

INK & OAK

SCHOOL EVENTS

By Sumita Magan

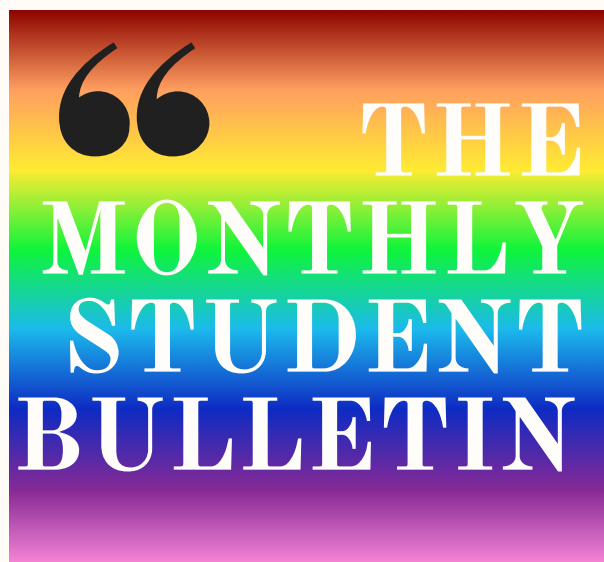
POLAR BEAR CHALLENGE



On Saturday, May 30, our school gathered bright and early at 8:30am for the annual 12km walk from Muizenberg to Simon's Town. Although it was extremely cold that morning there was lots of excitement, laughter and plenty of creative costumes from each class.

Many students pushed themselves to run the entire route and completed the challenge by dunking in the freezing ocean at the finish line. Our new record for the challenge is 1 hour and 19 seconds.

The class 8 parents and guardians organized the event and provided prizes, which added extra excitement to the occasion. All the students pushed themselves and everyone had lots of fun. There were doughnuts and orange slices at the end as a little refreshment. Most importantly, the event raised significant funds for the Nikiwe Bursary and the Oak Grove Facility Fund. Thanks to the dedication of students, families and sponsors, the forms brought in an impressive amount that will directly benefit our school community.



GEES WEEK

From June 17th to 19th, the school will come alive with the energy of Gees Week, a three-day inter-house competition filled with spirit and excitement. The Red House (Robert Sobukwe), Yellow House (Victoria Mxenge) and Blue House (Steve Biko) will battle it out in general knowledge quizzes and sports like baseball, volleyball and rounders. Adding to the thrill, the school has planned a surprise game that will keep everyone guessing until the big reveal.

This year's Gees Week is shorter because of Youth Day on June 16th, which commemorates the 1976 Soweto Uprising when students bravely protested against apartheid education policies. Their courage reminds us of the power of young voices, making this week's celebration of unity and school spirit even more meaningful.

Gees Week promises unforgettable memories, fierce competition and a chance for every student to show their pride. Bring your cheers, your Gees and your house colours. It's going to be legendary!

SHAKESPEARE PERFORMANCE



We also have our annual Grade 9 Shakespeare play coming up next term from the 11th of August to the 16th. We're all looking forward to seeing what this year's class brings to the stage. They will be doing A Midsummer Night's Dream.

Here is a very short summary of the play: Four Athenians run away to the forest, only to have Puck the fairy make both of the boys fall in love with the same girl. The four run through the forest pursuing each other while Puck helps his master play a trick on the fairy queen. In the end, Puck reverses the magic and the two couples reconcile and marry.

Wishing the class the best of luck. I for one cannot wait to see the results.

THE WORLD CUP

The FIFA World Cup 2026 has officially kicked off, making history as the first edition to feature 48 teams and three host countries: Canada, Mexico and the USA.

The opening match was a throwback to 2010 where South Africa also faced Mexico in the World Cup that was played at the FNB Stadium in Nasrec, Johannesburg, South Africa.

The expanded format means more nations than ever are competing on the world's biggest stage. Mexico started with a 2-0 victory, the USA impressed with a 4-1 win and Canada earned a 1-1 draw.

The tournament will run until July 19, with the final set for New Jersey, promising weeks of exciting football and cultural celebration.



ARTS & CULTURE

THE LOST LANGUAGE OF ART

By Isabella Kannermeier

Art is something that is becoming a lost language: civilisations, existences and human history were all spoken and remembered through their architecture, culture and art. Something that has been reduced in its soul and beauty, replaced with a price tag and a forgotten name.

Something that was once inaccessible to most, making it the pinnacle of wealth during the Renaissance, and undeniably one of art's most transformative eras, where we were gifted with breathtaking works of art in every way imaginable. These works were hung on the walls of buildings that were sculptures of art themselves, pieces that we would now barely give the time of day to look at. Instead, we walk past and ignore them but wait for hours to see the Mona Lisa.

