

JUNE 2026, Volume 18, Issue 3

**FINDING INNER PEACE
THROUGH THE PHONE POLICY**

EXPLORING THE MEANING OF LIFE

THE SECRETS TO SUCCESSFUL STUDYING

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HOW TO ELECTRONICS

CAS TRIP TO VIETNAM

A GLIMPSE OF THE CLASSICAL FAMILY

TANGO

Early March, the class of 2027, went to Vietnam for our CAS trip. The purpose of this adventure was to assist a local neighbourhood —Mai Chau— by giving them more hands to build a bridge and to exchange knowledge about our various cultures. It was an exciting experience where the Grade 11s got to enjoy Vietnamese culture, away from Japan and academic stress. We were all at peace during our time in Vietnam, and simply just enjoyed this rare opportunity, where we all had to talk to each other.

We got to spend time with the welcoming locals of Mai Chau and appreciated their company, communal meals, and volleyball skills. They gave us small tasks in order to help them in constructing the bridge, even though most of us believe we increased their workload. This service helped the class to understand how privileged we are in knowing that we don't have to build our own bridges. While we were helping the uncles in building the bridge, we were instructed to split into two groups; one group had to mix the concrete while the other group had to throw huge rocks into a pit. Both of these tasks were very physically challenging, and as time went on everyone began to be more exhausted. So it was no surprise when there were some occasions when we broke the water pipe, as we were throwing the rocks into the pit...

Some challenges we faced were the language barrier and the shower schedule. Most of the villagers did not understand English and nobody in G11 understood Vietnamese. The most we could have said was thank you and hello. While we did have an interpreter who helped in translating what the villagers wanted to say to us, we might've had closer connections with the people in the neighbourhood if we had spoken the same language. The first few days, we stayed at a

homestay where we had to share the same four bathroom/shower stalls. We all understood that there was a very limited amount of warm water supply, we all also understood that the first few people to get into the shower would get most of the warm water. So everyone began to be very hostile with the rock, paper, scissors contest which would determine who would be the first group to shower first.

We made various memories while doing different activities. We got to experience rice farming with the assistance from the villagers. We had to put in rice plants (I think?), into the field, vertically. Very few of us were successful in this task; the majority made the field look extremely messy. We also got to build bamboo rafts and row them in a river. I personally don't believe we "built" the rafts, we put the bamboo together with a wire and double checked it was secure enough. This was a very scary experience since some people were trying to flip other people's rafts, especially the people who were nice and dry, and had not dived into the river yet. There was someone in particular with very terrible vision who lost their glasses in the river and had to endure the rest of the trip without their glasses, that was memorable for everyone except for that one person.

It is safe to say that everyone enjoyed the CAS trip even though we had our challenges and individual struggles, it was a nice event where we all made niche memories. We all learnt new things about each other and the local communities. I hope the new years will enjoy their trip as much as we did ours.

THE PURPOSE
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CAS TRIP TO VIETNAM

by Mayuka Nawata



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TANGO

continued from page 4

Nathaniel. "It's for you."

Nathaniel held the receiver's speaker to his mouth. "This is Officer Deatach of the Phoenix Police Department. Who is this?"

"Detective, we're calling from the University Hospital." The voice was sad, in an empathetic way that immediately made Nathaniel on edge. "We're sorry to inform you that Chief Warren Periturus has been hospitalized, on basis of arsenic poisoning. He's on life support, and is currently in comatose. Before that, though, he asked us to specifically notify you, Officer."

Nathaniel felt like he'd taken a gut punch, literally doubling over and falling into his office chair. The medical professional on the other side of the line had dealt with grief hundreds, maybe thousands of times; she knew to stay silent. Nathaniel's eyes darted around as he looked searchingly at the ground, mentally trying to process.

Finally, "...How is he?" It was uncertain: hopeless and hopeful at the same time.

A sigh crackled tinnily over the line. "Unfortunately, it's very unlikely that he's going to make it, Officer. I'm sorry." The doctor might've said more, but Nathaniel didn't hear any of it. Likewise, the worried questions from Johnny got no answer. Nathaniel leaned his head back up to the ceiling, and tears rolled down his cheeks. However, when he spoke again, it was clearly full of anger. "We are leaving," Nathaniel said, teeth clenched. "Now."

Ninety-Nine LLC Headquarters

The squad car screeched to a halt in front of the Ninety-Nine operations headquarters, which also served as the main factory. Johnny didn't complain as he slid back into the passenger seat, from which he'd nearly catapulted out of from the sudden stop just now. After hearing about the Chief, he was similarly anguished, and completely understood his partner. The warrant had been immediately granted, but that still wasn't fast enough for Nathaniel, so now he was impatient, not just mad.

Rain smacked down onto the street almost bitterly as Nathaniel slammed the driver's door shut into the downpour. He scowled.

Nathaniel marched over to the glass guard booth of the building, rubbing his fingers together awkwardly – he'd ditched the toothpick promptly after the call from the hospital.

