

ISSUE 04

*Last Lecture, Classical Literature
Scholarship and Covid-19*

the
LION'S ROAR

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ADAPT TO WHAT'S COMING

LINCOLN CANNON || MAESER PARENT



My older sons, Spencer and Nathan, are recent graduates of Maeser. My youngest son, Alexander, will be a junior next year. Each has attended Maeser since 7th grade. And, thanks to that experience, they know a lot.

But none knows what's coming.

When I graduated from high school, there was no Internet. Well, okay, there was something evolving into the Internet. But few people knew about it. And fewer used it.

My teachers didn't know that I would go on to engineer web applications. That's not just because web applications didn't exist—it's mostly because few of us had ever conceived of such a thing.

(Web application? Huh? Is that what Spider-Man uses to prevent zits?)

So, no, my high school teachers didn't prepare me for the particulars of my profession. They couldn't. But they could and did do something else more important.

They taught me how to think.

The Internet took the world by storm. It terminated or transformed beyond recognition countless jobs and whole industries. Those who weathered the storm best, tended to be those who were willing and able to adapt.

Maybe some of us are adaptable by nature. But I think just about all of us can learn to be more adaptable—much more adaptable.

We can learn how to observe, deliberate, ask questions, improvise, reason, express ideas and solve problems. We can gain confidence, creativity and compassion. We can learn how to be more intelligent.

People think of intelligence in many ways. I like to think of intelligence as the capacity to adapt. It's the capacity to achieve goals across different and dynamic contexts. We can learn this kind of intelligence, this adaptability, at least to some substantial extent. And we can help each other do that. Indeed, we must!

The world didn't stop changing at the advent of the Internet. To the contrary, the Internet accelerated change. Like sharper blades made even sharper blades in the iron age, and

bigger machines made bigger machines in the industrial revolution, so more information is making more information.

And none of us knows what's coming.

But we can still prepare. We can be more ready for whatever it might be. We can be more adaptable—more intelligent. We can cultivate ever greater capacity to pursue our bright and shining goals, whatever they might be.

That's a principal reason that Dorothee and I chose to send our sons to Maeser. The promise was a Liberal Arts education, leveraging the Socratic method, to develop pro-social character and critical thinking skills. And, in my observation and by most accounts, Maeser has lived up to that promise, admirably and commendably.

I don't know what's coming for Spencer, Nathan and Alexander. But the education they've received at Maeser has increased my confidence that they'll be able and willing to adapt. And it's increased my confidence that they'll have friends who are able and willing to adapt with them.

So, bring it on! ■



NEW BEGINNINGS

Photo by Alumnus
Jared Chapan

MICHELLE LINFORD || MAESER PARENT



It was just another errand-running day. I must have gone to Walmart, because I was driving by the bowling alley when the marquee message about open enrollment lit synapses up in my brain. Wait, when did it become a school? I turned (a little too sharply, I'm sure) into the parking lot, feeling a quiet but insistent desire to learn more.

Entering the familiar-but-different doors, I stopped while my eyes adjusted to the dimmer light inside. My other senses felt startled by the stillness in a space that used to reverberate with the delightful din of dropping, rolling balls and crashing pins.

Feeling sheepish about my ignorance about lotteries and charter schools, I nervously broke the silence to ask the woman at the front desk about the enrollment process. She kindly answered my questions, handed me the paperwork, and informed me of the lottery date.

Weeks (months?) passed. It wasn't until that date came and went that I realized how much I had wanted this door of opportunity to open for our family. But it was time to enroll our son,

John, in the junior high across the street. I can still recall the dimness I felt inside as we signed him up for the usual 7th-grade classes. I think he was excited. But I was not.

Still, I thought nothing more of Maeser until a couple of weeks later. I was checking a by-then-mostly-abandoned email address for something. An urgent message in my inbox included the word "Maeser" in the subject line. With my heartbeat pulsing in my throat, I read that we had been selected in the lottery. It was Monday evening. We had until Wednesday to respond.

My husband and I were excited. Our son was not. He grumbled when we checked him out of school the next day to check out Maeser.

The tension in the car was thick. John was (understandably) insistent that he wanted to go to junior high with his friends. My husband was insistent that he should attend Maeser. My momma gut told me that this new school could be a good thing for our son, but we already had an established pattern of letting our children have a significant say in their educational choices. "Let's just go learn a little more about the school and then we'll talk about it," I urged. Truth be told, I had little hope that our son's

steely stance would shift, and I was steeling myself for that outcome.

The office was abuzz with end-of-school-day activity, but Mrs. Myers was quick to notice our unannounced, unfamiliar faces. She graciously gave us an overview of Maeser's mission, and then suggested we talk with Mr. Kennington. Within minutes, we were seated in front of the headmaster's desk.

John wanted this meeting to be over quickly. Mr. K engaged us as though he had all the time in the world. I'm sure the conversation began with Q&A ping pong between adults, but what I remember most is the kind, intuiting focus the headmaster had on John.

I didn't realize how in tune he was, however, until close to the end of our visit. Mr. K. said something pithy and personal to John about why Maeser would be a good fit for him. In an instant, the energy in the room changed. There may have been a few more questions, but soon we were shaking Mr. K's hand, thanking him for his time. My momma heart melted when our 12-year-old quietly but confidently said, "I want to go here" as we walked through the double doors into the sunshine. ■

BECOMING BECCA LINFORD



BECCA LINFORD || EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



As the youngest, it only seems natural that one of my core traits is to be an observer. I observed how my siblings went to the bathroom on their own. Therefore, I self-potty trained. I observed what got my siblings into trouble,

so I knew what to avoid. Therefore, I got out of several consequences. I observed how to be the librarian's favorite—read a lot of books. Therefore, I checked out the max amount of books and gained Mrs. Herbert's attention. (I never read a single book I checked out, by the way.)

This theory of observation-before-action seemed foolproof. If I could merely observe all that my siblings did and then walk in their footsteps, I would never take a misstep.

I tucked this philosophy between my SOAR binder and the stack of notebooks I never

touched and carried it with me on the first day of 7th grade. According to my siblings, Mz is a fun teacher, therefore I should pay attention in that class. Check. Middle School soccer is the quickest way to get friends, so I should try out. Check. If I want to make friends, act like John or Rachel (my siblings).

I couldn't check this box.

How would they act around my classmates? They had never been around the Cottle twins, Kara Han, Guys' Night, or any other 7th grader, for that matter.

This realization punctured a hole in my philosophy that only got bigger. Walking in the footsteps of my siblings made me "another Linford," not Becca. "Another Linford" could find friends while hanging out with John or Rachel's friends, but Becca couldn't seem to find her own place among the 7th graders.

"Give it time," they said.

If I acted according to anything my siblings said, I am glad I chose this one. As time went on, I noticed I could add a few more things to being "another Linford." I became the annoying questioner to ask about the first atom in Mr. Butler's class. No other Linford had done that. I painted the 7th period Latin Battle flag with a Winnie the Pooh holding honey. No other Linford had done that. I was in Mrs. Killpack's Dancing with the Teachers. No other Linford had done that. By the end of my 7th grade year, I was a pesterer, painter, awkward dancer, and, surprisingly enough, a friend.

Fast forward to senior year, Becca is also a captain, leader, actor, discussor and socializer.

I'm glad I observed what my siblings did -- even if it meant that I entered Maeser as 'another Linford'. But most importantly, I'm glad I did what they did NOT do... so I could leave Maeser as Becca Linford. I *entered* as 'another Linford' but *left* as Becca. ■



THE SHOES I COULD NEVER FILL

THOMAS WEBB || SENIOR



For eleven years, there has been at least one Webb at this school. And during those eleven years, Maeser has taught my family much more than Calculus and Physics. I believe each and every member of my family is ten times the person they

would have been if they hadn't come here. Maeser has become as much of a home to me as my own, and there is little I value more than my time here at this school. And I speak for all my siblings with confidence when I say this.

When I first came to Maeser, there were certainly a lot of expectations. I had heard so much about this school, and was excited to go here. But there were also expectations with more impact. Having four older siblings going through a single high school before you influences how everyone perceives you. Unfortunately, I didn't just have four siblings go before me. I had four siblings who were extremely talented and influential in a lot of aspects of the school. Together, my siblings have at least one award from each and every department in the school. And in the case of drama, a lot more than one. Because of this, many students older than me and most every teacher had an expectation for who I was and what I could accomplish. Years at Maeser

"I FELT LIKE AN INFERIOR SHADOW TO MY SIBLINGS"

passed, and I felt like I never met up to a single one. Elizabeth was an academic genius, and an amazing Violinist. Spencer was a star actor, and a pure tenor. Everyone seemed to love Hayden, and he was always a class officer. Nick was good at everything. For years, I felt like an inferior shadow to my siblings, and was definitely treated so by a few. All my accomplishments just never measured up to theirs. And one or two of my siblings assured me of this. I felt terrible for not being better, not measuring up to the name Webb.

I felt like this for a long time. But things changed junior year. Junior year was a very good year. And I came to a realization in the third quarter of that year. People's expectations don't define who I am. In fact, they have nothing to do with me at all. I was perfectly happy with who I was. And more than that, I had many accomplishments I was proud of at

Maeser. Fulfilling the legacy of my siblings never meant being good at the things they were good at, or having a hundred friends. My siblings had good qualities that I could aspire to have. I strived for Elizabeth's discerning insight and intelligence. I tried to be kind and genuine like Spencer. And I took every occasion to be classy and cordial like Nick. It doesn't matter if you don't make the team, or lose at competition. What really mattered to me, and matters for the rest of my life, is the person I had become. Expectation wasn't the only thing my siblings left for me. What really matters is the example. I've tried hard to emulate the best qualities of my siblings. And I'd even say I've succeeded on some of them. Your goal shouldn't be to be the best. Just strive to be a good person. And as long as you're happy with who you are, it doesn't matter that you don't have a medal to prove it. I never filled the shoes of my siblings. And that's ok. I did my own thing, had my own accomplishments. I am proud of myself, and that's enough.

So goodbye Maeser. Of the veritable hundreds of papers my family has written for you, this is the last one. We have left each other better than we were before. And given me the best six years of my life. And at the end of the day, that's all I could ever ask of you. ■



FINDING HOPE IN COVID-19

THE SIMPLE JOURNEY TO HOPE

ANOUSHKA YADAV || 12TH GRADE



Many people have asked me what I've been doing during the quarantine. I give my automatic response of "homework, sleep, eat, repeat." But this isn't entirely true. What I have really been doing is stressing over how much college tuition costs, crying over how bad the five drafts of my Last Lecture sound, and watching all ten episodes of "Never Have I Ever" on Netflix over the span of a day and a half.

