NASA’s Perseverance Rover Landing
An Engineering Student’s Perspective

JOEL MAJANO
Cannon Writer

Mars: a world so far and foreign, but when you look at it closer, you can imagine how the Earth looked before it got to its current state, with no civilization anywhere to be found. When I first saw the images coming back from NASA’s Perseverance rover, I was honestly just taken aback, and began thinking how incredible it is for us to be able to see a completely different world in real time (well, delayed by 11 minutes, thank the speed of light for that).

Let’s go back a few days before that moment, shall we? February 18th, 2021 was a monumental day for anyone even remotely interested in space, and an even bigger day for the folks over at NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) who had launched the Perseverance rover to Mars back in July 2020. NASA had a perfect record in landing vehicles on Mars going into Perseverance’s landing, so while there was still a degree of risk, the chances of Perseverance landing were not bad. NASA’s first rover, Sojourner, landed on Mars in July 1997 and it surpassed its planned mission length by over 70 sols (the Mars equivalent of a day). Furthermore, NASA had landed the twin rovers Spirit and Opportunity

Celebrating Occasions During COVID-19

KIRTANA DEVARAJ
Cannon Writer

The pandemic has impacted all facets of life and continues to do so one year later. Before the pandemic, we were used to going out on Friday nights, celebrating occasions with friends and families without being concerned about social distancing. However, since the pandemic hit, this has all been hampered. Some people have started going out again but it is still a health risk. It is possible to celebrate occasions virtually, while mostly replicating the in-person experience. Here are some tips:

Organize a Zoom birthday. I have tried this for celebrating friends’ birthdays and it has been a huge success. Get on a Zoom call with all your friends and play fun online games such as skribble.io. And of course, don’t forget to sing happy birthday for your friend! Often in large Zoom calls, it is difficult for everyone to interact, hence, playing games allows everyone to be involved.

Have a Kahoot night with your friends. A nice bonding activity with your friend group can be to try fun Kahoot quizzes. There are pre-made quizzes available on various topics such as world affairs, pop culture, etc. so there is something for everyone! Occasions can be celebrated by creating customized Kahoot quizzes related to that. A good way to organize a Kahoot night would be to hop on a video call, ask the host to share screen with the Kahoot questions and start playing!

Have a virtual baking fiesta. Baking with friends and family is always very eventful and entertaining. While the same experience

Celebrations continued on page 5

TIME ZONES
page 5

PLANT GUIDE
pages 8 & 9

YOUTUBE ADS
pages 10 & 11
Hello Zoomers,

This is my final letter as Editor-in-Chief for you all since this is already the last edition of the Cannon Newspaper for the year! Time flies, honestly, and to think that it has been a year since the pandemic began. Taking on this role entirely virtually has been an interesting experience and I am so grateful for every single person I have worked with!

A lot of things have changed since last year, many of which I’d taken for granted and didn’t realize made such a big impact on my life. I miss walking around campus and waving to people I know. I miss sitting down in the gloomy Pit after a long day of lectures and snacking on a scone while catching up with friends. I miss attending Skule™ events, even if I just sat on the sidelines. Yet, I definitely don’t miss falling asleep in lectures and anxiously standing in overcrowded transit.

Despite everything, I’m still hopeful for what is yet to come. And I hope for the best for you all as well.

And with that, I present the final Cannon Edition. An edition filled with creativity, poetry, inspiration, and fun. This edition made me realize how wonderful this team is. We’re all going through this together and trying our best. Hopefully, we can be together come the next edition.

Writefully yours,
Alyson Allen
Read a Book

ANDRE LI
Cannon Writer

Read a book
Desk beside dusk
To read a book
No people, then no chaos

Read a book
Sunset glitters the paper
On my ear, an up and down chapter
Ten thousand emotions, a fragile heart
to cure

Read a book
I can finally read a book, freely
Let me read a book
Let me forget all sorrows and suffers
Integrate an untainted soul into my mind
Let me forgive all hurts and hatreds
Illuminate my blurry sights with an ideal torch
Never ponder the shackles
And all the known and unknown fetters

Read a book
Dusk is my dawn
My old friends to a reunion
Hibernated excitement since Cambrian
Yet in a sudden instant
Millions of words silent
Again, I glimpse some despair
Dusk is always before a polar night
Will the sun ever appear?

