

# VERITAS

A painting of a unicorn's head, rendered in shades of blue and green for the mane and face, with a prominent golden horn. The background is a warm orange color. The unicorn's eyes are dark and expressive.

Winter 2017 - Issue 2

*Culture*

Creative Writing

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Canadian Content

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*Cover Page Artwork By: Stefania De Martin*

Hello Readers!

I'm so excited about this, the second issue of the Veritas! Welcome back from the holidays. I hope everyone had a beautiful and peaceful Christmas. I'm also looking forward to seeing all your New Year's resolutions being put into practice!

This issue will feature some very interesting articles. In particular, keep an eye out for those with some interesting comments about student life and living as a young person, as I am sure you will find them relevant. Articles with important issues such as sleep and technology use will be featured.

Just a reminder, you can all submit letters to the editor if you have anything to say or any comments to make that you would like published. Don't forget to submit your art for the cover!

Feel free to make these comments or ask any questions through our email: [hsg.veritas@gmail.com](mailto:hsg.veritas@gmail.com)

I wish you all the best in the next few months, and as school work piles up and winter drags on, don't forget to smile!

-Guin

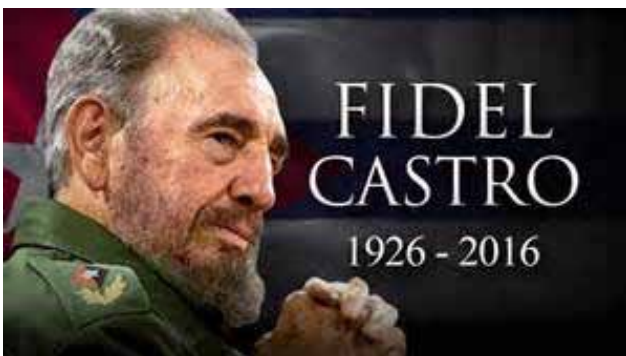


# Since We

## The Death of the Cuban Leader

Fidel Castro, the former dictator of Cuba, passed away on November 25, at the age of 90. Castro had dictated Cuba for almost fifty years until he stepped down in 2008 and appointed his younger brother as the leader of Cuba. Since the death of Fidel Castro was announced, both cries of joy and sadness have been expressed by the citizens of Cuba and the Cuban-Americans. Some viewed him as a flawed, yet good leader, and because of his imperfections, he was more relatable. In addition, for some people, he was the only leader that they had ever known. However, some viewed him as Cuba's main problem, as he established a communist country and ruled as a dictator.

After the death of Fidel Castro, Justin Trudeau responded by making remarks on two occasions. Much controversy was created following both of Trudeau's speeches, including his defense of his original remarks about Castro. At first, he had acknowledged the great connection between Cuba and Canada, and praised Castro for his achievements. But later, Trudeau was asked if he felt Castro was a dictator and he replied in the affirmative. When he was questioned about his initial speech, his defence was that he was only recognizing the connection between Cuba and Canada. Some critics believe that Trudeau is trying to keep a strong relationship with Cuba, as his father Pierre Trudeau had established during his time as prime minister. However Justin Trudeau has failed to succeed at this, as he did not have the same friendship or connection with Fidel Castro.



## The American Recount

As the world knows, on November 8th, 2016, Donald Trump was elected as the 58th President of the United States. While many rejoiced, many others grieved over the loss of Hillary Clinton's campaign. Since then, both the American Green Party and some Democrats have demanded a recount in three states: Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, and Michigan. Trump has refused a recount in Michigan stating his objections: "Voters should not risk having the Electoral College door knocked off its hinges all because a 1% candidate is dissatisfied with the election's outcome." Dr. Stein, the leader of the Green Party, believes that the system could have been hacked and wants to ensure that this is not the case. However, the recount is not likely to change the overall result of this presidential campaign. In addition, recounting is not only very time consuming, it is also very expensive.

