

## Macdonald C.I. “We’ve Got You Covered.”



Photo Credits: Yilin Luan

both industrial and academic.

Every year, the TDSB Hindu Heritage Month Volunteer Planning Committee organizes a specific theme around the event. This year, the theme is Sri Rama: Epitome of Love, Compassion, Duty and Service. Sri Rama was the 7th reincarnation of Vishnu, one of the principal deities of Hinduism. Throughout his life, he was the perfect man, son, husband, and monarch. He fought evil and upheld ideals and values of Hindu society, acting as a role model to future generations to come. The story of Sri Rama, also known as Maryada Purushottam, teaches others on how to live life to the fullest.

Throughout November there were multiple events and contests hosted in light of the celebration. For future events, you can keep yourself updated through the TDSB Hindu Heritage Month account: @tdsb\_HHM. Happy Hindu Heritage Month!

## Interviewing Loui Karaoulis, Our School Caretaker, Trans Eye for the Cis Guy

Selena Sarwari

COVID-19 has brought many hardships to teachers across the world, including those here at Mac. But how has it affected other staff members, such as our school caretakers? To answer this question, I interviewed our school’s main head caretaker, Loui Karaoulis.

To start our interview, I asked Loui a few questions to get to know more about him and his career. He shared, “I started my career back in 1987, and I’ve been the main head caretaker at Sir John A. Macdonald for almost two years now, and plan to be here much longer.” He also went on to say, “I love the school; the students are fabulous and it’s a great building to be in.”

Since COVID-19 has affected many teachers and altered what their normal schedule looked like, I wondered how it affected Loui’s regular day. He replied that his daily schedule has always been very busy, as he is responsible for the security of the building, and ensuring that all the heat and fans are functioning correctly.

However, the pandemic has certainly impacted his schedule. Loui commented that “We do a lot more sanitizing and much more cleaning [than before] — a deep cleaning — to ensure that the school is safe and ready for when the students come in.” With the pandemic, his and the caretaking staff’s schedules have gotten a lot harder as well: “If we’re short-staffed, we might need more hours to sanitize, seeing as sanitizing is our highest priority.”

Moreover, I asked Loui for his thoughts on how Mac is faring against this wave of COVID-19 and whether or not there are ways in which we could help. He replied, “As you can see, everybody is wearing masks, and all the students are sanitizing their hands before they walk in. And we, as staff, are checking to make sure everyone is safe and healthy before they enter the school — and you can tell [it’s working] by the low number of cases we have at school.” He also stated that to keep the school safe, us students should continue to properly wash our hands, sanitize, and follow basic social distancing protocols.

Overall, as a school and community, we truly appreciate Loui and all the caretakers’ dedication to keeping us safe. What do you think that we can do better to make the jobs of our school caretakers easier during these challenging times?

## Hindu Heritage Month

Brandon Feng

For thousands of years, Hinduism has prospered from regions near the Indus Valley (modern day Pakistan) and spread around the world to become one of the most practiced religions. It is practiced by approximately 1.4 billion people in the world today.

This November, the TDSB proudly celebrated Hindu Heritage Month! November has been reserved in Ontario to observe Hindu traditions, values, and cultural practices.

Ontario is home to more than 360,000 Hindu Canadians who are recognized as great contributors to Canadian innovation, growth, and multiculturalism. From across the province, since the early 1900’s when the first Hindus immigrated to Canada, they have helped to develop this country’s progress in countless fields,

Zara Knetsch

Stubbornness is a wall; no amount of logic and emotional explanations will knock down a transphobe’s argument. I hate that they don’t care; it’s discouraging.

The simmering anger in my gut burns my time away. Its smoke clouds my thoughts, destroying my patience. Those flames that scar my insides lick the bricks of stubbornness like the burning bush from the Old Testament; no harm can come to their perception.

I hear a silent screaming coming from behind my eyes. The scream is an echo of constant pain from people like me.

Being trans is a lonely feeling. Surrounded by curious people who will never understand. How do I know that I am? They make me prove myself. How do I explain my core to strangers and people who think they know what it looks like? How do you explain colour to the colourblind?

Why is there more curiosity about my body than my well-being?

