
SUMMER EDITION



The Orator



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SUMMER SUNSHINE

NEWS FOR YOUR SUMMER VACATION



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EXECUTIVE EDITOR'S LETTER

Dear Readers,

We present this final issue of the year to you with mixed emotions: this edition marks not just the end of the school year, but the end of an era for many members on the exec team, including myself, who will be graduating.

On behalf of the graduating team, it has been nothing short of an honour to serve our school community in this way. And we are so proud to close out our term with milestones like growing our readership and physically publishing an issue.

We are confident in the paper's bright future, to be led by new voices and fresh stories. Thank you to everyone that made this paper what it is - our writers, editors, designers, artists, and readers.

As always, happy reading!

Abigail Joseph



TABLE OF CONTENTS



The Ultimate Summer Bucket List.....	4
Summer Events Around the World.....	7
Why MAMMA MIA! Is the Perfect Summer Film.....	9
Bringing Personality Back to the Web.....	11
Summer Poetry Submissions 2025.....	13
If I Could Do It Again...Advice from the Class of 2025.....	15
Ask Athena Advice Column.....	18
Mind Matrix.....	20
Artist's Corner.....	21

THE ULTIMATE SUMMER BUCKET LIST

Written By: Jocelyn Chau | Edited By: Meghan Li

Hey SBA! Summer is right around the corner, and it's time to start thinking about how you want to spend it. This two-month period is our chance to take time for ourselves, to develop our skills, to have fun with friends, and to build memories that will last forever. There are so many opportunities and activities that you can spend your summer doing; don't waste it away! If you're looking for some ideas, here are the top 28 ways you can have the best summer ever this year. It's been divided into five categories, so feel free to skip to whichever part of the list you feel best fits your hopes for the summer:

Relaxation - The academic year can be tiring; one of the best ways to spend your summer is to take time off for yourself.

I.Spa Day: Take a spa day. Allow yourself the opportunity to take care of both your physical and mental health in one go. Spas have been shown to enhance mood, decrease stress, and increase mindfulness. Taking the time to unwind and take care of your wellbeing is an important aspect of summer.

2. Go on a Road Trip: Although this isn't applicable to everyone, if possible, going on vacation -no matter how small- is a great way to completely distance yourself from the struggles and pressures of your at-home life. Explore new scenery, learn about new cultures, and spend quality time with your family or friends by travelling across Canada. Whether that be to Niagara Falls, to

the maritime provinces, or all the way to BC, road trips are great ways to enjoy the company of those you love while creating new memories.

3. Go Camping, Biking, or Hiking: One of the greatest ways you can fully relax is by enjoying the effects of nature, which has been scientifically proven to improve mood, decrease stress, and increase cognitive function. This, combined with dopamine-filled exercise, gives your body and brain a full boost!



Relationships - Spending time with those whom you love, whether that be family or friends, is one of the best ways to have a fulfilling summer.

I.Have Sleepovers: Staying up late to talk, take midnight walks, play games, watch movies, have baking competitions, and hang out under the stars is a great way to spend quality time with your friends. Instead of overstimulated activities, sleepovers are an amazing idea for spending time with close friends, and they are flexible to conform to whatever you and your friends are interested in!

2. Play Sports: In Canada, summer brings along with it the perfect weather to exercise outside. From volleyball to soccer to basketball to baseball, summer is a great time to goof off with friends and enjoy each other's company as you get your heart racing

trying out sports you've never given a chance before. Playing with friends takes away any sort of pressure and is a great way to stay healthy while making the most of the beautiful weather.

3. Board Game Night: Games don't always have to be online. There are many in-person board games that can help make a night with friends really fun and interactive. From party games like Cards Against Humanity, Don't Say 'Um', Codenames, and Throw Throw Burrito to more strategic games like Catan and Seven Wonders, board games are a great way to spice up a night with friends.

Events - While generic activities are fun and necessary, summer is also the holder of numerous special events and festivals that can help add variety to your weeks.

1. Toronto Fringe Festival: Running from July 2nd to 13th, the Toronto Fringe Festival is the largest theatre festival in Ontario, dedicated to featuring the plays and pieces of unknown artists. It hosts many amazing performances and is a great way to spend time appreciating the performing arts and drawing attention to new Canadian work.

2. Beaches International Jazz Festival: As one of the largest Jazz Festivals in Canada, the Beaches International Jazz Festival is a month-long (July 5th to 28th) festival that celebrates Jazz with live music, concerts, street performances, workshops, food trucks,

and more. It's a fun way to surround yourself with music and explore new sounds!

3. Toronto Caribbean Carnival: This month-long festival from July 31st to August 4th is a celebration of Caribbean music, art, food, and dance through parades, entertainment, performances, street food, and more. It's a great way to learn about and celebrate Caribbean culture in Toronto.

Staycation - Oftentimes it can be all too easy to end up spending all your time watching other people's huge vacations and wish you could do the same; while it might not be exactly the same, planning a staycation is a great way to make the most of your own circumstances. Here are some great ideas for itinerary items for a staycation in Toronto.

1. Head to High Park or the Philosophers Walk: Although Toronto is an urban area, that isn't to say that there's no natural beauty. Places like High Park (an area filled with beautiful cherry blossoms [best for late April/early May], breathtaking gardens, parks/playgrounds, and a zoo) and the Philosophers Walk (located in the St. George UofT campus with relaxing scenery great for contemplation and relaxation) are amazing ways to enjoy different elements of the GTA.

2. Go to Centreville Amusement Park: If you're tired of Canada's Wonderland, the Centreville Amusement Park is another amazing option. Located on the beautiful Toronto Centre Island, the Centreville Amusement Park is filled with over 30 attractions and is a great way to explore more of the area with family and young kids.

