

## TEACHER STRIKES



Teachers at Philemon Wright and Hadley went on strike twice this past year due to failed contract negotiations. They were seeking better working conditions and higher salaries. The strike, part of a broader movement involving over 500 teachers in the union\* being the Western Quebec Teacher's Association (WQTA), aimed to address issues like lack of funding, overcrowded classrooms and attrition of qualified teachers. This leaves students confused, with many questions. Our article aims to answer and educate students at Philemon Wright and Hadley. Included are the points of view of three staff members at Philemon Wright Hadley: Mr. Khan, Mr. Leclair, and our WQTA delegate for Hadley (who is also a teacher).

Failure to meet workers' needs has been a reoccurring and familiar issue, confirmed by our teachers. When asked about his experience with contracts,

Mr. Khan, a grade 10 science teacher, stated "I think it was my first year (as a teacher), had time to progress, but we went on strike. I was unfortunately... you have to show introduced to contract that you are willing and able to negotiations immediately...it's take the next steps, in order for always been [...] part of me things to actually move."

He also stated that when it came to a vote on this strike "In our schoolboard it was 100%, There was not a single vote that said no. I was counting the ballots."

This strike followed another that occurred weeks prior. When asked if we should have gotten to the point where a strike is necessary, Mr. Khan answered, "No, our contract was up March

31. We presented our offer over a year ago, October 23rd. We've had time to progress, but we went on strike. I was unfortunately... you have to show that you are willing and able to take the next steps, in order for things to actually move."

Here is what our sources had to say about the movement towards a strike: "(there is) definitely much more of an impact now because, everyone is united in this." Mr Khan stated.

This point ties in with "We're 600 000 people... there's a lot of power there.", stated by Philemon Wright English teacher, Mr Leclair. Teachers have been protesting continuously by

wearing t-shirts and standing on picket lines on Thursdays. Now, with the strike they are going days without pay. Mr Leclair stated, "It's crazy when teachers and nurses, can't afford to buy houses." He added. "When you think of people who you would consider [to have] good jobs, you shouldn't have to go right to doctors and lawyers. There should be this whole great big group of people in between...Teachers with 10 years of experience and nurses working 60-hour weeks, should be well paid."

When we asked a teacher and WQTA delegate at Hadley, about the strike and its reasons, they stated "Our school boards and unions, (...) between the two of them, hammer out a contract, to govern working conditions, salary..." They added, "The governments recognize the benefits of having a contract. You took the conflict out of it...and put it on paper and dealt with whatever incidents might happen." Confirming that the strike is the result of a contract that failed to meet both the unions' and the government's wants. Our sources also stated that most teachers are hoping for a 15% raise over the course of 5 years.

When asked what his thoughts on what was needed, Mr Leclair stated "We need more guidance counselors, we need more nurses, we need more support in the building, we need more special education technicians [...], and we need more teachers, so that you guys aren't sitting in a class with 35 people in it."

CBC quoted Education Minister

Bernard Drainville in his statement that in Quebec there are "8,558 teaching positions ... yet to be filled (1,859 full time and 6,669 part time) in the public system." In another article CBC also claimed that "25% of young teachers quit within the first five years." as claimed by Josée Scalabrini, president of the Fédération des syndicats de l'enseignement (FSE-CSQ). All three of the staff we interviewed agreed that they have felt the toll of less staff and the hiring of less qualified teachers.

"There's less and less qualified teachers, you can always find someone to do the job, but I wish more people realized that... the unqualified teachers don't have university degrees." stated Mr. Leclair. He later added "If our educators are not educated, we have a problem." When asked why teachers are quitting, he replied, "People need to be paid a fair wage or they're not going to want to do it."

Touching on the same issue our WQTA delegate stated, "(when it comes to a contract), I don't mind being more flexible, but is it going to increase the attraction of teachers to this system? Because they're not there, I'm picking up the slack... I want out too." They added "not only the attraction but the retention... and I don't hear that as much on the government's side."