Before I found out I was trans, being trans seemed like a distant concept. It wasn’t really talked about. Trans people are often seen as unicorns. Non-existent. They think of us as a rare breed. As if we aren’t right beside them.

I haven’t decided if it’s better if people pretend to accept me or not. Those people who tell me they support me but yet never use my pronouns. Weak support. Illusion of friendship. At least it’s not hate?

It’s terrifying to be transgender in a cisgender world. Statistics of trans deaths are passed around our community as easily as cat memes. Cis people don’t often respond well to trans people. Often we are infantilized or sexualized. They shove non-binary people into binary after binary after binary. We are not here for you. We don’t need to fit your definition of trans.

People are hypocrites. They preach love and acceptance and in their next breath, kick their child out of their house. They yell equality and kindness but don’t even let trans people use the bathroom.

“Ladies and gentlemen”, “boys and girls”, “guys and gals”, “she/he”. Our words mean a lot. The solution is compassion and respect. For people to try and listen. If transphobes truly listened and tried to understand what we were saying, maybe there wouldn’t be so many.

## Mac Health Council’s Tea Tuesdays



Photo Credits: Karen Mitro



Photo Credits: Rachel Tang



# Sports and Events

## Diwali - The Festival of Lights

Jatin Taploo

During Hindu Heritage Month, people all over the world and at Mac celebrated Diwali on November 4th. Known as the “Festival of Lights,” Diwali represents the triumph of good over evil, and of light over darkness.

The first day of Diwali follows the Hindu calendar; this year, the five-day-long festival commenced on the 31st of October. Each day has a specific purpose in marking particular events, deities, and wars.

The third day is the main day of Diwali, which landed on November 4th this year. It is so important because it marks the day King Rama returned home after 14 years of exile. He was immediately welcomed by his family and kingdom. The people of his kingdom decorated the whole city of Ayodhya with lights and had a grand celebration. During the third day, oil lamps known as diyas are lit and children play with sparklers.

King Rama is one of the avatars of God Vishnu, whose wife is Goddess Lakshmi. That is why during Diwali, Hindus worship Goddess Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, and pray for good luck and prosperity.

During Diwali, there is a myriad of foods and delicacies, such as samosas and sweets. I asked Vishva Sritharan, a Grade 9 student, who was happy to share about his Diwali celebrations this year. He mentioned, “We had a variety of food on Diwali, such as samosas, murukkus, halwa, and laddoos. It's a very enjoyable holiday and we get new clothing for everyone. Usually, we'd also spend Diwali with cousins, however, COVID has changed the ways we did Diwali this year. As we have a Prayer Room, we lit up lamps and made sure there was light everywhere throughout our home.” Personally, I celebrated Diwali by exchanging gifts and buying new clothes. I also lit up candles and spread them out around my prayer room. As well, I ate roth and ladoos, which are homemade (and very delicious!).

All in all, I had a great Diwali, and it appears that other students did as well. To those who celebrate, I hope you all had a wonderful and cherishable Diwali while spending time with family and friends!

## Girls' Field Hockey

Lia Sayegh

Every team starts with rookies. It was no different for Mac's girls' field hockey team, composed of students who, despite their inexperience, were determined and more than willing to pour blood, sweat, and tears for victory. Although many teammates knew little about the sport, they were eager to be the first at Mac to play against other schools since the pandemic began. With dedication, zeal, and Mrs. Tanos-Johnson's coaching, the girls' field hockey team saw improvements beyond their own expectations.

On game day, the team was put to the ultimate test. Mac was off to face two teams on that glorious Thursday afternoon, and, a challenge it would certainly prove to be. The first game was against a known winning team: North Toronto Collegiate Institute. But, as intimidated as the amateur team was, Mac was equally as motivated and ready to face the challenge. The team was going to make itself known.

During the first half, close calls had everyone on their feet. Surprisingly, the teams were matched in skill, so neither team spared any effort. At halftime, the score was still 0-0 and the tension could be cut with a knife. Everyone was eager to give it her all in the second half, as the need for a goal was clear to both teams. Despite Mac's resilient defence efforts, North Toronto scored a beautiful goal with a little over fifteen minutes left. The game ended with a score of 1-0, leaving North Toronto victorious.