Picture this: books lying around untouched, bottles of paint that are probably dry now, and a sparkly prom dress hanging next to my cap and gown waiting to be used. I'm sitting on my bed endlessly typing away at another essay for

English 1010 or scrolling through YouTube trying to find the next funny dog video that might catch my interest.

I've realized that during this quarantine, I lost all hope. I lost hope in having my dream prom, and of being able to hug my friends and take stupid pictures with our diplomas during graduation. I lost hope of leaving my house to eat ice cream or jumping into a cold swimming pool. (I really miss the swim team!) This is not how my senior year was supposed to be. I was slowly digging myself into a hole deeper than the Mariana Trench.

That slowly started to change as I started to text my friends daily to make plans for a small summer prom or a big summer graduation party. My heart swelled with excitement as I thought about seeing my friends and teachers

before I leave for college.

So here's the thing: it's easy to lose hope in a time like this when you're stuck at home with your family all day and you're not able to see your friends. Thankfully, we have tools like our phones and Zoom so we can still (sort of) see our friends.

Trying new things has helped me tackle the darkness. I recently got into baking and I started reading "Crazy Rich Asians" for the 5th time. I practice calligraphy and coloring with oil pastels.

Try something new, talk to friends and fill your bucket. This advice that Mr. Simmons gave me stuck. Do what you like, and maybe you can find your hope. ■



LIVING HISTORY MAKING MOMENTS

NATALIE GERBER || TEACHER



As a freshman in college, I was getting into my 1985 Honda accord and heading to my 9 a.m. class (Video Production). There was something on the radio about airplanes, but I didn't pay much attention. It took a while to realize the severity of that morning on September 11, 2001.

Eight years later I was finishing graduate school and entering the job market only to find that all those teachers I was told "Utah really needs right now" were getting laid off. It was the start

of the 2008 recession and I couldn't find full-time work.

On Thursday, March 12, 2020, I met with my colleagues in the Maeser library to discuss plans to close the school. Mrs. Ellis predicted a day early that schools would close due to a global pandemic. She was right (as usual).

It's not often that you recognize that the moment you are living is going to later be taught in history classes. You'll reach a point when you're telling people about the time schools were closed due to COVID-19. You'll look back on how you completed your classes

online--even classes that were never intended to be online. You'll tell stories to your kids and you'll mentally skew the severity of it all.

This may be the first time you've recognized a "living history moment," but it won't be your last. I don't know what else the future holds for you, but there will most certainly be other "unprecedented events" and "difficult times" ahead.

But pay attention when those moments do come, because those are the moments that define a person. ■

What is something positive that has come from all the closures?



NAIYA BURNS || 11TH GRADE

"Closing down things has made the amount of people commuting a lot lower so the environment is getting a break"



ALICE WATSON || 7TH GRADE

"... [J]ust being able to take some time to relax and really focus on what goals I want to accomplish."



ANNIKA MECHAM || 9TH GRADE

"I've become closer with my family. I've learned to be more patient. It's taught me how to be a better person even though it's frustrating. I've also grown a larger respect for healthcare workers."



MATTHEW CARR || 11TH GRADE

"I've gotten much closer to my family."

ADVICE FROM THE PAST

2011

BRONTË STEVENS (BRINGHURST)
STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT 2011



It's now been 9 years since I graduated from Maeser and my 3 years in student council are some of the

happiest memories of my life.

This year, remember:

You're Creating Memories:
Whenever you are planning an event or activity, go in expecting that things will go wrong! Don't get too focused on things being perfect, but work with the people and resources to focus on creating a special memory and experience for your fellow students.

Value Others' Perspectives:
Strive to understand the feelings and experiences of your fellow students and student council members. Just because you've been elected doesn't mean that your opinion is more important than others'. It means that you've been given the trust from the students and opportunity to be an empathetic leader.

Expand Your Social Circle: My senior year, I introduced myself to someone new to our school. I received a note from her, later that year, in which she shared that she had been really nervous and scared, and how it made a big difference for her. This new role can be an opportunity for you to step outside of your comfort zone, and make a lasting difference in someone's life.

2012

AUSTEN ARTS
STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT 2012



A great man once told me that if you see something and think "someone should do something

about that," be that someone and do it. This has been a leading force in my life and was a leading force for my time as Student Body President.

My advice is to take the time to get to know the people around you and to reach out to those that may seem left out or struggling. Sometimes a simple "hello" or smile can turn someone's day around.

Be kind.

2013

CASSY BROWN
STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT 2013



More than 7 years after serving as Student Body President at Maeser Prep, I delight at garnishing my

professional resume with the title. My service to the students of Maeser Prep as Student Body President and Editor-in-Chief of *The Lion's Roar* illuminated me to my own talents in leadership by making one truth (along with others) painfully apparent: it's not about me.

My role as an adventure guide revealed this truth as a tool for delivering transformational experiences to humans who entrust their physical and emotional safety to my expertise. Adventure guiding is not my passion because I get to keep people safe in vertical terrain. It is my passion because I get to leverage my role as an expert to facilitate the deepening of my clients' connections with themselves as they are and with a version of themselves they can't see on their own.

Though the specific duties of a student council member and an adventure guide are different, the concepts of effective leadership in these roles are similar. We hold the responsibility of bringing our personal strengths and unique insights into our leadership roles to not only define a vision of better for our people but also provide clear, actionable steps to collectively move closer to realizing that vision.

2014

RILEY CORRIGAN
STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT 2014



Be kind.
The history of the word "kind" will help me explain a little the weight I give this word.

According to etymonline.com, the word "kind" descended from a Proto-Germanic term meaning "family." (Now, you can learn more about word history on your own, but all this has a point.)

While your fellow students at Maeser are no replacement for your flesh-and-blood-families, hopefully you believe in the universal sister/brotherhood of all people. Being kind is about believing everyone is your family and treating them as such. Talk to them; listen to them; pause for them. Yes, I'll even say, love them.

My second point is a quote from author Brandon Sanderson: "Journey before destination." Let me suggest two ways this can have some meaning for you (at least one of which is derived somewhat from Sanderson's works):

- 1) When you mess up—and you will—that's not your destination, keep on going.
- 2) The value of your actions goes beyond their outcomes. There is value in paying attention, working and loving, even if there is no perceivable outcome, or it doesn't turn out how you wanted it to.

8 of the last 10 Student Body Presidents offer their advice for the newly elected Student Council

2015

SAM STONELY (ELLIS)
STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT 2015



Your value as leader is not measured by your success, but by the success of those you lead and serve.

Re-read that.

It takes the pressure off!

Support your classmates and other student council members in their endeavors to be creative.

I feel so strongly that one of the most important skills any leader can have is to listen to those around them and act on what they hear.

It's not about planning perfect activities or dances. It's about making memories that follow you long after high school.

Be you. They elected you for you. Work hard. Make people feel valued and loved. People remember way more how you make them feel than by what you say.

You can do this.

2017

KENDALL BAILEY
STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT 2017



Congratulations! You have been voted into Student Council by your peers. This means that they trust you to help make their experience at Maeser

next year awesome.

I have a few thoughts about how you can be successful and have a better experience.

Remember what your purpose is. Student Council is not about you. Student Council is about creating and maintaining Maeser's culture. It's about helping everyone feel like they are a part of the Pride.

Work together. It is easy for everyone to get stuck working on the individual assignments they have and forget that you are all part of a larger whole. If everyone works together you can create something amazing.

Don't be afraid to ask for help. If you feel overwhelmed, there are so many people ready to step up and help out. You have advisors, fellow council members, other teachers and friends who want you to succeed and do your best.

Be creative. If you have an idea for how to do something differently than it has been done before, ask. If you never ask, you will never know!

As one of my favorite teachers used to say, "Go forth and conquer!"

2021 will be awesome!

2019

CLARK BAILEY
STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT 2019



Remember that guy that stood in front of the school last year at the Spirit Bowl dressed as Dumbledore in a ridiculous

maroon robe and an itchy fake beard? Well that was me at the culmination of weeks of planning, coordinating and purchasing supplies.

A lot of people put a lot of hours into that event. And it was awesome! I think, and I hope, that it was a good time and a good memory for Maeser.

People might think that as the Student Body President, that would be the climax of my experience in that position, my triumphant moment of glory in front of my peers and teachers. But it wasn't. Actually it was just really stressful making sure everything went as planned.

In reality, the best moments of my time as Student Body President were talking to middle schoolers and lower classmen at lunch, helping people with homework, and rubbing shoulders more closely with the amazing teachers, faculty and staff Maeser has.

Don't forget what's really important: people.

2020

CODY WILKINS
STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT 2020



You know Maeser. You know the people. You love it here. You love your big Maeser family. It's why you are on

student council.

You are here to lead. You are here to serve. You are here to represent your peers and Maeser as a whole. What do those all have in common? Planning stumps? Doing carpool? Obeying the uniform always? Attending events? Being in StuCo forum? No. No. No. No. And oh, no.

The one common purpose is the people. Student Council is ALL about the people. Don't lose sight of the people while you are doing all of the duties and checklist items.

Without the people, none of this would exist. You are included in the people you need to remember.

You are on a journey of self-discovery. I found part of myself on StuCo. I would urge each of you to serve and lead yourself a bit as you actively and deliberately serve and lead those around you.

You've got this, just trust yourself.

KARL G. MAESE



THE PLEDGE OF OUR PRESIDENT

RACHEL GUNDERSEN || STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT ELECT

One morning, I was sitting in first period freshman Socratic.

“Good morning Maeser, please stand for the pledge.” Hayden Webb said enthusiastically.

We all arose from our seats and put our hands over our hearts to show our allegiance to our flag and country. There was nothing different about the pledge that morning, just the same laborious, awkward recitation attempting to follow the voice over the speaker.

“Thanks Maeser, have a great day!”

“Thanks Hayden” Mz said. Her mood then shifted dramatically and in her most serious tone she addressed her class of tiny freshmen. “When you guys are seniors and one of you is Student Body President, promise me that you will start the pledge, take your mouth away from the speaker and then let the dang classes say it on their own!”