3. Explore Casa Loma/Baldwin Steps: This huge Torontonion castle is a breathtaking



must-see attraction. With lucious gardens, and, more importantly, a grand towering architectural building, Casa Loma gives you the true castle experience right here in the GTA. Not only that, but it's filled with attractions and food, so you can get the best experience possible during your time.

Personal Growth - If spending the whole break resting makes you feel restless and ready for action, the two-month-long summer break is a great time to work on yourself.

1. Create a New Hobby: Summer is a prime opportunity to add more flavour to your life. Picking up a new hobby can give you a focus to devote your free time to, and can give you something to look forward to when days get bland. Finding a mission, purpose, and passion in a new hobby is something you have the perfect opportunity to develop during this two-month break. Some ideas include picking up an instrument like the drums, piano or guitar, learning a new sport like tennis, pickleball, flag football, or soccer, baking or cooking, doing puzzles, painting, songwriting, crocheting, and reading.

2. Organize Your Life: Sometimes the best way to clear your mind is to sit down and organize your life. List down your priorities, rank them, identify areas of weakness and strength, create new ideas and missions you would like to add to your life, and plan how you would like to reach them. You'd be surprised by how freeing it is to see your life laid out in front of you.



Try a Reading Challenge: The amount of free time that comes with summer gives you the perfect opportunity to engage in a reading marathon to get back into or to strengthen your love of books. Some great challenges to boost motivation include book goals, genre challenges, author challenges, and more.

4. Spiritual Retreat: Finally, spending time with God is a great way to deepen your spiritual connection and reflect on your life and its path. Visit your local church to find out more about Eucharistic Adoration, daily mass, or just faith retreats that are being run throughout the summer!



All too often we can make the mistake of wasting away our summers. Sometimes we spend the summer bored out of our minds. Sometimes we pack it too full. Sometimes we let it pass us by as we stay inside and scroll, and sometimes we spend it watching other people make memories while not making any ourselves. Don't make that mistake this summer. Hopefully this list helped you create some ideas for how you can make the most of your break!

SUMMER EVENTS AROUND THE WORLD

Written By: Rebecca Varghese | Edited By: Wilhelmina Harker

Planning on travelling this summer? Experience the thrill of local tradition, music, food, community, and spirit in our guide to unique festivities. Ranging from elaborate parades to jazz festivals, here are 10 summer events around the world:

1. Running of the Bulls- Pamplona, Spain
Hosted every year from July 6th-July 14th, Running of the Bulls is one of Spain's most thrilling traditions. Locals and tourists alike run for over eight hundred metres alongside six fighting bulls through the narrow streets of Pamplona. It's one of Spain's most popular events with over one million spectators each year.

2. Gion Matsuri - Kyoto, Japan
Dating back to the 9th century, Kyoto's Gion Matsuri in July is a stunning display of Japanese tradition and beauty. It's celebrated during the entire month of July, featuring elaborate floats, traditional costumes, and religious parades. Visitors can enjoy street food, lantern-lit evenings, and a deep sense of cultural heritage.



3. Sikkim International Flower Festival- Gangtok, India

Celebrated in May, the Sikkim Flower Festival showcases the diversity of Sikkim's flora during its peak bloom season in the hotter summer months of India. Some of the flowers showcased include: orchids, rhododendrons, and alpine plants. It also includes cultural exhibits, food stalls, and dance performances.

4. Inti Raymi - Cusco, Peru

Every June 24, Cusco honors the Inca Festival of the Sun, known as Inti Raymi. This colorful and spiritual event celebrates the winter solstice in the Southern Hemisphere. With traditional costumes, ancient rituals, and dramatic performances, it celebrates a deep connection to Peru's indigenous roots.

5. Montreal International Jazz Festival - Montreal, Canada

Held in late June or early July, this is the world's largest jazz festival. Montreal's downtown transforms into a musical feast, hosting thousands of jazz artists and performances. With lively streets, outdoor stages, and a fantastic arts scene, it's a must-visit event for music lovers in the heat of summer.

6. Festival del Viento y las Cometas - Villa de Leyva, Colombia

Held every August in the town of Villa de Leyva, the Festival of Wind and Kites is a celebration of Colombia's windy season. Thousands gather in the town's massive cobblestone plaza to fly enormous, colorful kites shaped like animals, mythical creatures, or intricate designs. There are competitions for the biggest, most creative, and highest-flying kites, plus music, street food, and more.



7. Sziget Festival- Budapest, Hungary

Held every August 6-10 on Óbuda Island in Budapest, the Sziget Festival is one of Europe's largest music and cultural festivals. With multiple stages and performances spanning genres like rock, pop, EDM, and world music, it attracts fans from all over the world. Beyond music, the festival includes art installations, workshops, and even a circus, making it a full-blown cultural experience by the Danube River.

8. Lake of Stars-Lake Malawi, Malawi

This festival brings together musicians, artists, and festival-goers from across Africa and beyond. This three-day event features live music, poetry, dance, and art in a stunning natural setting. This spectacle by the shining waters of Lake Malawi attracts over four thousand visitors a year.

9. Fourth of July- United States of America

Celebrated nationwide on July 4th, this iconic American holiday commemorates the country's independence with fireworks, parades, concerts, and cookouts. Cities like New York, Washington D.C., and Boston host large-scale events, while communities across the country gather for local festivities, from patriotic music to outfits of red, white, and blue.

10. Sauti za Busara- Zanzibar, Tanzania

Taking place each February is East Africa's leading music festival, Sauti za Busara, meaning Sounds of Wisdom. While nearing the end of Tanzanian summer, it's a summer festivity featuring a diverse lineup of live African music, from traditional taarab to contemporary Afrobeat.

