

# THE STA TIMES

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**EMBRACING THE TANGIBLE: THE CASE FOR VINYL & ANALOG HOBBIES IN A DIGITAL WORLD**  
*Nyah Walker*  
Pg. 2

**BACKPACKS?**  
*Oliver Tuey*  
Pg. 3

**A QUIET REVOLUTION: CHOOSING COMFORT.**  
*Melissa Syyad*  
Pg. 5

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## LESSONS OVER 5 YEARS OF SPORTS

*Nathan Canvin*

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In my eighth-grade year, I nervously approached Fen Burdett stadium, STA's long-time substitute field, ready to try out for the junior boy's soccer team. Eager to earn the respect of the tenth graders and notice of the coach, I worked hard through three tryouts. The team list was posted outside the school gymnasium changing rooms. I was ecstatic to have made the team, and happily shared the news with my family. Despite limited playing time in my first season, our team, on paper, seemed strong. However, something didn't quite click, leading to a disappointing loss in the semi-finals.

Entering high school sports, I encountered more skillful athletes than in elementary school, pushing me to find my place. After my first soccer season coached by Mr. Appleton and Mr. Grossling, I joined basketball tryouts. Making the team was thrilling but we had our work cut out for us. Our lack of cohesion and height resulted in a tough first game loss which proved indicative of the rest of our season. Despite the six-thirty morning practices we were unable to jive and would later lose on our coach's birthday by 70 points. It was undoubtedly one of the lows of my high school sports career.



I remember this loss and the fire it brought to the rest of the team to work harder and never be on the receiving end of this humiliation again. A fire, that if latched onto correctly can ignite any team's season.

Then came Covid, putting sports on hold. I joined track and field and learned that you'll never know who you'll meet. The track team that year was excellent, making the most of our situation by training hard and running time trials in virtual meets. We took a rotten time and flipped it upside down. I continued my running endeavours the following fall, developing my endurance with the great Mr. C, Ms. Mattia, and Mr. Domina as coaches. In one particular race at the end of the season, I was neck and neck with my friend from STA. It was looking like only one of us would qualify for one of the limited spots available at Provincials. As the daunting hill approached he spurred me on, pushed me, and slowed down and cut off another competitor behind me. In every team sport at STA, there's a switch that will flick to kick comradery into action. All division is obliterated and replaced with brotherhood (or sisterhood). **CONT. PAGE 2**

**ST. THOMAS AQUINAS REGIONAL SECONDARY SCHOOL**

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Throughout my high school sports, I've been blessed with skilled coaches who have been there and done that, invested in the players, and had a genuine passion for what they're doing. My Grade eight coach, Chris Ufford, was a CapilanoU legend, and my Grade 10 coach Ransford Brempong, was a basketball legend on a bigger level. He taught me and my teammates in Academy, a program I much preferred over gym class. In my penultimate year of high school, I was coached by Jim Kelly. He is a VC alumnus well known by anyone in the basketball community for his passion for the game and long-standing service. Through my last three years of school soccer, I was coached under Fernando Grossling, more notably known as Ferny for his politically correct jokes. Despite STA's large focus on academics, they also employ fantastic coaches who all student-athletes should take advantage of, to soak up what they have to offer.

The biggest opportunity that playing high school sports has offered me is a bridge to others. This bridge has led me to make friends with people I otherwise would not, based on a strong connection from being united in the diversity we faced as a team. The amount of good memories I have to carry forth with me from sports as a Fighting Saint is vast. This ranges from the Senior Boys' Basketball trip to Arizona, both enjoying all it had to offer and playing some of the best schools in the States, to the senior boys' soccer Kamloops trip where we forgot the ball bag and still managed to come in second place. Even the smaller trips on the school bus to BC Catholics and BC Provincials were filled with the smell of hard work, questionable music, and palpable excitement.

For STA I've played for teams that are favorites going into competitions as well as the underdogs. From winning North Shore championships, and placing numerous times in the BC Provincials and Catholics, to the feeling of inadequacy as the team fell just short, it has been a roller coaster of both highs and lows.

What I've learned from playing sports at STA is that team culture is everything. If you're not the best on paper, don't count yourself out. High school sports establish strong friendships and when you're playing together as a school your teammates become your family. Persistence will pay off and coaches will recognize the amount of effort you're putting in.

Everyone contributes, whether you are on the bench or starting every game. So, the next time you put on that Fighting Saints shirt, wear it with pride, enjoy the experience, and play with all your heart.