Here we are four years later and her tiny freshmen are a little older now.

Mz, this one’s for you.

Students of Maeser, I promise to never say the entire pledge over the intercom— but instead, to let the classes finish it themselves.

Every morning, when we make a pledge to our flag, we make a solemn promise to honor and protect it with everything we can. When I decided to run for Student Body President, I made a pledge to Maeser. I promised myself that I would do everything I could to unite and lead our school. I committed to preserving our unique and inviting culture.

Maeser students are a different breed in the best of ways and I want to keep it that way. My goal

as president is to make everyone feel like they have a voice at school. I want everyone to feel like they belong. When people have a seat at the table, they are more inclined to open up and show their true selves.

The more people feel like they belong, the more excited and willing they will be to come to school and learn. If quarantine has taught us anything, it is that humans are social creatures. Extroverts, introverts and ambiverts alike crave connection with others. It is a basic need, and school is the best way to build these types of lasting and authentic relationships. My pledge as Student Body President is to create an environment where everyone is not only comfortable, but excited to build these kinds of friendships.

My platform is based on outreach. I want to find those who feel invisible and passed over and show them that they are not forgotten. Sometimes it is easy to get lost in the hustle bustle of school and the stress of our classes that we forget to reach out. Student Council’s main responsibility is not Spirit Week, Service Auction or prom. Student Council’s main responsibility is genuine connection with the student body. Their mission is to get to know the students of Maeser through positive conversation and consistent attention to their needs.

Next year, I promise to do everything I can do to preserve the community of Maeser while also emphasizing inclusion in all that we do. I want everyone to feel like they have a place at school.

This is my pledge to all of you. I’m committing everything I can to make next year better than ever and I have never been more excited. ■

WORDS FROM STUDENTS



REFLECTIONS ON THE YEAR

KEIRA HAMILTON || 8TH GRADE



For me, the most memorable experience in school comes down to two things.

MSI was an amazing experience I'll never forget. We got to go on field trips galore! We had many fun adventures, such as the butterfly biosphere and Labyrinth games.

The butterfly biosphere was fun because we were enveloped in nature and experienced it firsthand. It didn't even feel like Utah! It brought out fun sides of people, while also revealing strange fears, like fear of butterflies. (Which I didn't even know was a thing.) The many different kinds of butterflies and their beautiful designs were astounding. It truly was a magical sight.

We did other things during MSI like the Labyrinth games, which were amazing! Everyone got into groups of 4-5 people and went through escape rooms. Each room varied from intense mental games to physical games. It was cool to see each member of my groups' talents being put to the test. Some rooms were easier than others, and some took forever to figure out how to get through them.

One of the rooms, which was my favorite, was the volcano. It was mostly physical and involved swinging above sensors, that, if you tripped them, you lost and had to start over. We had a lot of fun and definitely grew closer as friends.

I loved the groups in MSI because they let us grow together, and get to know each other.

In sewing, we got to chat and sit and make things, which gave us a chance to get to know each other personally.

**"I WOULDN'T TRADE
ANY OF THESE
EXPERIENCES FOR
THE WORLD."**

I also made a friend during MSI, whom I am sure will still be my friend through high school.

The second most memorable experience of the year would be Broadway Rocks. Eighth grade was my first year participating and it was hilariously amazing.

Auditioning was a little scary, but once I got in, and heard how laid back it was, it allowed me to have a lot more fun than I would have.

In my small group, one of the leaders was Rachel Gundersen, who is amazing! She is quirky, sunny, nice, and gets the job done. She was amazing to practice with, and just awesome. Our group brought energy to the stage, and we were lucky to have with us Stella Yeritsyan as one of the main vocalists. She is funny, silly, and nice.

During Broadway Rocks, there were a few challenges we had to overcome. For example, the majority of the mics weren't working, so instead of having around twenty, we had eight. And, while practicing in small groups, the fire alarm went off. (This was because of some burnt popcorn.) We were tired and had to go out into the cold snow, which made people a little cranky.

Doing Broadway Rocks allowed me to get more comfortable with myself, and feel a little more at ease.

All in all, these two experiences have made me grow closer to my Maeser family and made me love them even more. I wouldn't trade these experiences for the world. ■



ROOM 151

ADAM COTTLE || 12TH GRADE



It was just a building, small
and grey

The day I'll be leaving is far
away

I was a nervous, small little
boy

With a spark in my voice,
teachers it seemed to annoy

But they put up with me, and helped to grow

Taught me to think, and to strive to know

As my body grew bigger, so did my mind

It expanded and accepted, those less inclined
My heart became cheerful, with that spark in my
eye

That's when time seemed to fly by

Senioritis was cured, by another ailment no doubt

Our last few moments, were blotted out

I walked through the halls

It would be my last

And I remembered the memories, that I had
amassed

I counted the rooms, and the memories within
When I stopped at a room, that I had never been in

It was room 150, that's what it was

As I looked within it gave me a buzz

My spark has touched, every room but this

I would never know what I had missed

My time here was good, I could call it great

And my life after this, is mine to create

I will miss my last few months at school

And that room 150. But I would be a fool

If I let that stop me from being able to fly

With a gleam in my smile and that spark in my eye

I will not let my life go by

That room 150 and my last months of school

Are opportunities I missed, I know it's cruel

But I have made a goal and I will persist

That those two things, will be the only
opportunities I missed

TEAMS

TAMMA BAHR || 11TH GRADE



This year, I decided to join Cross Country. At first, I felt like the inexperienced one—and I was. I felt like I was the one asking all of the questions. I followed the workout plan laid out over the summer. Then, I got pneumonia, and I did not

want to run. By the end of the summer, I was better, but only had five weeks to get back in shape.

During the summer, we came together and ran stairs. It was hard, but my teammates encouraged me.

Then, school began, and with school, normal practice. We grew as a team. One day, I ran warmup and worked out with Colin. We ran and we talked. We talked about ourselves. We joked and we cheered each other on at meets.

While at first, I started running to stay in shape for cross-country skiing, I kept running because I love it. I love having a team, and I love the feeling after I run. Sometimes the workouts were hard—especially hill workouts or wind sprints. However, I gained a team, and I received support staying fit.

Try something new. You'll get experience, and possibly find a new hobby or join a team. ■

DRAMA

KATELYN SNYDER || 10TH GRADE



Wow! What an amazing year!!! It's crazy, that all this has happened. Personally, I never thought we'd have a virtual 4th quarter. However, it's been a pretty cool experience so far.

My favorite memory would have to be the play we were going to put on this year. I love "Beauty and the Beast," and was so excited to be able to participate in it this year!

Two of my closest friends were also participating for the first time and I had so much fun learning with them. We made a lot of jokes and laughed a lot. "Do you see people stacking babies in the real world?" and "That should be me..." are some of our favorite inside jokes. I loved getting to work with the cast, they are all so insanely talented!

The directors were amazing as well! It was obvious how much hard work and effort they put into choreographing and directing and putting the play together. This play will always be one of my most treasured experiences!

Drama has always been pretty high up on my list of favorites. And this year it didn't disappoint! I think that we even grew closer together. Thanks for the memories! I look forward to making more! ■

WORDS FROM ALUMNI



MY PRIDE

LEX MAYNEZ || ALUMNUS

Finishing up my sophomore year at BYU didn't go nearly the way I planned. I moved back home, changed my major, and my classes went online. But, it taught me to always be ready because plans will always change. The list of negatives is long and dreary, but the list of positives is short and bright.

Starting my own business in November 2019 helped me create friendships that have

lasted through all this turmoil. It has helped me reconnect with old friends—my Maeser friends. This business has been a creative outlet that hasn't just blessed me socially but financially and educationally, as well. When I am interviewed, companies are impressed. When I'm with friends, they talk in admiration about what I've created. Starting a business taught me what I'm capable of and how it only takes confidence to make an idea a reality.

Just as I learned at Maeser, mistakes are inevitable, but success is long lasting. The true lesson is in the Maeser Pride: not only the satisfaction of belonging to the school, but also a social organization and a community. I've seen support from friends and family during these trying times. And nothing will ever take me away from this, my Pride. ■

MY ENROLLMENT STORY

MOLLY GRIGG (CHRISTENSEN) || ALUMNA



Not many students can say they love uniforms, but I am one of them. When my parents asked if I still wanted to go to a charter school for Jr. High school, without hesitation I said, "yes!". Then there came the matter of a lottery. I remember my

parents setting alarms for when the Maeser lottery opened so they could put my name in right away.

Flash forward to the spring. My family was

eating dinner when my parents said they had a surprise for me. I was a little confused I watched them pull out a stuffed lion. A lion? What could that even mean? My parents then said, "You got in!" Now I was really confused!

I was still really quiet and so my dad started quizzing me. "What school has a Lion as their mascot?" I just sat there thinking about the mascot from "The Chipmunk Movie" that scared Theodore. My mom finally burst out "You got into Maeser!" I was overjoyed and I may have taken a few laps around the dining table with my stuffed lion.

This is where you'd think that the story would end. But when my mom went to drop off the paperwork to enroll me in the school they said I was still on the waitlist.

Needless to say we were all very confused, and when my mom asked them to check the list of new 7th graders they found me. Come to find out, my parents each thought they were in charge of enrolling me in the lottery, so I was in the system twice! One Molly Christensen got in, while the other Molly Christensen got waitlisted. ■



THE BLAME GAME

BRONWYN KENNINGTON || ALUMNA

High school was incredibly difficult for me for a variety of different reasons. During this time, I struggled with feeling so overwhelmed and exhausted that taking responsibility for my mistakes felt like it would break me. The people I spent my time with, while good people for the most part, did not want to step up and own their shortcomings and mishaps either. There always seemed to be a pile of drama on my plate, seasoned with a large helping of finger pointing and judgment.

One experience stands apart from the rest. Two girls lied that our mutual friend was telling everyone that he and I were dating. I pulled the boy aside to talk to him privately about it and clarify with him that we were not, in no uncertain terms, a couple. The conversation went poorly because he lied in order to deflect embarrassment and further conflict, and I didn't realize the two girls I'd trusted had lied in the first place. Over the last three months of school, with the help of my mom and my teachers, I was able to parse out the truth from the lies. However, these discoveries didn't come fast enough.

During this time, our circle of friends blamed each other for what happened. We were all set in a pattern of refusing to take responsibility for the lies and overreactions.