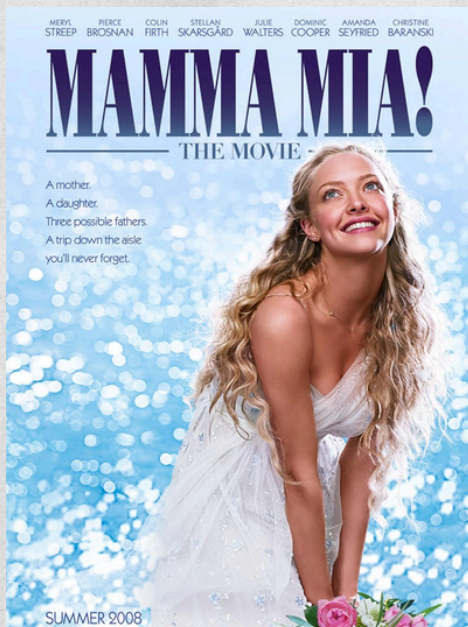


From lakeside concerts in Africa to fireworks in the U.S., these summer events offer unforgettable ways to explore the world through celebration. Whether you're drawn to the rhythm of live music, the energy of street parades, or the diversity of cultural traditions, there's a festival waiting to be discovered. So, nurture your wanderlust and explore summer around the world.

WHY MAMA MIA! IS THE PERFECT SUMMER FILM

Written By: Islay Chidiac | Edited By: Hannah Thompson

On a rainy day during March 2020, my life forever changed. As the pandemic began to reshape the world, I was embraced by a vivid whirlwind of colours, sixteen of ABBA's greatest hits and Meryl Streep dancing across a dreamy Greek island. Yes, I had just been graced by Mamma Mia! Since then, I have seen the film more than fifteen times and watched the dazzling musical live. Why? The award-winning cast: Amanda Seyfried, Meryl Streep, Julie Walters, Christine Baranski, Colin Firth, Stellan Skarsgård and Pierce Brosnan. The uplifting plot: a young woman invites three men to her wedding on a Greek island in the hopes of discovering who her father is. Above all, the fact that Mamma Mia! is the ultimate summer film.



MAMMA MIA!

Summer is indisputably the most beloved season, considering it is a time of joy and exuberance. This euphoria is captured in the film's infectious soundtrack, which is a tribute to living life to the fullest. For example, "Honey, Honey" highlights the gleeful adventures of youth as the young woman, Sophie, and her friends romp across a gorgeous vista. Meanwhile, it is impossible not to sing along to "Dancing Queen," a celebratory anthem of friendship, fun and joie de vivre. All of these hits exude the wonder of summer - freedom, spontaneity, nostalgia and, of course, love.

The summer vibes of ABBA's iconic numbers are enhanced by the stunning, Pinterest-worthy Greek scenery. Picture crystal blue waters, cloudless skies, sandy white beaches, cute sailing boats, rosy sunsets, idyllic Greek villas and gorgeous Mediterranean vistas. The dreamy setting enforces that Mamma Mia! is not only a film - it's a vacation! For a fabulous one hundred and eight minutes, Mamma Mia! is pure escapism, offering a joyous reprieve from the realities of everyday life. Indeed, you do not need to think while watching Mamma Mia!, only bask in the uplifting celebration of love, family, friendship and summer fun.

In fact, what defines Mamma Mia! as the ultimate summer film is the unadulterated joy that is imbued into every aspect of the film, from the plot and the dialogue to the singing and dancing. Meryl Streep attested to the film's delightful atmosphere in a 2023 interview with Vogue, describing the shoot as "deliriously happy," and that glee is palpable on screen. However, Mamma Mia! is not only characterized by glitter and positivity; beneath the surface lie uplifting themes that align with the season of summer.

Notably, the film rests on the foundation that is the heartwarming bond shared between Sophie and her mother, Donna. This multifaceted mother-daughter relationship, explored in the tear-jerking "Slipping Through My Fingers," reflects that at its core Mamma Mia! is a love letter to family. In fact, it is this theme that propels the film. The plot is built around Sophie's quest to find her father as she struggles to reconcile her family and societal standards.

Her struggle to determine which man her father is illuminates to Sophie that family is not always born by blood, but built out of love. This journey teaches her that the love she shares with Donna, her fiancé, Sky, and her family friends, Rosie and Tanya, is equal to that of any stereotypical family unit.

This emphasis on family and friends embodies the summer spirit - a season of loved ones reuniting, reconnecting and embracing their loving bonds. Mamma Mia! also highlights the beauty in taking chances and new beginnings. This is reflected in the boldness with which Sophie invites the three men to her wedding, as well as the fact that these men embark on a journey of fatherhood. There is a remarkable profoundness in which they embrace Sophie with love, hope and maturity regardless of whether they are her biological father. Most especially, Donna and Sam relinquish the heartbreak of their youth in a courageous exchange for marriage.

These choices are a testament to the characters' ability to embrace life as it comes. This reflects the fact that summer is a season of living; a season where people immerse themselves in the beauty of life.

Ultimately, Mamma Mia! is an ode to the joy of summer: sun-kissed scenery, glittery song-and-dance numbers, lovable and earnest characters, and a reminder that although life is not perfect, it certainly can be fun. In a world of drama and darkness, Mamma Mia! offers light as warm as the summer sun and invites you to embrace the season as though you are "young and sweet, only seventeen"!



BRINGING PERSONALITY BACK TO THE WEB

Written By: Scarlett Wong | Edited By: Hannah Thompson

Do you have something you want to share with the world?

Well, you're in luck, because with the internet, this has never been easier! Can we take a moment to appreciate how amazing of an innovation the internet is? Having accessible global reach allows us to present our thoughts, creativity and passions, and connect with people everywhere. It's a great tool to share what you love, find appreciation, and foster community. Thanks to the world wide web's presence, anyone can experience the joys of relishing in self-expression. Though, of course, as any rose does, this one comes with its thorns..

