeded smoothly and were enjoyable for all involved judging from the happy faces!

ARTWORK

Leong Kai Cheng (8G)



Depiction of Syahsyah
by Eason Tan (10P)



Cirno by Eason Tan (10P)

Feature Articles

Is it fair to share the blame?

Byline: Lau Ka Hoong (10G)

'Mat Lajaks' are children who speed on the highways on bicycles, and a recent case brought this term back into the limelight. In that one case, a woman ran into some 'mat lajaks' on the highway which resulted in their deaths. The woman was sentenced to six years in jail. Now the big discussion online is whether anyone is really to blame?

Personally, I would blame the 'mat lajaks' themselves and their parents. The drivers are not guilty in this type of situation. The parents of the children are at bigger fault as their children had somehow gotten out of sight, or had even been allowed to participate in this sort of dare-devilish stunts. The parents are the main staple of how a child grows, in terms of personality, attitude and mindset. The fact that the child thought that it was even remotely safe to be out riding on the highway, is astounding.

Now, as for the children – the 'mat lajaks' themselves – they are at fault too. They are very selfish, not caring whether it is safe or not, not caring whether it will affect anyone else on the road or not. Now, because of their selfishness, they have left a permanent mark on the driver. The driver will live knowing that she killed someone and feel guilt all the time. People might argue that the driver is also at fault because she was not focusing on the street or maybe did not switch on the front lights of the car. Can you really blame her though? Car lights cannot reach a far distance, and maybe the street lamps were also not bright enough. It's just that most drivers would think that children on the road would avoid cars and not be riding without brakes. With both the driver and the 'mat lajaks' moving at reasonably high speeds, it's very hard to stop when you see something right in front of you.

Well, all of this could have been avoided if parents keep an eye on their children more closely, and if children are not allowed on the highway on their bicycles, whether alone or with their friends.



To rhyme or not to rhyme?

Byline: Yew Miki (10P)

When we talk about poetry, what is the first idea you get? Some may think Shakespeare, and some may think love. But to me, I think of poetry as a form of communication.

Poems, by definition, are pieces of writing in which the expression of feelings and ideas is given intensity by particular attention to diction, rhythm and imagery. Basically, a poem is an arrangement of words written or spoken. But is that truly all a poem is?

I believe poetry are messages or values written and published by the poet as a way to express their innermost feelings. Every word written can make one feel something as imagery and emotive words are weaved into every stanza or line of the poem.

One perfect example of the beautiful display of emotion is in the poem 'Daffodils' by William Wordsworth. Look at the following lines:

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.



In just a few lines, Wordsworth is able to express his rawest of emotion of loneliness and the feeling of being lost in the world. But also the lines show the feelings of excitement and the joy that washes over him upon seeing the glorious and golden daffodils.

Poetry is not just a piece you read but can also be a way poets express their views of the world. The message usually written in poetry is on topics that are often controversial. Poets use poems to express the most true form of the message that might be too hard to express in normal writing. This kind of poetry is prominent in the works of Romantic poets like Percy Shelley who often shared his political views in his poems.

But what makes poetry special is the way it is able to relate real life issues to beautiful works of art in words. Poetry is able to make people feel understood and comforted when reading the words.

So poetry is not just another piece of work that is read and forgotten but are pieces of work that deserve much more credit that they are given. Poetry is truly a masterpiece of emotions, messages and world views.

Peer to Peer



Dear Peer,

I am suffering from procrastination. It is an issue whenever I have homework or study to do. I always get distracted by something in the room and then forget about the work I have to do. This results in me cramming late into the night, or the day before the work is due. So, how can I treat this issue of procrastination?

Procrastinator

Dear Procrastinator,

I understand your issue. Here's my advice to you: Plan out a rough schedule, and list down whatever you need to get done right after you return home from school. If you are having trouble because you are getting distracted, try changing your study space. If you cannot find any other suitable space, then consider reorganizing your room in such a way that it will motivate you every day to get things done. For instance, try relocating your gaming things like Playstations. Also try switching off all electronic devices temporarily when you don't need them.

