



The Pulse

Sit Back and Relax

We have reached a very busy part of the school year. So why not take a break and sit back with *The Pulse*?



In this issue...

Sofia reviews *Operation Varsity Blues*.

Laurena takes a look at the long life of Prince Phillip.

Lily settles the ultimate Marvel debate.

Mackenzie tells the tale of a little robot's adventure.

Eliana shares a lovely lemon square recipe!

Writers

Mackenzie Boyle, Lily Christopoulos, Laurena Ferraro, Sofia Mignacca,
Eliana Pantazopoulos

Editor-in-Chief: Stefanie Capozzo **Faculty Advisor:** Lisa Arella



Operation Varsity Blues: The College Admissions Scandal

Review

By Sofia Mignacca



Harvard. Stanford. Yale. Earlier this year, a documentary was released on Netflix, one that caught the attention of both Canadians and Americans. The compelling documentary *Operation Varsity Blues: The College Admissions Scandal* focuses on the mastermind behind it all, Rick Singer, a “college coach” who claimed he could get any child into the most prestigious schools in the country... but everything comes with a price. Suddenly, the word “bribery” quickly became “donation” to these elite institutions.

The documentary shines a spotlight on every shady aspect of the story. This includes real dialogue taken straight from phone calls between Singer and his clients that the FBI had wiretapped, how children were made to look like athletes (despite their lack of athletic abilities) and the most famous celebrities trying to buy their children's way into schools like USC.

This college scandal is one that amplifies the corruption of prestigious college admissions through an unjust combination of wealth, fraud and legacy. There are 3 ways of getting admitted, Singer said. Through the front door, where you get in on your own, the back door, where you offer a hefty donation directly to the college, or Rick's service, THE SIDE DOOR. Over 700 families had paid millions of dollars to Singer to guarantee their children a spot, no matter what kind of lies needed to be fabricated. SATs are examinations that are standardized and are written by all American high school students. However, even these tests were able to be tampered with to elevate test scores of children with paying parents.

This documentary truly captures what's going on behind the scenes of college admissions and authentically depicts the injustices. It is crazy how the letters that begin with "We regret to inform you..." are ones that are sent to the children who actually merit admissions rather than those who used bribery as a means to get accepted. All the scenes documented in this film include real news clips, where dozens of well-known adults bribing their children's way in, are being arrested for their fraudulent doings.

In my opinion, *Operation Varsity Blues* showed the sad reality of American college admissions and captured the real facts behind it. There is a montage in the documentary of sobbing students' college reaction videos where you can see their heartbreak while reading rejection letters from their dream schools. Little did they know, their spots were probably filled by someone less-deserving of it after all. However, with acceptance rates of less than 15%, very few earn a fairly given spot in these elite universities, and the look of honor and fulfillment on their faces can't be bought for any amount of money.



Tribute to His Royal Highness

By **Laurena Ferraro**

Prince Phillip, Duke of Edinburgh, passed away peacefully at the age of 99 on the morning of April 9th, 2021. Prince Phillip would have turned 100 on June 10. His Royal Highness has lived a tremendously active life in the Royal Navy and played an important role as husband to Her Majesty, The Queen as well as a significant role as a senior member of the royal household. *The Pulse* is here to look back on Prince Phillip's legacy that he has left behind.

June 10, 1921

Phillip Mountbatten, Prince of Greece and Denmark was born in Corfu Greece. His father, Prince Andrew of Greece and Denmark was the younger son of King George I of the Hellenes. His mother, Princess Alice, was the granddaughter of Queen Victoria and the eldest daughter of her family.

1934

Phillip is enrolled and educated at Gordonstoun School in Scotland. Here, he met Princess Elizabeth for the first time at the wedding of one of his cousins.



1937

A few members of Phillips's family die in a plane crash after hitting a factory chimney near Ostend, Belgium. This included Georg Donatus, Princess Cecile (Phillip's sister), their two very young sons and Georg's mother. The family was flying out to attend a wedding.

April 1939

Phillip begins his naval career at the Royal Naval College at Dartmouth. Phillip's son, Prince Andrew, studies there later on as well.



July 1939

Before the war began, Phillip and Princess Elizabeth met once again at Dartmouth while she was doing a royal family visit. Lord Mountbatten, Phillip's uncle and brother to his father, asks Phillip to play escort to the future Queen.

1940

While Britain is fighting in the Second World War, Phillip joins the Royal Navy officially and is posted to the Indian Ocean.

1942

At just 21 years old, Phillip is promoted to the first lieutenant.

1944

His father, Prince Andrew, dies in Monte Carlo of heart failure and arteriosclerosis just as the war was about to end.

1947

Phillip and Elizabeth are married at Westminster Abbey. King George VI gives him the title of Duke of Edinburgh.



1948

Prince Charles Philip Arthur George is born.

1950

Princess Anne is born.