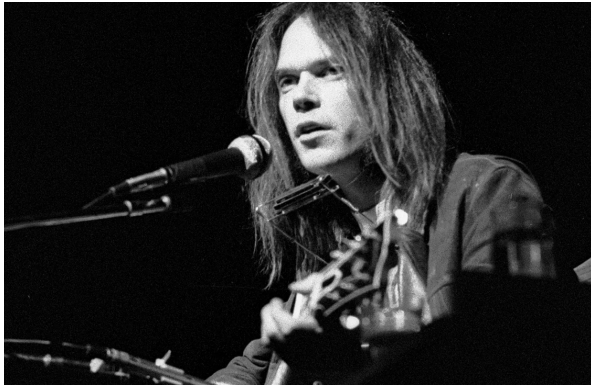


## **EMBRACING THE TANGIBLE: THE CASE FOR VINYL & ANALOG HOBBIES IN A DIGITAL WORLD**

*Nyah Walker*

In 2023, the sale of Vinyl Records in the U.S. rose for the 17th consecutive year, with over 42 million units sold. These are the highest vinyl sales since the early 90's, and mark a surging renaissance - the comeback of analog (as in not digital) hobbies. Vinyl is joined by practices like film photography, analog filmmaking, and CD burning, all technology appreciated for its overall effect and not its efficiency. The re-imagination of such hobbies are a symptom of a culture attempting to decelerate, to rekindle a comfort lost to convenience. In a society dominated by profitability and productivity, a turn to the analog can be the perfect opportunity to step out of a cycle of digitalized chaos and instant gratification, and enjoy a breath of fresh air.

Simply put, vinyl provides an experience that cannot be replicated through a screen. Vinyl's sound quality is far superior to anything digital - it's often hailed for its "rich" or "warm" tone, and for the way it fully captures music, in every detail. In its production, vinyl preserves the full range of frequencies heard in the original recording, resulting in a fuller sound and replicating to near exactness the way the music was played in-studio. This is made possible only by the grooves of an LP and when it is replicated in a digital form, an essential part of the music goes missing - vinyls simply store more musical information on them, and when music is distributed digitally, the full range of sound heard on a record cannot be transferred.



Vinyl and other analog hobbies provide the user hands-on engagement that their digital counterparts do not. Lowering the needle onto a LP, or loading film into a camera, creates a tangible connection to the medium and the art that results from it, contributing to a more immersive and integrated experience. Playing vinyl is a conscious decision, an event - hours of flipping through records in dusty stores, conversations over stacks of music, lamenting prices with friends, all leading up to the climax, when you drop the needle and listen to the fruits of your labour. You sacrifice all of this when playing music digitally, when music ceases to be an experience and instead becomes nothing more than background noise. This is to say nothing of the corporeal aspect, meaning the record itself, and the package it comes in. The artwork of the cover, the sleeve, all designed as a testament to the music, all designs the artist chose with the intent of immersing the listener even further into the world the album aims to create. The listener can be content knowing that even if they dislike the music, they now own a beautiful piece of art, and tribute to someone else's ingenuity.

The argument could also be made that in an era of streaming, physical music is the steadiest choice. In 2022, the majority of Neil Young's discography was removed from Spotify after a dispute concerning the views shared on a podcast with which he shared the platform. The same happened to Joni Mitchell, and recently, due to licensing issues, the majority of Oasis' albums have been removed. Spotify, and all other streaming platforms, though extremely convenient and accessible, are not always the most dependable ways to access music. Additionally, streaming does next to nothing to support artists - it is estimated that per 1 stream on Spotify, the artist makes \$0.0032 - the equivalent of the sale on 100 vinyls is 450k streams. Physical music is the best way to support the artists that matter to you.

Getting into vinyl is easy. Basic record players go for as low as \$70, and Vancouver has a plethora of quality record stores (Beat Street, Neptoon & Red Cat being among the best). As a hobby, collecting vinyl allows you to connect with your peers, explore your city and learn more about music, all while investing in music you'll enjoy for years to come. Beginner film cameras can be purchased for even cheaper than record players, and are a seamless way to practice a new art form while preserving lifelong memories. CDs can be burned for next to nothing, and serve as an easy and memorable gift or a souvenir of the person you once were, and the art you once enjoyed. The resurgence of vinyl, and of all analog hobbies represents more than nostalgia - it symbolizes a cultural shift, a yearning for authenticity and an appreciation for the tangible. It is not a rejection of modernity or a total retreat into antiquity, but an invitation to accept a balance. As we navigate through a world defined by overstimulation, an acceptance of the analog stands as a reminder that sometimes convenience should be sacrificed in order to achieve a unique, timeless, and deeply satisfying experience.

## BACKPACKS?

*Oliver Tuey*

With the new school year's lengthy list of additions to STA's school policies, none stick out to me like the detested backpack ban. With phones being confiscated constantly from distracted students in class last year, it was no surprise that teachers decided that enough was enough (whether I agree with a complete ban is another matter). Likewise, the school uniform has always been a strict policy of the school, and for an equally long time, the least respected; sudden enforcement of the uniform standards should not be surprising to students, either. When it comes to the issue of the backpack, however, I struggled to see the obvious issue. After talking to Ms. Martins and several other members of staff, the ban on backpacks seems to stem from two basic thoughts: that backpacks can be used to hide cell phones (making it harder to enforce the aforementioned ban on phones), and that they are a tripping hazard, particularly in the case of an emergency, due to the fact that they are strewn around classroom floors. While the impetus for action was made clear, the jump to an outright ban of all backpacks, a time-established necessity for one's academic journey, was not.