Although Mac had just lost, the team's spirits were still soaring. The team played against an exceptional school and only let in one goal. For a team of beginners, everyone on the team was proud of her accomplishments. However, with a back-to-back game against Harbord Collegiate Institute, the team had no time to relish its achievements. Despite the fatigue from the team's previous game, the team learned from its mistakes in its first game and triumphed with a score of 3-0.

Team members thought that their field hockey careers were over after that exciting tournament, but Mrs. Tanos-Johnson organized one more game against North Toronto the following week. Without hesitation, the Mac team was

determined to beat the only team against which it had lost.

The game began and was as equally aggressive as the last. Within the first twenty minutes, North Toronto scored. With a relentless pushback, Mac tied up the game before halftime. During the team huddle, Mrs. Tanos-Johnson told the team something that they would never forget: “see red.” That is what they did — hit after hit, fall after fall, Mac pushed back, but so did North Toronto. With three minutes left of the game, North Toronto scored and Mac's heart dropped. The game ended in North Toronto's favour, and the teams congratulated each other.

Regardless of its losses, it was astonishing how far the Mac team had come in a short period of time. The team owed much of what they felt to the wonderful coach, Mrs. Tanos-Johnson, whose passion for the game served as an inspiration for all. Tears were also shed for the graduating seniors. Their drive, motivation, and spirit were truly remarkable and motivational in the eyes of the younger members of the team. Congratulations to Mac's girls' field hockey team. You have made yourselves known!



Photo Credits: Lia Sayegh

## Sr Boys' Soccer

Todd Ash-Duah

Hey Mac! We are so excited that sports are back at Mac as we attempt to establish ourselves as an active school both in and outside of the classroom. Numerous sports teams are now locked in, ready to play, and eager to show off our Blackscot spirit — including our senior boys soccer team.

Our boys have been very eager to get back on the field, showing hunger and desire to begin the season. Although they only played two games, the team completely dominated their competition. Mac defeated Northern Secondary School with a score of 6-0 on November 1st, and Danforth Collegiate on November 4th, cruising by with a 10-0 victory.

Members of the team were absolutely ecstatic to be able to play soccer for our school, including Grade 12 student, Gino Colangelo: “It was just refreshing to play with my boys again. It's been a really long time since I played an actual competitive soccer game with them, and it was just fun to get back out there on the field.”

If you want to keep with our soccer and other sports teams, be sure to check out @macdonaldathletics on Instagram to stay updated throughout the fall and upcoming winter season. Let's go, Blackscots!

## Colour Wars



Photo Credits: Yilin Luan



## The Climate Change Apocalypse

Gabriella Ribeiro

What would you do if the world were ending? Some may say they would spend their final moments with their loved ones. Some may try to escape death and some make sure that they are prepared for when that moment comes.

As a child, I was very worried about the end of the world. I remember, one night, my dad and I were watching a space documentary and he mentioned that, in billions of years, the sun will explode. I was terrified. I spent the entire night thinking about what I would do and where I would go. Eventually, I realized that I am not going to be alive in billions of years so I do not need to worry about it (or do I?). Recently, I've grown fearful of the new and most likely apocalypse: climate change. By chopping down forests and burning fossil fuels, we will bring about our own demise.

Fortunately, we have the power to fix it. Efforts that include recycling, upcycling, and reusing all work to fight against climate change. By joining the Mac Environmental Action Council (MEAC), you can make a difference. This council has a lot to offer from hosting competitions, fundraising with bake sales, planting trees, and even hiking through our city's beautiful parks. In the MEAC, you can help heal the earth and have fun doing it.

All new members are welcome because we need your great ideas! Meetings are on Wednesdays in Room 130 at 2:50 pm. Join the MEAC, stop asking yourself what you would do if the world were ending, and start asking yourself what you can do to stop the world from ending!



Photo Credits: ZhenYan Lin

## Mac Music Council

Jessica Mu

*"Joining Music Council was definitely one of the best decisions I've made in high school, and I would highly encourage anyone to do the same!"*

- Tejesh Arujuna, President of Music Council

As one of the largest councils at Mac, the Music Council is focused on promoting Mac's fantastic music program as well as their music-related events. In the past few years, the council has led preparations for concerts, participated in music mentorship programs at local middle schools, and hosted Coffee Houses and Oodles of Noodles at Mac.