"Phoenix Police Department! Open up!" The security guard, who was smoking a cigarette, possibly upon orders by the company, squinted at Nathaniel antagonistically. However, when Nathaniel held up the laminated warrant (the judge's assistant

had done this, considering the weather), the man, chasened, pressed a button, and the electric gate swung open.

Nathaniel stalked in, Johnny right behind, leaving the cloudy security box behind.

The two met some resistance, which was unsurprising from a company so immoral that they'd sell poisonous cigarettes. However, a quick wave of the warrant and a withering glare was enough to make most back off; these people weren't paid enough to assault police officers, especially those who had legal rite of passage. The employees in excess of belligerence yet lacking critical thinking were dispatched with the swift practical combat moves Johnny and Nathaniel had learned in the academy, then shackled.

A janitor off to the side smoked a Ninety-Nine, obviously unaware of the arsenic concentration, ironic as the manufacturing process was in full view. The smoke that emanated from the butt of the stick swirled around and upwards.

Determinedly, going against what he'd read about the effects of secondhand smoke, Nathaniel inhaled the fumes. Garlic. The Chief's cigarette-smoke-filled office had smelled like garlic. Arsine gas smells like garlic. The janitor stared at Nathaniel, bewildered. The officer glared, snatched the cigarette from the custodian's mouth, threw it down, and rubbed it into the cement with his dripping shoes.

Now further vindicated of his accusations toward Ninety-Nine, Nathaniel pounded across the factory floor to a room at the far end marked "Executives Only". He put his ear to the door, listening carefully despite his agitated state, heard voices, and pulled out his pistol, shouldering his way into the locked room, yelling, "Hands up in the air!"

Mere minutes later, a dozen police lights flashed in the rain.

Phoenix University Hospital, two hours later.

"Thanks for all the help," Nathaniel said, shaking Johnny's hand.

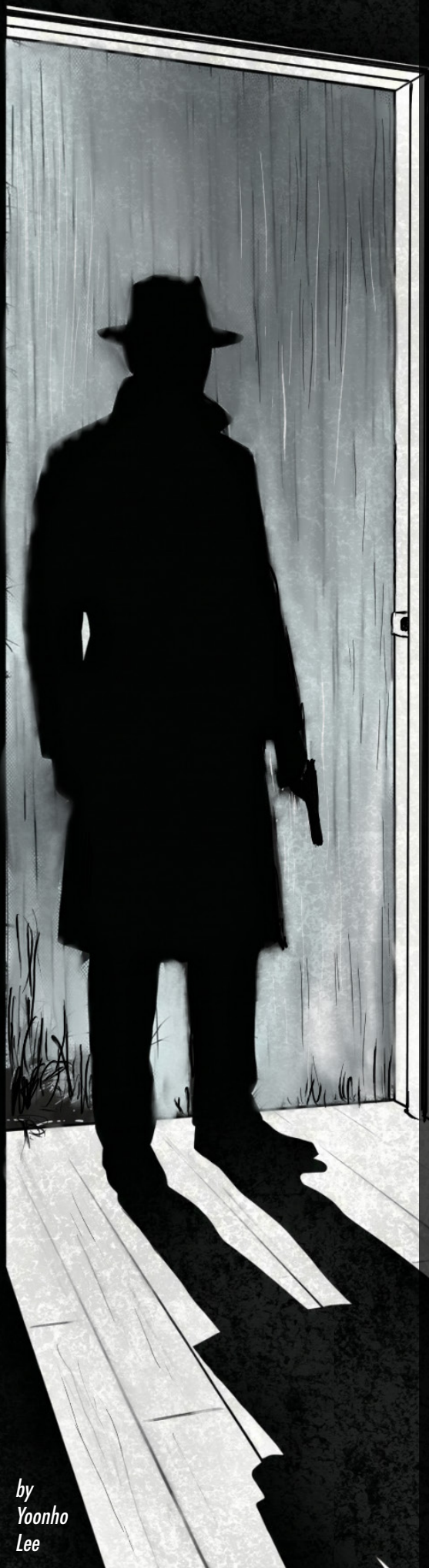
"Help? You did all the work, Nathaniel. Embrace that." Johnny's eyes twinkled in the light of the hospital reflected off the rainy pavement.

"I'll see you around."

Nathaniel sat by the Chief's hospital bed, clutching the side of it. "Chief," he said softly. "We got 'em. We got all of 'em." And Nathaniel wasn't sure, but he swore he saw the edges of the Chief's mouth curl up in a tiny smile.

Smoke and Mirrors

by
Yoonho
Lee



*Phoenix PD Cactus Park Precinct,
Chief of Police's Office.
February 14, 1952*

"Hell," Warren Periturus sighed, staring at the report before him. "What are these hospitalization rates?"

"That's only the half of it, Chief," Nathaniel Deatach said, a toothpick held between his thumb and index, a habit he'd picked up during his chainsmoking days; he'd stopped the smoking, but still felt uncomfortable without something between his fingers. "Most can't even make it to the hospital. Many are bedridden at home, some deceased."