Read a book
A breeze opens the door
Some eyes to start the trial
Peeps® are divisive. Many people simply adore the marshmallow chicks. Others despise them. It’s hard to find anyone who does not take either of those two extremes. Either way, the marshmallow treat typically consumed around Easter has (and is still creating) a very colourful legacy.

Before talking about Peeps® in particular, it is valuable to begin discussing the general marshmallow. Around 2000 BC, the ancient Egyptians would squeeze the sap from the marsh-growing mallow plant, *Althaea Officinalis*, and mix it with nuts and honey to create a treat reserved for the gods and Pharaoh. This delicacy also had the medicinal capabilities to soothe sore throats and colds, although likely in different forms. This original recipe likely stayed relatively the same for many centuries.

In the 1800s, this recipe made its way to France where candymakers combined the mallow with sugar and egg white then whipped it into a more familiar marshmallow treat. Interestingly enough, doctors were also using this recipe and whipping it into a hard meringue. It was then sold in bar form as a lozenge. Customers loved the marshmallow, or guimauve as it was known then; the only issue was that it took too long to prepare. By the late 1800s, candymakers had designed the starch mogul system which allows marshmallows to be made faster by using corn starch molds.

In 1910, an American immigrant from Russia, Sam Born, started innovating the American confectionary scene. He introduced “French Chocolates” to New York City and invented chocolate sprinkle production. Eventually, he was even given the keys to San Francisco for creating the Born Sucker Machine, an invention that allowed the sticks to be mechanically inserted into lollipops. By 1923, he opened up a shop in Brooklyn with the name Just Born to highlight the freshness of the products he sold.

Less than 10 years later, despite the Great Depression, Just Born expanded by moving its operations to Bethlehem, Pennsylvania in the United States. Just Born continued to grow through the acquisition of other smaller confectionery companies and successful brands of its own. In 1953, they acquired Rodda Candy Company, and with it, the small marshmallow treat known as Peeps®.

Initially, Peeps® were handmade in a process that took 27 hours to complete. For Bob Born, Sam Born’s son, this was way too slow, so he created a new machine for the process. “The Depositor” as it was called, was able to pump Peeps® out in about 6 minutes from beginning to end. This machine pumped out Peeps® all the way until 2014 when it was reluctantly replaced with an updated one.

Today, an average of 5.5 million Peeps® are produced each day, about 2 billion Peeps® each year — enough to circle the Earth twice. The Peeps® brand continues to grow today with products aimed at other holidays such as Halloween and Christmas, but they are still definitely well associated with Easter where they are the number 1 non-chocolate Easter candy sold for more than 20 years.

While some want nothing to do with Peeps®, others show a keen interest... some might even say an unhealthy obsession for the sweet treat. There is a World Peeps® Eating Championship held annually in National Harbor, Maryland, USA. Others use the treat with an artistic flair, with creations ranging from a mosaic of Jesus Christ to statues of dinosaurs made of Peeps®. Still, others, clearly cannot eat it at enough meals in a day that they have created a monstrosity of a main course, Peepza (yes, Peeps® as a pizza topping). People have even created Peeps®-infused vodka. These do not even touch upon the crazy flavours that they come in which include: fruit punch, pancake-and-syrup, and even root beer float.

Given marshmallow’s colourful history, it almost seems fitting for an equally colourful treat to come out of it. One may never know why these chicks are so popular. Whether adored or despised, their rise to fame has definitely made Peeps® a household name that does not seem to be going anywhere soon, to many’s chagrin and delight.
Your Circadian Rhythm and Online Learning

 VANESSA ELIZABETH AYOU NG-CHEE
 External: IST

This school year, some international students who went home to countries having different time zones had to face the question of whether they should stay up late into the day or night to attend live classes, or sleep according to their time zone and watch recorded lectures. There are many factors involved that revolve around the amount of time you have available. However, your productivity is not just affected by the amount of time you have available to you, but also when you are able to make use of that said time. This is determined by your circadian rhythm.

According to the Sleep Foundation, circadian rhythms are 24 hour cycles that control all the chemicals running around your body that help you survive. These 24 hour cycles can affect your mental health, metabolism, immune system, and most importantly your sleep-wake cycle, which directly affects your productivity.

