

What's UP?

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ISSUE



P.1-2

It's Christmas Time!

- Culture or Consumption?

P.2-5

More New Teachers!

- Mr. Wong
- Miss Ho

P.5-7

Movie Reviews

- Frozen 2
- Joker

P.6-7

Latest Trend

- School Renovation

FOCUS

WHEN MODERNITY MEETS CHRISTMAS

---For Culture or Consumption?

Walk past the street and you can see numerous Christmas trees and other decorations - yes, Christmas is coming! Indeed, in a metropolitan city like Hong Kong, even if you are not a Christian, you will find yourself immersed in the festival. Behind the scenes of assorted decorations, what does Christmas actually represent? What is the story behind it?

Christmas is the festivity in remembrance of the birth of Jesus Christ, who is the son of the God. As one of the most influential figures of Christianity, he was hailed as the role model of all people by some. In fact, it was described in the Bible that it was God's wish for the birth of Jesus, in order to lead the people to kindness from the wrong things they have committed. Therefore, Christmas becomes a festive event widely celebrated by Christians, with activities ranging from Christmas feast to gift exchanging.

These are the stories of the past. Nowadays, Christmas activities have extended to the whole community, making it no longer a religious festival solely celebrated by Christians. As a matter of fact, most of the people in the city are fond of being a part of it, despite choosing to neglect the story behind the celebration. According to a survey conducted in 2018, Hong Kong people spend about \$5500 at Christmas on average, showing that spending money has become the major part of the festival. Some of the Christian associations even have sparked criticism on how the holiday has lost its original meaning, thus advising their believers not to celebrate Christmas at all.

And it is not the only point that consumerism at Christmas has aroused controversy. While green spending has become the talk of the town in the past few years, more and more people have become concerned with how the mass spending at Christmas causes harm to the environment. Take

gift exchanging as an example: when you have unwrapped the present on Boxing Day, do you find all your presents useful? Unfortunately, just like most of the people do, you have most likely received cups and photo frames, which you have many already. As a consequence, you will leave them idle at home, or even throw them away, leaving the resources used for manufacturing these products wasted.

When you walk past these decorations again, do think twice before you spend. Let Christmas be a festival of culture and joy, and not to be engulfed by consumerism!

Interviewing Mr. Wong

4B Pauline Chan 4C Melody Wong

C:Pauline Chan W:New teacher Mr Wong

C:Hi, Mr Wong. Thank you for today's interview. Let's start with an easier question: what grades and subjects are you teaching?

W:I am the class teacher of 4B and I teach F.1,3 and 4 Maths.

C: Oh I see. May I ask—why did you choose to be a teacher?

W: Erm... I love to get along with students and I think teaching is a really fun and meaningful job.

C: That's very inspiring. Have you taught in any other schools before teaching in LKKC? Why did you choose this school?

W:Yes, I've taught in a girls school before. I chose this school because it is near my home and I want to try out a new environment---a co-educational school.

C:That's interesting. Do you have any expectations for your students?

W: I hope they can be serious and concentrate during class. Strive for knowledge. Also they need to be self-critical about their behaviour. The most important thing is to have a clear sense of what is right and what is wrong because these are very important when you leave school and enter the society.

C: We will bear that in mind. I wonder if you have a favourite movie?

W:Umm...It's difficult to answer as I seldom watch movies.

C:What about a favourite book?

W: A well-known one would be The Legend of the Condor Heroes, written by Jin Yong.

C: Here is my last question. Can you share some of your hobbies?

W: I used to love playing chess and I like playing the guitar.

C: Wow. That sounds cool! We'd like to thank you again for accepting our interview. I hope our schoolmates can learn more about you after reading this interview.

Interviewing Miss Ho

3B Lorayne Lee, 3B Gianna Santoso, 5D Mary Zhong

There are still a couple of new teachers we haven't introduced yet so let's meet them now.

Z: Mary Zhong (5D) L: Lorayne Lee (3B) G: Santoso Gianna (3B) H: Miss Ho

Z: Hi, Miss Ho. Thank you for today's interview. Let's start with an easier question: what grades and subjects are you teaching?

H: I'm currently teaching F. 3 and F.4 and I only teach English.

Z: May I ask—why did you choose to be a teacher?

H: This dates back many many years ago. I've always loved to work with children. I guess educating them is something that I'm willing to offer myself. I'd like to watch them grow and grow along with them.

Z: Have you taught in any other schools before teaching in LKKC? Why did you choose this school?