# Last Wrote . . .

## The Grey Cup

The Grey Cup is a professional Canadian football competition held annually. The winner receives a silver trophy. This year was the 104th year for the Grey Cup and was held at the BMO (Bank of Montréal) Field here in Toronto, Ontario. The final game was held on November 27th, 2016. The Ottawa Redblacks, the “underdogs” and the Calgary Stampeders went head to head.

In the first quarter, the Ottawa Redblacks came in strong with a 10:7. As the second quarter began, they continued to play strongly with a 10:0 score. Then, in the third quarter, the Calgary Stampeders made a comeback with a score of 10:7. After, they proceeded to increase their score with a 16:6. In overtime, neither team scored any points. Therefore, the underdogs, the Ottawa Redblacks won with 39:33. This was their first victory in 50 years and it sent the city into a joyous frenzy.



Heralding the Christmas Season

This year featured 112th Santa Claus Parade which took place on November 20th. Larger than ever, the Santa Claus Parade had twenty-five floats and twenty-one marching bands. They began by parading from Bloor and Christie Street and ended by the St. Lawrence Market. The weather was abnormally cold this year, standing at about three degrees, but this did not deter the crowds. The Toronto Santa Claus Parade is one of the longest running children’s parade across the globe.



Disappointment from the MLS Cup

December 10th, 2016. 3.534 million views throughout Canada and the United States. One chance. The Toronto FC or the Seattle Sounders.

The two teams went head to head to compete for the MLS Cup. It was a shocking game, as the Toronto FC lost in their homeland. It was very disappointing because it had taken ten seasons for the Toronto FC to reach the championships. As well, the game remained tied at 0 to 0 and resulted in penalty shootouts. Sadly, Toronto lost in this shootout, with a very close score of 5 to 4 for Seattle. Not only were the players and coaches disappointed, so were the fans who either watched live at the BMO field that night or at home from a television screen. Since the loss, fans have erupted on the Internet, complaining that Toronto was the better team and that they should have won. However, others argue that the Toronto FC fans are being sore losers and need to accept their loss. Toronto fans should be proud to have made it as far as the championships. Hopefully in the future, Toronto will win the MLS Cup.

By: Annika Fu

# Current Events

## Is Trump a New Hitler?

“Mass chaos - the world is ending! We have a modern Hitler on our hands. Everyone run for your lives!” These and other extreme words are being uttered daily around the United States. Ok, let’s take a step back here. Usually people have one of two views on the topic of Donald Trump. It is either: “We are all going to die!” or “Calm down!” So let’s take a look at both of these viewpoints.

Comparing Donald Trump and Adolf Hitler may seem like an extreme, but that has actually been happening. And there are definitely some similarities that could be pointed out, at least by looking at things on the surface. Hitler ordered mass deportation and death of millions of European Jews, due to his extreme anti-semitic feelings. He used his hatred of the Jews to blame them for Germany’s post World War I domestic problems. One striking similarity between Donald Trump and Adolf Hitler, that is really getting people thinking, is the familiarity in the language they both have used. One of Hitler’s promises was to “make Germany great again.” Sound familiar? Everyone has heard Donald Trump declaring loud and clear to the Americans that he will “make America great again.” Trump used this slogan throughout his entire campaign. Even now that he has been elected, he is seemingly doing things that he feels are for the betterment of the United States, but are they?



Many living in the U.S. believe that the president of the United States is promoting racism. This is because he has blamed, and continues to blame, immigrants and Muslims for many problems that America is facing. Trump has also recently tried to put mass deportation into action by ordering sweeps of immigrants to take place across the country. However, after so many protests, the U.S. Supreme Court has repealed this motion. We have yet to see what Trump’s reaction will be to this. The course of action he takes in the future may bring to the forefront even more comparisons to Hitler. Hitler was faced with a similar situation Trump is in right now, and his final course of action was to create concentration camps for people he did not believe were “real Germans”. Will Donald Trump eventually arrest anyone he personally does not view as a “real American”?

From many viewpoints, things look pretty dire. Yet some people have an entirely different take on Trump’s actions. These people, who may not all be Trump supporters, feel it is extremely harsh to be make such serious accusations. Many Americans, along with the media, have been quick to judge the new president and paint the worst possible picture about America’s future. It could be right or wrong; only time will tell.