As time goes on, the evolution of how we share content is continually progressing. Social media is at the forefront of the internet, with a staggering number of users and algorithms designed to keep people on and scrolling. It makes being seen easy. However, with the domination of social media platforms as our primary means of connection, our view of "sharing" ourselves has slowly shifted towards "selling" ourselves. Social media culture is central around and ultimately encourages us to chase after numbers and external validation. The idea of sharing content on the internet is now placed heavily on following and monetization. In the process of this internet evolution, we've lost something very important.

The mainstream internet lacks soul. Because much of these social media platforms are curated by algorithms, you are only continuously fed the same type of content. Short-form content and brainrot run rampant online. Online interactions are shallow and many times, harmful.

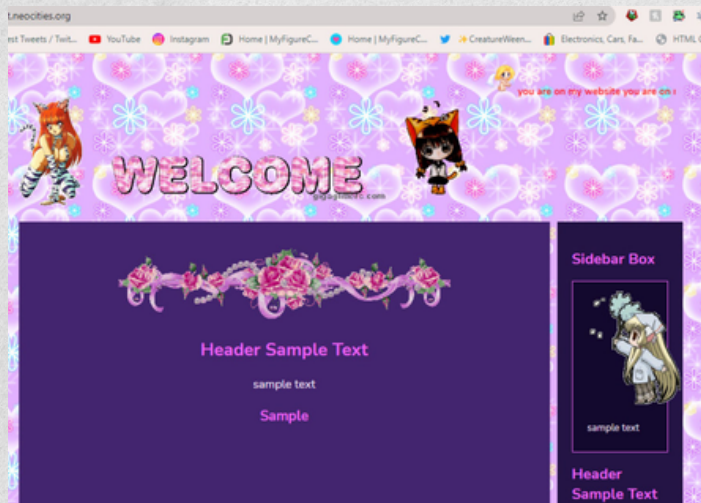
Even in visual design, the internet has become bland and uninteresting. (I mean, seriously, go to any mainstream site or platform and you'll see practically the same washed out minimalist design.) There's a distinct lack of creativity and life in today's internet.

In light of this, I'd like to unearth to you a corner of the web world that aims to revive this lost soul: the indie web.

The indie/personal web is a growing community bringing back the remains of retro internet culture. Before the rise of social media, web hosting platforms such as GeoCities were a place where people could make their own websites and surf the web. The level of individuality and personality far exceeds anything you'd typically see online nowadays. The internet of the past was a much more colourful and vibrant place. Contrasting to the modern internet where we favour posts and short videos, the indie web is centralized on creating websites where people share their thoughts, creations, collections, and so much more. Untouched by things like algorithms and following trends, the internet truly used to be a place to design and explore. And guess what? It still can be. While GeoCities has now become obsolete, its successor Neocities is alive and thriving! The indie web is a totally different side of the internet and I think this is definitely an experience you should try out and take part in.

So how do you take part? First of all, I'd highly recommend that you check it out for yourself first to get a sense of what I mean when I say personality (at <https://neocities.org/>)! Take a moment to browse, I'll wait...

Are you back yet? You'll notice that these websites aren't curated the way social media is. You're free to look for websites based on their tags, popularity, even update time. (They do have a special filter called "Special Sauce" which is algorithmic, however it is not particular to you.) And each of these websites are so, so unique and personal, especially in design. Functionality-wise, a website can serve any purpose you want, or if you'd like, it can have no functionality at all. People scouring through sites can connect with each other about their particular interests and agreements. And the coolest thing about websites? You're not restricted to the borders of a post, the whole page is your canvas! Everything is up to YOU. That's what makes this side of the internet so distinctive and wonderful. Every site has its own personality, and you're free to share it with the world.



If you're convinced, then the first step (which I know will deter many people) is to learn programming. It's not anything like WordPress or Wix or any other website builder where you have templates and preset tools, but being able to start from the ground up is what makes it so customizable! Yes, you will have to use HTML, CSS, and if you please, JavaScript to build a website. (Think of these three as the skeleton, skin, and muscles of a website respectively.) I won't go into depth on these here, but if you feel intimidated, don't worry! I can promise you that it is intuitive to pick up and there are a plethora of resources online (especially YouTube!) to help you build a solid foundation to start your website. My personal recommendation is to just start with the idea of the website you want to create, learn the basics of how to set up the most barebones HTML site, then just start building it from there! Learn the necessary skills as you go (for example, figuring out how to change the background image, or positioning elements), and have fun with it!



I believe that it'll make the journey more enjoyable, as you'll be working towards something you want to create. Trust me, the process of designing and implementing from top to bottom will be fulfilling. In the end, you'll have something that is uniquely yours.

Now, all in all, there's nothing wrong with using social media to share your creativity. Social media is optimized greatly for marketing and business. If that aligns with your values and goals, that's totally cool! Though for all the creatives out there who would like to be in a more personal digital environment, I'd highly encourage you to check out the indie web. It truly has some of the most dedicated and passionate people out there who just want to share what they love and connect with others about their passions. If you're up for it, there's a little corner of the web waiting just for you... You just have to go forth, be yourself, and create!

SUMMER POETRY SUBMISSIONS 2025

The Hollow Shell of Time by Sawel Keay

There goes Big Blue,
Back and forth, forever nowhere to.
Caresses the endlessly broken land of yellow,
A touch that erodes life hollow.

I am a hermit without a shell,
Lost, vulnerable—the white reapers can tell.
I need a shell so I can hide,
Or else they'll be my shell, trapped inside.

My hiding rock is not enough,
Locks me in its stone cuffs.
Rigid walls that crush me,
Rigid walls that hush me.