On the topic of backpacks as a tripping hazard, my first question was “why didn’t teachers just force students to put backpacks under their desks?”. While Ms. Martins agreed that this would be an adequate solution in some cases, she told me that in others, students were bringing gymstrip and instruments to class that wouldn’t fit under a desk. I asked why the administration didn’t simply crack down on such students with the same vigor currently used to hunt backpacks, as this would alleviate the danger of tripping while also forcing students to use their lockers; no satisfying answer was given. In any case, I continue to see bags dotting classroom aisles, now smaller in size and harder to spot (though not in every case, due to the lack of clear guidelines on what the “acceptable” size for bags is). I’m sure no one will be tripping on those.

From what I have heard, the idea of banning backpacks seems to have originally sprouted from the ban on phones, as backpacks provide students an easy way to hide their devices. While banning backpacks may have had some effect on this, to the administration’s dismay, various other complex technologies like binders, pockets, waist belts, sleeves, and even shoes allow students to do the same. It may also shock the administration to know that phones can be hidden in bags of all shapes and sizes, not only backpacks. This means that the portion of students that, despite the cellphone ban, would have hidden their devices in backpacks, are surely doing the same with the other, permitted types of bags. In this way, the backpack ban’s effect on the rate of hidden phones (which I’d wager is essentially none) is disproportionate to its negative effects.

The greatest negative effect, which is ironically one that factored into the ban of backpacks, is back injury. A study at Teesside University in the UK analyzed the effects of various bag-types on university students.

A study at Teesside University in the UK analyzed the effects of various bag-types on university students. They determined that “shoulder and handheld bags produce postural deviations in all planes which may cause adverse stress and strain on spinal structures and ultimately lead to pain and progressive postural scoliosis.”. Backpacks on the other hand, while potentially harmful if too heavy, even then only produce symmetrical posture deviation, with the potential for other health risks greatly reduced. Looking at the halls of STA, bags like satchels, laptop carriers, and totes have all become the norm for students, despite only making rare appearances in previous years. Perhaps the safest option would have been mandating roller bags.



It is clear that ineffectiveness of the backpack ban is rooted in the fact that it is not a ban at all, but rather a backpack replacement. In fact, considering the goals of the ban, it begs the question of why other types of bags were even allowed in the first place? Perhaps it was that even the school administration recognized the inherent issues with a complete ban; bagless students would guarantee greater disorganization (student lose handouts with a bag, after all), greater likelihood of loss or property damage (expensive laptops would be left unprotected while traversing the school and its many staircases), inconvenience for students carrying medication or hygiene products, reduced locker space (a bag still needs to be brought to school to transport supplies from home), cluttered desk spaces (no student wants to leave their computers and supplies unprotected on the dirty floor), and a resulting wave of complaints from displeased students and parents alike.

Between allowing backpacks, completely banning bags, or the current policy, banning bags would technically be the most effective in terms of achieving the school’s two major goals.

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However, the fact that a policy of replacement was implemented instead indicates that the staff (or at least a notable portion of it) agrees with my view that a ban would be problematic to say the least. Furthermore, if the school has made it clear that they will not commit to a ban, their options are reduced to either repealing the policy or continuing it. As I doubt that there is much variance between any of the policies regarding hidden phones, the choice comes down to the issue of cluttered classrooms. Comparing the state of classrooms during both policies, I wouldn't say that either addressed it whatsoever. However, given the fact that the current actually harms students in its increased risk of back injury, it feels obvious to me that it should be repealed immediately.

To the staff member reading this, I understand what you are thinking: "We did all this work, only for none of our issues to be addressed?". Yes. However, perhaps this is due to the fact that approaching the issues of cluttered classrooms and hidden cell phones through *any* regulations on backpacks is fundamentally flawed. At STA, I've always felt that the greater workloads and fewer second chances require more personal accountability and responsibility from students than at any other school. Our success has always been our *own* duty. In this, it is rather odd to me that specific behavioral issues are being addressed with blanket bans, requiring no personal growth in discipline for issues that are rooted precisely in a lack of it. The same way we start classes with prayer, attendance, or in the case of last year, handing in cell phones, why not start classes by making students put bags under their desks. As for the student that sneaks their phone into class despite the phone policy, their punishment is received in their own poor marks. The school has done all that it can to promote learning in removing distractions; if a student still decides to ignore the policy and distract themselves, the outcome is the same as for those who choose not to study. Once again, success is primarily the *student's* responsibility. Instead of forcing broad rules onto the entire school due to certain students, the school should encourage personal responsibility through targeting individual students that fail to meet behavioral expectations. In the end, I feel that if three detentions is enough to make a resistant student change their backpack to a satchel, it is surely enough to make a student move their bag under their desk.