There are many people who actually have some sympathy for Trump. Sadly, on his Inauguration Day, instead of a united country, there were protests in which people were shouting Trump is the next Hitler. Inauguration Day is supposed to be a special time for American citizens but with people implying Trump might start a killing spree, this made for a very dark ceremony. The same people also argue that protesters are forgetting Trump has a family and has raised what could be considered well-rounded, well-spoken successful children.

It seems as though, currently, everyone has an opinion of sorts about Trump. People are arguing, and everyone appears confused. But now that you know the basics what do you think? Is Trump a new Hitler?

*By: Vanessa Marku*

# Creative Writing

## It's a "Love-Hate" Relationship

It snowed a lot today,  
But the sun still shone with its  
bright rays.  
A snow day was pleaded for  
And the snowplows' engines, like dis-  
tressed lions, roared.

The perfect day for tobogganing  
And for packing and throwing, while  
it continued snowing.  
The wind snapped crisply,  
As the children, and others at heart,  
catapulted snowballs fiercely.

Back home, many drank a sweet treat  
While others kept warm with socks on  
their feet.  
Loved ones tardily returned,  
And were greeted with poutine gar-  
nished with cheese curds.

Those with glasses wiped their lenses  
While Frost was happy to finally be  
put to work again.  
And he had brought the cold,  
Fortunately, hot chocolate was being  
sold.

Not all welcomed the snow with joy.  
With a winding commute and slippery  
roads to "enjoy",  
Along with a chilling frostiness,  
And the heavy effects of thick, morn-  
ing grogginess.

This made it difficult for some to  
smile,  
As people shovelled their driveways,  
heaping snow in a pile.  
Or as some chipped off ice from their  
windshields,  
With anger so mighty that it was un-  
concealed.

Even walking was a challenge.  
In addition to finding food in the  
pantry to salvage.  
Hopefully the home's heating works  
Or else the icy bite would lurk.

An odd amount of people did not care  
less.  
They said, "I would rather just stay  
inside and play chess."  
Or perhaps they were just too lazy,  
Arguing that going outside would just  
be crazy.

The snow rapidly vacated  
From the impressive heat that the sun  
radiated.  
The snow puddled like ice cream,  
But all knew that too soon, snow  
would no longer be a dream.

It would shortly snow again  
Dropping down to negative ten.  
But outside would still be fun  
Even if it was not in the scorching  
sun.

# Trapped in Her Head

## Yael

I woke up. The waves were crashing into rocks, only to dissolve into smaller waves and sea foam. I walked along the shore, barefoot. The sand felt warm and textured. Every step felt like a gift. I looked towards the sun; it was blinding. Its intense light forced my eyes to shut themselves, but at the same time, the scenery was dark and everything was clear, yet I couldn't focus on the picture. It was all...like a dream...

"Excuse me, do you need something?" asked a loud echoing voice.

"Who are you?" I asked loudly.

I am Henry, you must be Yael."

I nodded. "Uh, yes. Henry, where are you?" I asked suspiciously.

He chuckled. "I'm here."

"WHERE?" I yelled.

"Yael, I'm right here. You can't see me or touch me, understand?"

I nodded. "But why can't I see you?" I asked.

"Let's agree on something. You don't ask about me, and I won't ask about you, unless you wish to tell me. Ok?"

I sighed. "Okay, fine.

"Just because you can't see someone, doesn't mean they aren't there." The waves suddenly disappeared. Henry's voice faded and the scenery vanished.

I opened my eyes; an ugly white ceiling welcomed me back into the horror of reality. That dream though, what was that? It's like I remembered everything as if it had actually happened. Like if I left this place and went there, but I've never been to a beach, and of course, the Henry person. Or the voice? He seemed to be pretty real. After all, he knew who I was, and stuff. Odd.

"Yael. Darnit YAEL. It's late already honey. You're going to miss the bus." My mom called for me.

"Mom, I had this awesome encounter with this voice named Henry while asleep." I replied.