Periturus pinched the bridge of his nose with his stubby fingers, taking a puff from his cigarette, thinking. The released smoke only added to the mist-like ambience of the office, which weirdly smelled like garlic, Nathaniel noticed. After a migraine-induced pause, Periturus asked, "What did forensics say?"

"All deaths are from arsenic poisoning. Characteristic symptoms, and some had the beginnings of lung and skin cancer development," Nathaniel replied, having memorized the contents of the report. "I'll check out a victim today to get a direct feel."

"I doubt you'll have any trouble finding one." Periturus grimaced. "Don't let me down, detective. We need to find out who or whatever's causing all these deaths of our citizens."

Walking towards the door, Nathaniel said, in farewell, "Take care of yourself," raising a hand.

"Talk to you soon, Nate." Periturus replied fondly.

When he was left alone in the office, Periturus allowed himself to privately grit his teeth in pain. His abdomen was killing him, as it had been for about a month. He smoked the cigarette to alleviate some suffering, but for whatever

reason it didn't help in the slightest.

Paradise Lane, Residence 15.

"Okay, this is the place." Officer Johnny Cadavere rested his gloved hands on his belt and looked the residence up and down. He checked his watch. "It's been twenty minutes since the doctor called us." Johnny had contacted all the house-call doctors he could find in the phonebook and asked them to report to the department if any patients had signs of chemical poisoning, specifically arsenic if they could identify it.

"You sure this place is in Paradise Lane?" Nathaniel questioned, eyebrow raised, giving a once-over of the shabby wooden shack of a house.

"Yep," Johnny chuckled. He knocked on the door, which surprisingly creaked open upon contact. The pair of detectives stepped in cautiously, Nathaniel pulling on his own pair of medical rubber gloves, then sliding his toothpick into the gap between his forefinger and middle finger.

"Hello?" he called out warily. "Dr. Campbell? Mr. White?"

Following the sound of clacking footsteps from within, a middle-aged man hurried into view, adjusting his circular glasses. "Ah, the detectives. Pleasure to meet you both."

"Dr. Campbell! I remember your voice," Johnny said. The three men shook gloved hands.

"How is Mr. White doing?" Johnny asked carefully, as the doctor led them deeper into the house.

"Mmm..." Dr. Campbell's mouth formed a tight line. "His health has deteriorated quite quickly since our first meeting, about two weeks ago. He's in critical condition, I'd say. Clear signs of arsenic poisoning have arisen over time, and his breathing, especially, is very shallow." He frowned. "When I heard his voice during today's

call, I rushed over here." The men reached the bedroom door and Campbell mindfully pushed it open.

There, a man, in his mid-forties, lay in an adjusted bed – it was tilted upward slightly. His skin was blotchy and had painful welts. Johnny took the lead in approaching the patient. Though Nathaniel was an excellent detective and a mentally tough individual, he had a certain fear of the almost-dead. Indeed, Mr. White barely looked alive. "What... what are the cops... doing here?..." Even this short sentence caused Mr. White to pant, like he'd just finished a triathlon.

"Sir," Nathaniel began professionally. "We're here to ask you some questions." After a brief pause, Nathaniel continued. "We have reason to believe that your illness is not an isolated incident but one of dozens happening citywide. Therefore, we would like to ask if you've experienced anything unusual lately, maybe before your first signs of pain, that might be the root of the problem."

Mr. White's eyes closed, thinking. Raggedy breaths filled the tense silence of the bedroom. Finally, a response came. "All I can think of... is that I changed—" a hoarse cough, "the brand of my cigarettes." Nathaniel took a step closer, listening intently. He was going to put aside his fear of the near-dead for today. Johnny maintained his distance, not wanting to crowd the patient. Dr. Campbell stood off to the side, fiddling with his stethoscope, a nervous mannerism he'd acquired during his resident years. Mr. White took a deep shallow breath and swallowed, building up the strength to continue. "When the ones I'd smoked were discontinued..." A moment of recollection. "Maybe a month ago."

"What brand did you replace it with?" Nathaniel asked, crouching

down beside the man's bed.

"Ninety-Nine. I switched to Ninety-Nines." Mr. White said, wheezing slightly now.

Where have I heard Ninety-Nine before? Nathaniel racked his brain. Where have I seen that brand? He shut his eyes, for just ten seconds, though this gave him plenty of time to sort through his mental cabinets of near-photographic memory.

His eyes popped open. "Let's go," he said abruptly, getting up from his crouching stance. "Thank you for your time, Mr. White. I hope you recover soon."

Nathaniel was halfway out the door when he looked back to see Johnny hesitantly take a single step forward.

"What're you waiting for? Come on!" Johnny gave Mr. White

an assuring, apologetic tight-lipped smile and a quick nod to Dr. Campbell, then entered the hallway to see his partner already shoving out the front

door into the street. It was a cloudy day, but sunlight shined through, creating a bright gray afternoon sky.