## A QUIET REVOLUTION: CHOOSING COMFORT.

*Melissa Sayyad*

As much as I love to talk, I find the awkward gaps in conversation so unbearably difficult to endure. And so, my go-to line to fill up silence has always been, "I'm so cold". This statement particularly held true within the walls of STA, where a terrible blend of a thin school uniform, and a questionable heating system, made for a near polar climate. If I had a dollar for each time I've mentioned being cold, I'd have enough to afford the cafeteria prices. However, as true as this may have once been, I don't think I've said it at all this year. For the first time in the past 4 and a half years, I haven't been constantly complaining about feeling chilly. No longer does a trip to the science wing feel like a trudge through the Arctic. No longer am I sneaking hoodies in search of relief. No longer am I cold. You may ask, Melissa, why the sudden change? It is none other than the glorious attire of fleece lined tights I now wear under my kilt.



A few months ago, my mom brought home these tights. They appeared to be regular, slightly sheer, black stockings. However, they could not be more special. Instead of a thin material, providing minimal insulation, they are lined with a beige fleece, maximizing warmth, and making them so very effective. Yet, the natural look maintains the elegance. Now, in contrast to what I've felt for so long, I am *comfortable* in my school uniform.

Someone once told me that there are three types of people; those who try desperately to fit in, those who'll do anything to stand out, and those who truly are themselves. This alarmingly profound statement transfers into many areas of life, including fashion.

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For years, I ignored my mother's desperate pleas to wear something warm as I went to school in the winter months. And for years, I suffered the consequences. As I reflect on what I was thinking all the years I missed out on wearing stockings, I can only conclude that it was the fact that I was trying to avoid any teasing comments from my peers. As much as I hate to admit it, I didn't want to do anything that would set me apart like that. Thankfully, as I've gotten older, I'm starting to care less about what others think regarding such silly topics. Very soon after I made the switch, many of my friends began to do the same. Now I notice it more than ever among the seniors, and wearing tights doesn't seem as abnormal anymore. My only regret is that I didn't reach this conclusion sooner, and that my only comfortable winter at STA happens to be my last.

Keep in mind, this is not a call to stand up against the unifying effects of uniform and preserve individuality. The tights are perfectly in line with the school's standards. No, this is not about standing out. It is about falling into the third category, where people are the happiest. This is simply a call for prioritizing your comfort, doing the things that don't bother anyone else, yet optimize your school experience. This is a call to ignore any ill toned comments as you try something new. This is a call to talk about things that are worthwhile- not comments about what someone is wearing, nor how cold you are.



I still love to talk. But *now*, I yap about my fleece lined tights to anyone who will listen.

# LOVE FROM SINNERS

*Maya Spadavecchia*

When sitting in a religion classroom, it is almost guaranteed that at one point you'll hear the words "each and every one of you are called to be saints." Even though each year through the Catholic school system, I kept on hearing the same phrase, I never gave it any thought (sorry religion teachers). It wasn't until I started to notice the number of saints with sinful pasts, that I started to ponder and examine the phrase more closely. We are all sinners. But, why is it that the saints, of all people, were once some of the most heavy sinners? In order to answer this complex question, I asked some of the religion teachers to give me their thoughts. Even if you're not Christian, I encourage you to read this because of the fact that as humans, we all do bad things. By understanding how we can actually become better after sinning, we can give ourselves a pillar of hope and comfort to get through times of heavy guilt and troubles.

It is paradoxical to think that from sin, we are shown the greatest amount of love. Almost as if "saints often have sinful pasts because it is precisely the sinful past that is God's way to show them their value and worth" (Grossling). Even though their sinning has caused hurt, God still loves them, and shows them unending mercy. Not only does this show the magnitude of God's love, but it also results in the saints' immense love for God. They are incredibly grateful that God forgave them, giving them further grace and healing. Simply put "the 'great sinful' saints, having rejected God the most, in turn appreciated all the more what His Love is" (Keong).

This gives humility to the sinner, a quality you must have to be a saint. Sinners, after forgiveness, are able to see that they themselves have faltered and were still given pardon. Knowing this, they are able to understand that they are not better or morally higher than anyone else. They can also see how "they are just as dependent on God [as] anyone else" (Grossling). This phenomenon also leads the sinner to grasp a very important ability. It makes them much more able to love and forgive someone else.



This is because they can see themselves in whoever has wronged them. Jesus said, "Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little" (Luke 7:47). This beautifully explains how people love in correlation to sin and forgiveness. The principle stands that "love is a response to love, and that when a sinner is forgiven (forgiveness being an act of love) they are able to respond with greater love" (St. Therese de Lisieux).