Pieces we admire and praise while never knowing their true meaning. Clothing we wear without understanding the political messages and cultural significance they were made to carry. Jewellery that used to echo cultures through its sounds and chimes. Songs we once sang to make voices heard and beliefs amplified, to be remembered through lyrics and tunes. Our wallpapers, books, comics, homes and buildings themselves are all things that represent culture and art.

We've lost what art and culture truly are. By definition, art and culture share a symbiotic relationship: art serves as the visual and audible manifestation of a culture, reflecting its core values, beliefs and history. Simultaneously, culture provides the essential foundation and context that shapes how art is created, understood and appreciated by society. Recipes, hairstyles, music... the list goes on.

When we see these today, we view them as nothing more than a trend, a new want and rebrand we wish to accomplish, like a store decorating itself for an upcoming holiday. We've forgotten its origins: something that was created by one mother, one family, a tradition passed down and travelling through generations. It is mixed and developed further through different people, amplified through years, hands, ideas, love and mistakes. This becomes something more, the foundation, the backbone of our cultures, the primary colours used to paint the world we see but also blind us from the one we could be living in.

Art has always been entwined with our very being. It is part of so many cultural rituals. It is seen through our mehndi, braids, piercings, pagri, jewellery, clothing designs and the colours we wear, all carrying a meaning and a purpose.

Our jewellery can be heard through the chimes it makes as we walk. It holds a visual beauty while echoing the sounds of our beliefs at the same time. The songs and prayers that our voices thundered in our mother tongues are taught through generations despite being miles from their birthplace. Art was never a set form, it has always been heavily rooted in our very existence.

The art of creation is a gift we now take for granted. It was once something only the wealthy could afford. Art is political; it encapsulates history within its different forms and it is sewn into its upbringing. Fashion will always be one of my favourite examples of this. We often see runway shows and don't look past the weird shapes and questionable designs. We think it is targeted at a blinded audience, one that cares more about the brand name printed on it than the actual pieces. I urge you to look deeper than that.

Fashion has always shown its unapologetic opinions in a bold way. Those messages could be conveyed in a non-verbal manner that still clearly voices ideologies and supports activism. Art has become too accessible. In a discussion in class, we spoke about if poetry is becoming outdated, something people don't reach for anymore, and I don't believe it is something we can't find anymore. Instead, it is something we see too much of.

It's not that it is being lost in everything around it but instead being lost by being in our view too much. It's something that is always there in videos and reels. We hear it all the time, so we no longer have the desire to go and discover it ourselves.

The same is happening with everything else. We never need to go and learn things on our own; it's no longer something that is hard to come by or a purchase away. It's like how we don't have to go and do extensive research about other cultures because we see them on our screens constantly.

People of all ethnicities, their foods, histories and languages are all things we see on a daily basis. However, it is a drained, watered-down and lifeless version of its true form. We aren't seeing it in its true beauty.

This is cultural commodification. It turns it into a broken idea of its original form, altered to fit Western ideals, to still fit "trends" and our ideal versions of what is acceptable.



IN THE WORLD...

The Naturality of Queerness

By Ellior Freedman

First of all, a bit of terminology. In this article, “queer” is referring either to somebody who identifies with the LGBTQIA+ community or to an animal that has same-sex relationships. LGBTQIA+ stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Aromantic/Asexual and more.

In a world where hate and abuse against queer people is rising, it is important to remember that queer people and queerness have and will continue to be present on Earth and it is simply a natural part of life.

Queerness and homosexuality in animals have been observed throughout history but unfortunately people were not willing to record and publish these findings and those who did were censored and shunned. Even nowadays, a survey of researchers found that 77% had observed same-sex sexual behaviour in the species they studied, but only 48% collected data on it and only 18% published their findings, which is a surprisingly small amount.

Same-sex sexual behaviour has been documented in over 1500 animal species but the real number is likely much higher. Some notable animals showing same-sex behaviour are giraffes, where males have been observed showing frequent same-sex behaviour, including courtship and physical contact. Pigeons show both male and female relationships. These same-sex pairs will often build nests together and in the case of females, they will lay unfertilised eggs and try to hatch them. Dragonflies also have same-sex matings. In primates, researchers have found same-sex pairings in at least 59 primate species, which is rather significant since humans ourselves are primates.

Some other behaviours we have seen in animals include them changing their sex. This occurs in some fish, invertebrate and reptile species.