"What are you doing?" Johnny caught up to Nathaniel, who was briskly entering the driver's seat of the squad car. Johnny had no choice other than continuing his inquiry inside the car. "Where are we going?"

Nathaniel gave a quick grin. "We're going," he cranked the car into drive, "to the nearest corner shop." Without further explanation, he veered forward.

The nearest corner shop, 6 minutes later.

"There it is!" Nathaniel snatched

a Ninety-Nine cigarette box off the store's front shelf. "I was right! One of the victims who had a heart attack was holding a Ninety-Nine pack of cigarettes!" What he'd remembered at Mr. White's was the paper-clipped crime scene photograph from the Chief's forensics report.

Johnny, not having been informed of Nathaniel's private revelation, was dubious. "So you think the cigarettes were the cause of all the deaths? Lung cancer? That takes years to develop, Nathaniel."

"Unless, the cigarettes are chock-full of arsenic," Nathaniel countered readily.

"Arsenic? Like rat poison? In the cigarettes?" Johnny was, despite himself, surprised.

Nathaniel nodded.

"The British have known that there was arsenic in normal cigarette smoke for almost a decade now,

meaning it's not surprising that Ninety-Nine was able to obtain it legally."

"Yeah, but isn't it a small amount? That's why lung cancer only happens after years, maybe decades," Johnny pointed out, still befuddled.

"You would be right if we're talking about, say, Camel cigarettes. However, Ninety-Nines have a much higher concentration that speeds up that destructive process. Remember Mr. White?"

"How could I forget?" Johnny winced involuntarily.

"He had definite signs of late arsenic poisoning, almost nearing skin cancer. The way he coughed too, that was lung cancer. I'd bet

if we got him checked out we'd find his lungs completely blackened."

"But... why?" At this point Johnny was now self-conscious of his own lack of contribution to the crime-solving. "What do they have to gain?"

"I remember seeing in the paper that a new medical insurance company had opened up, a month before, the same time around when Ninety-Nine began operations. Maybe they're collaborating with each other to get benefits on both sides. The insurance company might give some of their profits to Ninety-Nine, because the cigarettes are irresistibly cheap."

"One poisons the people and the other treats them," Johnny said, reverentially. "Okay..." A moment's pause. "What do we do then?"

"Get a warrant and bust Ninety-Nine doors down."

One hour later, Cactus Park Precinct

"We have sent a sample of the brand's cigarettes to our forensic department. Their chemical analysis should provide concrete evidence of the company's wrongdoings." Nathaniel stood while writing, wanting to finish and head to the municipal court as quickly as possible – Johnny didn't sit either.

"To conclude, we hope you, honorable judge, can approve this warrant. The lives of thousands are in the balance. Regards, Detectives Nathaniel Deatch and Johnny Cadavere of the Phoenix PD." Nathaniel finished the request with a set of triumphant wrist flicks, signing the bottom of the paper. He passed the pen to Johnny so that he could do the same. Thunder ka-koomed outside; the cloudy day had developed into a rainstorm.

As Johnny read over the warrant again before signing, a fellow officer handed the telephone to

continued on page 2

It has been a few months since the new schoolwide phone usage policy, which was rolled out in April 6th, the start of the Spring trimester. However, despite the time passed since these rules were clearly laid out, it's apparent that not everyone is following these guidelines.

True, there are understandable reasons for the rulebreaking, but, isn't it also true that this policy must have some logic behind it? And, all in all, is putting your phone away really that bad? Still, our school expectations could be improved to heighten the policy to its full potential. Here is my perspective as a not-failing student and someone who's attached to their phone yet follows this new rule.

Firstly, phones have real tolls on studying and learning. Note that the following facts are by real scientists who study human behavior. Research from the past indicates that lower attention, harder time recalling information and overall less efficiency can result from the presence of a phone, even

notification-less. Though modern research doesn't fully support these claims, I'm sure many of you have experienced glancing at your phone unnecessarily during homework, becoming distracted and sometimes forgetting what you were going to do. A more recent study showed that students without their phones took 62% more notes and scored much higher in review tests than device-using participants (The Impact of Mobile Phone Usage on Student Learning, Kuznekoff, et al. 2012). Simply put, removing phones from the equation is a surefire way to better your learning.

Additionally, constant social media can be harmful to still-developing young adults like us. Countless studies have shown that usage of social media on its own can have negative effects (like those mentioned by Mayo Clinic, 2025). Therefore, having the pull

of your phone as well as the stress of keeping up to date looming over you at school, a majority of the day, is only worsening your educational performance. "...[H]aving access to constant, algorithm-driven content creates a rabbit hole that's all too easy for [students] to get lost in," said psychiatrist Candida Fink (Encyclopedia Britannica). Give yourself some breathing room!