It is crucial to understand that saints, while having the ability to do these things, don't do it on their own. Whether their paths were set, or they had a very big conversion "[they] would consider themselves to be great sinners" (Keong), which because of this "need His Grace to do and be good" (Keong). Another way to say this is that "the Saints in heaven are clothed, not just with their own virtue, but with the grace of God acting through them" (Otoole). This is important because it reveals how good God is, and how it's more than okay to depend on him when we are in times of sin or hurt.

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We need to realize that saints have sinned just like each of us.

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They have failed time and time again, but with the grace of God and their realizations after sinning, they were able to enter into having more love for God, and the people around them. They are deemed heroic because of the way they've handled the challenges in their lives. Especially if you struggle with guilt after sinning, let this be a reminder that even the saints sinned, and that since the sin has already happened, the only thing you can do is be penitent, and try to do better. After all, "one cannot meet a pure soul who loves more than a repentant soul" (St. Therese de Lisieux).

### Ingredients

- 1 ½ cups (210g) gluten-free flour blend
- ¾ tsp xanthan gum (omit if your blend already contains it)
- 1 tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp salt
- 2 eggs
- ½ cup milk
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 2 tbsp butter, melted
- 2 tsp pure vanilla extract
- ½ cup Hershey's chocolate chips (optional)

### Steps

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F (200°C), Line 12 holes in the muffin pan with the paper liners. In a bowl, combine the flour, xanthan gum, baking powder and chocolate chips.
2. Mix the melted butter, milk, olive oil, eggs, salt and vanilla extract in a bowl.
3. Add the wet mixture to the dry mixture and beat it all together with a wooden spoon. Don't worry about lumps; these will disappear while the muffins bake.
4. Spoon the mixture into the paper liners and bake for 18-20 minutes, until the muffins are risen and baked through.

## RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT GLUTEN AND CELIAC DISEASE

*Rienaa Ganesans*

In recent years, gluten intolerances have gained significant attention as more people seek gluten-free options. Celiac disease is a medical condition in which people cannot eat food containing gluten. Doing so may cause digestive problems and symptoms such as abdominal pain, bloating, diarrhea, and fatigue. Celiac disease is a lifelong condition. In Canada, almost 1% of the population (or 1 in 114 Canadians) is estimated to have celiac disease, although approximately 90% of cases remain undiagnosed.

Unfortunately, I'm part of the 1% of people who suffer from this disease, first diagnosed at the age of 11. Once the doctors confirmed that I had celiac disease, my eating habits had to change drastically. I could no longer eat most of my favorite foods, such as pizza, cookies, burgers, and ice-cream. In fact, many foods unexpectedly contain gluten, as it's not only found in wheat, but also in rye, barley, oats, and triticale. Because of this, I have to read food labels very carefully. While it was difficult at first, I am now used to it.

One of the most difficult aspects of this journey, in my opinion, is the social part. When I go to restaurants or birthday parties with my friends, I have to be careful regarding the food I eat. Sometimes I bring packed food from home because it is easier. In school, my friends would always offer me food and I would have to politely decline even though it was so tempting to just say "yes"! Traveling has also been a problem, because not all locations offer a gluten-free meal. Although going gluten-free can sometimes be difficult, it is important to keep in mind the benefits of a gluten-free diet, such as reducing bloating and discomfort, improving energy levels, and helping with weight management.

From cookies to cupcakes, there are a surprising number of recipes that don't contain wheat flour and still taste good. Here is an easy gluten-free cupcake recipe to try at home:



# CHRISTMAS BAKING RECIPES YOU WILL LOVE

*Chloe Travers*

As Christmas is coming closer and closer a great way to celebrate the holidays is to bake! Let me share some recipes I guarantee you will love.

1. We'll start off with a recipe perfect for anyone who loves fudge. This sugar cookie fudge is so delicious and so easy to make!

**RECIPE**

★★★★★ 4.53 from 692 votes

## Sugar Cookie Christmas Fudge


Author: [Jaclyn](#) Prep: 5 mins Cook: 5 mins Set Time 2 hrs

Total: 2 hrs 10 mins

*Easy-to-make, 5-Ingredient, Sugar cookie Christmas fudge is a combo of two of my favorite treats: Christmas sugar cookies and fudge.*

Servings: **36**

[PRINT](#) [PIN](#) [SAVE](#) [RATE](#)



### Ingredients

1x 2x 3x

- 1 14 ounce can sweetened condensed milk
- 2 ½ cups white chocolate chips
- 1 ¼ cup sugar cookie mix | recommend heat-treating as per note below
- 2 Tablespoons butter
- christmas sprinkles or sprinkles of your choice

### Instructions

- 1 Prepare a 9×9 baking dish with parchment paper and a thin layer of non-stick spray. Set aside.
- 2 Add sweetened condensed milk to a large pot and heat over medium heat, stirring often. Once hot, stir in the white chocolate chips, sugar cookie mix, and butter. Continue stirring until melted and smooth. Remove from heat.
- 3 Stir in a generous amount of Christmas sprinkles.
- 4 Pour fudge mixture into the prepared dish and top with more sprinkles.
- 5 Place in refrigerator and allow to set overnight, or until firm (at least 2 hours). Slice into bite-size pieces and serve.