The WQTA representative stated that "there is an impact on kids, [...] we're looking at the future of education for students, not just our wages. Our working conditions... relative to the education of our society."

Philemon Wright Hadley has over 1000 students. Our sources stated that NOSH feeds 80-100 students a day. "When kids are out of school, that's a big issue. There's social interactions missing, there's learning that you're missing. We've got students that are in need of a secure place." Stated Mr Khan.

The WQTA representative stated, "slow erosion is invisible, ... I see this as a very different struggle here. We're not looking at a contract, we're looking at the educational institution."

A message to students

When asked what is your opinion of impact on students Mr. Khan answered, "I think it sucks. (...) as students you guys have clearly had a difficult time." he added "effectively you could say, grade 10's and 11's right now, their entire high school career has been in some kind of turmoil... so absolutely this has a major effect on you guys. We (teachers) are well aware of that... it's unfortunate that as students you get caught up in this." He then stated "I know for a fact that every single teacher is trying to ensure that these strike actions impact their students to the absolute least. We are trying to mitigate the problems... (but) also we are looking at a long-term game here."

Mr. Leclair also shared his views, "If I was a teenager I would go home and I would not be upset... I'd be like great I can sleep; I can have a break. But I think it speaks to how much we need to invest in mental health, because people need a break so badly." He added "I hope that students

understand that if we get (...)more money in education, it will make your life better. Your CEGEP better. When you graduate and start working, in your own unions, you will make more money, with better pensions. ". He ended with "I want results now for myself, but I also don't want you guys or my kids... to have to fight this fight forever."

When asked should students get involved the WQTA delegate stated "...Being involved in a democratic fashion is always beneficial. That's what our purposes are here in education. You could use that as a learning situation." they also added for what students can do to get involved, "they can't participate in a picket, (but) asking questions, for instance when we (protest)... on Thursdays, is good. It's a learning experience that is relevant to reality."

Written by: Charlotte Pelletier and Olivier Bélanger

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## **MEAN GIRLS REVIEW**

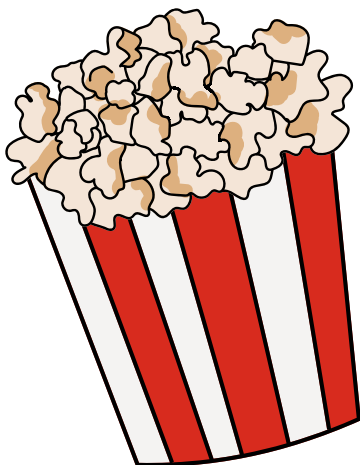
In this new adaptation of the iconic 2004 cult classic we all know and love, Tina Fey directed yet another outstanding version of this book turned movie turned musical turned, most recently, into a movie musical. I loved the reimagining far more than I should have, but that doesn't mean it is perfect. Ultimately, the utter awe and spectacle of the songs and new actors swept me through the admittedly fast-paced plotting and dialogue. The mere theme and plot of Mean Girls would carry it even if the execution wasn't as good. The lesson of self awareness and how high-school can bring out the worst in you, the relatability and the iconic way this journey is depicted will always be unmatched. And now with an added appeal to an audience of musical lovers! Mean girls is a story reflecting on the hierarchy of high school, but it doesn't just stop there, it also explores relationships with other people, family and friends, getting to the root of what 'friend' really means. It delves into the blur between good and evil essentially, and how easy it is to be "mean". Mean Girls shows us how to rise above

all that is the politics of high-school and return to just being yourself, and shows us the value of being kind.