H: Yes, I have. I have actually taught in a number of schools and prior to this one, I have taught in a boys school. I've worked there for a number of years before I decided to come over to LKKC. Besides, I love to work in Tuen Mun because it's closer to my home and LKKC has a good reputation. The students here have good academic achievements and there are very good citizens in Tuen Mun. So, I have always wanted to work here.

L: I see you have a strong Australian accent, are you from Australia?

H: I was actually born in Hong Kong but I grew up in Australia so I do have a somewhat strong accent.

Z: Did you have any difficulties growing up in Australia?

H: I surely had them. I was only 11 when I went there as a year 8 student. I had huge difficulties in communicating with the rest of my classmates and the rest of my school. I remember crying every day for about the first nine months because I couldn't communicate and I didn't know anybody around there.

Z: How did you overcome the difficulties?

H: Just don't worry about making mistakes and failures and you will be able to speak and make friends. Also, I do think that school is where you make mistakes and you can make mistakes without paying a cost. It is much better if you can learn from it than learning from nothing.

L: I've heard you are an expert in creative writing, any tips?

H: Well, I won't say that I'm an expert but I do enjoy reading what students write. I do think that everyone is a creative writer because you can try creating something from nothing. By simply having your pens and papers, people can jot down their thoughts and feelings.

L: Do you have any suggestions or ways that can help students to improve English?

H: My tips on improving English is simply to immerse yourself into that environment so perhaps read more, listen more and watch more English materials to help yourself. Take the initiative and talk in English – it really helps.

G: Do you have any expectations for your students?

H: I don't really have high expectations for students in the academic aspect but I do have expectations in terms of their personal growth. I'd like for students to be helpful and respectful. I like to communicate with students. Being a good student, helping each other is more important than getting good results.

Z: We will bear that in mind.

G: Do you have a favourite movie?

L: Jasmine. (LOL)

H: My favourite movie is Aladdin, with princess Jasmine. It is the most recent one that I've watched. I couldn't draw myself out of the beautiful music so I have to recommend it.

G: What about a favourite book?

H: I read a lot of books but I can't pick one at this moment. I guess different people do enjoy reading different reading materials. There is no such a thing as reading the right material or wrong material. But just having a casual read over the newspapers and English magazines is relaxing. As a start, students can read English magazines like the English Corner and the English Channel. I do have some magazines in my staff room so students who are interested can come and borrow them.

Z: Can you share some of your hobbies?

H: As a mother, I do love to take care of my children. But in terms of my personal hobbies, I love needlework, making crafts and cooking so I'm a fan of arts and crafts.

Z: We'd like to thank you again for accepting our interview. I hope our schoolmates can learn more about you after reading this interview.



It's more than just a Disney Film

5C Kari Tung



Frozen 2 aired two weeks ago and is still the hottest film with it being the second film in the Frozen duology following the viral 'Let it go' song from Frozen 1.

Focusing on the story of Arendelle after 'happily ever after', life isn't so 'happily ever after' for Elsa (Idina Menzel) after all. She keeps hearing a voice calling out for her at night and so she strives to find the source of the calling when she realizes the safety of Arendelle is at huge risk. Anna (Kristen Bell), Kristoff (Jonathan Groff), Olaf (Josh Gad) and

Elsa wander into the unknown to seek for the voice, with little knowledge from a story their mother told them when they were little. And the story takes off, where they seek adventure and discover hidden secrets. Is the power too strong for Elsa to manage? And what challenges will the two sisters face? How far are they going to go to save Arendelle—and each other? You'll have to watch the film to find out yourself.

You might think that it's a Disney film and Disney films are for kids. But I reckon that this is not the case here. In a scene where Anna tries to find Elsa, she sings a song called 'The next right thing'. My first impression was that this song is about depression with Anna feeling hurt and succumbs to despair for around four minutes. But the message behind the song is far beyond that.

In the song, one of the stanzas is 'The life I knew is over, the lights are out. Hello darkness, I'm ready to succumb. I follow you around, I always have. But you've gone to a place I cannot find. The grief has a gravity, it pulls me down.' Anna suffers from a tragedy that she never thinks of and she can't bear it. It was ironic because at the start of the film, she sang 'Some things never change' with Olaf. Her optimism has been seen throughout Frozen 1 and 2, being the brave and strong protagonist. But in the final song of Frozen 2, she finally shows that no one's life is perfect with butterflies and rainbows and that it's okay to feel sad and struggle in life.

Anna is surely a role model to a lot of children and the way she faces her problems shows and fosters maturity for young viewers knowing it's alright to be devastated in life as long as you know what you should do about it and never give up. The song after that fits this theme - 'You are lost, hope is gone, but you must go on and do the next right thing. Anna brought out the message to do the next right thing. And what exactly would the next right thing be? How can we know it's right when we don't even know what to do? It's dark that a Disney character has to face tragedies and not-so-happy endings, but bringing out that the next right thing might actually help solve it. And what's right is what you face, what you dare to conquer and time would open up the way for you, even if things can't go back. Everything happens for a reason and we should all keep that in mind.