Big Blue's waves freely roar,
But I am dead—silent, secured.
This rock is a prison;
Without a shell, I am nothing.

I look above—the white reapers,
Careless wings of quartz feathers.
Angels who tickle Big Blue's head,
Descending only to curse life dead.

I wish I were an angel,
Detached, free, bound to null.
But I cannot freely fly,
Fated to cling, in a shell confined.

At last, I found it—
My shell, my home sweet home.
A cradle, a refuge, a prayer fulfilled,
A place where I'm more than bones.

But then an angel swoops, reprimanding,
Led by Life's inevitable end.
A fiery knife, a scalding glow—
Now my dream only night knows.

A haven I had dreamed of,
My hope is torn with merciless love.
The angel bore it to the heavens,
Like sea foam, it leavened.

The angel ascended to Big Blue's crest,
Deeming the shell unfit, distressed.
It fell from grace, failed the Divine's trial—
Scorned—there's no beauty in safe survival.

It kissed the ground,
Pounding Earth's lips, screaming pained sounds.
Each grain of sand a hammer,
A symphony of strikes made it shatter.

My shell held surprising greatness—
A hermit that shared my likeness.
A red spider with claws raised in fright,
Sideways it scuttled, fearing Heaven's light.

Before I could call out,
A flash of white sprouts.
The angel's a hunter—the white reaper,
Claimed another red brother.

These lands are cruel,
Big Blue's endless laughter shakes us fools.
Big Blue endures forever,
His belly swells while we untether.

For Big Blue, time's a stage for our mock,
To Big Blue's sways, tick to tock:
I may not last,
But I'll be the one who laughs last.

Life's bound to Big Blue's sand:
An hourglass—destined to die where we stand.
I can hear the sand dropping,
Hammers bashing, no stopping.
Until they smash the time beneath us,
Peace is found when Big Blue's stage is in pieces.

Panic at the Poems- Reagan Suarez

The birds start to tweet,
The flowers begin to blossom,
Must be summertime!

The sun rises and beams over the
earth,
On top of the flowing grass,
On top of the blooming flowers,
Through the windows glass,
Even during heavy showers!

Spring disappears, and another season
comes,
Ultra-hot weather,
Many a dandelion fly through the air,
Midnight skies come much later,
Eagerly awaiting the time
Ready for summer?

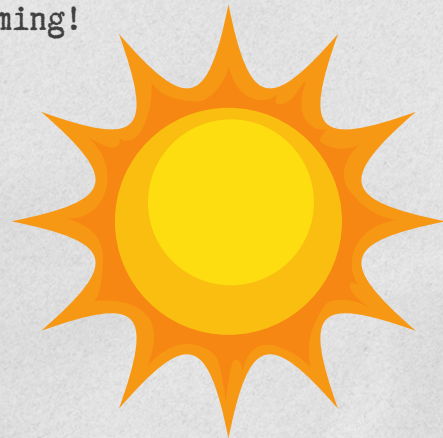
**For the Sun is Coming! - Wilhelmina Harker**

The cold months won't last,
You'll grieve what it does to you.
Soak up that frostbite fast,
for the sun is peeking through!

When the sky-light rose,
you cowered in the shade.
For now you're exposed-
out naked and displayed.

Do you miss that dull snow,
that you hid down below?
In this bright summer glow,
your drained colours show.

Will it hurt to feel real,
without that cold numbing?
That truth will soon reveal,
for the sun is coming!



IF I COULD DO IT AGAIN... ADVICE FROM THE CLASS OF 2025

Written By: Jocelyn Chau | Edited By: Hannah Thompson

High school can be terrifying. As Ms. Cosentino said, "We have 2 million minutes in the place where many people live out what they call their 'golden years'". Oftentimes, it can seem like time is speeding by too fast. No matter what grade you're in, everybody can use advice in high school. That's why the Orator interviewed three of the most accomplished Grade 12s at SBA, for some of their top advice on how they made the most of their high school years. The three students interviewed were Janelle Ponniah, Isaac Garel, and Ethan Bautista, some of the most accomplished high school seniors at SBA. Each student's individual interviews were compiled below. We hope this helps you get an idea of how you can enhance your high school experience.

Orator: Tell us a little bit about yourself. What are your interests? What are your accomplishments? How have you made an impact in this school?

Janelle: Hi, I'm Janelle, a grade 12 AP student. I'm someone who's always been drawn to helping others, especially through healthcare, leadership, and creative problem-solving. I've been passionate about medicine for a long time and also love engineering, which I've explored through robotics, software club and HOSA. I was accepted into pre-med and engineering programs and will most likely be attending UC Berkeley in the fall. At school, I've been on student council every year, and I also help lead the Software Club. One thing I've really tried to do is bring people together through events, volunteering, and just showing up when support is needed. Whether it's organizing fundraisers, running lunch activities, or leading a group of members to run different events for our school, I've always wanted to make the school feel more connected and welcoming. I've also started new initiatives that focus on kindness and connection. For instance, I helped launch Care Crafts, where the Student Council partnered with the Makers Club to deliver handmade cards and plushies to

children at the Markham Stouffville Hospital. Through these efforts, I've always focused on making the school feel more connected, compassionate, and welcoming.

Isaac: I'm very passionate about science and mathematics, and I've always loved problem-solving, learning how different things function, and working collaboratively with others on innovative projects. I also enjoy reading fictional novels, some of my favourites are Dune and Lord of the Rings. I also play competitive baseball and hockey in my spare time and try to help out in my community as much as possible. Throughout high school I have been involved with various different clubs and councils and have always strived to make a significant contribution to the school community. I've contributed through my roles as a member of the faith development council and wellness committee, and I have demonstrated my leadership in my roles as Grade 9 Student Representative, Student Council Vice President, and Student Government President. These experiences and roles have allowed me to make a meaningful impact on the school by organizing various events, encouraging school spirit and student collaboration, and promoting cultural awareness. I have maintained a 95+ average throughout my high school career and have achieved awards for distinction in chemistry, functions, french, and history.