Directed by Tina Fey, Mean girls follows Angourie Rice as Cady (pronounced Cadie ;) Heron, a previously homeschooled girl from Africa, excitedly attending an American High school for the first time. As Cady soon realizes, navigating high school alone could prove difficult. Luckily, she soon gets welcomed by The Plastics and their leader and the so-called "apex predator" of the school, Regina George (played by Reneé Rapp). All this popularity and power soon catches up to Cady when she truly realizes what she's gotten herself into, and learns the way of the popular clique. Mean girls (2024) is definitely "not your mother's mean girls" and though that may have disinterested some from the movie, it has a whole new audience to appeal to and affect in a way the other couldn't. With its incorporation of musical theatre elements and scenes of powerful singing and dancing and lighting techniques, it can transport you to the world of live theatre, while simultaneously having elements of normal movies and the abilities to do things that are just impossible live. As a musical theatre fan, I had my eyes glued to the screen during each song, watching every dance move and listening for my favorite lyrics and lines. However there were some moments where I questioned

their directorial decisions. During “Stupid With Love” a fairly upbeat song with silly lyrics, they stayed true to the theme of the song but not the lyrics, having the actress sing in a romantic sort of ballad way with otherwise hilariously ridiculous lyrics. I could go through a few more choices but in the end most were just made ultimately because Angourie Rice just does not have the vocals of the original Broadway musical actresses. Sadly some of the iconic jokes and quips were missing for many reasons, some being insensitive, some too mature and some ironically just deemed “too mean”. René Rapp however was an element that stayed true to the Broadway aspect, as she was actually the Broadway actress for Regina George from 2019-2020. She is an amazing triple threat in the industry with many opportunities sure to come. Overall it was an amazing movie and I just feel so lucky to have been able to see this mean girls journey from the book that started it all to where we are now and can’t wait to see where it goes from here, and what’s next for the budding star René Rapp.

Written by Bella M



## ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT

The Israel-Palestine ‘conflict’ with its 75-year occupation and ongoing apartheid continues to be a topic of deep concern and global attention. To understand this ‘conflict’ you must go back, not to October 7th, but to 1948, the Nakba. Nakba in Arabic means catastrophe it refers to the violent mass disposition and displacement of Palestinians. 700,000 Palestinians were forced to flee and 15,000 were killed by Zionist militias following the partition plan of Palestine.

Since then, the amount of the map considered Palestine has continued to decline (see below) and separated Palestine into Gaza and the west bank. 60% of the west bank is under full Israeli control and 40% under the partial control of the Palestinian Authority. Gaza on the other hand is governed by Hamas although it is occupied by Israel. Many of the people living in Gaza were forced to move there during or soon after the Nakba, which is why the 365 km<sup>2</sup> (that is around half the size of Toronto) piece of land is so densely populated with around 2 million occupants half of whom are

under the age of 18.

While Israel claims it pulled out of Gaza completely in 2005 it still controls the food/water/fuel in Gaza and has implemented a strict land and sea blockade. Even before October 7 Palestinians in both the West Bank and Gaza had access to just 80 liters of water per day, falling below the international standard of 100 liters set by the World Health Organization while Israelis get around 4 times the Palestinians.

“I have ordered a complete siege on the Gaza Strip. There will be no electricity, no food, no fuel, everything is closed,” Gallant says following an assessment at the IDF Southern Command in Beersheba. The Times of Israel even went so far as to say, “We are fighting human animals, and we are acting accordingly,”

After the 7th of October, the Israeli defense minister Yoav Gallant announced that Israel would not be allowing any food, water, fuel, or electricity into Gaza due to HAMAS’ actions on October 7th. This is what is

known as collective punishment. This is where the entirety of a group is penalized for a crime only a few committed. 'International humanitarian law asserts that no person may be punished for acts that he or she did not commit.' The justification used by many is that 'Israel has the right to defend itself'.

However, as stated in paragraph 139 of the International Court of Justices Advisory, Israel does not in fact have the right to defend itself from attacks from occupied territories it controls. This includes the Gaza region, according to the UN.

On matters of international law Israel has violated at least 28 resolutions which all members of the UN must legally follow. This includes the use of white phosphorus on civilians, the bombing of hospitals, UNRWA schools, refugee camps, ambulances, mosques, and churches (including the 3rd oldest church in the world). It is also important to note that the hospitals that were not bombed are overrun and have little to no resources. All of these places also have refugees who fled from their homes sheltering in them.

Another way some attempt to reason away these atrocities is by saying Israel told the occupants of north Gaza to go south via a safe route, only Israel had already bombed the safe route and is currently bombing the south as well. Israel justifies all this by saying they want their hostages back.