Peer SS

Dear Peer,

I would consider my situation a minor one, but it does definitely affect how I see myself. I really bother a lot about my looks, hair and also dressing. Ever since I entered secondary school, I have been losing a lot of hair. I don't know what to do about it. I have oily hair and every day when I wake up in the morning, my hair is so oily that I end up washing my hair two times a day.

And then also, every time I finish a bottle of shampoo, I change to a different brand to try out which one is suitable for me. I have tried cutting my hair shorter but it only made a small difference. What should I do to stop my hair from falling out?

Hair Losing Young Girl

Dear Hair Losing Young Girl,

I feel for you, as I too have gone through what you are going through now. My hair was so fried and looked extremely grotesque. My mother tried a remedy that made my hair so much better. You should use three egg whites and rub this into your scalp before leaving it in for approximately 40 minutes. I would also advise on only using a single shampoo and not try out different brands. This might irritate your scalp even further. Hope this eases your situation.

Peer BY

Dear Peer,

How do I explain my situation? I don't get enough sleep during the school week.

I am constantly thinking about what is going to happen in school the next day whenever I go to sleep. I have tried lots of ways to get a good night's sleep, but nothing works. I am scared that I have done something wrong and I am going to get into trouble for it. I often have this nightmare where I get into trouble and really bad things happen. I don't know how I am supposed to stop myself from thinking these bad things.

What should I do to stop the bad thoughts from coming to me when I am sleeping? Advice please.

Tired School Student

Dear Tired School Student,

From your letter, you appear to have an unhealthy obsession with staying out of trouble in school. While it should go without saying that we should strive to be on our best behaviour in school, it isn't good for your health to stress about it so much. I think it would be good for you to ask yourself these questions: What was the worst punishment you've seen in school? What caused it? Are you likely to suffer that punishment too?

So far, your letter has not illustrated any punishments that you have suffered, and you seem to be trying to be on your best behaviour. So, I would recommend that you try to find activities to take your mind off school, or talk with your parents about your feelings. As a very last resort, you may want to seek medical help.

Peer TT

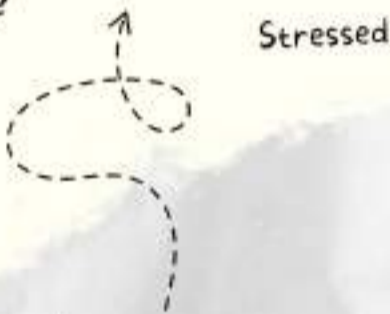


Dear Peer,

There are a lot of things stressing me out, from the overload of schoolwork, several hours of tuition, to many other responsibilities. I often feel extremely exhausted by the end of the school day. Although I do enjoy attending to my duties and responsibilities, it sometimes feels like there is a constant weight on my shoulders.

Sometimes it can get extremely stressful with the back to back events, and this is also very exhausting. It feels like I do not have time to myself or to spend with my family. I don't regret the things I have helped plan or organize in school, but it can all pile up at times.

With the IGCSE closing in, the pressure and stress of wanting to do well is taking center stage. What should I do to help ease the constant build-up of stress?



Dear Stressed,

I suggest that you make a schedule and plan out how your days are going to go. Make sure to allocate time for yourself. And if this means not being able to perform some of your duties and responsibilities, then it is alright. The most important thing is to make sure that you are doing well. You cannot always attend to every duty or responsibility. Sometimes, you just need a break. So remember to take care of yourself first, then only your duties and responsibilities, because you and your mental health come first.

Peer AT

Dear Peer,

I have the problem of non-productivity. The reason is because, after my tuition classes which end at 7pm, I lie down on my bed and the next thing I know, I am dead asleep until the next morning. It is a very bad habit as I don't get any homework done and I have to scramble to complete it the next school day. I feel guilty when I wake up the next day and realize that I have not done all I need to, the day before. It has become a consistent thing that I am doing lately and I don't know how to stop. I need advice on how to stop this bad habit.