Ethan: Mostly it's been myself studying, I don't get tutored or anything special. Outside of the content taught, I also watch YouTube videos about the topic before reviewing the slides. As for study tips, one of my favourites is something my older sister taught me called "blurting". The concept is that after a lesson and before a test, you find a blank sheet of paper and write down everything you think you know about the topic. Then, you check the slides, the textbook or your notes for the missing information, or correct information if you got something wrong. Then wait longer and longer before

repeating the process, until you're confident in your abilities.

Orator: How did you decide your extracurriculars and how did you advance to get where you did? What advice do you have to manage and improve specific skills?

Janelle: I chose my extracurriculars by following what I was genuinely interested in and what felt meaningful to me. I joined the Student Council in Grade 9 because I wanted to help improve the school experience and create opportunities that would support the student body. Over time, I took on more responsibilities and eventually became president. I also joined Software Club because I was curious about programming, and I stayed because I enjoyed helping others learn and grow alongside me. Music has also been a big part of my extracurriculars. I play nine different instruments, and it has always been one of my favorite ways to express myself and stay creative. Outside of school, I started skating when I was young and grew into a competitive senior skater through years of training and persistence. I also became a Junior Olympic champion in sport stacking, something I achieved through dedication and consistent practice. If I had to give advice on building skills, I'd say focus on what you care about, be open to feedback, and give yourself time to grow. Improvement takes effort and patience, but it's worth it when you're doing something you love.

Isaac: When choosing my extracurricular activities I tended to search for ones that aligned with my personal interests and values (leadership, service, and cultural awareness). I was able to succeed and advance to the positions I have now by being consistent with my work ethic, always taking initiative and responsibility, building strong connections with my peers, teachers, admin, and executives, and contributing in every way possible. To improve skills in public speaking make sure to start small and build up to speaking to a wider audience; start by talking to yourself in the mirror to gain confidence and master your pacing before slowly expanding the size of your audience. To improve time management use a planner or an agenda that allows you to schedule all your upcoming activities, and be sure to always set time aside for you to unwind and relax. Finally, to improve collaboration and teamwork, try volunteering for

roles that involve working with others to achieve a common goal. By putting yourself in these situations you allow yourself to grow and refine your skills.

Ethan: I did mostly what I was interested in, and it did help that my two older sisters were in FDC before me, so I had some guidance to look to to get to where I was. I picked a lot of clubs initially, and once I saw the clubs or councils that I liked, I decided to hone in on those. To advance to an executive position, I became as helpful as possible before I received any title. I've realized that much of what I did was a series of yeses to opportunities I've been given. If anyone's asking for volunteers or help, it rarely did a disservice to me to assist. As for specific skills, practice is key. I wanted to get better at public speaking, so I would watch a lot of tutorial videos on how to improve, but I'd say that that was just twenty percent of my improvement. I'd attribute eighty percent to practicing, because it helped me get over a lot of things, like the fear of failure, stuttering, et cetera, et cetera.

Orator: If you could give three pieces of advice for an incoming freshman, what would they be?

Janelle: If I could give three pieces of advice to an incoming freshman, I would say first, do not be afraid to step out of your comfort zone. Trying new things, even if they feel a bit intimidating at first, is the best way to learn more about yourself and figure out what you enjoy. Second, stay on top of your time. Being organized makes everything more manageable and helps you avoid unnecessary stress. Third, focus on building strong relationships. The people around you, including your friends, classmates, and teachers, can have a huge impact on your high school experience. They will support you, challenge you, and help make these years something to remember.

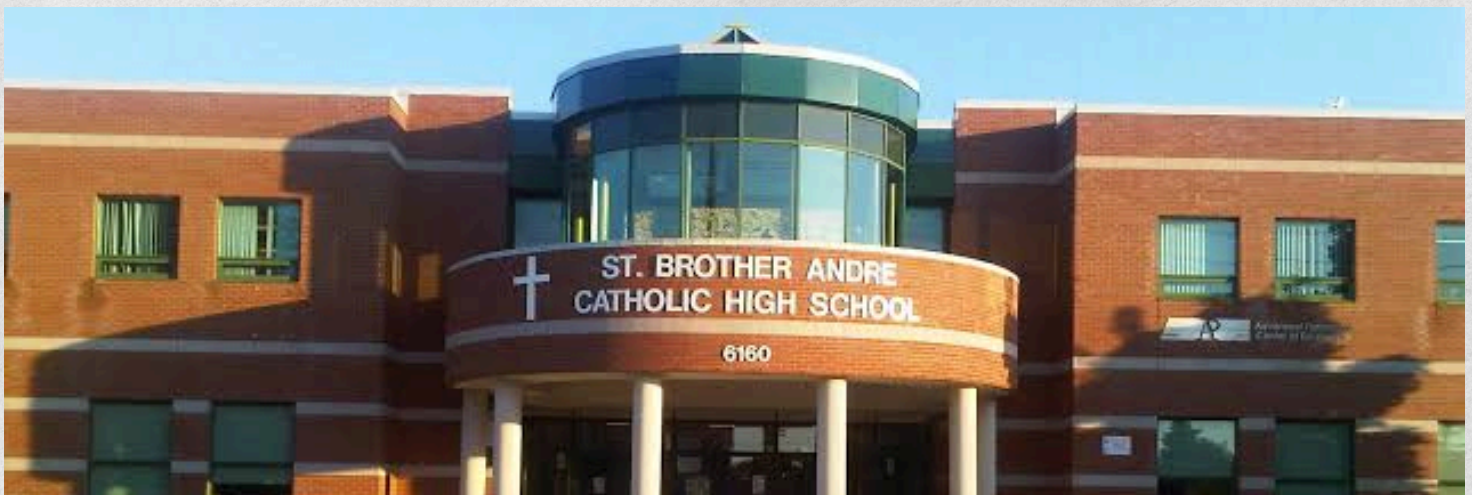
Isaac: My advice for incoming freshmen would be to get involved with the school community as soon as possible. Whether it's a club, council, or even volunteering for something like orientation night. Step outside of your comfort zone and try new things. High school is a time for growth and learning who you are as a person. By trying new things you open yourself up to new experiences and opportunities to