However, released hostages say they were not afraid of HAMAS while in Gaza but of Israeli

bombs.

Between October 7th and this December, over 18 000 innocent Palestinian civilians and over 7 700 children have been killed.

But according to Israel, the United States, and every other country that voted against the ceasefire or abstained, it's completely fine. While on the topic of a ceasefire we ought to remember the 7-day ceasefire at the end of November in which 105 out of 240 Israeli hostages in Gaza were released and 240 out of over 7200 Palestinian hostages in Israel were released.

A fun fact about 'the only democracy in the Middle East' is that it has detained around 10 000 Palestinian children in the past 20 years. This year alone it has detained around 880.

You may be wondering why Israel has so many children in their jails? What crimes have they committed? Well, the majority of the children were arrested for throwing stones at Israel soldiers (and detained for up to 20 years). But many were not even charged with crimes. They were kidnapped and put in prisons. According to save the children, 86% say they have been beaten, 69% strip searched, 23% held in solitary confinement, and 42% injured at the time of their arrest. To date, Israel is the only 'developed' country that tries children in military courts.

Additionally, Israel engages in censorship, generally done by using censor bars or laws on mass media. Israel's approach is killing at least 90 journalists in Gaza and closing all

internet access in the region.

The last thing that ought to be condemned is the dehumanization of Palestinians, which is another way Israel justifies its heinous crimes. Calling Palestinians 'children of darkness', 'Amalek' (the biblical enemy of Jews), and 'human animals' can supposedly justify bombing a children's hospital.



Written by Marn Elgebli

## BADMINTON REVIEW

On Saturday, January 20th, our badminton team lit up the courts at Grandes Rivieres and Nouvelles Frontieres, and brought the good fight back to the hard courts. A huge congratulations to all the Hawks and Falcons who came back swinging after a strike-induced tournament hiatus. This was our most well-attended tournament of the year, and a big success for many of our dedicated players. Mr. Swann & Ms. Johnson are super proud of everyone who came out to play. Next Tournament February 11th !!

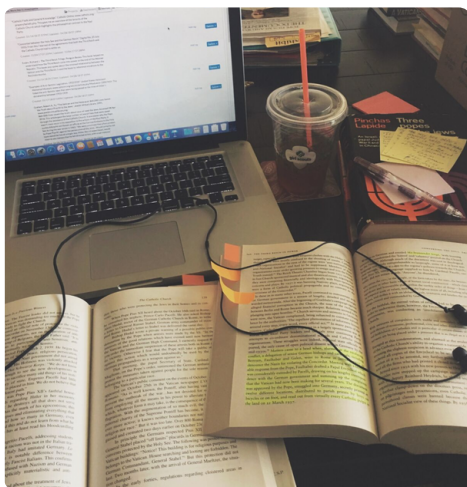
Bracket Busting Winner: Marek Bouffard

Big Winners: Noah Carrier, Emmanuel Goncalves, Dominic Smith, Emile Beaupre, Eva Gagne, Emiliano Goncalves, Elizabeth Atrens, Zach Trottier,

Alex Magnan, Atlas Maltais, and Zach Pacheko

Honourable Mentions: Adam Syed, Neveen Beaupre, Tahir Kahlon, Phil Roussy, Kiera Voisard, Vienna Nurse, Ksenya Lewis, Briah Macinnis, Autumn Johnson, Luc Roussy

Written by Mr. Swann



## STUDY TIPS

With tests, quizzes, and end of year exams on the horizon, there's most likely going to be a lot of studying going on at Philemon. But where do you start? What is the best method? What actually works? I might not know the best way, but here are some tips and tricks I've accumulated over the years that might help.

Firstly, find your ideal environment and learning style. There are many different types of learning styles, some more known than others. For example, you've probably heard of auditory versus visual learners, but there are other lesser-known learning types such as social learners and solitary learners. These sub-sections focus more on whether you learn better in

groups or alone. But why is this important? Research shows that most of these learning types use different sections of the brain to process information. This means that if you find your ideal learning environment and style, you can drastically improve your productivity and make studying easier.