This was the pattern I experienced over and over during high school, and truthfully, it was exhausting. By the time I became a senior, I was worn out and sick of pretending to be a mirror in order to deflect negative consequences. I realized something crucial: refusing to take responsibility doesn't ensure safety from negative consequences, it actually enhances them. Once I figured this out, I began taking small steps toward being fully responsible for myself. If I'd forgotten to do a homework assignment, or simply chosen not to do it, I owned up to it and took the zero. I began to not

only apologize for getting angry with people, but the leash on my temper became stronger and I was able to show my more naturally gentle personality.

The Blame Game robbed me of so many opportunities in high school. It cost me friends, good grades and chances to learn and grow. It was hard to admit to myself that my behavior and choices in many situations were hurtful or simply inappropriate for the situation. Taking responsibility meant taking a good hard look at the less than pretty parts of myself and acknowledging to others that I'm far from

**“I WAS ABLE TO PARSE
OUT THE TRUTH FROM
THE LIES.”**

perfect.

It's not comfortable, accepting that you're not flawless. Owning up to your mistakes still comes with consequences. Assuming responsibility does not mean that you can say and do whatever you like and apologize later—that's insincere and lazy. Truly accepting responsibility for your actions is doing your best to be disciplined and determined to do the right thing, making amends when you fall short.

It took me time to adjust to admitting my mistakes and striving to be more disciplined and hardworking. But when I did, my life grew simpler and I was able to weed out the people who weren't truly invested in me. I still struggle with getting tangled up in playing the Blame Game, but I've found a deep rooted confidence in myself when I own up to myself, flaws and all. ■

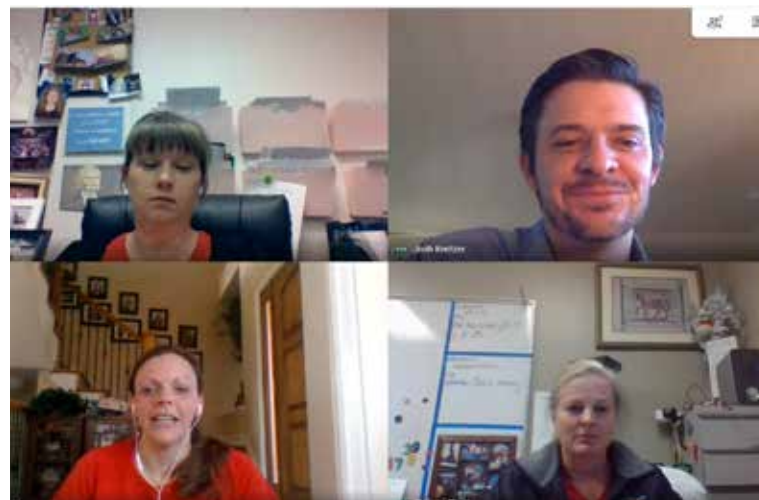


“A CHANCE FOR ME TO
GET TO KNOW MYSELF
AND MY FAMILY
MORE.”

-ANNA SCHREINER, 9TH



QUARANTINE



“IT IS AN
OPPORTUNITY FOR
QUIET ADVENTURE.”

-ANNA GRIFFITH, 12TH



“QUARANTINE HAS REALLY BEEN A TIME FOR ME TO DECIDE WHETHER TO GIVE IT MY ALL OR NOT. IT’S BEEN REALLY POWERFUL FOR ME TO HAVE TO MAKE A CONSCIOUS DECISION ABOUT BEING MY BEST SELF.”

-LUKE STANCIL, 12TH

LIFE



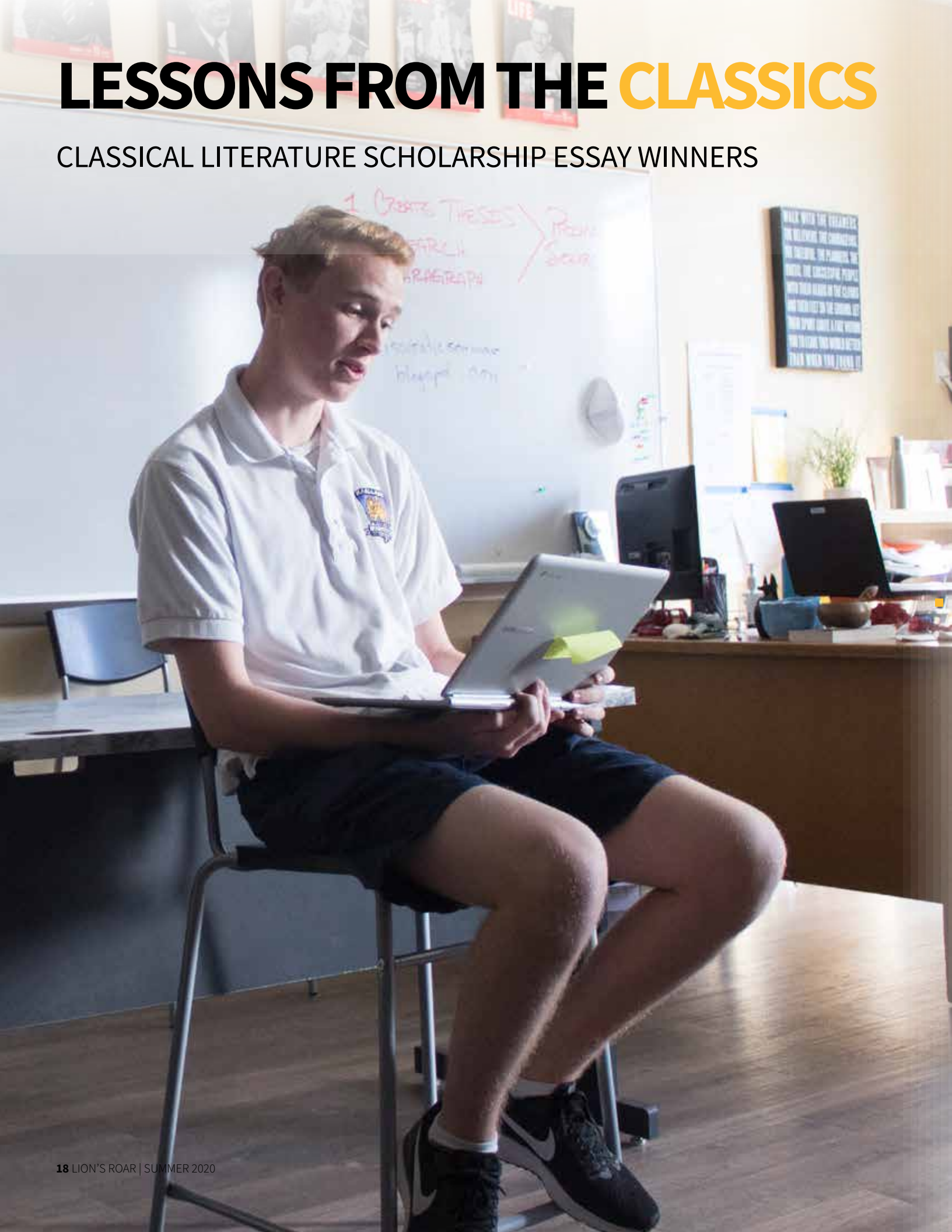
“THIS TIME IS A WAY TO RECONNECT WITH YOURSELF AND GIVE YOURSELF TIME TO ENJOY THE LITTLE MOMENTS IN LIFE...”

-CORTLAND LARSEN, 9TH



LESSONS FROM THE CLASSICS

CLASSICAL LITERATURE SCHOLARSHIP ESSAY WINNERS



CHANGING MY WORLD VIEW FROM *THE GRAPES OF WRATH*

ETHAN LYSKY || SENIOR- FIRST PLACE WINNER



In a dimly lit hotel room deep in the Andes Mountains of Bolivia, I flicked on a lamp and opened a borrowed copy of *The Grapes of Wrath*. Over the next two weeks, this book would become my guide as I attempted

to connect with a country and people whose languages and customs were foreign to me. During the day I moved through the city of Cochabamba in a bus that looked straight out of the 70's. As I peered through grime-covered windows I marveled at the incredible city sprawled out before me but felt distant from the people who occupied it. Bolivia is the poorest nation in South America, and my upbringing left me feeling alienated from those I had been sent to provide aid. At night I returned to my hotel where I joined the Joads as they crept across the midwestern United States dealing with levels of poverty and hardship that would have previously been unimaginable. What stuck out to me through this reading of *The Grapes of Wrath* was how experiencing the world can create forms of solidarity between people that

would not have previously been possible. As the Joads are dispossessed from their home and their family unit begins to falter, they find that rather than collapse their concept of a family has simply expanded. No better can this progression be seen than in the Matriarch of the family Ma Joad. In chapter 26 she muses that "They was the time when we was on the lan'. They was a boundary to us then.... we was the fambly - kinda whole and clear. An' now we ain't clear no more. I can't get straight. They ain't nothin' keeps us clear." At this moment she perfectly expressed my adolescent understanding of the world. I existed inside of my bubble where I saw the same people and landscapes and had no conception of the plight of others around the globe. In the last chapter, we see the evolution of her understanding when she proclaims, "Use' ta be the family was fust. It ain't so now. It's anybody." What at first is seen as the breaking down of her family is, in fact, the expansion of the concept to encapsulate everybody that is in need. Through *The Grapes of Wrath*, I was able to see that this experience was not just the breaking down of my previously limited understanding of humanity. It was also the expansion of my ability to empathize with

the Bolivians and everyone around me. Reading *The Grapes of Wrath* may not have taught me Spanish, but I learned that there are ways we can connect with people other than by using words. Through empathy and service, I found that although I could not communicate with the Bolivians I came to understand that we all share a bond that is deeper than any language barrier. Whether it was playing soccer on a dirt field or enjoying the same meal, what drives us as people always seems to be the same. No better is this put than by Casy in chapter 4 when he says, "maybe it's all men an' all women we love; maybe that's the Holy Spirit-the human spirit-the whole shebang. Maybe all men got one big soul ever'body's a part of." In this declaration of Transcendental wisdom it is proclaimed that we are all connected through our love and humanity. Through this book, I have learned that when we look at our similarities rather than our differences and take an approach of empathy, we can connect with others in meaningful ways. Every time I open a copy of *The Grapes of Wrath* I am reminded of how one of the quintessential American novels taught me to connect with people thousands of miles away. ■

NEW DIRECTIONS FROM AN OLD CLASSIC

DANNI CHESLER || SENIOR- SECOND PLACE WINNER



My first reading of the *Aeneid* began in a waiting room of the radiology department at the Orem Instacare. I was sitting in front of a table covered in the three-month-old magazines meant to keep people from getting impatient, my mom next to

me scrolling through Facebook to pass the time, and a black book in my hands that I had just received a day earlier. In order to keep up with my assigned reading for the night, I opened up the book. The rest of my day was consumed by nurses with needles, waiting for surgery, and some 2,000 year-old poetry mixed in. At the end of the day, I had to get my appendix removed. This being my very first surgery, the recovery was something that I was quite unprepared for.