Thirdly, academic honesty is threatened when phones are present. Cheating is easy, and thus can be tempting, when you have the internet at your fingertips, or, at least, sitting in your pocket. If you eliminate the option of reaching for your phone, it would seem that cheating would become less likely, and I don't have to tell you the benefits of academic integrity, do I?

Finally, phones promote less physical activity. Especially for those who don't do extracurricular

sports, school is the best opportunity for students to burn off energy and enjoy themselves at the same time. Now, phone usage, especially gaming, could appear to do these same things, but running around the field isn't the same as scoring a digital goal. If you're already sitting in class most of the schoolday, why not get some exercise in when you can?

You may be thinking, 'what if I want to use my phone to take photos?' This is a pretty valid argument, so much so that it nearly convinced me to break the rules, which, for Grade 9 and below, means putting mobile devices in lockers - quick pictures are impossible. Nevertheless, it should also be noted that by attempting to record everything, you yourself are not really in the moment, as, in the end, you're behind a screen instead of taking everything in. Plus, unflattering photos taken unexpectedly and/or without permission at school, especially when uploaded online, would be embarrassing for the people involved. This could fall under breaches of privacy and trust, or, in

"IT'S
A
WIN
WIN"

FINDING INNER PEACE

serious cases, cyberbullying. Isn't it better to avoid these issues by simply putting your phone away and being present? It's a win-win. Of course, exceptions exist. However, if you're spending your life claiming every use case is an exception, isn't that contradicting the definition of an exception?

Another possible thought one may have is that this policy is a power move by our school to control us, and that by using your phone you're rebelling against a control-freak authority. Even if this was true (hopefully not, haha), by considering the possible benefits discussed above, wouldn't you agree that, just in this case, following the rules is the best move?

Finally, you may believe that denying yourself your phone will just make you use it more at home, because cravings would build up. However, if you have the

openmindedness, willingness, and discipline to continuously adhere to the phone rules, wouldn't it seem that 1) you deserve some at-home usage and 2) your desire would decrease over time?

However, a flaw in the system should be pointed out. Teachers, it's unrealistic to expect students to take photos in class when the

probably range from 2-5 minutes, depending on the grade of the class. This would allow students to stick to the policy's - and our school's - core principles while getting their work done.

Another issue are the Kwansei Gakuin Wi-fi restrictions. The removal of access to several non-educational and gaming

is understandable but unfair for students, who sometimes need these websites in a pinch. This means that they are tempted to use their phones to bypass these constraints, eliminating any positive effect that the policy might've had. While there isn't an obvious solution, considering this issue would be worthwhile.

Whether it's mobile-gaming in the library, scrolling in class, or taking unwitting photos of others, you can usually count on it happening at any given time and location. So, is it really a surprise when these people complain of a bad grade, or get caught by the teacher

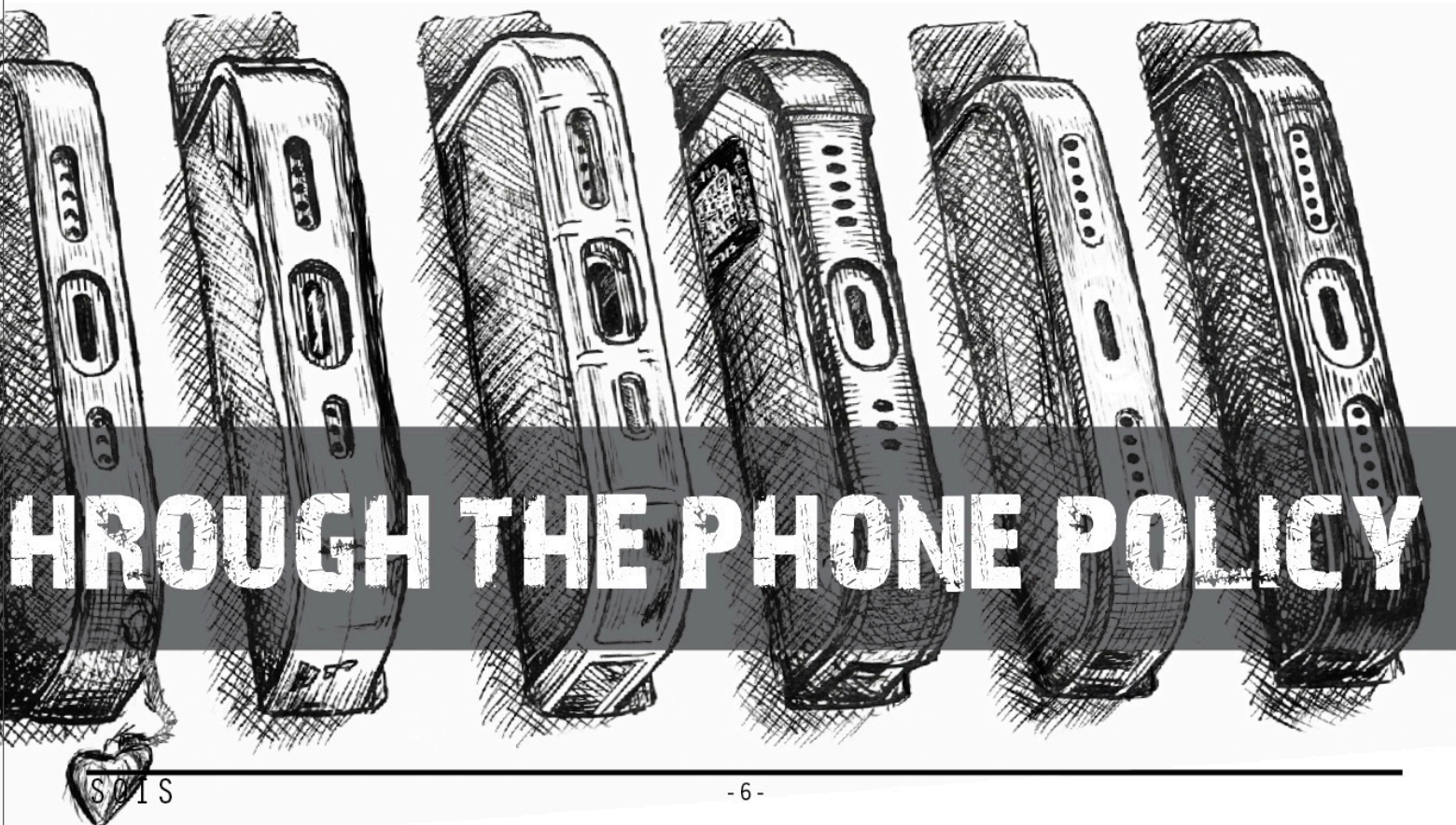
with a note-less notebook? Is it a shock when someone who peeks below their desk during tests forgets everything they 'learned' within the week? Our parents were right. It's because of those phones. Then again, maybe you can break the cycle.