Secondly, create a to-do list. At first, seeing all your tasks written down on paper may seem more daunting and nerve-wracking. But once you start checking off the objects on your list, you might get a sudden wave of motivation. Why? Checking off to-do lists has been proven to release dopamine, otherwise known as the 'feel good' hormone. Along with that, it is also recommended to first break down your tasks into smaller 'sub-tasks' to be able to cross more off without losing the motivation that the dopamine brings.

Next, I suggest creating a study playlist with soft music (that you actually enjoy). Studies have shown that music has multiple benefits when it comes to studying. Some of these benefits include stress reduction and (depending on the type of music) improved memorization and cognitive performance. In most cases, the studies recommend 'low arousal' music (music with slower beats and instrumental music) rather than 'high arousal' music.

Next is something that seems obvious but is easier said than done: Ask questions. I get it, there are lots of reasons to not want to ask questions: we don't want to be a burden, we assume

we don't need help, we don't want to give up our pride and seem vulnerable. However, there are also many benefits to asking questions, like increased focus, personal growth, information retention and, evidentially, clearing up any doubts.

Last but not least, don't ignore your health. Research has shown that being both mentally and physically healthy has great impacts on grades. For example, studies have shown that exercise has many positive effects, such as improved concentration, improved memory and stress reduction. On the other side of the health spectrum, other research has shown that poor mental health can decrease academic performance in students. In other words, you shouldn't focus only on schoolwork at the end of this term. It is equally important to focus on yourself and do things that you enjoy, to avoid burning yourself out.

At the end of the day, these tips might not work for everyone, and that's okay! We all learn in our own way, at our own pace. It may take a while to find what works best for you, but all good things take time, right? In the end, I suggest we all follow tennis player Arthur Ashe's advice and "Start where we are, use what we have and do what we can."

Written by Abigail Chénier

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## A STRANGE DOLPHIN DISCOVERY IN GREECE

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The discovery of a dolphin with 'thumbs' by scientists off the coast of Greece

"It was the very first time we saw this surprising flipper morphology in 30 years of surveys in the open sea," remarked Pelagos' scientific coordinator Alexandros Frantzis.

This summer in the Gulf of Corinth off the coast of Greece, scientists at Greece's Pelagos Cetacean Research Institute observed a dolphin with thumb-like appendages on its flippers. No traces of illness, no injuries or skin lesions are present on the dolphins' flippers but scientists hypothesized it could be a result of this dolphin, being among some 1300 striped dolphins cut off from the rest of their kind in the Mediterranean Sea, being isolated resulting in inbreeding that could explain what is seemingly a genetic abnormality. Note that dolphins do technically have fingers, the bones in their flippers are arranged similarly to a human hand. The flippers normally conceal this but it seems these dolphins don't exactly. All said, the dolphins

thumbs may bear likeness to ours but do not appear to be opposable, as mammalian anatomy expert Lisa Noelle Cooper commented, "The hook-shaped 'thumb' may have some bone inside of it, but it certainly isn't mobile."

Written by Niamh Montgomery

## THE DISCOMFORT ZONE

Who are you when the lights go out? In the end, when nothing else matters except the concept of what you were, what did you achieve? Did you ever do anything out of the ordinary? Something that sets you apart from the others? Did you win any races? Lose any? Are you even really participating in your own life, or just letting it slip away on autopilot?