Waking up the next morning, I was greeted by new pains and weaknesses. No longer could I sleep on my side, which still has left its mark on me to this day, I quickly discovered that laughing didn't bring the same joy as before, medication was constantly being slid down my throat, and walking was more of a burden than a mode of transport. While I was sleeping away my days at home, my wonderful teacher, who had given me the *Aeneid*, posted his own thoughts online for our class on a specific line

in the first book: "Endure, and save yourselves for happier times" (1.244 trans. Lombardo). With just seven words, my suffering and pain made sense. My future was not bleak, it was full of light and hope. There was a reason to hold on and keep going because I knew that life would be better if I endured through it.

Thankfully overtime my stomach pains subsided, laughing brought happy tears to my eyes, sleeping was less of a hassle in terms of what position I was in, and I walked at my leisure again. Little did I know that only 8 months later I would have to pick up that book again, not for school, but for my own comfort and sanity.

On August 31, 2017, I tore my ACL. A common yet very problematic injury because I was a starting varsity soccer player with an entire team of girls who needed me on that field to fight for every ball that came my way. I was not ready to turn my back on those who depended on me. I didn't know the exact diagnosis until after 6 excruciatingly long days full of scans and tests to figure out why my knee had decided to give out on me. The day after I found out, I shuffled into my coach's office and just broke down. After revealing the tragic news to him, he invited me to gather my emotions for the first period of school by hiding away in his office.

While my math class was learning how to factor equations, I was taken back to when I had found solace in the stories of a man much before my time. Out of my backpack came the *Aeneid* and I began with the famous phrase *Arma virumque cano*. A new set of fateful words then stood out to me. Resting at the end of Virgil's innovation to the Muses, he said, "So hard and huge a task it was to found the Roman people" (1.48-49 trans. Fitzgerald). It wasn't easy for Aeneas to establish a people so far from his original home. He had to face multiple wars, the dangers of the sea, and losing those he loved most. My life from here on out was going to consist of a knee surgery and recovery that was not going to be easy. I knew I was going to be okay, because at the end of the day I would be a better person because of my trials.

To this day the *Aeneid* has forever pointed my life in a new direction. From Aeneas' story and Virgil's words, I learned how to endure through my struggles and understand what life looks like after. There was a point to the adversities I experienced, and I was comforted to know that I could be even better on the other end of them. I am eternally grateful to whatever force placed the *Aeneid* in my path because without it, I would be a slave to my trials instead of the master. ■

THE LAST LECTURE

THE LAST LECTURE AND WHY IT DOESN'T MATTER

AMMON HASSON || SENIOR- FIRST PLACE



This is it, the Last Lecture. The pinnacle event for every student at Maeser. The famous last words of dying seniors who are about to pass away and be reborn into adulthood. It's the moment when a student steps up to the stage and, clothed in the robes of wisdom, imparts their final admonition. Every student dreams of this moment. It's what our

**"I DON'T CARE IF YOU
GLEAN SOMETHING
PROFOUND FROM
WHAT I AM SAYING IN
THIS SPEECH..."**

whole education has been building up to. We have spent countless desperate hours in the shower pondering this one question: What will I say? After all, this is your only chance to leave behind a legacy. It's all or nothing: home run or strike out. Time to find out whether or not you will be remembered. So then what will I say? I say forget about the Last Lecture. It doesn't matter.

We as students have the misconception that life is all about defining moments. We think

LAST LECTURE: THE BETTER STORY

CARSON BAILEY || SENIOR- SECOND PLACE



As the rain began to pour, the enemy materialized. It was a dark, thick, gooe presence. As the foremost knights in the kingdom, it was the Bailey boys' calling and duty to defeat this monster. After donning our armor and strapping into our boots, Clark slid back

the castle gate and we charged forth to slay the beast. Our initial efforts seemed to be forcing it into retreat. But the harder we fought, the deeper we sank into the behemoth's black-brown soup. The deeper we plunged the more we strained to hoist our boot-shod feet back to the surface until finally we were caught in the fiend's hideous spell. We were cemented in place. The Bailey brothers were defeated and bitterly hung our heads in shame. Then we waited for the fearless, undefeatable Queen of the Realm. Only she could save us in our darkest hour.

Upon hearing our desperate call, Mom walked out into the backyard, smiled as she saw our snow-boot dressed feet drowned in muck, took a few pictures, and pulled us out of the muddy garden in the far corner of the yard. After getting hosed off to rid ourselves of the final remnants of the earthy leviathan, Clark and I went inside through the sliding glass door and shrugged off our armor, eh-hm, excuse me, rain jackets. This grand tale of daring courage stands tall in Bailey

family lore and forms a cornerstone of my childhood memories.

This year in Senior Socratic we studied *Life of Pi* by Yann Martel. Without spoiling too much of the story, following the sinking of his ship, Pi, the main character, tells of his voyage across the Pacific Ocean in a lifeboat with a tiger on board. At the end of the book, Pi tells another story that parallels the first, but lacks its beauty and meaning. When I read this second ending I was, initially, deeply offended. Pi just spent 300 pages detailing his conversion to religion followed by how that conversion had aided him in his demanding journey across the sea. This second story seemed to say that was all just a hoax Pi had invented to hide from his painful reality. But in a Socratic discussion on Zoom, my classmates helped me realize the truth of what Martel was saying: The first story with the tiger is not a deceitful mechanism to hide the truth. It was Pi's way of learning from and demonstrating principles he found in his tragic adventure. I remain unsure which version is true, but I discovered the power of telling the better story even if that story isn't rooted so much in fact as the emotional power of the moment.

My backyard adventure with Clark was full of both fantasy and interpretation. We never were knights captured by a fierce mud demon. On our other adventures Clark and I never actually faced off in a rugged western town as sheriff and outlaw, nor did we fly to the moon in our homemade rocket. However, these fanciful tales of heroic action contain the joy of my childhood. It is not in the rote details of slogging through a soggy garden that would have been forgotten days or weeks later, but in the better story of my runaway imagination, that I created that joy. The key was to spin the non-essential technicalities into a fantasy that more realistically represented the feelings of the experience.

High school is no different. We have junctures with fate: winning a soccer game, losing a basketball game, stumbling through the Socratic discussion on a reading I should have done the night before (missed opportunities for growth that I'm ashamed of), screaming "There's nothing like a dame!" in Broadway Rocks and discussing how to navigate woes of high school drama with Mr. Simmons and "The Boys" after practice. As individual events these memories make up "the good old days," that I will remember for years to come. But it is the romance, background, potent emotions and interpretation that make stories worth listening to, but more importantly, worth learning from. I am not telling you to fabricate stories to teach artificial lessons, but there is immense value in recognizing the powerful lessons that can be learned in the deep emotions of seemingly insignificant moments. The moments of high school are essential and wonderful, but it is how we turn those moments, on the muddy potter's wheel of fantasy and principle, into better stories that shape and define us that really matters. ■

that legacy and worth is made manifest in the singularity of events like Last Lectures. We get so caught up in the words of Eminem, “The moment you own it, you better never let it go, you only get one shot, do not miss your chance to blow, this opportunity comes once in a lifetime, yo!” We think that a perfect Last Lecture is the only way to do justice to the life we have had at Maeser. Don’t get caught up in the lie.

It isn’t about giving the Last Lecture, it never was and it never will be. Who cares what your famous last words are? Who cares if it’s perfect? Who cares if you capture your whole life’s experience in a five minute speech? You shouldn’t. Because here’s the thing: Anyone can give a Last Lecture. But very few can live a Last Lecture. I could stand here and give the perfect speech about all the lessons I learned at Maeser. I could say: you will not get a good grade if you gamble during middle school science; true happiness comes from following passion; buying a sailboat off of KSL, painting it orange and calling it the Henry Hudson will get you an A on your Socratic project; and cherish

your Maeser experience—you won’t get another. These are important lessons, but anyone can teach those lessons by saying the exact same things I do. But only I can teach those lessons through what I do. Words have no power and authority unless you live what you say. It isn’t the moment of giving the Last Lecture that matters, but the years after when you live it.

I don’t care if you glean something profound from what I am saying in this speech, because I don’t consider this to be my last lecture. Chances are that in a few weeks when you meet that brown eyed summer crush, you will forget everything I’ve said. And you know what, that’s okay.

But I do have one wish: when the time comes when we meet again in 30 years, I want you to be able to look at my life and see who I have become through living the principles of truth, honour and virtue. I want you to see how I have lived the lessons I learned at Maeser. I want you to see how I’ve achieved true happiness through following my passions. I want you to

observe me cherishing every moment, and I want you to notice how dedicating myself to learning continually, thinking critically and communicating effectively has changed my life. When you see all of this and who I’ve become, it is then that I want you to think, “Wow. Now that is a Last Lecture.”

A legacy is not defined by the advice given in a Last Lecture. Legacy is defined by how one lives what they want to say. Look around. Do you remember the last thing one of your teachers said? I don’t. When I look at someone like Mr. Simmons or Mrs. Cannon, I don’t see a lecture they gave. I see people who teach, not for the money, but for the individual. I see people who care. That is their legacy.

So I say to you, forget about the Last Lecture. You can only do justice to the lessons you’ve learned by living them. Be someone who, when people look at you, they see what you have become and they think, “Man, I want to leave a legacy like that.” Forget about giving your Last Lecture, and just start living it. ■

THICK AS THIEVES

CLAIRE FELT || SENIOR- THIRD PLACE



I slightly wish this were the Oscars. If that was so, then I’d only have 45 seconds to speak, and if I went over that time the microphone would cut out. Sadly for you, though, this isn’t the Oscars. And as much as I’d like this to be a completely wonderful spontaneous culmination of all original work... I’m gonna have to say that that is not what this is. I must tell you now before it’s too late... that I am a thief.