grow and meet new people. Stay organized as much as possible. Being organized and having a cohesive plan is instrumental to succeeding in high school. By having something for you to refer to with important dates and events you set yourself up for success and help prevent yourself from procrastinating and becoming overwhelmed with everything going on. Ask for help when you need it. SBA is such an amazing community and there are always people who are willing to help you and point you in the right direction. Teachers, administration, and older students have all gone through the same process you are experiencing now and getting their feedback and advice on how they succeeded may help you too.

Ethan: The first is to take as many opportunities as you can. Broaden your perspectives, join councils, clubs activities and see what you like. Try to do as much as possible to find what you like and are good at. Say yes to everything you can, and see how you

rise to the challenge. The second is to do the homework. No one likes it for its own sake, and everyone wants to avoid it, but I've discovered a lot of development is found in the things I avoid. If you can find a way to do it as intended, there will be very little cramming that you have to do, and it prepares you to do the more difficult courses in grades eleven and twelve. The third is to find a way to be productive when nothing is due; keep yourself busy. I find that completely relaxing during slower weeks is a mental state that is difficult to recover from. I'd recommend at least thirty straight minutes of work or studying a day when it seems there's nothing to do. Even just that allows you to transition into harder weeks more smoothly.

Hopefully, these interviews were able to help you gain some direction, insight, and hope for your upcoming year(s) at SBA. Good luck!



ASK ATHENA ADVICE COLUMN

Written By: Isabella + Hannah | Edited By: Francis Kafieh

"Hey Athena, I'm unsure of a friendship and worried how to end it. How do I do it in a respectful manner and still be civil with the so-called friend. Sincerely, A Little Bit Unsure."



Hi there Unsure. This is totally natural; high school is definitely a testing time for relationships. Many find that growing up sometimes means growing apart. If you find yourself growing apart from someone, I would approach this friendship like a new relationship. Try testing if there is still a possible spark between you and your friend by spending some time with them, then take some time to reflect, evaluating what has changed about this person and your relationship with them. This might help you realize that there is still an opportunity to develop or change your friendship! On the other hand, if things are awkward or you can't see a relationship progressing with them, there's no shame in mentally shifting your priorities in this relationship. If you find that you're not interested in forming a closer relationship, it might be best to only spend time with them in group settings with mutual acquaintances, or to simply share a passing nod in the hallways. Friendships at this time in our lives can be stressful to navigate, so the most important thing to remember is to be kind to yourself and others even as your relationships change.

"I have a crush on my friend. They are so cool but I don't want to ruin the friendship. What should I do? I feel like it could work out. Sincerely, Confused and Crushing."



Hi Confused. It's always hard to know when or even if you should confess your feelings for someone else. Sometimes being close to someone adds an extra layer of pressure, an anxiety that confessing will add awkward tension to your relationship. On the contrary, sometimes this closeness can actually be the glue that will keep a relationship afloat no matter what. If you're uncertain how they feel about you, try getting closer to them, have some alone time together; build the foundation of your friendship first, and when you're ready, you have something to build a romantic relationship on top of. If you're worried about not being able to tell if they like you back, the best thing to do is put out signals so that the pressure isn't on you to try and read signals that might not even be there. Find subtle ways to indicate to your friend that you're interested in being closer, and don't be afraid to make your hints obvious—like offering to do their favourite things with them. At this point, the most likely worst case scenario is that you now have a really close friend who you can laugh with about all this later!

"Sometimes I feel like I fall behind in my English class because I can never finish a book fast enough, especially when I can't read along with an audio book. How can I get better at being a faster reader? Sincerely, A Worried Reader."



Hello Worried Reader. First of all, you're not alone; many students struggle with reading speed, especially when the pressure's on in class. It's easy to feel like you're falling behind when others seem to breeze through books, but remember: reading isn't a race, and comprehension matters way more than speed.

That said, there are ways to build your reading stamina and confidence. If you find audiobooks helpful, try listening while reading the physical book whenever possible; it can reinforce understanding and help you move through chapters smoothly. If audiobooks aren't available, break your reading into manageable chunks. Set small goals, like a chapter or 10 pages at a time, and reward yourself when you finish. You can also try reading in a distraction-free space and using tools like your finger or a bookmark to guide your eyes along the lines—it may sound simple, but it can help keep your pace steady. Over time, you'll naturally start reading faster. Most importantly, talk to your teacher if you're struggling. They might be able to offer accommodations, like extended time or alternative formats. Advocating for yourself isn't a weakness; it's a strength. Keep turning those pages!

"Hi Athena, I'm in grade 12 and chose my university programs based on subjects I'm really passionate about; things I enjoy as hobbies too. But lately, my courses have started to feel more stressful than fun, and I'm worried the work will make me lose my passion altogether. I try to tell myself, "Do what you love and you'll never work a day in your life," but it's not really helping. Are there ways to keep my passion alive when it's also tied to school and work? Sincerely, Searching for a Spark."