Always Sleeping

Dear Peer,

There is a person in my year level whom I really dislike because I consider him to be obnoxious and annoying.

Unfortunately sometimes, I am forced to work with him and he can be condescending or blatantly rude. At those times, I can't help but retaliate. I will be seeing this guy for another year or two, so how do I deal with it?

Cannot-Stand-Him

Dear Cannot-Stand-Him,

I understand that this person annoys you and you're struggling to tolerate him. Perhaps you might try to understand his situation. Maybe he is unaware that he's being rude and obnoxious or he's not really trying to be rude? He could be going through many problems and probably feels alone so he might be taking out his frustration. Another thing you might want to consider doing is keeping your distance from him and mentally blocking his voice out whenever he speaks. Eventually, you will feel like he isn't really there in the surroundings. Hope this was helpful.

Peer RJ

Dear Peer,

Recently, studies have overwhelmed many of my friends, myself included. The end-of-year exams are getting closer and closer and this is making me lose my mind. The thought of me not passing the exams stresses me out. What can I do to overcome this troublesome anxiety I'm feeling?

So Anxious

Dear So Anxious,
Frankly speaking, I think you are speaking for all students, including me. Exams stress everyone out and the thought of failing and disappointing our parents might just be the unwanted 'cherry on top' of the stress meter. However, I think that if you try your best in the exams despite having several Fs, it is still good enough as afterwards, you will have learned more about what you need improvement in. Anxiety happens to everyone during exam periods so I think that you should give yourself more credit, even if things don't meet your self-expectations. Doing so will help to build your self-esteem and confidence so you can do better for the next exam.

Peer NT

Dear So Anxious,
I understand that exams can be stressful, but it is something that can be extremely beneficial for your future. I have gone through what you are enduring, and this is what I have done to help myself. I try to plan my time, whether for study or leisure. Meditating at wee hours of the day helps me deal with my stress when exam season is near. Don't ponder on whether you will achieve your target marks, but strategically make use of study methods to help you grasp your fundamentals better. That way, you won't need to cram for revision at the last minute.

Peer BY

Dear Always Sleeping,

You sound frustrated and I empathize as I think we have all found ourselves being less productive than we would like to be, at one time or another. It does sound to me though like you may have too much on your plate, which may be what is making you tired enough to fall asleep as soon as you lie down on your bed. Have you considered rescheduling tuition times, or maybe even cutting down on the number of tuition classes to take, if that is at all possible? Perhaps with less on your schedule of things to do in a day, you may find yourself less stressed overall, which will in turn help you sleep more deeply and wake up more refreshed. If you really get a good night's sleep regularly, that feeling of exhaustion goes away and you will have energy again to do what is necessary. Good luck!

Peer JN

Peer to Peer

Another Failed Attempt

by Koh Zheng Tao (10G)

Fiction Writing

"Finally, I have done it! I have the platypus terminator-inator!" exclaimed Dr Doofenshmirtz, cackling delightedly and then coughing as a result of too much cackling. He now had a weapon to punish Agent Perry the platypus, who had been on Dr Doofenshmirtz's tail for the past three years. Agent Perry had so far managed to destroy all of the doctor's maniacal inventions, escaping only by the skin of his teeth the evil doctor's attempts to kill him. But with his new invention the doctor was sure that this time, Perry the Platypus would pay the price. In the meantime, Agent Perry had already received information from his chief, Major Monogram about Dr Doofenshmirtz's intentions to create a new weapon, and as expected, Agent Perry volunteered himself to take Dr Doofenshmirtz down and stop him in his tracks.

The next day, Dr Doofenshmirtz waited for Agent Perry to enter his domain named the Doctor Doofenshmirtz Evil Incorporated. This was a tall purple building, approximately 55 storeys high, with the main laboratory on the topmost floor. The doctor, knowing that Agent Perry would come, sat on a wooden chair with one leg crossed over the other, waiting. Suddenly the door burst open and there in the door frame stood a platypus with a hat, unmistakably Perry the Platypus! Dr Doofenshmirtz hit a button on the device and in the blink of an eye, four tentacle-like claws shot out of the machine and grabbed Perry by his limbs.