There are four major committees within Music Council this year: Operations, Communications, Designers, and Events. Operations keeps the music department organized and tidy; Communications prepares videos and posters to promote music events throughout the school; Designers creates decorations for the music department; and Events coordinates upcoming music-related activities.

Music Council's goal is to unite students and create a sense of community through the common interest of music. Despite the restrictions that have arisen due to COVID-19, Mac Music Council will continue to bring entertaining and engaging events to students throughout this challenging school year.



Photo Credits: Jalan Bayram

## Remembrance Day at Mac

Vishva Sritharan

*"They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old: Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them."* - Laurence Binyon, "Ode of Remembrance"

As we roll toward the brisk days of winter, we are met with a significant day when the efforts of members in the armed forces are recognized. This day is known as Remembrance Day.

On Remembrance Day, we commemorate the Canadians who served and protected us during WWI (1914-1918), WWII (1939-1945), the Korean Wars (1950-1953), and other worldwide conflicts. Countless soldiers have lost their lives or became disabled in order to give us freedom and peace, which we often take for granted.

On November 11th at 11:00 am, Canadians pause and stand in silence for a moment to honour the men and women who served, fought, and sacrificed themselves for our rights.

Mac's Remembrance Day assembly honoured the valiant efforts of the Canadians who served the country during worldwide conflicts. Schoolwide, every staff member and student paused for a moment of silence to remember. We thank everyone who participated in the assembly, helped create the lovely Remembrance Day posters, and donated to the victims of the wars. Most of all, we sincerely appreciate Mr. Steel and Ms. Kostopoulos for leading the commemorative event. All of these efforts truly emphasize the importance of this day, and how it should remind everyone that our world wouldn't be the same had it not been for the brave heroes who fought for us. Lest We Forget.



Photo Credits: Zarina Gibson

## Art Council

Kaitlyn De Ponte

Hey Mac! Have you seen all the stunning art located around the halls? All those creative and meaningful designs were created by none other than our fellow Blackscots! Whether it's spreading a powerful message or helping us get into a certain holiday spirit, the Art Council always delivers beautiful work!

For Halloween, members of the Art Council put pumpkins, dolls, and other terrifying things together throughout the school to get Mac into the Halloween spirit. For Truth and Reconciliation Week, they created an important display of orange and blue paper cut-outs of boys and girls together in the main hall.

Going into the winter months, the council continues to work on exquisite masterpieces. For the holiday season, members of the Art Council are preparing decorations and a big, festive display with snowmen, snowflakes, and other art to light up the halls, preparing you for the most wonderful time of the year.

Upcoming projects include selling Valentine's Day cards in February, helping other clubs and councils with their displays, and hopefully hosting an illustration contest.

If you love to draw, be creative, and would like to lend a helping hand to make artwork for the school, this is the club for you. Meetings are held every Thursday after school in Room 142 and new members are always welcome!

Let's get creative, Mac!



# Interviewing Blackscots

## Interviewing Mac's Class of 2021: Alisa Yan at York/Seneca's Collaborative Nursing Program

Karen Mitro & Nancy Zou

Welcome back to our interview series featuring recent Mac graduates! This month, we spoke with Alisa Yan, our former Senior-Editor-In-Chief at Mac News. She hopes to give Mac a glimpse of her journey and experience as a Nursing student.

### 1. Which post-secondary program are you going to? How did you decide?

I'm currently in the four-year Collaborative Nursing program at York/Seneca. After narrowing my choices down to nursing programs, I chose this program based on its nearness to home, location of clinical placements, variety of placement settings, cost, and positive reviews from past and current students.

### 2. What advice would you give to Blackscots interested in your field?

The biggest piece of advice I'd give to students interested in nursing would be to first assess what you value most (ex. commute, placement locations, student life). From there, narrow down your choices until you have your top pick. You should also reach out to students in the program as well as nurses to ask what they like and dislike about their program/job to see if it aligns with what you want to do.

### 3. How would you describe life at your university community?

It can be difficult to make friends since it's more of a commuter school. However, by putting in the time to talk to others in your classes, it's definitely not impossible! Though COVID-19 has also made it difficult to interact with others in residence, it can still be a great way to meet others. The Seneca King campus itself is quite small and peaceful, so it's a good place to explore and hang out with friends.