According to John Trougakos, an associate professor of organisational behaviour at the University of Toronto, in a BBC article by Brian Lufkin, 75% of people are most alert between 9 and 11 am. This is assuming that your circadian rhythm is operating as it should. You may be thinking that if you maintain a nocturnal sleep cycle, eventually your body will fall in line. However, the main environmental cue that drives your sleep-wake cycle is light, of which the sun is a major source. Therefore, sleeping during the day and staying awake during the night may not be the most productive use of your time. The reason behind the sun’s effect on your sleep-wake cycle is the production of the hormone, melatonin. Light halts melatonin production, while the absence of light causes it. Melatonin is the hormone that makes you feel sleepy, and ties your sleep-wake cycle to the sun.

After a full day of screen time you may need some assistance with falling asleep. Dimming lights and limiting screen time before bed can serve as an aid in melatonin production. If you are not able to dim the lights you can try using lamps instead of using the main light, or use sunglasses… indoors. If you prefer to defy the sun to watch live lectures, coordinate with group members who are located elsewhere, or for any alternate reason, there are other things you can try. Investing in a sun lamp can increase your exposure to light during the darker hours when you intend to be awake. Getting some black-out curtains to be used during the day when you are sleeping can keep melatonin production going so that your sleep is not interrupted. You can also try melatonin supplements, but you should consult your doctor first.

There are other pros and cons to watching recordings and sleeping according to your time zone vs adjusting your sleep cycle to watch them live. Keeping up with live lectures can prevent you from falling behind in your coursework. Sleeping according to the timezone in which you are located and watching recordings could allow you to spend time with family and friends in your time zone because you are awake when they are. Choosing either can be difficult for coordinating group projects if your team members are in other time zones and have to make this choice as well. Another major contributing factor is whether or not you can stick to your decision.

It is important to understand that there is no right decision. In such unprecedented times you need to take it easy on yourself. This is easier said than done but if no one else will, then at least you should try to do so. Keep in mind that you are not alone, and your lack of productivity may not be your fault. It’s probably just science.

Celebrations

continued from page 1

is not possible virtually, it can be replicated to some extent. Ask all members of your event to prepare the required ingredients, get on a call with them and start baking! You can see everyone baking and that is similar to baking with them in-person. Send pictures of your baked goods to each other too!

Take part in a movie night using Netflix party.

Movie nights are an integral part of any friend circle and that is something I am missing immensely. A virtual substitute for this can be the Netflix Party feature. This allows you to chat with your friends while watching a movie of your choice and is a great way to bring back movie nights!

Host large events on virtual platforms.

For events such as large family gatherings, or other large events, consider platforms such as Remo. While this is a paid platform, it allows you to customize the interface to make it seem more realistic and replicates the in-person experience very well. This will allow you to have events while safely social distancing!

These are just some ways to safely celebrate occasions until the time things get back to normal. Remember that the pandemic is not yet over and safety measures must still be taken.

As mentioned above, there are various ways to celebrate safely and have fun. Remember to do your part in social distancing and protecting yourself and others around you from COVID-19. Now I hope you have an idea of how to celebrate the next occasion safely!
Youtube’s Most Annoying Ads Ranking, Finally Revealed

RUKNOON DINDER
Cannon Editor

I know, I know, I’m back with another clickbait title, and I apologise for it. Nothing’s revealed, I just ran out of ideas for an article. If you feel cheated, I hope you stay because I think I advertised my product quite well by Youtube’s standards. And I do have good content to make up for it. But before we begin, I want to give a quick shoutout to my sponsor, The Cannon Newspaper. Established in 1978, The Cannon Newspaper is the official serious newspaper of Skule", providing the absolute top quality real time news reporting, at least 5x better than generic store brands like Toike Oike. Use code “RK” now for a free 4 year +PEY (+1 if you’re into that) subscription. Thank you to The Cannon for sponsoring this article.

See how annoying that gets, especially when you have to watch nonsense like that 20 times a day? That’s Youtube advertising in a nutshell now. I remember when Youtube used to be a place to showcase your passion projects. Times when you could spend all night watching your favourite content creators’ distressfully track through Japanese forests, or cry about how life randomly creates their problems as they shovel more food down their throat. And all that without Manscaped trying to sell you razors that you’ll probably never use in the winter anyway. But those days are long gone. Youtube’s dominance is so big that you can’t even effectively quit it anymore as a creator or a viewer, making it a great place to slap ads on without customers leaving. Where else are you going to get your daily fix of diss tracks, apology videos and Mr Beast giving away entire planets to others?