2. This next recipe is almond bark, which is always a favourite treat to have around during the holidays!



### Ingredients

- 16 oz. white chocolate candy coating
- 16 oz. milk chocolate candy coating
- 1 1/4 c. roasted salted almonds

### Instructions

- 1 In 2 separate saucepans, melt white and milk chocolate separately over low heat, stirring constantly.
- 2 Pour half of the almonds into each saucepan and stir to combine.
- 3 On a rimmed baking pan lined with wax paper or parchment paper, spread milk chocolate out to desired thickness.
- 4 Drizzle white chocolate over milk chocolate and use a wooden spoon or knife to swirl together.
- 5 Set aside at room temperature to harden.
- 6 Break or cut into pieces before serving.

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### 3. My last recipe recommendation is matcha brownies. Any matcha fans will love these!



#### Ingredients

- ½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter
- 3 oz white chocolate, roughly chopped
- 2 tablespoons matcha powder
- 1½ cup granulated sugar
- ½ cup brown sugar
- 2 eggs, at room temperature
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup (125 g) all-purpose flour

#### Instructions

- 1 Preheat oven to 350°F. Line an 8×8 baking pan with parchment paper, allowing the parchment paper to hang over the sides so you can easily lift the brownies out of the pan. Grease the pan.
- 2 In a small saucepan, melt the butter over medium heat. Turn the heat to low and add the white chocolate and matcha powder. Stir until completely melted. Remove from heat.
- 3 With an electric mixer, beat the sugar, brown sugar, eggs, vanilla, and salt on medium speed until fluffy, about 3 minutes. The mixer should leave tracks in the mixture.
- 4 Switch the mixer to low and continue to run while streaming in the white chocolate, butter, and matcha mixture.
- 5 Sift in the flour, mix on low speed until incorporated.
- 6 Pour into baking pan and bake for 20-25 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the brownies comes out with only a few crumbs.
- 7 Let sit in pan for 10 minutes before removing the brownies from the pan. Allow brownies to cool for half an hour before cutting.

# CHRISTMAS WORD SEARCH

*Neve Larson*

## WINTER WORD SEARCH

E X S G T M D G R C T J S C A R F  
 T L T K X R N B H O X N E Q W L D  
 S X C Q A I T R Q R E N V Z Q L Y  
 F N R I I T I U E T A B H L R Y M  
 I S O K C S E E T C H O L I D A Y  
 R T S W T I D I Y D T K G D D L J  
 E N S M F N M D S C E N D L N B X  
 P E A L I L N B O T I L T M Q Q X  
 L S T E O A A C N K O S S Z P Y Y  
 A E R N C R O K C C O O P Z M N X  
 C R N Y L A A O E R N D B L Y J M  
 E P X R T Y T C F D V Y W M Z J D  
 T B B R Q S Q Q M Y Q M R W N W N

CANDY CANE  
 SNOWFLAKE  
 TOQUE  
 MITTENS  
 REINDEER  
 SKATE  
 SKIING  
 CHRISTMAS  
 HOT COCOA  
 COLD

SCARF  
 FIREPLACE  
 BOOTS  
 ICICLE  
 PRESENTS  
 STOCKING  
 SLED  
 CAROLS  
 HOLIDAY  
 FROST

## DEAR SANTA

*Callia Rinon*

*Mikayla Selegria*

Dear Santa,

My face warmed up after getting home.  
The weather was so cold, I thought I was stone.  
Mommy saw my freezing face,  
giving me hot cocoa for me to embrace.  
Putting on my PJ's and ugly sweater,  
the coziness of it all really fits this weather.  
The ornaments hung on the tree with a sprinkle  
of colour;  
the bright, gold lights will never look duller.  
The decorations put up just for this season  
reminding me that Christmas is nearing.  
Believe me when I say I really am well-behaved!!  
I follow my manners like how I was raised.  
I eat all the veggies on my plate,  
...though I can't say the same for the ones I hate.

My mommy said, "baby, it's cold outside"  
so I snatched my snug jacket from my bedside.  
A fluff of snow into a ball  
piled atop like 1,2,3 so he'll never fall.  
My tall, tall snowman looked a little blue;  
I gave him some mittens, a scarf and a big hat,  
too!  
I jump around, up and down,  
to create snow angels in this town.  
Ring! The sleigh bells jingle;  
the joy in one's eyes begins to twinkle.  
I march back and leave my footprints behind,  
for it is gingerbread cookies I need to find!  
There I go, creating the dough  
as I look away from my parents under the  
mistletoe..  
My red stockings hung by the fireplace with  
care;  
was it you who put those candy canes in there..?  
Bundled in my blanket through this silent night,

near the hearth of warmth brings cozy delight.  
I really hope I'm not on the naughty list;  
if I am, a waterfall of tears will exist!  
I swear I've been a good kid all year long.  
Now it's time to sing some Christmas songs!  
All I want for Christmas is my two front teeth,  
while below my tree, a stash of toys underneath.  
I've left you some cookies and milk by the kitchen  
table,  
but please don't trip by the tree cable!