Now, if I had created something completely original...it would likely be complete nonsense. Because we’re all thieves. Whether you notice it or not you steal every day. Our specific brand of thievery encompasses everything in our lives. The only difference is this: you and I...we, steal ideas. While you may have come up with an essay topic that no one has ever written before, that idea came from somewhere else and was influenced by something else. The design behind all of the clothes we wear, the book plots we read, the plans we have for our lives, nothing around us is ever perfectly original. And that’s why you can steal it. Now please, see this in the metaphorical sense, I’m not telling you to steal a car because illegal thievery is bad for a reason, but if you can take an idea or a trait and weave it into something that is your own, then you can steal...like an artist.

Throughout our lives, we’ve picked up habits, traits and personality quirks that have created who we are today. While Austin Kleon went over this idea in his bestselling book he centered his topic on physical art. The ideas that I’m imploring you to think about deal with who you are and who you want to be. Do you want to be an athlete? Do you want to be a singer? A straight-A student? Or even just a better student? Do you want to be a kinder person, more humble, more creative? You name it. There are so many avenues to get where you want to go. But if any of you are like me, then you might get stressed out at the very thought of trying to become the person you aspire to be. My advice is don’t try and start from square one, instead, try thievery. Find others who model those things you want to become. Study the people and things you look up to in life, take an idea, and transform into your own—don’t imitate, emulate, and make sure to give credit where credit is due.

Through my years at Maeser, one of the most important things I’ve learned is how to be me. While I did learn things like science, sentence diagramming, really good insults from Mr. Watabe, and how to properly say “Gea” from Mr. Harmor—I’ve also learned how to make friends, create habits, do

research and...steal. That is how I learned to be myself. Stealing like an artist was taught in Mrs. Slade’s class when she sang and danced to teach us about covalent bonds and I learned how to enjoy learning. Stealing personality traits was taught when Mr. Dowdle yelled, “Get in uniform!” because I learned respect. And stealing a habit was taught every day when I learned what it meant to truly care about others. When my teachers would stay late just to help me with one math problem, when I overheard Print Comm talking about what they did at 3 a.m. in the morning while putting together our yearbook. Or when my coach pulled me aside just to ask if I was doing ok. These kinds of behaviors are worth taking.

I’m so grateful that humans are “thieves” because it means that even if I didn’t know it, I was being influenced one way or the other into becoming a better person. And what more can we hope for out of life? So I tell you now, whether you be a 7th grader, a freshman, a senior, or even a graduate, become the person you want to be by thievery. You emulate rather than imitate and you take ideas and attributes and you make them your own because, in the end, the only original work in the world is you. But you get to decide what creates you—and Maeser has been, and still can be, the best place to start your masterpiece. ■

KEEP IT UP

EMMA HAILSTONE || SENIOR



The average human head weighs approximately 10-11 pounds. This is around the size and weight of your average bowling ball. Due to our infinite access to technology and information our heads are constantly looking down at our phones, computers, and tablets. The more we have our heads down, the more weight and strain it puts upon our necks and eventually our spinal cords. But we do not only hang our heads when using technology.

I will always hate the Juab High soccer field. I was a shy, nerdy sophomore feeling very out of place as Maeser's varsity left back. The only reason I was on the varsity team was because our stopper, Danni Chesler, had torn her ACL and they needed another defensive player. I had played very few full-fledged varsity games, and I did not know what I was doing, or how I could possibly help fill the hole that Danni had left in our defensive line. My heart and mind were racing as I tried to keep up with the confident, fast and physical girls that seemed to fly past me in Juab's black and gold uniforms. I remember their wing coming down the left side of the field and crossing it to the center of our 18-yard-box. As the ball was flying through the air, all I knew was that it was my responsibility to reach that ball first. My excitement of intercepting the pass with a seemingly perfect chest trap turned to utter horror, as the ball bounced off of my chest directly towards the goal I was supposed to be defending. Time seemed to almost stop as I watched the ball fly directly through our

keeper Savannah's hands and hit the back of the net. Everything was a blur except for the look of disappointment on my teammates faces, and the stream of hot tears mixing with the sweat on my face. I had failed everyone, my coach, my friends, my team. I hated myself for thinking that I could ever be good enough to be on this team or to play this sport. I lost all confidence in myself, and I hung my head as the final whistle blew. We lost that game terribly.

The next summer at soccer tryouts, I was determined to be a better asset to the team. I was working hard, but still making a lot of mistakes. After one particularly bad pass, I put my head down to hide the tears trying to burst from my eyes. I heard Becca Linford, our team captain, call my name. "Emma", she said, "I don't care what mistake you make. You are not allowed to put your head down." And with a quick love tap on the shoulder, she went back to the drill. I was caught off guard, but I continued on with tryouts as best I could. My ankle flopped as I attempted a cross to mid-field, and the ball crawled to a stop yards before its destination. Instantly my eyes dropped to the grass in humiliation. "Emma!" Becca called, and immediately I snapped my head up, and ran to the next position forcing myself to focus on keeping my eyes up.

I had not realized that I even had this habit, and I did not only do it on the soccer field. My head would hang if I did not understand the concept being explained in math class, and I would fall further behind as I beat myself up for not being smart enough. The floor became my only comfort after stuttering through hastily memorized monologues for Shakespeare auditions. I walked through the hallways with my head down so I would not have to meet the eyes of people I so desperately wanted to impress. I believed that keeping my eyes on the ground would somehow hide my flaws, but in reality it only drove me further away from the goals that I was striving to reach.

Our generation already spends copious amounts of time with our heads down. We are not only consumed by technology, but by our own mistakes and fear of imperfection. Friends: You have the ability to make a difference in the lives of everyone around you, but you will never reach your full potential if your head is kept down by your weaknesses. It may feel like you're balancing a bowling ball on a blade of grass, but keep your head up. One simple change in posture can change everything. ■

**"I DON'T CARE
WHAT MISTAKE YOU
MAKE. YOU ARE NOT
ALLOWED TO PUT
YOUR HEAD DOWN."**

MAESER FELLOWSHIP

JOHN HENDRIX || SENIOR



There are days that stick with you forever. You can remember almost everything. The sun shining through the windows, the delicious Kneaders buttermilk syrup and the blue Vans you wear everyday. These days usually are the most impactful of

your life and the majority of the time, you don't know when they are coming. I had one of those days my sophomore year. Cody and I were at Kneaders eating breakfast. I chose the pancakes of course. Our intentions were to hangout and have some good pancakes. But Cody and I did not know what our conversation would lead to.

**"GOING AT LIFE'S
CHALLENGES ALONE
IS AN IMPOSSIBLE
TASK."**

Through the flow of the conversation I told my dear friend Cody that I had a pornography problem and had for a few years. I'm not telling you this as a confession or making my lecture to scare you straight. This is merely a small point in the greater lesson. The reason I share this is to teach that we all are on our own journey

and surrounded by mentors and friends that will help us. Cody did just that. He helped me like a loyal companion would. He loved me and guided me, lifted me up and caused me to act for good. I felt like I was Frodo from the film masterpiece known as the Lord of the Rings. Without Frodo's friends and group to support him, he would have been lost on his way and fallen under the dark powers of the ring. It was Sam who carried him through the last part of the journey and it was Sam who helped him destroy the ring and rid Middle Earth of evil.

Cody was my Sam.

There was great help from many people, not just Cody. If it was just Cody, I do not think I could give this address. My fellowship is made of people like Kara, Mz, May, Mrs Cannon,

REAL COSMIC HORRORS

JACOB YANCHAR || SENIOR



Perceptions of high school, I find, tend to vary widely and wildly. One perception that I don't find touched on enough is the terror that comes with it. I know that I have taken my fair share—and another helping—of terror in my times at 320 West 600 South, Londen.

However, these horror stories are not of the variety that I talk about in my English class when I should be writing essays.

I'll share a few of these stories. I remember one soccer game, playing goalkeeper, and facing down ALA's legendary Joe Viaje, the Goliath if I were David, in a one-on-one situation. However, unlike the biblical hero, I left the battlefield with less glory, and more grass between my teeth. A year earlier, somebody should have seen the look on my face when I saw that I was the only boy on the Fashion Statement Winterim list. It was like that of a stone man after witnessing the Medusa wearing Prada. And more recently than I'd care to admit, I was able to viscerally feel what authors of the cosmic horror genre had been speaking of for ages: an unknowable and terrifying entity, a teenage girl. I hoped to get a phone number to go on a date sometime. However, upon walking up to her, the little people pulling levers inside of my head suddenly decided to take some vacation time. In my eyes, the lights were on, but nobody was home. I forgot how to put a number into my phone, and said to the unfortunate recipient of this awkward conversation: "uhhhhhh my

phoone isn't workingggg, I'm just going to write the number down." I illegibly wrote it down on my excerpt of Alexander Pope, which then required a handwriting expert and about 15 minutes of careful deciphering to even hope to have an accurate translation. I share all of this to say: I. Know. Horror.

However, I don't think that my terror is necessarily unique to me. Rather, it is that high school and middle school, are by nature, very scary. While the trials I stated before are real, I found the larger difficulty to be continuing on to my next class after a particularly heartbreaking lesson on the Holocaust. Sometimes getting up in the morning, knowing that you have 8 challenging periods, and no time after school, proves daunting. I worried for so long about my college admissions that I cried about getting into my college of choice, with more emotion than I've ever felt over any sporting event. The raw perseverance that it required for me to get through sophomore spring finals, even with questionable success, was by far

**“SEARCHING FOR
HELP AND SUPPORT
THROUGH OUR TRIALS
IS NOT WEAKNESS—
IT IS SURVIVAL.”**

harder than the sum of its exams. I can't count the amount of late nights I've spent finishing Socratic papers. Even when the weekend rolled around, sometimes I couldn't help but leave a friend's house early, feeling depressed. Our life is composed of these trivial, yet very difficult, experiences. If we decide to regularly go it alone with this struggle, this terror, our lives will be filled with it. There will be no need to watch Nightmare on Elm Street or read H.P. Lovecraft on the weekends. We will be living through it ourselves. It's easy to let your school experience be turned into a lonely, cosmic horror.