TANGO Student Rep. Yoonho Lee

"GIVE YOURSELF SOME BREATHING ROOM!"

reason for the policy is to avoid phone usage. Please don't create situations where students are blamed for following the rules! One solution would be giving them specifically-allotted time to get their phones from their lockers or bags, take photos, send them to their devices (i.e. computers), then put them back. This would

websites is good in theory, but when the system is faulty, it's not very beneficial. Many sites that are academically applicable and useful such as ResearchGate, ILovePDF, and Adobe are blocked without clearly given reason. Upon contact with administrators, they stated our school has not much say in the district-run Wi-fi, which



THROUGH THE PHONE POLICY

"Ex-cuseee meee!" Trill sings, her glittery skirt billowing around her as her high-pitched voice vibrates across the entire room, causing Sharp to clomp his hands over his ears with a look of annoyance.

"Why are you always so loud?" he complains.

"Why are you always so sharp?" She laughs, and ruffles her little nephew's rigid hair. He glares at her, but it is more forced than genuine.

Trill finds Flat sitting in the corner of the room intently reading a book, her face pressed close to the cover.

"Hey, Flat, how are you?"

"Fine," she responds in a monotoned voice, but still she looks up from her book and stares doubtfully at the three-tiered cake her aunt was precariously holding in one hand.

"You need help with that?"

"Yes please, Flat. That would be very kind of you."

The two carefully make their way over to the center of the room, in the midst of others following Accent's orders. Without him, there would be completely no sense of order around here. He knew exactly what to prioritize. Where and what to emphasize.

Legato quietly hums a long melody to herself as she helps make space for the cake, her movements smooth and effortlessly elegant. It wasn't what she did; it was how she did it.

"Is everything ready?" Accent calls, his voice powerfully echoing. "Yup!"

Everyone turns in the direction of the voice, and is stunned to find the birthday boy in his pajamas, at the top of the stairs - not the stairs anymore really, more like

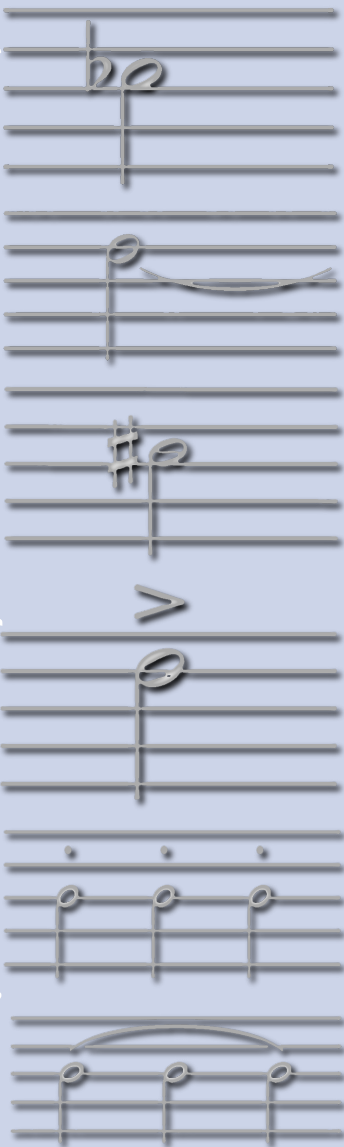
a slide that wasn't there before.