While she scrambled in the room for the home phone she said, "That's nice honey. Come on, get dressed. Breakfast is on the table and your lunch is packed. I need to make a phone call. Love you; have a good day at school ok?" I nodded and she looked around nervously and left the room to dial the number.

At school I had my group of friends, and I badly wanted to

tell them about Henry but I had read this BuzzFeed article that said that no one cares about knowing the dreams of others, so I kept it to myself. I kept thinking of it all day, but everything changed when during history class my breath started to get heavy and it was hard to breathe. I kept taking long deep breaths but I couldn't get any air. I felt as if someone had set my lungs on fire. The world went blurry. I could no longer hear the teacher and my vision failed me. The last thing I remember was someone yelling.

## Sandra

"Yael is having a seizure!" I screamed. Her body collapsed to the floor and started to tremble.

Miss Nanson ran to call 9-1-1 and sat beside her. "Someone, give me a sweater, NOW!" All the kids ran to their lockers to try and help until finally someone brought a cardigan and he tied it around her mouth and back to secure her tongue from moving. The ambulance finally arrived and took her and Miss Nanson. Everyone just stood there.

"Poor girl," said one of the students.

"Does she have like, epilepsy or something?" asked a boy.

"No, she has a different disease, schizophrenia," I said.

"What? I've only heard of that stuff in movies. So does she have like imaginary friends and stuff?" he said playfully.

I got mad. "Shut up; that stuff doesn't actually happen."

## Yael

Once again, I woke up to the same white ceiling as I have for the past 14 years. "Mom, hey what exactly happened yesterday?" I yawned.

"You had one of those seizures again. You know why? Because you didn't take your pills with you to school."

I groaned. "Is it really that bad?"

She got up. "Yes, it is. Now sleep. You need rest."

I gave her a look. "Um, I've been sleeping all day. What even?"

She then got annoyed. "Then watch Netflix or do something. I don't know." And she shut my door.

"Okay, then. Love you too," I said to her retreating back.

I turned on my TV and started searching on Netflix until I found this one TV show. Degrassi: Next Class was playing, with a new season. Time to binge-watch. By Episode 3 I was drifting back to sleep. Everything became hazy as I slowly fell into sleep.

I woke up on the same crystal beach. My clothes were all soaked in water. I waited for Henry to call me, he didn't. I called for him and he didn't respond. I began to walk along the beach, I reached a rock with a slanted with flat surface. I sat on it and waited for Henry's voice to break the silence of nature, I could feel the sun soaked rock touch my skin. Suddenly a cool breeze crashed into the trees and brushed against them; you could hear the rustling of the leaves brushing against each other.

“Oh, you came,” said Henry. I stood on the rock and jumped onto the water; the splash cooled my feet. “Why did you come here?” he asked as I started to run in the shallow water. “Well, the thing is, I don’t choose to come. I’m kind of forced to. Like, today in class I got a seizure because I couldn’t stop thinking of you.. Then sometimes sleep just falls upon me like a boulder hitting an animal.” We continued talking for a while, as I stopped in front of where the palm trees began. I looked under the tall palm trees. “Hey um, Henry, can I come back to this island or whatever this is whenever?”

“Of course you can. It’s all yours. You made this island with your incredible imagination and you can come here whenever,” he replied. And once again, the scenery faded.

“Yael! Oh my goodness! Jeez! Yael! Wake up!” my Mom screamed. It was obvious she was panicking. I scratched my head. “Relax Mom, oh my gosh. What time is it?”

“It’s 3:07 pm! I need to call your therapist,” she yelled as she scrambled across the room with the phone and a phone book in her hands. She dialed a number in her trembling hands. “Hi, this is Blanca Susans. I’m Yael’s mother...” and her voice faded as she walked down the stairs. I had slept for 18 hours? Darnit!

I spent the rest of the day at my therapist’s office and I told him all about Henry. Of course, therapists believe voices like Henry’s to be imaginary friends, but Henry is real. I know it. My therapist told me to take this medication that prevents excessive sleep. My therapist said that 18 hours of sleep is unhealthy and told me to forget about Henry because he was probably distracting me from reality, so I should leave Henry and live life. Gee, thanks doc I thought. I will not forget Henry; he is my life, and he’s all I think about. I can’t forget Henry, it’s not that I don’t want to. I want to forget him, but he’s in my mind all the time and I can’t get him out of my head.