However, I think that there is a solution. Sometimes the relief that is required after being berated by a proverbial monster is only found in the embrace of someone you're close with. After being secluded in the creature of your own emotions, the best course of action can be to talk out your feelings with a friend in a Macy's parking lot, listening to Ribs by Lorde and arguing intently about whether ice cream can "have a nice chew" or not. For so many years, I decided to fight a battle against my own personal graphic slasher film. I chose to go it alone. Until only recently, did I decide to truly let people in, and let them make fun of how terrible the movie is. Because, if there's one thing I know about horror movies other than that they are often scary, it is that they can be—with the right people—the most corny and laughable things you've ever seen. Searching for help and support through our trials is not weakness—it is survival. It is only through help, perseverance, and wise decision making, that you can also survive through your own Maeser cosmic horror. ■

Simmons and others who helped me.

My loyal friend Kara was the first person I told in 8th grade. I was sitting in my basement with my cracked Ipad in fear she would judge me. But the exact opposite. She showed me great love and expressed how much she hoped I could get better and overcome my trial.

Kara was my Aragorn.

I learned that when I shared with the right people I had more people to keep me accountable. Mz was one who helped push me the most. I view her like a second mom so I tried my best to heed to her advice.

Mz was my Gandalf.

I have found my fellowship at Maeser. It has

changed over the years, but since 7th grade, I have surrounded myself with people who lift me up just as Frodo's friends lifted him. My advice to you is find your own fellowship like Frodo and I have done. Be mindful of who is in your fellowship, you want friends and peers who will uplift you. Going at life's challenges alone is an impossible task. It is important you have the right people beside you. Imagine Frodo's journey if he didn't have his friends to help him. Don't try to fight your battles alone.

Find your fellowship and enjoy the journey and don't make it harder than it needs to be. Find someone like Gandalf who will show you right and wrong and teach you the way to go. Find someone like Aragorn who has faith in you always and believes you can do anything. Get a

friend like Pippin, with their infectious sense of humor they will always make you smile. Most importantly get a friend like Sam who will never give up on you. No matter what, they will stay by your side, and lift you up to be better. They will even carry you when you do not have the strength. Find a fellowship like Frodo—people who love you and support you and want to make sure you succeed in your journey. Maeser is filled with people who can support you. The best way to find them is by telling people your struggles, and be honest with yourself and others. I have been blessed to have loyal friends to help me along my journey and what I hope more than anything is that every single one of you can find your own Maeser fellowship. ■

RELEARNING TO LEARN

THOMAS VICK || SENIOR



Freshman year my life took a huge turn. My mom passed away. It was the hardest thing that had ever happened to me. To preface, let me tell you a little bit about her. Her name is Christine. She loves classical music. Her favorite color is red. I could tell her about

anything in the whole wide world and she would always just understand. And she changed people's lives. She changed mine. So now I'm going to share with all of you some of what Christine did for me.

First of all, she showed me how to love a good book. How to run home, jump in bed and disappear inside another world for hours. And then Mrs. Smith taught me that a book could change my life. That Jean Valjean isn't just some character in a book, but that now he's a little part of Thomas Vick.

Christine showed me that I had someone who would always be behind me. She showed me when she drove to cheer me on at every one of my soccer games, no matter how far. And then I saw that I had a team behind me. I saw when I scored my first varsity goal and my teammates rushed to me with flushed faces and their eyes glowed with the same joy that mine did.

She showed me that school is important. She showed me by being the smartest person I ever knew. She showed me by giving up her time to help me with every assignment I struggled with. And then Mrs. MacDuff showed me that

the things I learned in school could benefit me my entire life. Twenty five dollars a month now is hundreds of thousands in the future, get investing people.

Christine showed me how to pick good friends. She showed me when I saw the excitement on her face as she picked up the phone to answer a call from her best friend. And then at Maeser, I didn't have to pick good friends. Because you all picked me the second I walked through those big pillars out front.

She showed me that tough love helps you grow. She showed me when she let me figure out problems on my own and ignored my incessant whining. And then, Mr. Watabe showed me that something good can actually come from running a seventeen-nine at practice. And believe it or not, that you can learn from that soul-crushing experience of not knowing the right answer when he calls on you in math. Or even worse, when you confidently state the wrong one.

She showed me how to be strong. She was so strong. She showed me when she would come to my room after a round of chemo and make sure that my trivial day of middle school had been A-okay. And then Mrs. Cannon showed me how to take the pain of the ones you love and turn it into something beautiful. She showed me every time she talked about her daughter, and helped us all become a little better.

And Christine made me cry. She made me cry because I missed her. And then I laughed. I laughed because Mr. Simmons told my class a story about his own dumb self in high school, because he knew that's what we needed to hear that day.

So why? Why do I share Christine with you? Because Christine is my mom, and she taught me everything I know. And she may be gone, but she'll be with me forever. And you guys? You're my family. You managed to teach me too. And though it's time for me to leave this family, it is one that will never leave me. The person on your right and the person on your left? They're your family. So learn from them. And as you continue on with your lives, in class, in sports, in Print Comm, in drama, I just want you to remember what I learned from Christine, and what you learn every day from your Maeser family. And then you can leave this place like I'm about to. Not knowing everything, not as a perfect person, but you'll be just a little bit better than when you first walked in. And I promise you'll be just a little more prepared for the next great adventure life has in store for you. ■

**"BELIEVE IT OR NOT,
YOU CAN LEARN FROM
THAT SOUL-CRUSHING
EXPERIENCE OF NOT
KNOWING THE RIGHT
ANSWER."**

TO ALL THE MAESER BOYS I'VE LOVED BEFORE

KARA HAN || SENIOR



"I like you." The three words I dreamed my crush would say to me. From the time I was little, to senior me, I adored every Rom Com I watched. From the perfect depictions of awkward girls talking with crushes, to the unrealistic relationships and romantic gestures, I wanted

to have love like in the movies. When I came to this school, I wanted so badly to have all of the Maeser boys I loved love me too.

In 7th grade I quickly became best friends with some beautiful girls and, to no surprise, it seemed as though every boy liked them. They

were outgoing, sweet and pretty, perfectly fitting into society's standard of beauty. I couldn't help but feel as though I was falling behind. I would stare in the mirror and wonder what I had to change to get a boy to like me. I was too short, not skinny enough, I needed better clothes, I needed to change myself. My insecurity grew as I tried to please everyone around me. I would paint a picture in my head of what the perfect girl would be like. Prettier, skinnier, funnier. Not because someone told me I needed to change, but because I never saw myself as enough.

With every crush I've had at Maeser, I would change. My personality would become geared towards each boy and change to what I thought would please them. I would change

my music taste, to how I acted in big groups even the way I would talk. From the flirtatious teasing and chasing each other in the middle school hallway, to the feeling of your heart racing as you reach to grab hands for the first time, to the shaky clammy hands pinning on the boutonniere at your first dance, all these boys knew I liked them. A couple even liked me too, but I still never liked myself. I craved the validation of having a boy like me, but that feeling never truly filled the void. No matter how deep the connection was, the validation I got was by believing they liked the idea of me.

Another year, another crush. Another connection with a new boy. This Maeser boy told me I was pretty. Simple words that normally

SENIOR YEAR HORROR

MADDY FAIRBANKS || SENIOR



If a horror movie wants to really be classic, it needs four elements. First, a blonde girl tripping over everything in her path while hysterically running away from a monster. Second- a shower or bathtub scene in which a character either gets

attacked, dies or just stares dramatically at their shampoo bottle with water streaming down them as they contemplate the meanings of their existence. Third, there must be some sort of love interest who either saves the day, dies, or runs away. And finally, if the movie is really classic, it'll have some world changing event or twist. Going through high school, a lot of my friends found it strange that I liked these types of movies but it's good I do since my senior year fit all of the criteria.

I found myself playing the role of the frantic blonde lady as I tripped up the stairs at least once a week with shorter passing periods and stricter attendance policies rushing me. I saw my preparation for the role in Show Choir when Ms. Smith had us run in place while singing Thriller. I also felt the weight of the role in Show Choir's faculty Christmas performance as I watched Josh struggle to keep piles of cups and plates from falling, basses tripping over the piano chord, unplugging it, Carson scrambling to plug the piano back in, and Emma Hailstone's phone going off at full volume in my pocket during Silent Night. The year had plenty of clumsiness.

I also recall having plenty of contemplative shower scenes, staring at shampoo bottles and face wash wondering things like 'Is math really

simple?' and wondering what I would do with myself if we really did have to do online school to flatten the curve. Turns out, I had to focus on flattening more than one curve with gyms closing and availability of snacks increasing.

As the classic love interest goes, I had plenty of awkward 'things' during my high school career. There's a small dating pool at Maeser, which allows one to have awkward pasts with almost everyone whether they dated your crush or you used to 'date' them. None of my love interests seemed to save the day like in the movies, but some of them did sort of die socially for me since the awkwardness could never be moved on from, and I wouldn't be surprised if people wanted to run away from my past self.

There were also plenty of twists this school year. Awkward 'things' broke up, and I wasn't alone in not landing the role I wanted in the school play but we couldn't have four Belles and five Mrs. Potts now could we? Of course the ultimate 'world changing event' was Covid-19. One moment, I was talking with a friend about how it probably wouldn't even touch Utah then two weeks later, school and everything else was shutting down.

It's alright though. We'll survive not going back to school. We just need to learn how to survive quarantine. I still found myself as the blonde running at full speed away from her problems when Covid-19 hit. Something you'll notice about those classic horror movies is that they never resolve until the helpless blonde becomes less helpless and figures out how to face the monster. I needed to face my problems too, for them to go away.

So instead of dragging around my feelings for a boy who decided to let go, I've decided to let go too.

I've also faced the fact that skipping meals and using school as a distraction from hunger wasn't a healthy diet plan. I've finally learned how to eat healthy in an actually healthy way and am feeling much more comfortable and confident how I am.

I still have a couple more problems to face, like figuring out math so it can be 'simple' enough for me to get a 4 on the modified BC Calc test, but I've found that since Covid 19 hit, my mental and physical health have only gotten better. Before, I used my busy schedule to hide from my problems, but now that I've had to face my monsters, I've started defeating them.