Hi Searching for a Spark. What you're feeling is completely valid, and you're definitely not alone. When something you love is intertwined with school or your career path, it can start to feel more like a chore than a joy. That doesn't mean you made the wrong choice; it just means your relationship with your passion is evolving. One way to keep the love alive is to create space for it outside of academic pressure. Try engaging with the subject in a low-stress way—watch a fun video, journal about it, or explore parts of it that aren't tied to grades or expectations. Even small moments of enjoyment can help you reconnect with why you chose this path in the first place. Just remember, it's okay if your passion looks different over time. That shift doesn't mean you've lost it; it just means you're growing.

Inspired by the NYT

Sort the 16 summer-themed words into four groups of four based on their hidden summer connections.



MIND MATRIX

CONNECTIONS

COOLER

SUNSCREEN

GRILL

SAND-BUCKETS

LEMONADE

SUNGLASSES

FLIP-FLOPS

POPSICLE

BBQ

WATERMELON

HAT

PICNIC

TOWELS

SWIMSUITS

ICE CREAM

UMBRELLA

ANSWER KEY

COLD SUMMER TREATS

Lemonade, Watermelon, Popsicle, Ice cream

BEACHWEAR NECESSITIES

Swimsuits, Flip-flops, Towels, Sand-buckets

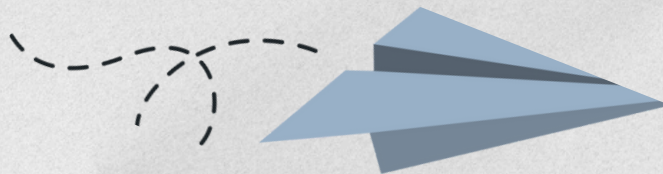
OUTDOOR PARTY

Grill, Barbecue, Picnic, Cooler

SUN PROTECTION

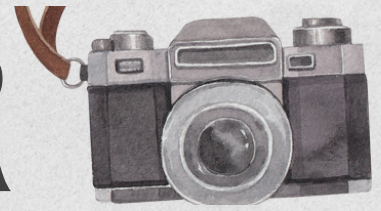
Sunscreen, Sunglasses, Hat, Umbrella

Created By: Bianca Manlapaz

COMIC
STRIPS

ARTIST'S CORNER

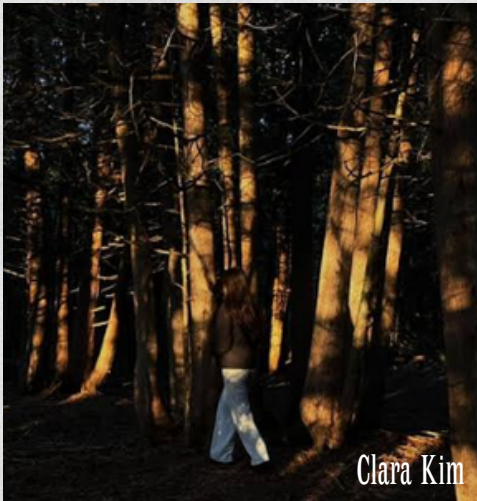
ARTIST'S CORNER



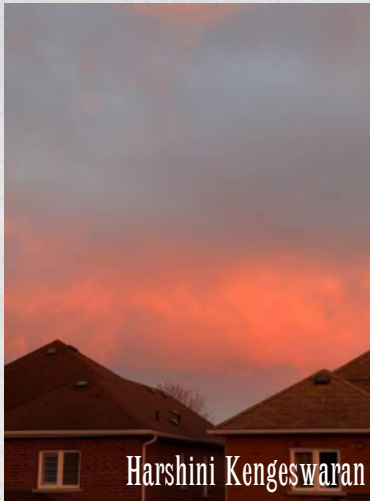
Talon Contreras-Wong



Cayleigh Abad



Clara Kim



Harshini Kengeswaran



Cayleigh Abad

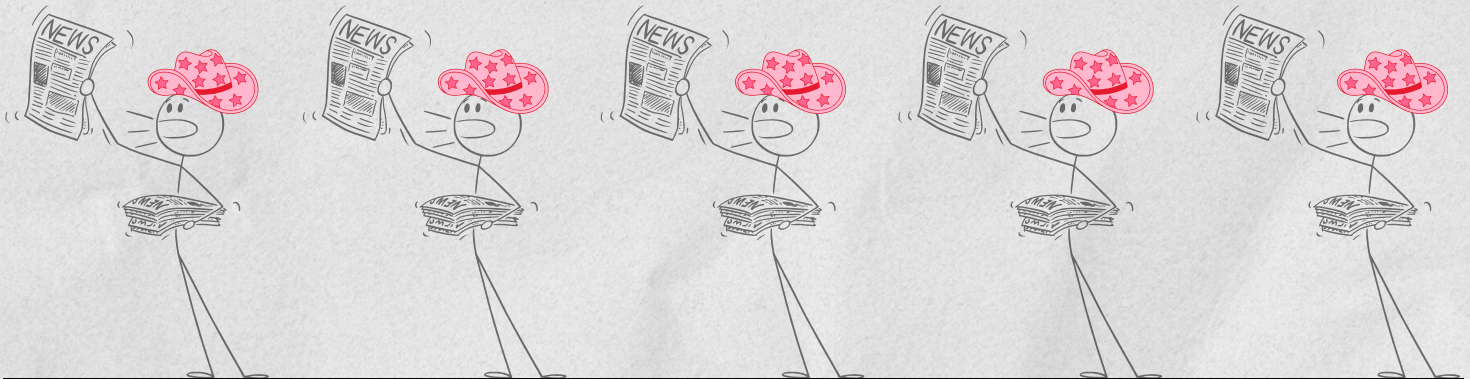


Cayleigh Abad



Harshini Kengeswaran

PHOTOGRAPHY



YOURS TRULY,
THE ORATOR TEAM





Fin.