When I got back home, I threw myself onto my bed and checked my phone. Soon after, I checked the time and it said 8:30. I’ve always been a Mean Girls fan, so I turned the TV on, and watched it. Near the end of the movie, when Regina gets hit by a bus, I could no longer hear the RV. Stars started to appear all around me and I lost my vision. I was still conscious but I was starting to lose it. My breath started to get heavy and soon I couldn’t breathe. With the last breath I had I whispered, “Help, me...please...”

“Yael! You came!” Henry said joyfully. I smiled vaguely. “What’s wrong?” he asked.

“Well, my therapist wants me to forget you. But I can’t. He thinks you are imaginary and that you don’t actually exist,” I answered.

“Hey, that’s all okay; he wants you to forget about this place. It’s what therapists do,” he replied.

I nodded. “Yeah, but I don’t want to forget. I love it here. Yael, listen. Let’s kind of forget about the whole argument about reality and talk dreams, complain about life, school whatever. You seem to be able to do whatever you want here. It’s your place isn’t it?”

“Get wet, run, climb trees, and stuff; if you can’t do it in the real world, do it here,” he said.

I smiled. “Well, I’ve always wanted to go past the palm trees.”

“Go climb ‘em girl,” he told me. I ran towards the palm trees. Henry and I laughed and had a great time. I had never felt this way before.

“This is amazing!” I told him.

### **Blanca**

8:30 PM OF THE NEXT DAY

Dialing 9-1-1

“Hello, this is Blanca Susans, my daughter isn’t waking up,” I sobbed into the phone.

“How long has she been asleep for?” a voice on the other end asked.

“Almost 24 hours,” I said through my sobs.

“Ma’am, please stay calm, we are on our way.”

I hung up the phone. “Oh my sweet Yael, oh my poor baby... my beautiful girl... please wake up, come on Yael, my baby, please wake up again...” I took the phone from the nightstand and called my parents. I looked out the window and held the phone up to my head, my tears wet the phone. I could hear the sirens from the street below. I quickly turned off the phone, and put a jacket on Yael. It was snowing. I got my handbag and slowly picked her up. “It’s okay baby, it’s going to be ok shhh,” I said comfortingly.

I went down the stairs with Yael in arms. The doorbell rang. I opened the door and rushed to the ambulance.

Once we got to the hospital, a doctor appeared. “She seems to be in a coma ma’am,” a man said.

I burst into tears again. “Will she ever wake up?” I cried

“I don’t know; does she have any illnesses?”

I nodded. “She has schizophrenia.” The doctor nodded. In the hospital room I waited with my Yael. A new doctor came in. “Yael is it?” I nodded. “Well Ms. Susans, it appears that your daughter has limerence.”

“What is that?” I asked,

“Limerence is not uncommon when you have schizophrenia. It is when you have a thought that your brain keeps bringing back and it causes constant thought, shortness of breath, and other symptoms. However, she’s in an abnormal coma which we don’t know yet the cause of. Due to the schizophrenia, she may never wake up again...”

END OF PART I

*By: Sofia Vitro*

# Culture

## Are We Obsessed with Technology?

Imagine a day without a computer and a phone. That seems kind of scary, don't you think? As someone who is greatly dependent on my phone, I know that a day without it or the use of the Internet would be a nightmare. A couple of decades ago, computers and mobile devices were nothing but products of science fiction. Today everyone, even many young children, are exposed to technology. Technology is not a bad thing, objectively speaking. Technology is actually quite wonderful. There would not have been so many positive advancements in our world were it not for technology. However, are we, as a society, too obsessed with it?