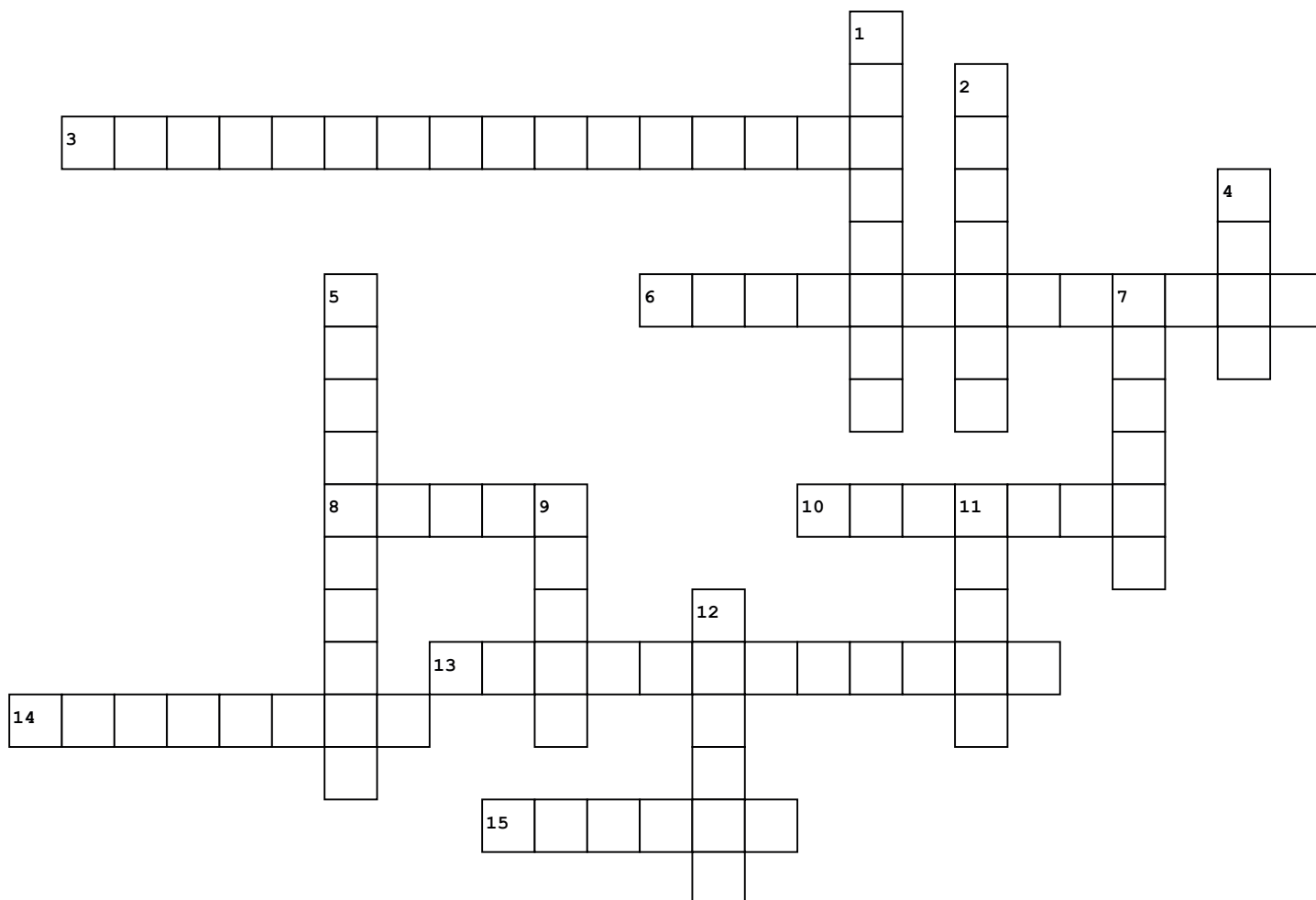
From,  
the well-behaved 6 year old :)



# WINTER CROSSWORD

*Gabriella Kasabashian*

*Kiki La Pica*



**Across**

- 3. something you build made of
- 6. food holiday in the middle of
- 8. February Tests at the end of the
- 10. month
- 13. made with snow
- 14. drink for a cold day
- 15. fun activity on a snow day  
keeps our hands warm