Dr Doofenshmirtz laughed sinisterly, ecstatic at how well his new invention was working. He began to regale Perry with talk about how the machine was going to convert Perry into a stuffed toy animal. Desperately, Perry looked all around the laboratory, trying to find something, anything that would save him. Then out of the corner of his eye, he spotted a screw on the floor. Using his tail, which of course, worked like a hand for Perry, he scooped the screw off the ground and with all his strength, flung it at Dr Doofenshmirtz's feet. Bullseye! It was a direct hit! Dr Doofenshmirtz yelled, held his injured foot up and hopped around wailing in pain. Stumbling around, the doctor accidentally hit the release button that freed Perry from the claws.

Perry the Platypus immediately jumped at Dr Doofenshmirtz, throwing an uppercut that sent the doctor flying. Perry then turned towards the evil machine and from a distance, studied the control panel. His eyes fell on the bright red button that said 'Self-Destruct'. He rushed over, reaching out to push that bright red button. Dr Doofenshmirtz shrieked 'Noooooooooo' at the top of his lungs, but was too far away to stop Perry. In the span of the next few seconds, Perry slammed his paw onto the red button - Bam! - grabbed the parachute that he had somehow spotted on one of the tables, and did a running smash through the nearest window as he leapt out into safety and freedom.

"Curses on you, Perry the Platypus!" screamed Dr Doofenshmirtz as he watched Agent Perry glide elegantly away from the building. It was yet another failed attempt on the part of the evil Dr Doofenshmirtz.

The List

by Wong Sheng-Yan (10G)

Rushing to the door, John found an obstacle in the way. It was his mom who stopped him and handed him a shopping list. John's mom ordered him to buy the items on the list, or there would be nothing for dinner. To avoid being late, John grabbed the shopping list from her and ran out of the house.

When he reached school, Mr Smith, John's homeroom teacher, approached him in a rush and requested his help in posting the exam name list on his table, onto the notice board outside. Before John could say anything, Mr Smith left. John had no other choice but to help Mr Smith post the list.

After school, John ran to Mr Smith's table to look for the exam name list. It had been a long, tiring day at school. John only wanted to finish his tasks quickly and get back home for a nap. In a hurry, he took out the shopping list from his pocket along with the exam name list to the notice board.

When he reached the notice board, he gathered all the paper he had on hand and pinned them to the board. Immediately, he sprinted onward to the supermarket to buy his mom the groceries. Along the way, his mind was just thinking about rest.

The moment he arrived at the supermarket, he reached into his pocket. He realized that it was empty! Sweat began to trickle down his face, and his face started to turn red. He flipped his bag over and over and turned it inside out. However, there was no shopping list in sight. He knew that he would be in deep trouble if he did not find that list.

Suddenly he recalled where he might have placed it. He hurried back to school to take a look at the notice board. To his surprise, he had pinned it there along with the exam name list. Although he had finally found the shopping list, he could not retrieve it as the school gates were locked up already, and the teachers were no longer around.

John had no other choice but to return home worried and empty-handed, to await a long lecture from his mom.

Lost and Found

by Doménique Dekker(10P)

Fiction Writing

I was lost then, and I am lost now. He was never lost and as far as I know, continues to live the legacy of Edwin Miller. The boy who had it all. How exactly he got it all is beyond me, but crazed obsession could have been the lead cause but how well can I really remember what happened if I'm crazy? It could have all started when he fell out of his family's pride and was sent to the boarding school; it could also have started when I fell off that stubborn horse.

It always starts with falling, doesn't it? He had helped me up off the ground and started playing his game with me, only I wasn't aware then of playing the game at all. The Game was simple: Eight Tasks and One Lie. The prize that would come after The Game was never specified by Edwin, but playing His Game was exhilarating enough. I was desperate to please him, you see. Was it Love? What do I know?