Technology is a standard that we, the people of the twenty-first century, are blessed with. The advancements in technology that we have been fortunate enough to experience have helped us grow and flourish. For instance, medical technology has helped many people diagnose, detect and even cure serious illness and diseases. The advancement in computerised art has allowed for better digital animation. Advancements in communication through technology have allowed people to communicate in more efficient, effective, and personal ways. Face-to-face communicate is no longer defined by people being in the same place. However, despite these positive effects of technology, it is facilitating 21st century citizens to fall into addiction.

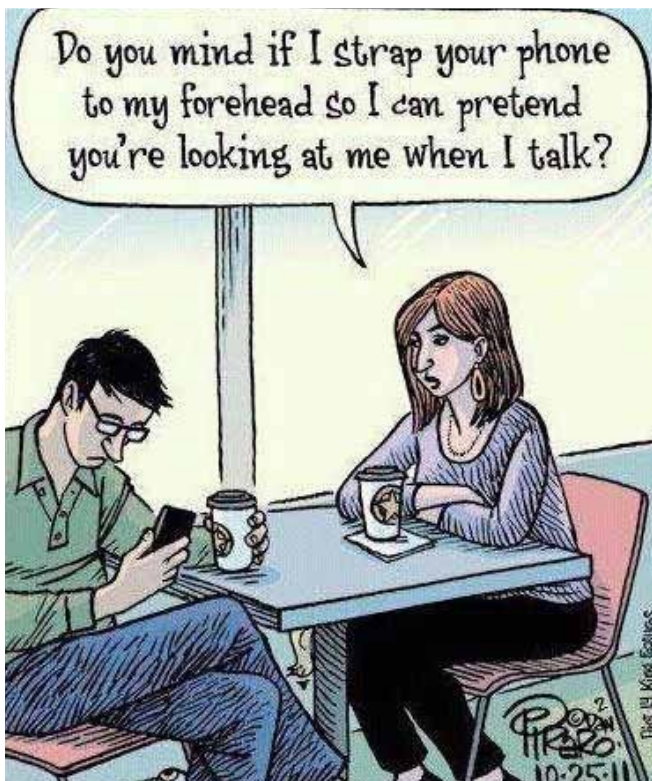
At a young age, I always wondered why everyone else had a phone and I did not. I got my first iPod when I was 14 and first phone when I was 15. Unfortunately, there are now toddlers playing on digital gadgets instead of enjoying healthier pastimes. When I stroll around the mall, groups of friends are all on their phones, without even acknowledging each other. As I wait patiently on the subway for my own stop, everyone is on their mobile devices. I am no exception to this, but when is it too much? People are constantly making sure they have their phone on hand – some people literally walk with their phone in their hand. Many individuals are scared of missing out on their social life, but end up missing out on what is going on right in front of them. People spend hours of time on their phones that could be much better spent.



Growing up, I was always reminded that there should be a balance in everything. When I ate too much, I would feel sick. When I slept too much, I felt groggy. What happens when one is on their phone too much? Over the years, people have become less active, as they become more dependant on their digital devices. Is it not easier to binge watch a couple episodes of your favourite show on Netflix, rather than going out and enjoying the outdoors? Some people have also become less health conscious, and are not taking proper care of themselves because of the hours spent on technology. People are burning bridges and putting up walls within relationships in real life, to make time for people on the screen. People are constantly typing and texting on their phone, losing the necessary face-to-face communication skills they need. It is so much easier to say things online, through a screen, than in person. People are also losing the ability to write properly. They are constantly typing slang and abbreviations. Thus these words become part of their everyday vocabulary.



Technology is such a vital part of our society. It is used for homework, communication and entertainment. It has greatly influenced our society and has shaped it to become what it is today. I know that I could not live without technology, but I also know that I do not need to be as attached to it as I am. We can appreciate how fortunate we are with the advancement of technology, but we must realize that there is more to the world than computers and mobile devices. If we are constantly looking at a screen, we will never see the beauty of what is truly around us.



By: Paula Lauro

# The Feminization of the Film Industry

One of my favourite movie series is the Oceans Trilogy. It consists of Oceans 11, Oceans 12 and Oceans 13. They are comedy heist films that are very well acted. The series features a predominantly male cast and the actors are marvellous at portraying their individual characters. Recently, I found out that the entertainment industry is remaking the movie with a predominantly female cast. It just won't be the same!