**Down**

- 1. what people give each other for Christmas
- 2. activity done on ice
- 4. what is put on the top of the christmas tree
- 5. popular scent or flavour during the winter
- 7. season popular winter sport, done in
- 9. mountains
- 11. who delivers presents on Christmas
- 12. colour of fresh snow  
ice sport played with a stick

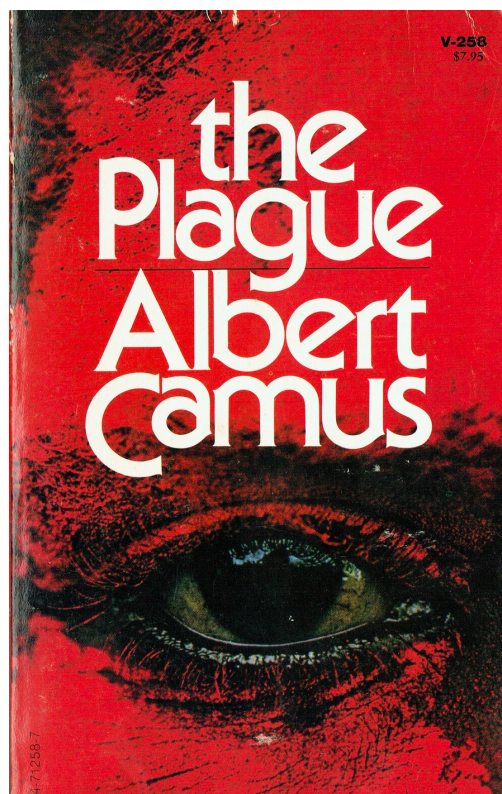
## YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE READY, YOU JUST HAVE TO START.

*Mr. Grossling*

In Albert Camus' famous novel, *The Plague*, one of the characters, Joseph Grand, is writing a novel. He is a perfectionist, paralyzed as he is stuck on the first sentence. He wants it to be perfect and therefore keeps revising it. Throughout the novel, you read its progression, and I must say, the last draft of the opening sentence sounds pretty amazing. He has a masterpiece of an opening line. The only problem is that there is no novel to read. He is trapped in the lie that his first sentence has to be perfect before he can move on.

But this attitude infects so many things in our daily lives. The idea of being 'ready' is often confused as some expectation of perfection or at least impressive precision. As though Lio Messi was outstanding when he first played soccer, or Ludwig van Beethoven didn't require endless hours of practice before writing the masterpieces that he wrote. OK, bad analogies? But don't many people often avoid trying something new lest they mess it up? I have heard this so many times. On June 27, 2009, I was certain I was ready for marriage. Fifteen years later, I find it laughable (please avoid the other extreme - I am *not* suggesting that one does not carefully discern and prepare to be married). But my point still stands. We often ascribe being 'ready' as 'having figured it all out.' Now if I had had this attitude before getting married, I'd still be single. What was more important, however, was that I was willing to marry my wife according to the reality of what marriage is and what it means for me as a Christian man.

I have had many people ask me for relationship advice. And more often than not, I have been asked this question, or a version of it: "But what if I start dating him/her and then we break up?" My answer: "Uh, exactly. Isn't that why you date someone, to see if you'd break up?"



You don't have to know someone is Mr. or Ms. Right before you date them. Or many students preparing to graduate high school are not sure what program to enter because they don't know if they will want to have that as a career for the rest of their lives. When I was in fourth year university, I was still shooting to be a musician and songwriter. Today I am a teacher. Things change, you don't have to have all the answers today (or to be 'ready'). Be at peace, let go of control.

The most often time that I hear this problematic attitude is when people are thinking of their relationship with God or their faith. Once again, time and time again I have heard people tell me that they would like to grow closer to God, would like to know Jesus, would like to go to church, but that there is so much going on that they are not 'ready.' My response: "Uh, exactly. This *is* the time to grow closer to Jesus. During times that things are messy and you don't have it all figured out." God didn't come for the righteous or for the people who had it all figured out (those who were 'ready'). He came for the gong shows and for the people who didn't have it figured out - like myself!

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Months before I was getting married, a priest friend said to me that God often purposely conceals the difficulties in big decisions because we sometimes may underestimate ourselves and run away from it thinking that we would not be able to handle some potential difficulties. And that by stepping into it a little more trustingly, we are being more humble and childlike. Well, I can say with absolute certainty that this rang true for me as a husband and father. I thank God that He protected me from myself and had made it necessary for me to trust in Him as well.

I wasn't 'ready' when I played my first major concert with my band in downtown Vancouver. I wasn't 'ready' when I began my first year teaching. I wasn't 'ready' when I married the love of my life, the woman I swore I'd love until the end. I wasn't 'ready' to be a father the first time I held my newborn child in my arms. But, by grace and trust in God, I was willing to do these things to the best of my ability, and that has made all the difference.

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# Acknowledgements

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