Do you fear failure, or do you just fear change? Your comfort zone probably isn't good for you. Your comfort zone, in essence, is the fear of change. "You're not happy with something but it's just how it is, or the idea of change feels more

uncomfortable than the discomfort you're currently experiencing" is how Bethany Thorson, counsellor, described it. The irregular has been scary for as long as humans have existed because the unknown could contain monsters that will eat your kids. But nowadays, in modern day society, there is no longer the off chance that 3 bears will inhabit where you want to stay the night. So what are we scared of? We all know that we could be doing better than what we're completely comfortable with, but 99% of us decide to stay the way we are anyways, at most making the smallest of gradual changes over years unless the hands of life force us to do otherwise, and even then we fight back. Most of us will look back on our lives and regret half the decisions we made and all of them we didn't. Most of us are okay staying within the familiar confines of the boxes we've made for ourselves, containing our goods and bads, and nothing changes. This is living on autopilot; we're safe all the time so a majority of people decide to never "evolve" in their daily lives. This lack of evolution causes the comfort zone's fallacy. That nagging feeling that you're not doing enough and that nothing's new isn't exactly peachy. If you're bored of life, you're too comfortable. And if you don't change anything, what will change?

So, you're in the complacent zone. It's good enough, I guess. It's not that bad but it's not that good either. I mean, it's better than complete failure, right? That's where the fear of change starts to sprout. In the

end, the fear of change all starts with the fear of failing. Variations of the question, “what if I lose everything in the process?” bangs on the walls of your head and demands to be heard. Just a heads up, if you’re in the comfort zone you’re already failing. Not terribly so, but you still are. You’re putting your time and efforts into a sinking ship. But you’ve already come so far into making this zone so comfortable! What if you need just one more year to make it all worth it? ...Is one of the examples of the sunken cost fallacy that most people ignore. You can easily become used to a terrible situation, so used to unhealthy habits that have popped up overtime that you don’t even realize they’re there. So yes, change is scary, failure is scary, but looking back at all the what ifs will be the thing to keep you up for countless nights. “Do not fear failure, but please be terrified of regret.”

Along with the fear of failure, meeting it eye to eye, is the fear of success. Because what if, in the end, you get everything you ever wanted and it’s still not enough? That’s just a risk you’re going to have to take. Numerous studies about attraction, admiration, and every compliment or good feeling someone could have about you have shown that being courageous is the number one trait to have. But what is courage? To put it simply, it’s facing your discomforts. You’re not brave to get on a roller coaster if you were never scared of it in the first place. We all need to acquire the courage to change the things we can. Success and failure work

together as a team, making it so you’ll always have one as well as the other. If you walk the whole way around a track you still made it around, but you’re left in the dust of what you could be. If you give it more than your all, you might just reach a new personal record. Losing a few races and winning a few more. Choosing to live in the discomfort zone.

In the end, we might all be existing just to exist. In a thousand years no one will remember me, you or any of the regular population. But in the now you can have an impact on so many people, or you can fade into the shadows before your time has even come. This all boils down to me and numerous others telling you to go out and live because you really don’t have that much time to do so. Go experience things and embrace the discomfort zone. Let both your successes and failures guide you but don’t let them define you. Be a forever changing mess because that’s what being human is about.

Written by Tara Szoczei

## **WHAT IS COP28?**

After several weeks of tense negotiation and deliberation, the 2023 United Nations Climate Change Conference, COP28, has ended with a commitment from over 130 countries to transition away from fossil fuels. The historic deal marks an advancement in global climate action, as it is the first time language regarding a transition away from fossil fuels has been included in a UN agreement. Despite its breakthroughs,

COP28 has received mixed reactions across the globe, climate scientists among those unsatisfied with the verdict.

The fundamental aspects of the deal can be summarized by four key announcements:

- Over 130 nations to include agricultural emissions in climate action plans
- Countries to phase down unabated coal usage
- Creation of a \$30 billion global climate solutions fund, \$700 million to go towards helping vulnerable countries mitigate the effects of climate change
- 118 nations agree to triple their renewable energy capacity as well as double their energy efficiency

Scientists have been vocal about the commitment not being rigorous enough to keep the planet from warming past the threshold of 1.5°C above preindustrial levels, which, if surpassed, would have a catastrophic and irreversible effect on the environment. Though the agreement includes terminology relating to fossil fuels, there is no definite commitment to phasing out nor phasing down fossil fuels, even after over 130 nations insisted on its importance. Additionally, some language appears favourable towards the use of fossil fuels, such as the use of “transitional fuels” otherwise referred to as natural gas.