Some notable animals who do this are parrotfish, clownfish, green frogs and slipper snails. While the way and reasons animals do this differ from the human transgender experience, we can still find similarities between them.

Looking at all of these animals showing natural and harmless behaviours that people get abused and killed for showing is rather eye-opening. Remember that queerness is found across hundreds of species, while homophobia is a human social behaviour.

Let’s go back. All the way back to the beginning with one of the first proofs of queerness in humankind. In Gurus Cave, Zimbabwe, a cave painting that has been interpreted by some researchers as depicting sexual activity between men was discovered. This cave painting has been dated to approximately 8000 BCE.

In Egypt, a tomb was found close to the pyramid of Pharaoh Unas, which was built around 2500 BCE. This tomb belonged to two male noblemen of the Pharaoh: Khnumhotep and Niankhkhnum. There are two reasons pointing to why we can assume they were lovers. The first being their names. In ancient Egypt, names held a lot of significance and meaning. It was also not uncommon for people to take on new and chosen names later on in life. With Khnumhotep and Niankhkhnum, we can find a common thing in their names: “Khnum”, who is the Egyptian god of fertility and water. Both of their chosen names include this god and could point to another level of closeness between the two men.

The second reason, and most important one, that leads us to assume they were lovers is the carvings and paintings in their tomb. The most important carving was of the two noblemen facing each other with their noses touching, which was the highest form of intimacy in canonical ancient Egyptian works. Even though both of these men had wives and children, in artworks of them the wives were often painted distant from the men. This and other factors have led some historians to suggest that they may have been lovers and had a relationship with one another.

Over the course of human history, there have been many people who greatly contributed to society who have been queer but oftentimes their queerness is not told and is hidden due to high levels of homophobia and low levels of acceptance during their times. I have compiled a few notable people to talk about.

Elagabalus, who was a Roman emperor from 218-222, is believed by some historians to have rejected traditional gender expectations, although modern labels cannot be applied with certainty. Although assigned male at birth, during her reign over Rome she would often request for people to call her lady instead of lord. Along with this, she would wear luxurious silks and makeup. She called out to physicians from all over and offered a large sum of money if they could perform a sex-change operation on her but unfortunately it was not possible at that time. Due to her rejection of gender standards and not conforming to what people expected from her, she was assassinated in 222 at the age of 18.

Leonardo da Vinci, who is a famous Italian polymath who greatly influenced science, mathematics, art and much more, did not write much about his personal life so we don't have many of his personal thoughts but there are some records of him from others. Some historians have speculated that Leonardo may have had little interest in sexual relationships since in one of his notebooks he wrote, "The act of procreation and anything that has any relation to it is so disgusting that human beings would soon die out if there were no pretty faces and sensuous dispositions."

There is also no proof that he had any kind of relationships with any man, woman or anybody else. The closest thing there is, is an anonymous accusation of sodomy against him which happened when he was young but nothing came from it due to lack of evidence.

Isaac Newton, the man who invented calculus and revolutionised physics, has led some historians to speculate that he may have had romantic feelings towards men, although there is no clear evidence. Isaac Newton had no interest towards women but instead had a very close relationship with another mathematician, Nicolas Fatio de Duillier and when it abruptly ended Newton had a severe mental breakdown.

Eleanor Roosevelt, who was the wife of American president Franklin D. Roosevelt, was rumoured to have had a long-lasting relationship with another woman. Eleanor met Lorena Hickock while Lorena was working as a journalist writing about the president and his wife (Eleanor). Some historians believe their relationship may have become romantic during this time. Lorena soon quit her job as a journalist, saying that she felt she was compromising her journalistic integrity. After quitting, she began to work at the White House as a member of staff, bringing her closer to Eleanor. They shared many letters with each other, many containing affectionate nicknames that they used. It is said that their romance faded but they did continue to be close friends until Eleanor's death in 1962.

This shows that queerness is natural and we should continue to work towards a world where we can accept each other and see queerness as a part of life.

It's ironic that so many of us are able to admire historical figures who were likely queer yet hate those who are openly queer (or closeted) today.

LIFESTYLE

HOW DO I COME OUT TO MY PARENTS?

By Cilla Mae Rijdsdijk

I am not LGBTQ+ myself, but I thought that since it's Pride Month, this article might be useful to some students who are doubting their sexualities. So I went to some friends of mine, some of whom were still in the closet and some of whom had already come out, to ask them how they went about it and what things about the conversation they would have done differently.

The thing about this situation is that it's different for everyone, depending on what your parents' views are, what your views are and how comfortable you are with confrontation. Friend A has very relaxed parents, who have both been there for her in every decision she makes. She doesn't think it's a very important detail in her life, but she is at the start of a relationship with another girl, which she would like to tell her parents about.