1951

Phillip leaves the navy since the King's health is rapidly declining.



1952

While in Kenya on a Royal family trip, Phillip is woken in the night to hear the sad news that King George VI has passed away and that Elizabeth, at the age of 25, is to succeed her father to the throne.

1953

Elizabeth has her coronation at Westminster abbey.

1957

Phillip is made a prince of the United Kingdom by the Queen.



1960

Prince Andrew is born.



1964

Prince Edward is born.

1969

At the age of 84, Philip's mother, Alice, passes away after having spent her final years at Buckingham Palace.

1997

A year after the divorce of Princess Diana and Prince Charles, Diana is killed in a car accident in Paris. Prince Phillip must accompany the Queen to speak to millions outside of Buckingham Palace, after having a lot of criticism of the royal family's response to Diana's passing.

2006

Newspapers report that Philip is seen as a God by 400 residents of Yaoh-nanen in the South Pacific.



2016

Even after suffering some medical issues in the early 2010s, Prince Phillip becomes the longest-lived male descendant of Queen Victoria at 95 years of age.

2021

Prince Philip died at Windsor Castle on April 9th at the age of 99. Her Majesty, The Queen is going to turn 95 on April 21st, 2021, her first birthday in a long time without Prince Philip.



Who is More Powerful?: Thor V.S Scarlet Witch

By: Lily Christopoulos



“With freedom, flowers, books, and the moon, who could not be perfectly happy?” (*De Profundis*, Oscar Wilde)

*** SPOILERS UP AHEAD***

The Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) is a multibillion dollar media franchise based on the comic books notoriously written by Stan Lee. The comic books are accredited for the creation of The Avengers, a team of extraordinary individuals, with either superpowers or other special characteristics. Its purpose was to protect the planet from inner or extraterrestrial threats.

Fans are constantly comparing their favourite Avengers, and attempting to ascertain who the superior hero is. There are many worthy contenders, however Thor and Scarlet Witch have piqued the interest of countless Marvel aficionados.

Therefore, the question remains: Who would win in a fight? Thor or Scarlet Witch? The answer is clear as day. Scarlet Witch is the most powerful Avenger, and would by default win against Thor.

Wanda Maximoff was born in 1989 in Sokovia along with her twin brother, Pietro (also known as QuickSilver). Maximoff was born with the latent magical ability to harness Chaos Magic, making her the legendary Scarlet Witch. Her powers were too weak and doomed to diminish over time. But using the mind stone embedded in Loki's scepter, her powers heightened.

Maximoff's abilities include telekinesis, energy manipulation, and some form of neuroelectronic interfacing that allows her to both read thoughts and give her targets waking nightmares. She has these abilities because she can control Chaos Magic. Chaos Magic is the name of a magic that can manipulate, warp, and reconstruct the fabric of existence and reality to the user's very whim, and bring about total destruction to the cosmos.

A noble opponent is Thor Odinson. Thor is one of the most powerful Asgardians. Asgardians are an ancient alien civilization, who humans consider to be gods. Thor himself has superhuman strength, speed, agility, durability, and immunity to most diseases.

Most impressively, he wields an enchanted hammer, Mjolnir, forged from Uru metal that has powers over storms and can generate energy blasts known as anti-force. Only those who are deemed worthy can lift it.

In the film *Avengers: Infinity War*, Stormbreaker was created to replace the mighty hammer.



Stormbreaker is increased in size and mass, having both the blade of an axe and the head of a hammer in its construction, as well as sporting an elongated handle enabling the weapon to be wielded two-handed. It is a notably more potent and murderous weapon.

Even with these miraculous powers, Thor pales in comparison to Scarlet Witch.

In *Avengers: Age of Ultron*, Maximoff is on the opposing side of the Avengers for the majority of the movie. She uses her mind-controlling abilities to give the Avengers nightmares, including Thor. Thor's vision was his biggest fear. He saw Asgard and its people in ruins. If the two heroes were to fight, Maximoff could easily put her opponent in a trance and paralyze him with fear as she has already done in the past.

In early January, Marvel released the acclaimed television show *WandaVision*. It features two super-powered beings, Wanda and Vision, who begin to suspect that everything is not as it seems. *WandaVision* only solidifies Scarlet Witch's remarkable powers.

In this show, Maximoff uses her powers to manipulate energy and reality. She creates an entire alternate reality and has hundreds of people under her control. To put this into perspective, she single-handedly altered the fabric of space time. This overwhelming power is exorbitant to say the least.

Believe it or not, Maximoff is actually considered to be an amateur. She has much more to learn as she has not yet reached her full potential. In the post-credits scene, she is seen studying witchcraft, and enhancing her abilities as she is advised to do.

On the other hand, Thor's capabilities have already peaked with the Stormbreaker. There's little to no room for growth, whereas Scarlet Witch is just getting started.