The apocolypse as we have now come to know it cemented Youtube as one of the most lucrative monetisation platforms. There is no changing it. In any case, it is my final article for this year, so instead of ranting as I usually do, I will take the low (effort) road and make a Watchmojo ranking of the most annoying Youtube ads.

Here, I have compiled a list of Youtube ads using (imaginary) stats and (non existent) community feedback which you can safely instantly skip without wanting to know what they are selling you. To be fair, all ads are skippable, but some are more skippable than others.

Number 10: HelloFresh (and other similar food subscription apps)

This one barely makes the list as I never considered it to be particularly annoying and, if anything, it is helpful during a pandemic in which you are trying to maintain your body without having to move an inch. But it’s still useless in my opinion because an app like HelloFresh will never be able to carve out a market for themselves; there are too many factors working against them. A small number of people actually do not plan out their groceries, an even smaller number of them do not have a grocery store accessible to them, and a further smaller number can’t get groceries delivered to them via umbrella apps like Uber. FUNnily enough, if you are among the final demographic, chances are you live in a location where HelloFresh does not deliver anyway.

Number 9: Nord VPN, Express VPN, Surfshark

Now a VPN is an extremely useful thing for sure. But here’s the privilege: you make a privacy software and these are the names you come up with? That alone makes me not want to buy these. Besides, if you have seen one of these ads, you have seen all of them. So keep skipping, the content never changes.

Number 8: Skillshare and Masterclass

I quite enjoy these ads to be fair. I guess the ads bother me because they start off with industry experts hyping up their subjects and then start providing small lessons... but they never finish them! I know you want me to pay for the rest of it but don’t tease me like that. I’d say these were the ads I came the closest to actually buying the product and that makes me hate them for working. Skip it because it will make you spend 100 bucks a year.

Number 7: Cardi B UberEats, John Hamm Skiptedishes

Are you seriously telling me that essentially serves the same purpose, but also because the more TikTok ads I see, the more I am convinced I should never download TikTok. Tiktok serves no useful purpose. I go to Facebook to sell my old furniture to idiots, to Twitter to watch intellectuals act like idiots, to Instagram to see idiots act like models, to Reddit to see idiots act like intellectuals. It’s amusing. But TikTok ads make it look like it’s just idiots acting like idiots. That’s just sad. If I want to see idiots, I already have the Paul brothers on Youtube. I guess if you don’t want to download TikTok, don’t skip these ads?

Number 6: TikTok Reels

Quite literally the “Obama putting a medal on Obama” of advertisements, these annoy me not just because it’s one app I waste an ungodly amount of time on asking me to waste time on another app, that essentially serves the same purpose, but also because the more TikTok ads I see, the more I am convinced I should never download TikTok. Tiktok serves no useful purpose. I go to Facebook to sell my old furniture to idiots, to Twitter to watch intellectuals act like idiots, to Instagram to see idiots act like models, to Reddit to see idiots act like intellectuals. It’s amusing. But TikTok ads make it look like it’s just idiots acting like idiots. That’s just sad. If I want to see idiots, I already have the Paul brothers on Youtube. I guess if you don’t want to download TikTok, don’t skip these ads?

Number 5: Wealthsimple

Wealthsimple is a decent

Wealthsimple continued on page 7

Number 4: Express VPN, Surfshark

Number 3: Cardi B UberEats, John Hamm Skiptedishes

Number 2: TikTok Reels

Number 1: HelloFresh (and other similar food subscription apps)
beginner-level trading app, but does not work at all for big investors due to restrictions on stock limits. Funnily enough, they never mention that in the ads. Their ads are also horrid. Terrible jingles, disastrous acting, the plot makes adult films look Oscar worthy. I mean I understand it’s a trading app, not a Marvel movie, but is it too much to ask for some effort? This might be the only entry in the top 5 that makes me not want to try the app because of how terrible the ads are, not for their actual content.