There's a reason why I like horror movies so much. It's because people have to be brave in them and it makes me feel like I can be brave too. In the end, the monsters are usually defeated, and that's how senior year will turn out too. ■

**“NOW THAT I’VE
HAD TO FACE MY
MONSTERS, I’VE
STARTED DEFEATING
THEM.”**

have a big impact. A girl being told she's pretty by her crush would normally stir the butterflies in her stomach and bring a smile to her face. Except this time was different. I didn't smile, I didn't say thank you. I broke down quietly

**“I BEGAN TO... TRULY
FILL THE EMPTINESS I
THOUGHT COULD ONLY
BE FILLED BY OTHERS.”**

uttering out, "I don't believe you." While crying in a Maeser boy's arm, I had a realization that changed my perspective. In my room that night, I stared at my flaws in the mirror and I found myself drained, searching for someone else's love. I finally knew I could not rely on another person's perspective of me any longer. This was when I made the change. I would get ready in the morning, not to look good for a crush, but for myself. I would plan a healthy meal, not to look skinny to other people, but to feel healthy on the inside. I began to know myself, and truly fill the emptiness I thought could only be filled by others.

Experiencing something new with a crush was still fun, but my value did not change based on that person. Although in this new relationship, I was never perfect at loving myself, I noticed a change. I no longer needed to be prettier, skinnier or funnier. Self-love filled my empty void. I learned to love my flaws, my strengths and everything about me. Looking back on my Maeser experience, I grew to be grateful for all of the Maeser boys, the crushes and the memories. I know now that it's not about how many Maeser boys love you, what's most important is if you love yourself first. ■

DON'T BE THAT GUY

MIKEY ROBERTS || SENIOR



Man, I remember the first day of 7th grade like it was... wow 6 years huh? Damb. Where did all the time go? Oh yeah, to Maeser. I forget, Maeser is its own dimension. Years turn into seconds, classes last an eternity, teachers turn into life-coaches and friends, Deans

turn into Dumpster Firefighters, and SOAR stays boring as heck. I guess this is it. This is my senior year, isn't it? What's my legacy?

This has been a question for 6 years of my life. Knowing that this doomsday clock is ticking down, I've erased and rewritten this now 6 different times. Some of you seniors out there already have this written, and to that I applaud you. For me, impossible. Nothing. My head is

empty, there isn't a legacy that I can think of. Brendan Murphy, Ammon Hasson and I built a boat in 10th grade, but I don't have that boat anymore. I was starting second baseman 2 years in a row for our very own baseball team, but I'm graduating. I was on the track team until our season was taken away from us. I would say that I'm a graduate of Karl G Maeser, but I haven't done that yet. I can be funny during class, but I guess I won't have any classes here anymore will I?

I got it! Don't be that guy.

You know exactly what I am talking about. We all know. That guy is someone who will walk behind his crush and kick their knees out. They're the type of person that will go into the bathroom, get wet paper towels, and throw them on the ceiling to see whose could stick

the longest. They constantly don't care about their grades, and they don't care about other people. They have a sense of entitlement, as if the whole school owes them something. I'm here to tell you, hey can you please not be that way? This is probably completely unheard of for a Last Lecture, but I'm going to ask for some audience participation. Now, keep in mind this is very important for "That guy" to hear, and I'm sure that Gerber has dreamt of doing this for many years now. But on the count of three, we're all going to say "Don't be that guy" together. One, two, three. Don't be that guy! Great, now that the people around you know you just responded to a video like a child watching Dora, I can move on.

You might be wondering, "Hey Mikey, how do I not be that guy?" To that, I say it's easy! Just be nice! I've done it for 6 years, or at least tried to.

THE WEIRDEST THINGS I HAVE EVER DONE

WESLEY HADFIELD || SENIOR- SACRIFICIAL POET



Number one. Sophomore Year, Ammon Hassan paid me \$5 to lick the mold off of the drainage pipe at Coldstone. Can you believe that? The chump paid me to eat free food.

Number twelve. One night, I ran across the Orem High

Football field wearing nothing but a football helmet. It was 1 o'clock in the morning. I was completely alone. I didn't even tell anyone about it until right now.

Number twenty-eight. I consumed 28 oranges in 83 seconds just to prove that I could.

Number seventy nine. I found a lifetime friend named Thomas Vick who is somehow weirder than me. Which leads me to number eighty, the time that I traveled to Switzerland with Thomas and despite the fact that we stayed in a three-bedroom apartment, we shared a twin bed because I was afraid of the dark.

Number ninety-four. I made a Maeser Meme instagram account.

Number one hundred and three. I played Mufasa in a local theater's rendition of The Lion King and, number one hundred and four, I showed up at football practice in a full set of Mufasa makeup and told the quarterback that it was because I had a big piano recital. As if that was somehow better?

Number one hundred and twenty-five. I'm sorely afraid of my best friend in the world.

Number one hundred and twenty-six. My best friend in the world is my mother.

I don't chew my nails because I am nervous; I chew them because I am hungry; I drink more hot chocolate than water; sometimes I try to make the Snipe noise from the movie Up; I bought flip-flops for my "girlfriends" as a three year old; my gamer-tag is WazzleDaddy77; and number two hundred and fifteen, I chose to be a middle school soccer coach for a bunch of stinky tweens -- and liked it!

Number three hundred and twenty-seven, I chose to stay at Maeser.

Number four hundred and eleven, I thought that because I was weird the kids at Maeser would, for some outrageous reason, love me less, or wouldn't love me at all. That may be the weirdest, most laughable thought that has ever crossed my mind. Somebody who thinks a Maeser student wouldn't love another human being for being weird clearly hasn't spoken to Mr. Dowdle about Comic-Con, or to Mrs. Smith about Show Choir for that matter. Somebody who thinks being weird at Maeser is alienating, clearly hasn't waltzed down the middle school hallway during spirit week. Somebody that assumes they are a misfit at Maeser surely does not understand the culture that we, as students, have fought so hard to create and preserve. Everybody knows that we are a group of misfits and we are a herd of freaks, but the weirdest thing that a student at Karl G Maeser Preparatory academy could possibly perceive is that they aren't loved because of their uniqueness.

Number four hundred. I sing Puff the Magic Dragon to myself at night. Thomas Vick talks like Kronk from Emperor's New Groove when impersonating adults; Kara Han puts toothpaste on her forehead before she goes to bed; John Hendrix likes airplanes more than people; Ethan Lynsky read encyclopedias instead of Harry Potter as a child; Cody Wilkins is short; Becca Linford had a crush on me in fifth-grade. In the end, the only thing that we all have in common is the mutual recognition that diversity is excellence. That's the lesson that the class of 2020 has worked to preserve as have the graduating classes before us have for the last decade. It is the responsibility that we leave on your shoulders as we pass the baton: Promote your differences. Recognize the accepting culture that we have strived to produce and treasure it infinitely. Finally, recognize that we are all rooting for you to embrace your bizarre tendencies, recognize the excellence in diversity, and embrace your list of "The Weirdest Things I Have Ever Done." ■

Service has been my main motivation for these past 6 years, and I can genuinely say that has helped me become the person that I want to be today. When I look back on the years that I have spent asking people what I can do to help, I can't help but want to help someone again and again. Once, one of my friends was having a hard time, so I brought her some ice cream. Sure, that isn't a big gesture, ice cream for a friend, but I can tell you that she probably still thinks about it sometimes.

In conclusion, Maeser, the last thing I want to leave with you is a reminder that any gesture, big or small, counts against any points earned from being "That guy." If what I've done matters, what you do matters just as much, if not more. I've been here 6 years, and known a lot of "those guys", but I can say that through my service, instead of being "that guy," I'm me. ■



THE SMALL VOICE IN YOUR HEAD

BRANDON LEE || SENIOR- SACRIFICIAL POET



There is nothing more terrifying than to know that you might get convicted of a crime you didn't commit and receive a criminal record that would ruin the rest of your life. It was September 2019 and I found myself here, at the Provo police department. This is the place where a real-life detective took me into a small investigation room with a 2-way mirror and interrogated me. Just like the movies. It was truly one of the most terrifying experiences of my life.

Now to explain how I got here, let's come here; to Cold Stone Creamery in Provo. It was September 11 of last year. I had been working here about a year when one late night I got scammed. Malicious people brewed up a well-crafted plan to steal money from unsuspecting employees, a perfect target being myself: a totally unsuspecting, naive teenager. Now I don't want to go into details because it brings me physical pain retelling the story. I have tried to block that experience out of my brain so reliving it all over again is very, very uncomfortable. But to make a long story short, I got scammed, and after I got scammed, the police department and my mother thought that I had stolen the money.

Luckily, I don't have a criminal record and I learned some valuable lessons, so, things worked out. But my long story is not what's important. What is important is that I didn't listen to a small voice in my head. While I was getting scammed there was a small voice in the back of my head whispering to me, "Maybe this is not a good idea." My conscience was telling me the right thing to do, but pressure from others, fear and exhaustion clouded it, so I couldn't hear it.

If you Google what's the definition of conscience, it will say, "an inner feeling or voice viewed as acting as a guide to the rightness or wrongness of one's behaviour." So by definition, it's your brain using your moral compass to decipher between good and bad decisions; like having a devil and angel on your shoulder. But I believe your conscience is much greater than that and has the potential to make a tremendous impact on your life.

To explain myself, let me take you to the Maeser track, here. Late last year, I found myself pacing around this track absolutely terrified knowing that in a few minutes I would have to walk inside and recite a memorized monologue to Mr Hults and Ms Smith. I was not an actor and what I was doing was totally out of my comfort zone. Why would I do that to myself? Because earlier I had a choice. I could either try out for Shakespeare or not try out for Shakespeare. Neither of those choices was bad, but my conscience was still trying to tell me something.

It was telling me that I should try out for Shakespeare, a new and exciting experience. The rational, reasoning part of my brain was battling my conscience with self-doubt and fear of failure. It was telling me, 'I'm not an actor! I'll just look like a fool! Even if I try out I'll lose all the good roles to more experienced actors.'

Thank the heavens I listened to my conscience! Because of that one decision to listen to my conscience, I discovered new talents, met amazing people, landed the role as the Beast, won third place at the Shakespeare Festival and composed music alongside Sam Cardon, a famous composer.

Our consciences aren't just used to differentiate between good and bad decisions. Our conscience helps show us opportunities that will change our lives. Yours may be telling you to have that uncomfortable conversation you've been dreading for years. It may be telling you to try out for that new sport or learn that new instrument. It may tell you to treat your mother a little more kindly or talk to that friend you haven't seen in a while. In any case, you'll have excuses to not listen to your conscience, just like I did when I was trying to decide whether to audition or not. If you ignore all the excuses and listen to your conscience which is most often telling you to do something difficult and uncomfortable, I know It will change your life in ways you are not expecting. ■