And you know what's the next right thing to do now? Watch the film and see if you agree with me.

Joker is Not Kidding You

5C Sapphire Wong

If Elsa has frozen your minds into the world of fantasy, the following film will surely bring you back to reality. Joker is a recent American film produced by renowned companies with a long history of rich experience in the filming industry—the Warner Bros. Pictures and DC films. The film is based on characters by DC Comics, and stars famous actor Joaquin Phoenix as the Joker.

The film had drawn massive attention before it was screened as Joker was widely agreed to be one of the classic characters that is uneasy to imitate. The most remarkable attempt was played by Heath Ledger in the 2008 film, The Dark Knight, as a supporting villain character. Pitifully, he passed away at an early age. As such, Joaquin was expected to be either "another legend" or simply a "plain failure".

Here's an outline of the film. In Gotham City, a failed comedian, Arthur Fleck, has a condition that makes him laugh at inappropriate times. Arthur's mental illness causes almost everyone in society to reject and look down upon him. The feeling of failure brings him face-to-face with his alter ego: the Joker. Ever since his first murder, Joker has embarked on a downward spiral in revolution and bloody crime. He eventually transforms Gotham into a notorious city of crimes.

Joker takes a character who's usually portrayed as a villain. Does the film affect your feelings toward him? The way he is presented in the film is criticised to be excessively heroic and sympathetic. However, Joker does spark public awareness on mental health issues. It also unveils the despairing consequences of bullying.

If I were to comment on this film, genuinely, I wouldn't say this film is educational as Joker's criminal behaviour should not be legitimised and connected to mental illness. I would use thought-provoking to describe the film because it contrastingly demonstrates the false way to deal with bullies and how the rich and powerful people neglect people who haven't "made something of themselves". That's why we should embrace mental illness and people who suffer from that. Let's drive bullying away with our love and care.

Recently, I have seen graffiti on public areas dubbing Hong Kong as a place "worse than Gotham". That has echoed and stayed in my mind for a couple of days, which is why I'd like to share this movie with all of you here. I hope our love and care can be felt, be rid of bullying and stay strong when being neglected by the rich and powerful people.

Virtual Idols

Marrying your idol right? Well, that

would be a dream come true, dream came true for Akihiko Kondo, who married international star Hatsune Miku and made global headlines. The marriage wasn't the only reason for making headlines though. You see, Hatsune Miku is actually a virtual reality character – she doesn't exist. Yet, thousands upon millions of people know her and love her. Hatsune Miku is the first in a line of virtual idols taking the Internet by storm.



5D Linda Chik

The world 'idol' and its meaning has shifted over these years. Before, they were exclusively applied to celebrities. Now, it also refers to youtubers, social media influencers and the like. At least, these were all people. Another new type of idol is becoming popular, most notably in Japan – virtual idols. They, unlike their predecessors, are entirely digitalized. In a sense, they're not even people.



Perhaps the most well-known virtual idol of all time is Hatsune Miku. She appears as a sixteen-year-old girl with long teal twin pony-tails. Hatsune Miku is a virtual singer, famous for her iconic high, sweet voice sampled from the voice of Saki Fujita. She was released in 2007, as the first in the Character Vocal series by Crypton Future Media. Although she is entirely synthesized, she still managed to gain a cult following on social media. She is so famous that she has worldwide live con-

certs every year, opened for Lady Gaga concerts before and is now a mascot for the Japanese city Sapporo.

Most virtual idols come from the Vocaloid engine produced by Yamaha. Originally intended to be vocals for professional music producers, these voices took on a life of their own. Other famous Vocaloids include Kagamine Rin, Kagamine Len and Megurine Luka.

Other virtual idols on the rise are virtual youtubers, or commonly known as vtubers. Some utilize AI so the virtual characters can respond to their fanbase on their own. They act as normal youtubers, talking about their interests and everyday lives on camera but are once again entirely virtual and exist only through a screen. The most well-known of them is Kizuna AI.

Although idolizing such characters may seem farfetched and strange to the general population, we should accept everybody's individual interests. Is it strange to marry a virtual idol? Very, but it doesn't mean you can berate or laugh at him. Whether you are a K-pop *stan*, a Star Wars fan or enjoy classical music, we can all co-exist peacefully. Having these interests makes you no better nor worse than anyone and we should all remember that.

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