"Staccato..." Accent says, not scoldingly, but just hesitantly.

But Staccato doesn't hear him because he is calling for the trumpets to cue his grand entrance, and then he slides down, bouncing slightly every few seconds.

Then as he reaches the very bottom suddenly he is propelled

A GLIMPSE OF THE CLASSICAL FAMILY



by Anya Muthuvelan

up into the air... closer and closer...

"Gotcha."

Staccato sighs as Legato catches him just inches away from the cake, and the entire room bursts into laughter. Even Flat, who has tears in her eyes, and Sharp desperately trying to hide his smile.

HOW TO ELECTRONICS by Leon Taouk

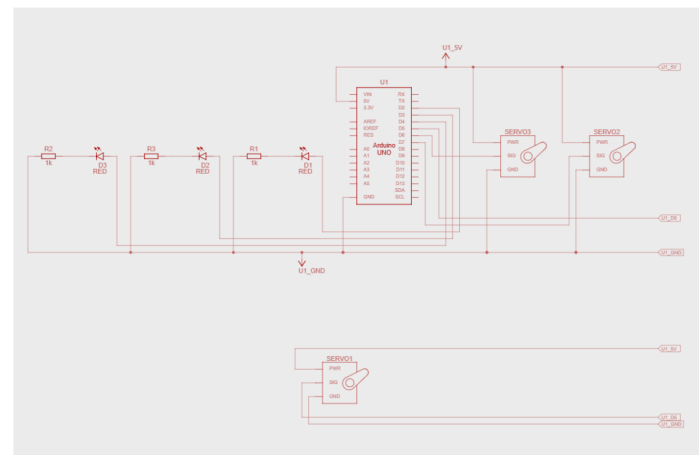
A good hobby is to learn electronics because it lets you create basically anything, it improves problem solving skills and it really helps.

WHAT IS ARDUINO?

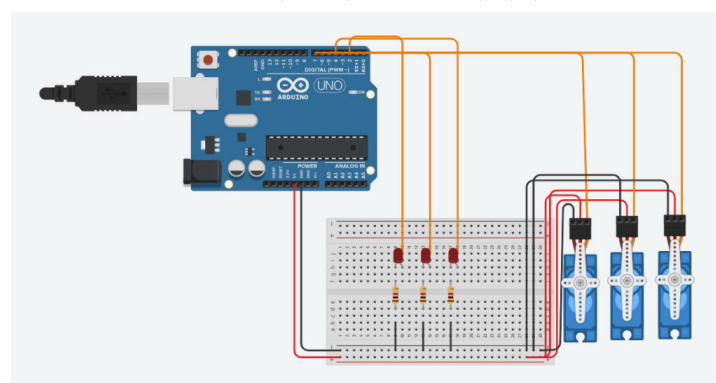
Arduino is a small "computer" that can be programmed. It is extremely useful because it reduces the need to learn how to make advanced circuits to control the logic of the circuit. Essentially, Arduino is a mini programmable circuit board that can output electrical signals depending on how it's programmed. However, Arduino is not a single board, it is a company that makes the boards I am writing about. With more powerful, computationally capable boards costing more than smaller boards which are good at controlling circuits.

Arduino boards offer an opportunity to learn how electricity works by being able to control how and when electrical signals are sent. Since the Arduino boards can be programmed using C++ (a coding language), advanced contraptions can be made. Arduino also offers a really good way to create basically anything you want. Arduino not only improves system level thinking but also improves problem solving when figuring stuff out yourself.

Arduino Demonstration Below...



*THIS IS A DIGITAL SIMULATION OF THE REAL CIRCUIT



Are you tired of having endless assignments and no motivation? Of walking out of the exam room knowing you could've done better if you had just started studying earlier? Of getting a little too comfortable with procrastination and all too familiar with regret? Studying can feel exhausting and overwhelming, but since it is something we all have to keep doing, it's worth taking the time to learn useful strategies.

The human brain is very complex. It is programmed to work in certain ways that are sometimes outside of our control. Once you learn how to use the workings of your own brain to your advantage, you will be able to fight procrastination and set yourself up for academic success. Here are 3 psychological concepts to apply to your studies:

The Hawthorne Effect

This occurs when experimental subjects change or improve their behavior when being studied. People tend to improve their focus, effort, and performance when they are aware that they are being watched. While the Hawthorne Effect was not originally researched in regard to studying, and while there is still debate surrounding the accuracy of these findings, try testing it out! Study next to a friend or family member, or in a public space like a cafe or library. You could even study with your camera on! When you know you're being noticed and observed, you'll be less likely to avoid work or get distracted.