Friend B's parents are going to be a little trickier. See, Friend B's parents are fairly sure that she's straight because Friend B is still in the closet. She is afraid to tell her parents because she has a shaky relationship with them but doesn't mind confrontation.

Friend C has one parent who is definitely going to support him and one he isn't sure about. He hates confrontation and gets nervous easily.

So what should each friend do in this situation? Friend A has already come out successfully (so proud). Because she didn't think it was such a big deal, she simply told her parents that she was dating a girl and showed them a photograph. They asked if she was lesbian, she said that she was bisexual and then they congratulated her and all moved on with their lives.

Friend B is still in the closet, so how should she go about this? First, she should test the waters by talking to her parents about LGBTQ+ characters in movies and seeing how they react. She should make sure she has a safety net: a friend or relative she can text if it doesn't go quite the way she planned. If coming out to both seems overwhelming, she could tell one at a time if she wanted to or write it down if she feels shaky. However, if Friend B feels that coming out would put her safety, housing or wellbeing at risk, it's completely okay to wait.

Friend C has already come out. He didn't want to talk face to face, so he added both his parents to a group chat and told them online. His father was supportive right away, but his mother wasn't keen. But over time, once she was informed of what being trans meant to him, she began to come to terms with it, as long as her questions were answered.

Some things have to be made clear, however. Nobody should be pressuring you to come out and least of all should they be telling you how or when to do it. The important thing is to make sure that you are comfortable, that you feel the time is right and that you always have at least one person who accepts you as you want to be accepted.

Your identification doesn't need to make sense to anyone but you and you don't need to explain yourself to anyone.

Just know that you are always, no matter your pronouns or sexuality, worthy of love.



Questions of the Month

BY RAPHAELLE.M.RICHMAN



1. Why don't we have Maths Lite?

Answer: That is a good question. The reason why is because they think that Pure Maths is better for us since it raises our passing rate higher than Maths Lite.

2. I disagree with what my teacher is telling the class, what do I do? I feel that I should not write it down in my Main Lesson book, what do I do?

Answer: If it's factual, then raise it with the teacher privately. But if it is a matter of opinion, then raise it in a class discussion. Depending on the topic maybe consult with the teacher or a guardian first.

3. Why did Charles Foster Kane say "Rosebud"?

Answer: I had to go to Google to figure out who he was because I didn't know. Apparently, his childhood sled "Rosebud" was thrown into a fire and it symbolised his loss of innocence.

4. Why does Mnr whistle?

Answer: I think he whistles because he's happy or because he has a catchy tune in his head.

5. Can we request things to be written in the newspaper?

Answer: Yes, you can, It may not be published but this is a student newspaper and we want to write what you want to read!

6. How to deal with a Mocking brother?

Answer: This question was about how to deal with your younger sibling. Well, I also have a younger sister who is a pain in my neck and who also mocks me. Unfortunately for us older siblings, little brothers and sisters are here to stay.

My advice to you is, when you and your brother get into an argument, try to find common ground with him and instead of continuing to fight, talk to him about why he disagrees with you.

When he mocks you with his friends, don't react at all. Because by reacting, he's going to keep doing it and that will make you more angry.

I do hope you take this advice and if not, talk to your classmates and see who else is an older sibling and share advice with them. Us older siblings have to stick together after all.

BOREDUM BUSTERS

Word Search

Find the teacher

G M Q R K Y J B D D O W M U X I Q X N V
 Z A C O J L L V Q T M X P J F C Y Q X J
 D T B F R W A Z U Q U I C K F A L L E J
 J H X A T W M S Q S P E B Y K F X U P Q
 O E S Y K K V D E Z M E Z N A I A H U S
 H B A F A Y R X E N E I V J R U B I U H
 L U W C O P S M I Y A C T Z A X Z F D A
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 A V I S Z D F M J L M T Y B S U S P R U

karakashian

Quickfall

Sigalas

Bassie

Ohlson

Smit-Gardner

Mathebula

Coach Caleb

Davids

Smith

Carter-Bolus

Sharniek

Dowling

Klasen

Perry

Riddles

What kind of room has no windows, doors, floors, or ceilings?

A MUSHRROOM

What happens to your body if you go eight days without sleep?

NOTHING, YOU SLEEP AT NIGHT

A doctor and a lawyer are both in love with the same woman. The lawyer goes on a trip for a week and gives her seven apples before leaving. Why?

BECAUSE "AN APPLE A DAY KEEPS THE DOCTOR AWAY."