Furthermore, the Alliance of Small Island States representing 39 countries, all extremely vulnerable to the effects of climate change, claims that they were not in the plenary hall when the deal was gavelled through and were still deliberating.



Moreover, experts say the amount of financial aid for vulnerable and developing countries to combat climate change is nowhere near what is required. According to Global News, “Canada’s pledge of \$16 million for the loss and damage fund at COP28 would cover only about an hour’s worth of climate crises in developing countries...”

Though this deal is a step forward in the global fight against climate change, the consensus among specialists is that more action must be taken quickly to uphold world leaders’ promises of staying below 1.5°C of warming past preindustrial levels.

Written by Cadence Fournier

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## **ARE OUR FAVOURITE SONGS LOSING MEANING?**

Music is universally recognized as a source of comfort, especially during times of distress, loneliness, or when we seek a soothing melody to consolate our weary souls. Its melodies and harmonies have a way of allowing us to connect with others as well as spark memories, evoke emotions, and lead us to a path away from reality, even if it’s just for a few minutes. Many people find themselves immersed in their playlists, sometimes listening to every song in one sitting. If not, they would often have their favorite song on repeat, enjoying the melodies without necessarily paying attention to the lyrics. This, as well, was a cycle for me until one bus ride when I decided to listen to an entire album. As I drifted away from the physical world, I realized that I had listened to every song, and it felt as if I had awakened from a dream. It was as if something had been lifted from me, replacing the familiar feeling of being disconnected to a sense of being in the moment. Between these two scenarios, who had a better experience? Who had a deeper connection? Who was more in the present? Or

in other words... Do you really listen to music?

As humans, we have the natural tendency to fill our lives with various things and this is no exception when it comes to noise. Some of us feel this compulsive need to be accompanied by something playing in the background. Have you ever just scrolled through your music library, selecting a random song simply because you want some background noise while you studied? How about when you sit down to eat dinner, do you really pay attention to the videos or are they just there to fill the silence? Our modern-day relationship with noise has evolved especially with the easy accessibility of music, videos, and other sources of entertainment. We’ve gone to a point where we’re able to fully absorb ourselves into a constant loop of audio and visual stimulation. It’s as if we’ve developed a fear of silence, viewing it as an empty void that must be filled.

If we think about how life was a hundred years ago, we would be

able to identify a significant difference between music back then and music today. Think about the individuals who would come home from a long day at work, relaxing as they would listen to the music emitting from their turntables and record players. Back then, leaving out time for music because to them, it was an event, a special part of their day. Unlike our modern society where music is accessible anytime and anywhere, this was considered special. To them, it was perceived as an event. Nowadays, we just play songs—not necessarily because we perceive it as an event but simply because we are uncomfortable with silence. Take orchestras for example, if you were to go to one, you would take every second to listen and appreciate the music, each note would be significant and just like our first scenario, it would be memorable. In this time and age, our appreciation for music declines and it becomes secondary.

I'm sure we've all (including myself) had a favorite song where we'd play on repeat for days, weeks, and even months. However, when we play that "favourite" song of ours for so much, we slowly begin to grow sick of it. It no longer is a song but rather plain noise. Back when I was in 7th to 8th grade, "Lover's Day" by CUCO was my go-to song that I listened to every day. The song talks about how people's emotions change as time progresses, and I had related so much to it that I practically had a ritual of gazing out the window, staring out at the distance while I listened to it. There was a specific part in the

song that I would always find myself waiting for because I would always get chills down my spine on how good it was. This continued for a year, and since I listened to the song so frequently, it lost meaning completely. I soon found myself unable to feel the frisson I did which I had experienced the first few times listening to it, no matter how hard I tried. I got over it soon enough and was already on the search for other songs to listen to until about a year later, I rediscovered the song and gave it a listen again. Just like that, the song had regained its meaning back. What if I had diluted that song but continued to listen to it every day no matter how I felt. It would've taken a song that meant so much to me and would had distorted it into noise, making it meaningless. If we listen to something that is meaningless, what does that say about us?