For me, the movie Oceans 11 is more entertaining because of the male characters and their personalities. A common feminist assertion is that “anything a man can do a woman can do just as well”. However, in my opinion, there are basic ways that men and women differ, including how they are able to entertain us. I do not know how this remake will turn out, but I do not believe that it will be as good as the original. This is because it will not feature the fabulous male cast of the Oceans Trilogy.

Many films do have predominantly female casts such as The Princess Diaries. This movie was released in 2001 with the two leads being female, played by Anne Hathaway and Julie Andrews. Another example is the Hunger Games series. The series is an adaption from the books, in which the lead is a strong female protagonist, played by Jennifer Lawrence. She does a marvelous job of portraying the character Katniss Everdeen.



A good example of this is the movie Star Wars: The Force Awakens. It is a brand new movie with a female lead role played by Daisy Ridley. The fact that this movie has a female lead role did not occur to me until I was writing this piece. In this film, the gender of the lead character was determined because it best fit the role she plays in the story. Likewise in the movie Oceans 11, the actors, who happen to be mostly male, were written into the script because they were able to portray the characters of the story so well. Another example is the casting for the current film Rogue One: A Star Wars Story. There is a female lead role and a very diverse cast. The actors were picked for the roles not because they are male, female, black, white or brown but because they have the ability to interpret the role they need to play. So, in my opinion, it is better to make a brand new movie featuring a lead female or even a predominately female cast instead of remaking the film Oceans 11 that originally had a predominantly male cast for no other reason than a feminist assertion.



By: Isabel Padolina

# Do We Get Enough Sleep?



Do we get enough sleep? This question can be answered by peering into a high school classroom while a teacher is giving a presentation. Look closely and you will realize that most of the students' eyes are glazed over or half-closed. Without presupposing some fault on the teacher's behalf, I would like to point out to you that the reason is due to a lack of sleep. An average teenager attending high school only manages to sleep for a maximum of six hours a day. Around 82% of teens claim that they feel groggy after waking up and struggle to keep awake throughout the day. This is an extremely high average of sleep deprived children; so what could be the reasoning behind it?

The main answer to the above question is stress. It is proven that an average high schooler experiences almost the same amount of stress as someone who struggles with an anxiety disorder. The pressure to be successful has become the drive for many young students. However, it is vital that a teenager does not throw away their well-being for this so-called success. Is anyone really successful if they are getting money or good grades, but all other aspects of their life are in ruins? Ask anyone why they want to be successful and their answers will undoubtedly lead you to the fact that they want to be happy. But we must stop and think whether or not happiness means ignoring family, friends, hobbies and ourselves? The mindset that "I will work hard now and then when I get older my life will be perfect" is seriously unhealthy and false. Let me explain myself before you deem my statement ridiculous. Life is full of hard work, until the end. It is unavoidable. It solely depends on how you face the work and deal with it. Life should not be wasted. Focus on living life in the moment. What about all the beautiful relationships and happy memories that are missed out on?

Teens often do not realize the amount of sleep they require to function. While reading this article, I want you to keep in mind that sleep is NOT a luxury, it is a necessity of life. Various studies have shown that on average, teens need around 7 to 9 hours of sleep per night. Again, this is not a "ballpark" goal, it is imperative to a young person's wellbeing. Sleep schedules are extremely important. For example, it is proven that our bodies never get used to shift work. Sleeping at night between approximately 10:30 and 8:30 is ideal for young people. Of course, school does not allow for this possibility because of early starting and commuting times.

For high school students, homework can be overwhelming and you can feel swamped. The homework load may not even be unbearable, but the intense pressure of having to be the best can be exhausting. It distracts our brains so that even if we do sleep, our subconscious continues to feel stressed. A good night's sleep greatly

outweighs the benefit of staying up to finish homework. Sleep deprivation will only lead to stress, insomnia and potentially a drop in grades. On top of that, sleep allows people to think with a clearer mind, instead of reacting disproportionately to everyday challenges.