Number 4: Horrible Mobile Games

These honestly started out quite funny with the Mafia City “lvl1 crook” to “lvl100 boss” ads. They were obviously exaggerated and were, if not persuasive, original enough to get a pass. But over time the quality has degraded so much that I now see them copying sprites and models from actual PC games like Age of Empires or shows like Attack on Titan. And that is something I can’t accept. I already use UberEats, I can’t in good conscience support another exploitative piece of software. Needless to say, the ads don’t match the actual gameplay in the slightest. Everytime I see some ad showing next generation PS7 level gameplay only for the actual game to be another base-building Clash of Clans clone, I wish I could burn these ads with fire.

Number 3: Headspace/ Calm (Sleeping apps)

An app to make me sleep? Seriously. AN APP... TO MAKE ME SLEEP? What is this, the adult version of or my nan singing me lullabies? Especially when I am watching Youtube to NOT sleep. I’m not gonna pretend that the engineering schedule has not caused sleeping problems for me. But I’d actually rather stay up all night than turn this app on and let Jerome Flynn or Andy Puddicombe ASMR talk me to sleep. And yes I know it also has meditation features but they rarely ever mention that in their marketing. I can only judge on what I see.

Number 2: One Plus phones

Let me tell you all something. A phone is possibly the most useful thing to buy in this list. But buying a phone is a well thought out process. You look all your options up, compare them, work with your budget and then get your phone. I sincerely doubt anybody looks at a Youtube sponsorship of a phone and plans on buying it. It’s the same as car ads on Youtube but at least those are less egregious because they don’t have a set repeated dialogue. Like I get it, you have the fastest refresh rate and the greatest battery. Can I know a bit more about your phone? I’d rather watch a car drive through 20 seconds of nothing. At least that’s visually pleasing.

Number 1: Raid: Shadow Legends

Finally, the most unbelievably annoying Youtube ad of all time. Raid: Shadow Legends ads are everywhere. It seems they sponsor every youtuber, make ads for every time length, and have high budget productions. And that’s what makes my blood boil. It seemingly corrects all the mistakes the other standings on this list make. Good production value, decent acting, gameplay is somewhat accurate to what is depicted. But how do they have so much outreach? Who is playing a game this much? It’s not even a particularly good game. So who is funding this? If radio friendly music became an ad, this would be it.

If you’ve made it to the end of this article, you’ve probably seen enough ads just in this article to fund these companies for a lifetime. So do yourself a favour and get an adblocker. Admittedly it blocks smaller creators from getting revenue, but then they put these ads as sponsorships in the videos which you can fast forward so... win-win? Trust me, it’s an instant quality of life improvement for the rest of your life. God, I’m getting annoyed just writing about these ads. Guess I will just end it here and go watch PewDiePie screaming some more to calm down. Oh look, I got an ad for an adblocker!
Sweet Plant Pal Guide

Dina Castelletto
Alyson Allen

Cannon Skule

MARCH 2021
NASA continued from page 1

back in January 2004, using inflatable airbags to help the rover come to rest safely on the Martian surface. Finally, Curiosity landed on Mars in August 2012 using a novel "sky crane maneuver" to land gently.

Small detour for my quick thoughts

As an engineer, seeing the sky crane system work successfully was just jaw dropping and breathtaking because there are so many different systems that must work correctly to allow for a successful maneuver. First of all, the "jetpack" that is the sky crane system must slowly descend, then hover over the ground, slowly lower the rover, cut away from the rover, and fly a safe distance away from the rover...automatically. Perseverance added a whole new layer of difficulty to this maneuver by using computer vision to actually choose the landing location. The use of "Terrain Relative Navigation" is the first time that something like this would be used to land on Mars, so the JPL team was anxious to see how it would perform. The complexity of this system starts with acquiring a radar lock on the ground, then picking a mostly flat spot of land for landing. Next, the jetpack (which is part of the sky crane system) diverts to this location while still descending towards the Martian surface. Finally, the system picks a final landing location, and uses the sky crane maneuver to gently place the rover on the ground.

Okay, back to Perseverance

NASA and the JPL team streamed the day's activities from the control room that would be receiving updates back from the rover as it proceeded autonomously through the different phases of Entry, Descent, and Landing (EDL). That was all that JPL could do back here on Earth, as there would be no way to control the rover from Earth due to the 11 minute delay it takes for any type of transmission to reach Mars. Minutes before the confirmation of landing, as the team was getting updates from the rover, letting them know that it was safe and proceeding as planned through its stages, the tension in the room was palpable. I was sitting in front of my computer, watching alongside the JPL team, both of us having the same amount of control over what would occur before our very eyes.