The Game lasted for 10 months, but the time went by quickly. In those 10 months, I could only lie once, and the tasks given were simple enough but by their nature, were addictive. The first task planted the seed for a wild tree to start growing. Task one: Slash car tires and don't stop slashing until The Game ends. It was fun and exciting at first, filling us with the adrenaline needed for our next tasks, which became increasingly thrilling. From vandalising the school library to stealing silverware, to putting dead rats in the schools kitchen and even lighting the schools toilet on fire. It started becoming scary but each time Edwin asked if I was scared I said no. I lied all the time. I didn't think he realised my lies at the time but maybe he did, and just didn't care. It was only a game after all, maybe not an innocent one but still a game nevertheless. The last task went exactly like Edwin planned. He was a planner, he was clever with plans, all so carefully deliberate. This I learned after what went down in the last task.

Edwin Miller turned 18 that August, and to celebrate he bought a gun for himself. He didn't just buy one gun, but two. One for him, one for me. We each cradled our guns in the school corridor. It was time for Spanish class but we were skipping it. Next to the lockers, Edwin told me the last task. He wanted a shoot out like what he saw in the movies. In that moment I realized that life was like a movie for him. That sick boy with the wild eyes. I knew then that what lay behind those eyes were mania and recklessness. He was so lost from reality nothing bothered him anymore. He started shooting at me, deliberately missing me just so he could see the fear in my eyes. I know this because for sure, he would want me to finish the other requirements to his game - lie - even though he already knew I always lied, he always knew I was scared but he was shooting at me, like he was daring me to do it again. Play his Game fair though it was never fair to begin with. He had a way with me, I don't exactly know how that came to be but he knew everything about me, had some type of hold on me that I wasn't aware of, but at the same time knew was there because he had shown me glimpses of it.

Edwin was slick in a bad way like gum in your hair that happened so quickly you didn't have time to react before it got stuck in a big clump. This obsession with him caused me my sanity. I shot at anyone but him while he did the same. Like he had projected his sick mind onto me, I was also unbothered like him. I think at that point I started being angry at the Game he was playing with me, but he was so tightly coiled around my mind like a venomous snake. Angry bullets fired from my gun, flying in the air ripping through flesh and shattering bones. The power of the gun going off in my hands didn't scare me. Like I said, I was probably more angry than scared. I couldn't stop shooting; madness and anger kept pulling the trigger for me. We were two Lunatics shooting wildly without a motive. Well, I didn't have a motive, maybe he did but I don't know. Mid firing, Edwin asked again if I was scared, and I still said no. A liar I am. Lost in a craze. The mind is a powerful place and I had lost it to Edwin Miller. Silly isn't it? ... how someone can manipulate you so easily; silly naive me.

Sitting in a courtroom was devastatingly boring. I knew what I had done, so did Edwin. We both pleaded guilty, and were both found guilty. Life sentence they said, but already my life had been taken by Edwin. The interesting part came when I was sent to an institution for troubled girls to serve my life sentence. In there, I found a community. Where I thought I would be alone, I found others just like me. Upon meeting and sharing our stories bit by bit, we gained a feeling like there was potential for life and hope to be restored for us but that restoration would come with a price. We knew the risks but we had already taken the risk unknowingly as we slowly lost bits of ourselves at the hands of our manipulators - we lost the ability to think and do freely. We only had to empower ourselves to find back what we had lost. The price I had to pay for playing his Game was my mind and my life, I did all that he pleased and he? He would live in glory inside his mind for the rest of his life, having all that was once me with him.

Now that I had found a community, I found pieces of my mind, my life in every girl I saw in there. I was angry at that revelation at first but now me and the girls have found peace in our next step together. We're no longer struggling alone, we have each other. In the end, the prize of The Game I had to make up myself. I thought the most fitting prize for all that I had lost was what I have gained from being a victim of manipulation - I have gained a family with these girls; I have gained a new life with these girls that are just like me. Perhaps I have been found after all.