Most teens are not getting enough sleep, but it is never too late to start taking care of yourself. Many of you may be thinking “Great. She is telling me to sleep but it’s impossible if I want to keep my standards high.” You can still do your best, but without compromising your sleep. Here are some tips to help you attain your goals while maintaining healthy sleeping habits.

First, be more effective with your time. When you are working, work hard. Eliminate all possible distractions and maintain focus. Another important skill to have is to not be afraid to ask for help. Obviously do not abuse this privilege, however, you have friends for a reason. Life is supposed to be lived in harmony with those around you. The same way people depend on you, allow yourself to depend on others.

Also, when you do sleep, make sure it is quality sleep. The saying “quality over quantity” is very relevant to getting enough rest. Make sure you are comfortable and in an environment free from noise, light and distractions. If you use your phone as an alarm, make sure to put it on airplane mode. If you use your phone to wind down before bed, stop. This is a seriously widespread, but false idea, that being on your phone will help you fall asleep. Despite how you may feel about this situation, the fact is that your brain becomes stimulated by the light emitted from your phone and it will keep you awake for longer. Phones are also addictive and it is hard to show self-control and put it away. Try to get the most quality rest possible by applying some of these suggestions in your everyday nighttime routines.

Sleep is important to everyone’s health and wellbeing. Taking care of your body is beneficial to you and the people around you. The time spent sleeping is well spent. It is not worth compromising that time for other distractions. If you maintain a healthy sleep schedule, then you will be happier, more focused, less stressed and fully present at all times. If you are not getting enough sleep then make the decision to treat yourself better. Sweet dreams.



By: Jane Zuchelkowski

# New Year's Traditions Around the World

Happy New Year everyone! Welcome to 2017. I'm sure a lot of people stayed up on December 31st to wish 2016 goodbye, and to welcome in 2017. Here in North America, New Year's celebrations usually involve partying, alcohol, cheering, and counting down. But different countries have different traditions, from wishing your cows a Happy New Year in Belgium to dropping ice cream on the floor in Switzerland. Here are a few that I found especially intriguing.

## Bolivia

In Bolivia, a tradition is to bake coins into some treats, and whoever ends up with the coins will have prosperity for the coming year. The trick is not to chip any teeth.



## Russia

In Russia, people write down wishes for the New Year on a piece of paper, which is then burned and mixed into champagne, and drunk between 12:00 and 12:01. It's almost like trying to infuse their wishes into their systems... maybe it'll be true if it becomes part of their DNA?



## Spain

At midnight, one grape is stuffed in the mouth for every twelve strikes of the clock, which, if accomplished, will give you good luck for the New Year. Don't choke!



## Ecuador

In Ecuador, paper scarecrows and old photographs are burned at midnight to celebrate the New Year, and also for good luck. There's nothing like a burning scarecrow to endear you to Lady Luck.



## Denmark

Along with traditional food and firecrackers, a New Year's tradition in Denmark is to save old dishes, and to smash them down on the doorsteps of family and close friends. The more popular you are, the more danger you're in!



## Ireland

The Irish like to start off the year with a house freed from evil spirits. To chase them away, a loaf of bread is thrown at the wall. "Because logic".



## Puerto Rico

Puerto Ricans also like to start off a year without any evil spirits in their houses, and the method for doing this is about as logical as the Irish's: they throw pails of water out of the windows, which scares all the bad spirits away.



## Colombia

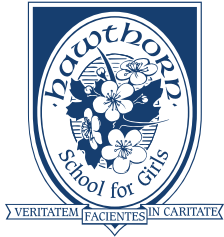
For a guaranteed year full of travel, a Colombian tradition is to run around the block at the stroke of midnight as fast as possible, all the while dragging behind an empty suitcase. It works every time. Don't argue. It does.



Maybe next year you can try some of these traditions. Who knows? Maybe evil spirits really are terrified of bread and water pails, and maybe your family and friends will be tickled pink to discover a load of broken dishes on their doorsteps. Either way, Happy New Year!

*By: Jessica Taylor*





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