### 3. Tell us about your transition to university so far. Did Mac prepare you well?

The transition into a nursing program was difficult at first because I wasn't used to the amount of readings we completed weekly. Mac prepared me well in regards to the content I learned (pay attention in biology!!); however, I'd say that the work I put in high school cannot compare to the amount I put in now.

### 4. What advice would you give to Grade 12s who are still undecided?

I had an incredibly difficult time deciding what to choose in Grade 12. My advice is to ask people in different programs/careers to hear their perspective and to research what the daily life of someone in x program or x career is like. As well, try to decide whether you want to be in a more general (such as science or arts) versus a more specific program (such as nursing or engineering). Realizing that I wanted to be in a more career specific program played a big part in my program choice.

### 5. What advice would you give to Mac students applying to post-secondary in general?

If you tend to worry over important decisions like I do: go to sleep. I spent way too many hours worrying over my future when in reality, I was going in circles. Try writing down your thoughts and the pros and cons of each program, going to bed, then coming back with a fresh mind the next day.

### 6. In hindsight, is there anything you wish you would have done differently during your time at Mac?

I would've tried stressing less about school, especially in grades 9 and 10. Now that I'm physically far from some of my high school friends and have less free time, I regret thinking so much about schoolwork and not spending more time hanging out with friends and trying new hobbies.

### 7. Anything to add?

Your health comes first. It is not worth losing hours and hours of sleep over tests and assignments. Make sure to eat well and sleep well since your brain functioning and memory depend on it!

We hope you learned something from Alisa's insight as a Nursing student — we certainly did! If you would like to hear more from Mac graduates studying in a variety of programs, stay tuned on our upcoming issues!

## Interviewing Mac Athletes

Megan Eng

Sports are back and gaining traction at Mac! Students now get the chance to be a part of a variety of teams, such as soccer, field hockey, volleyball, and even rugby.

I was lucky enough to interview one incredible athlete by the name of Janessa Rowe. Currently in Grade 11, Janessa is an outstanding student athlete. She has excelled at multiple sports, and particularly basketball. Below, she details her experiences, personal influences, and why you should try out!

### When did you first start playing basketball? What position do you play?

I started playing basketball when I was about eight-years-old. Both my parents played when they were younger, as well as my older brother and all my cousins — one even played professionally in Europe. My uncle coaches [basketball] too. I played on my elementary and middle school teams and had also played in a league outside of Mac. I usually play centre as I am usually one of the tallest players on the team.

### Why did you join the team at Mac?

I've always loved to play and be involved in sports at school. With COVID-19 shutting everything down last year, I am definitely taking any opportunity I can get to stay involved. I also really enjoyed my experience on the team in Grade 9, making new friends while learning new skills.

### Do you have a favourite player? Is there a team you cheer for?

There are too many to choose from! However, Kobe Bryant is definitely up there. His passing was extremely sad. I admire his mentality, his love for the game, and what he did off the court as well.

My favourite team is obviously the Raptors! I'm a fan of any Toronto sports team, but the Raptors are my favourite. The 2019 playoff run with the team winning the championships was amazing! Although I miss the team consisting of Kawhi Leonard, Serge Ibaka, Norman Powell, and especially Kyle Lowry, I am looking forward to the future of this team. It will be amazing to see how far they can go under the leadership of Fred VanVleet, with returning players like OG Anunoby and Pascal Siakam, and newer additions like Gary Trent Jr. and our 4th overall 2021 draft pick, Scottie Barnes.

### Was there anyone that influenced you to pursue basketball?

My biggest influence to play the sport was my parents. Both of them love sports and are always very encouraging and supportive. So, when they asked if I wanted to start playing basketball, I said sure. It was probably one of the best decisions I've ever made. My mom always comes to my games and though they may both critique me on the way home, I know they just want me to do well.

### What would you recommend for those who may be deciding whether they should join?

I would recommend that all students get involved and try out for any sports team, not necessarily basketball. Get involved! Even if you think you won't make it. What do you have to lose? It can be an excellent opportunity to meet new people, learn new skills, be active, and have fun!

Thank you for speaking with us, Janessa!



Janessa Rowe, Grade 11 Student Athlete