Parachute Deploy...

Landing vision system has produced a valid solution...

Sky crane maneuver has started...TOUCHDOWN CONFIRMED!

There are no words I can use to describe the feeling when I heard that callout. This was the first time that I watched something like this live, and it was overwhelming to say the least. Big events like this, such as the Falcon Heavy landing system on Perseverance take many hours/days to reach Earth. As more images came back, NASA periodically posted them on their social channels, allowing all of us back on Earth to see what Perseverance was looking at in its new home. The quality of the images is stunning and we can clearly see the Martian landscape filled with many rocks and mountains. My favourite moment was when NASA was finally able to share videos and sound recordings taken by Perseverance. The JPL team had hoped to record the sound of the landing, but unfortunately the onboard computer (which runs Linux!) was unable to record the data it was receiving from the microphone.

In a press conference held a few days after the safe touchdown of Perseverance, the landing video was shown to the press and everyone watching the live stream. The video begins right before parachute deployment and continues all the way down until the sky crane cuts away from the rover and flies a safe distance away from Perseverance. Next, two audio clips recorded by Perseverance were played live, and the audience could clearly hear the sounds made by the onboard devices, but we could also hear the Martian wind, which I did not expect to be able to hear any time soon with my own ears.

Okay, it's been a long read, but if you have stuck around this far, I thank you. This was an incredible experience, and I will always remember Perseverance's landing and all the emotions I went through while watching this event. The engineering work by the entire JPL team was fantastic to watch, and seeing it perform as well as it did was inspiring. I really look forward to Perseverance's next steps on Mars, which includes releasing a helicopter named Ingenuity, and testing rocks for past microbial life. As a final note, I encourage everyone even slightly interested in this to go watch the landing footage because, at the very least, it truly is out of this world.
When we think about sustainability, most people will think of it from an environmental perspective; but sustainability means a lot more than just protecting the planet. Sustainability as a whole relates to our capacity to maintain ourselves at a level that we've determined to be acceptable. Beyond the environment, it’s also imperative for us to maintain sustainable behaviour economically, socially, and mentally.

This fact has never been more apparent to me than during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the consequent lockdown into which Toronto has been submerged under for the past year. As a sustainability-minded engineering student, I’ve been a part of the Sustainable Engineers Association (SEA) for just about 4 years. The story of SEA during COVID has been unlike that of any previous year I’ve experienced, and likely mirrors the experience of other student clubs or design teams in the Skule™ community.

With over 40 members, SEA has always relied on in-person meetings to foster connections inside and between our various sub-teams. But with limitations on indoor gatherings rendering such meetings impossible, many of our members have been unable to meet their teammates. We’ve spent nearly a full school year trying to work, collaborate, and create with others whom we’ve only ever seen through a video screen. This hasn’t been great for intra-team relationships, and it’s made it that much more difficult for us to work together as a unit, rather than a group of individuals.

As anyone who’s tried to attend an event recently knows, one of COVID’s most significant impacts has been a universal switch to online everything. Many of SEA’s biggest events, like our Career Fair and Sustainability Conference, have central networking themes that were greatly hindered by a switch to online events. Compounding the difficulties in having to plan differently, we’ve also faced a concerning drop in attendance at many of our events, likely due to the inherent poorer quality that comes with rushing to adapt in-person events to an online format. On top of this, COVID has had a noticeable impact on the mental well-being of our members outside of their involvement with SEA. Being stuck indoors, away from friends and (in some cases) family, has made it harder to find the drive to put time and effort into an extracurricular club.

Yet amid all these negatives, I think it’s become more important than ever to not overlook the small positives that have managed to creep in. For SEA, the move to online events has allowed our events to reach a broader audience from other parts of the country and across the world. Our marketing efforts, which have always played an integral role in pushing awareness on what SEA does, has been largely unaffected by virtue of its online focus even in pre-COVID times. And in some cases, we’ve used our current situation to build entirely new initiatives that take advantage of COVID’s impact, rather than suffer from it.