The question remains: have our favourite songs lost their meaning? With the constant need for background noise, accessibility to music, and fear of silence, we may have unintentionally weakened the importance of the lyrics and melodies we hear daily. When noise becomes the norm, silence is jarring. Rather than valuing every individual note and lyric, we've transformed music into a constant companion that we constantly turn to when we find ourselves in the uncomfortable.

It's time that we carefully choose moments of silence and approach our favourite songs with a re-established sense our attention and appreciation. As a result, we may rediscover the

lost beauty and meanings our favourite tunes once had, allowing us to develop deeper connections with the music that can touch us in ways instead of morphing it into background noise that does not gift us the same things.

Written by Jenny Tran

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## FALCON READS

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### 5 most popular books of Bates Library

The library is undoubtedly one of the larger meeting places in the school, for booklovers and average students alike. But when it comes to book preferences, what is Philemon into? Here is a brief list of the 5 most popular books taken out of the library recently according to our very own librarian, Ms. Miller!

One Of Us Is Lying by Karen McManus is a young adult suspense/mystery series recommended for ages 12+ due to topics like murder, sexual assault, etc.

A Good Girl's Guide To Murder by Holly Jackson is a young adult mystery series recommended, much like the first book, for ages 12+.

The Leading Edge Of Now by Marci Lyn Curtis is a young adult fiction novel recommended for ages 14+ due to some difficult subjects like sexual assault (though it was specifically popular among Hadley students, so it really depends on the individual).

Keeper Of The Lost Cities by Shannon Messenger is a fantasy series recommended for ages 9+,

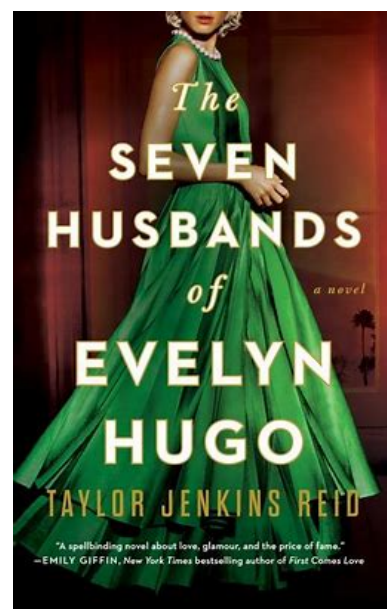
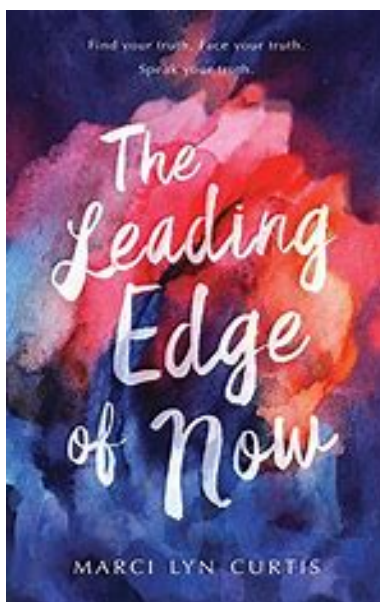
so it's suitable for all at PWHS, students and teachers alike.

The Shatter Me series by Tahereh Mafi is a young adult dystopia series with some romance and thriller elements mixed in, recommended for ages 16+ due to some heavy topics and "a bit spice [...] not overly detailed".

Now, another book that has been asked for is 'The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo' by Taylor Jenkins Reid. Sadly, this book is not currently a part of the collection. However, if you are looking for this book, don't lose hope! It's on its way and will soon be added to PWHS's library.

Hopefully this helps you if you're struggling to find something to read. But, if none of these appeal to you, I encourage you to look on your own, or consult Ms. Miller (available Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays) who is always happy to help!

Written by Abigail Chénier



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Thank you to all our contributors!

# SWEENEY Todd



April 11th, 12th, & 13th  
@6:30pm & 2pm  
Ticket's: 10\$ for students  
15\$ for Adults