The Zeigarnik Effect

This refers to our tendency to remember things that aren't finished better than things that are. Our minds naturally focus on tasks, goals, and information left incomplete or unaddressed, which makes it easier to recall them. Just as how unresolved mysteries leave us lingering, fixated on relieving the tension created in our minds, unfinished projects and study sessions motivate us to resume. If you're trying to learn a topic or memorize facts and details, taking short breaks will help keep the information active in your mind, and eventually retained in your memory. Try this if you want a boost in both motivation and productivity.

Implementation Intention

This strategy has to do with changing the way you set goals and plan tasks. Rather than simply stating or listing the things you have to do, an implementation intention, in the form of "if...then..." plans, adds specificity and decisiveness. For example: "If it is 5:00 on Tuesday, then I will open my laptop and start writing my lab report" or "If I am sitting on the couch before dinner, I will read 3 chapters of my book." These plans work because they deprive us of choice. By deciding in advance exactly when and where you will do something, you will be more likely to follow through with it. Try it out! Turn your intentions into action-oriented plans.

IF
THIS
THEN
THAT

THE SECRETS TO SUCCESSFUL STUDYING

by Ivy Meline

EXISTENTIAL MYSTERY

I catch myself zoning out a lot. It might stem from my social avoidance or simple exhaustion from social battery drain, but my attention often drifts inward to my own thoughts. But the problem is, they're often hopeless. "Why am I here?", must be the most dominant question swirling in my mind. Until something external draws me back to reality, I wander through the fog of purpose and existence. Although this habit is detrimental to my concentration span, (particularly when studying), my interests have unconsciously flourished through years of pondering. I am certainly not the only one who questions our existence. What is Life? Why am I here? What is the universe?

Something intriguing, but personally unsettling, is the fact that there is no single definition or meaning of life. When I first encountered this reality, I felt like all my years of introspection, and the thick, old fog evaporated. In truth however, the fog became even denser. This ambiguity of "life" was what makes life remarkably diverse. Life can mean everything; from your sense of belonging, pleasure of eating, your mere existence, the number 42, or even nothing at all (referred to as nihilism).

Among the countless definitions of life, two of the most widely acknowledge emerge from two distinct fields; Biology and Philosophy. These disciplines appear almost polar opposites; one scientific and the other conceptual. Exploring Life; Biology and Philosophy will inquire into the fundamental human questions through two contrasting

yet complementary lenses. The very first chapter will focus on the simple but profound question, What is Life?

Life. The moment your mind comprehended this word, what imagery laid before your eyes? The graceful movement of a butterfly landing on the seeds, a jaguar's slow but deliberate approach to a deer, an alluring blooming of a flower. These images arise from our biological understanding of life as something observable and

EXPLORING THE MEANING OF LIFE - PHILOSOPHY VS. BIOLOGY

objective. In biology, life is defined functionally as the state of an organism that exhibits metabolism, growth, reproduction, adaptation, and homeostasis. Metabolism is the life-sustaining chemical reactions in the body, growth; an irreversible increase in the body's size, reproduction; the production of an offspring by living organisms, adaptation; the development of an organism for better suitability for an environment, and homeostasis; the maintenance of an organism's stability. Biology characterizes

life through the interaction of these processes with evolution, genetic hereditary, and other vital mechanisms of living organisms. Through scientific methods, based on objective evidence and universal principles, Biology defines life as a state of an organism which is capable of sustaining these complex mechanisms, highlighting the rebarkable capacity of matter and life.

Biology provides us a radical and an measurable vision of

FACTS/
MECHANISM/
FUNCTION
VS. ETHICS/
THEORIES/
MEANING

what life is. But humans are metacognitive beings; we are able to have consciousness over our biological mechanism, existence and thought processes. We are able to inquire beyond the mechanism of life, and to our very conscious existence. Consciousness exists at the boundary where biology's measurable system meets philosophies immeasurable certainties. Philosophy, in its essence, questions what it truly

means to live. The human brain contains roughly 86 billion to 100 trillion neurons exchanging electrical signals (Harvard Medical School) at an astonishing speed. This neural activity enable our consciousness, yet this raises a crucial question; why are we conscious at all? Philosophy investigates why hold subjective experiences in the first place. But unlike biology, philosophy does not provide us with universally accepted answers. It invites individuals to inquire and suggest their own answers towards the mystery of the universe and life. Existentialism, Stoicism, Nihilism, Hedonism..., ancient and contemporary philosopher have presented their answers to the deepest questions of existence, reality and nature. One of the most influential propositions, made by Rene Descartes, is "Cogito, Ergo Sum," ("I think, therefore I am"). He proposed that the very act of doubting or thinking proves your existence as a conscious being. The thought proves the thinker. Therefore, his very existence is the most certain truth from which all other knowledge is built upon. While Biology defines consciousness as a neural activity in the brain, Philosophy uses consciousness itself as an evidence of one's existence.

Life exists simultaneously as a scientific phenomena and a existential mystery. Both fields approach the fundamental question through contrasting lenses, but provide us a deeper understanding of our lives.

by Manaka Iwaki

SCIENTIFIC PHIENOMENON

TANGO

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