The Gift

by Natalie Choong (10P)

The lights shone bright, lighting up the entire hall and music filled within the four magnificent walls. The windows towards the right were about thirty feet high draped by curtains that stretched across the hall. The whole hall was shining in bright yellow as if the walls were made of gold. Tables were arranged around the entire hall except no chairs could be seen. At the very end of the hall from the entrance was a mountain of luxurious-looking presents and a five-foot tall cake standing next to them.

Nathan entered the hall and headed for the birthday boy. He placed his gift in the boy's hands and wished him a 'happy birthday' with much enthusiasm. The gift was a brown box with purple ribbons wrapped around it. It seemed so small compared to the other gifts, as it was immediately abandoned into the mountain of other presents. Nathan swiftly took his bow and blended into the large crowd.

Absently, Nathan took a glass of wine and started tapping on the stem of the wine glass. He leaned on a table with one hand, facing the direction of the birthday boy. He stared down into his wine glass as he rotated the liquid in it. He remembered the sound of the gunshot that had gone off in his kitchen and he saw again, the amount of blood that had flooded the floor. The gunshot that had taken the life of the woman he loved, he would hear it forever – a shot that had gone off, just because she had not wanted to sell the toy car to the autocratic duke.

The silence that had descended upon the crowd dragged Nathan back to reality. The duke and duchess had raised their glasses and were tipping them to make a celebratory 'ding' that could be heard across the silent hall. Then, it was the speech from the duke. Nathan took a few steps back from his table and headed for the exit. He strolled past the corridor with portraits of the duke's ancestors, making sure he was pouring a trail of the powder he had on him as he went. Soon, he was outside, and breathing the cool evening air. He continued to make his way steadily away from the palace and was a good way off before he turned back around for a look.

Boom! The screams of people filled the air as intoxicating smoke quickly covered the grounds of the palace. Nathan watched from his safe distance, the fall of the house of the Duke of Charleton, there, right in front of his eyes.

"Oh, what a great gift that was; would you not agree, Lea?" Nathan whispered as he smiled.

Fiction Writing

The Cat that Needed Help

by Timothy Ko (10Q)

The sun rose on the horizon as Jim and his guide slowly trekked the well-worn path. Jim felt at ease, taking a deep breath of the crisp morning air. The Himalayas were famous for their scenic mountain trails, and he could certainly see why.

Perhaps it was for this reason that Jim did not hear the guide's urgent whisper to halt. Bumping into his guide, he asked why they had stopped. Motioning carefully towards some gravel on the wayside, the guide pointed out several animal tracks. Jim's face grew pale as he recalled another thing the Himalayas were famous – or rather, infamous – for. Pumas.

Jim was shaken out of his thoughts by a loud howl. "Run!" the guide shouted before sprinting back down the path. Panicked, Jim spun around, unsure what to do. Suddenly, a large shape jumped out from behind a rock. Jim closed his eyes, awaiting his death when a few seconds passed, then a few minutes. Jim slowly opened his eyes and saw that the puma had collapsed. Stepping closer to take a look, Jim noticed a pool of blood forming under its chest.

Gently turning the puma on its side, Jim found deep claw marks alongside other minor scrapes and bruises. It would seem that this puma had just gotten into a fight with another puma, maybe a bear.

Taking pity on the puma, Jim pulled out a first aid kit and began to treat the puma's injuries. After the last bandage had been applied, the puma weakly got up and padded over to Jim, moving in a way that Jim interpreted as thanks. Jim marvelled at how friendly the wild animal seemed to be.

Just as he was thinking about this, he noticed a group of people in uniform rushing towards him. Upon seeing the puma, their faces lit up. Two of them placed the puma onto a large stretcher while another thanked Jim profusely.

Introducing themselves as animal rehab workers, they informed Jim that this was a puma born in captivity that they were training to release into the wild. This was why it wasn't hostile towards Jim. Jim was then invited to visit the centre as thanks.

Jim spent the last few days of his holiday at the rehab centre, checking on the puma's well being.