At this point, I feel the need to stress that none of these problems or solutions are unique to SEA; every single student at UofT, whether involved in extracurriculars or not, has had to struggle with this same situation. In a weird way, it can sometimes seem like COVID might actually have brought us all a bit closer together, even if we’re only united in an uncertainty about the future.

One thing that I’ve come to realize watching SEA change as a result of COVID, is that people have a remarkable ability to adapt to the changing times, and take in stride the situation that the world presents. Change can be helpful; it can spur innovation and force us to try new things that we might otherwise have dismissed. So while I certainly don’t want to minimize the terrible loss of life that COVID has inflicted, I’m starting to believe more and more in the importance of recognizing the small goods that have arisen as well. Without the knowledge of how long it might be before our lives return to the pre-pandemic normal, focusing solely on the bads just doesn’t seem very sustainable.
Let’s Talk About The Rain

MINHA KHAN
Cannon Editor

I know what you’re thinking. Another COVID article. Trust me, I myself am tired of the endless references, jokes, videos, articles, news cycles, conversations, forecasts, advertisements, events, podcast episodes, small talk, long talk, breakfast, lunch, and dinner conversational topics, shower thoughts, posts, anecdotes, vlogs, TED Talks, and reflections about life in a pandemic. By now, the entire world wants to move on from the pandemic.

March 13, 2020 marks the day UofT shut campus down to in-person classes and transitioned to fully online classes. We recently passed the one year anniversary of COVID-coerced online school. It’s hard to not feel dismay at the amount of time we’ve spent in a quarantine that was first innocuously expected to be short-lived. For first years who’ve spent the better portion of a year meant to be brimming with new experiences academically, socially, and interpersonally from the silos of their home, I see you. For the second years who feel their time as a university student slipping through their fingers as another day in quarantine is docked down and the third years with PEY terms that went cancelled, I see you. And of course, the fourth years whose new Convocation Hall will be Zoom, we see you too.

Skule™ is known for its tight-knit community. I’ve heard online-school-anecdotes hinting otherwise within the first year batch of 2020. There are always people at Skule™ rooting for you and wanting you to belong with them as much as you may want to belong with them. I hope you find that out for yourself soon, too.

Amongst my Skule™ peers and my friends, feelings of burnout have been a common occurrence. I’m sure you know someone (perhaps even yourself) who’s also felt burnt out during this pandemic. It is difficult to source motivation for pixelated lecture halls or to muster enough energy to harvest a report for a BBCollaborate lab, day after day. Burnout existed pre-pandemic too, but being on campus gave us more resilient armor against it. Encounters with friendly faces on campus provided small shots of encouragement fuel to power our packed days. Being in a space of possibility where we were set up to meet new people, try exciting new things, and discover new facets of ourselves created an aura of excitement that reminded us why we were here in the first place when the going got tough.

You may notice the tone of this article is a bit dreary. That was not intentional but if it does sound dreary, that is okay. This article is about validating the fears, the loneliness, the despair, the losses, the uncertainties and the monotony the pandemic may have brought you. I think we all feel tired by our individual distresses, by feeling the same draining emotions for indefinite periods of time. Is there a silver lining? There can be silver linings, but not an all pervading one. Only you can decide if there is a silver lining for your own individual experience and then decide what it is. You may decide there is no silver lining or you may see infinite. In both cases, you are right. But silver linings ensue after. First, there is the rain and that rainfall will drench you. This article is about that rainfall and fully feeling it. This is NOT about Covid. Yes, a lot of the negative sentiment mentioned is a consequence of Covid, but this is about you and your experiences.

For those of you who’ve been in the rain more than not recently, this poem is for you. You are not alone.

情况来看你自己到心理健康和学术资源，Skule™ Mental Wellness: http://wellness.skule.ca/

Let’s Talk About The Rain

your true companions on this earth are concealed amongst the trees and the clouds when tears stream down, and you yearn for a place for your eyes to rest, to be placated, turn them upwards, to the sky, away from the touch of mankind. a safe shroud

follow the path of the wind, as it makes its course it is there for you, making an appearance to comfort you, and share: I understand how it feels to be moved by an unceasing force

see the trees, side to side, they gently drift huge like man-made buildings, but untethered, moving freely they wave to you, reminding, it is okay to feel powerless