The last two Avengers movies, *Infinity War* and *Endgame*, were about Thanos and the consequences of his actions. Thanos is an alien warlord from the moon Titan. He is regarded as one of the most powerful beings in the Marvel Universe. His kind went extinct as a result of overpopulation. He tries to prevent this problem on Earth by wiping out half of its population. The Avengers attempt (and fail) to stop him.

This shows that he is the ultimate enemy. Thanos has time and time again proven himself to be superior in strength. The being to defeat him would truly confirm their strength and dominance.

Even though the Avengers initially lost, there were times when they could have won against him. For example, Scarlet Witch could have easily bested him. "She could have taken out Thanos on her own," one of the characters from *WandaVision* asserts. During the epic face-off, Thanos was forced to call for reinforcements by sending his troops in after realizing he would be defeated. When she had him in her grasp, his fearful visage and the labored panic in his voice revealed how truly terrified he was of Scarlet Witch.

The closest Thor came to her level is when he used the Stormbreaker against his enemy. The axe fought through the power of six infinity stones (gems that embody different aspects of existence). However, Thor had not aimed to kill. He famously "should have gone for the head."



Even so, the fact remains that Scarlet Witch could have done the same and much worse. At this point in time, she wasn't even aware of Chaos Magic. She knew so little about her powers and still managed to practically obliterate Thanos.

All in all, these two characters demonstrate incredible power. Thor's weapons and godly abilities versus Scarlet Witch's Chaos Magic is truly a deadly fight. These heroes have certainly met their match. But to say that Thor would triumph over his adversary is absurd. This debate can be put to rest because Scarlet Witch is the clear victor in this hypothetical battle.



A Spark of Life and a Raincoat

By: Mackenzie Boyle

“Good evening citizens of The City. As you already know, it is the 40th anniversary of the founding of our beloved home. To commemorate such an occasion, I deem it necessary to retell the tale. Decades ago, there was a viral disease that came to light, eliminating over 90% of the world’s population. From the rubble arose our hero, the founder. He was a brilliant scientist who engineered a perfect artificial environment in a bubble. Because of his hard work and innovations, we are here today. Like any living being, he eventually passed away, leaving The Heart in his position. We mustn't forget-” From the aggressive shaking of the nearby construction, the old radio fell from the shelf onto a pile of cobweb covered boxes in a dark and mysterious basement.

The room was poorly lit and dusty, with only the moonlight illuminating a small fraction of the space. The sound of the bustling streets was drowned out by the thick walls, with the static of the broken radio echoing throughout the room. All of a sudden, a brilliant beam of light emerged from the boxes and lit up the entire basement. From the mess arose what looked like a young girl from a distance, but upon closer inspection it was clear she was made of wires and gears. She had a metal body, with very few patches of the original skin paint job remaining. On her left arm was a scratched away abbreviation that said A.L.I.C.E. It was the simplified version of a lifelike child, made during an experiment on artificial intelligence. The android had artificial hair, that was a shimmering white, with emotionless, beady black eyes. She wore a simple dress that was cinched at the waist with a soft white blouse underneath. Immediately, she began scanning the area for any sign of life. Not a single creature lurked in the room. The little robot

began piling up the boxes by the small window, creating a makeshift staircase to peer into the outside world. It was the backstreet of a shopping district, filled with both buyers and sellers. If a robot's eyes could light up with joy, hers were gleaming. She jumped down from the little staircase and walked towards the exit; this little android was determined to get a closer look.

The road was packed with people from left to right. They walked in an orderly fashion, almost robotically. There was no individuality differentiating them from one another. They all dressed in monotone clothing and had lifeless expressions. In the center of the dreary crowd stood the little robot. As she weaved through the dense crowds she stumbled upon an old lady in the streets. She sat leaning against a wall, shivering. Alice noticed her deteriorating vitals and decided to sit herself next to her.

“Hello deary,” said the old lady in a soft, raspy voice, “what can I do for you?”

The android picked up one of her belongings, a vibrant yellow coat, and examined it in a confused fashion.

“Ah, you must have a taste for the older things. See this here is one of those old raincoats. It stops ya' from getting soaked by a phenomenon know as rain. Of course, it no longer matters, cause' we don't got weather no more,” said the woman.

“I like it,” replied the little robot.

The lady responded, “Well, it ain't' got no purpose so how bout' you keep it.”

Regardless of whether or not it served a purpose, Alice loved the raincoat. Practically gleaming, the little android put on the bright yellow jacket and continued on the path of her curious adventure.

As the robot moved through the crowd, she started getting glances one after another. They stared, but it was in an expressionless manner. All of a sudden, a large security droid appeared in front of Alice, taking out a taser and shutting the little android down.

“Good morning,” whispered a soft robotic voice. The little android had reactivated her systems. The sound didn’t have one source; it came from each corner of the mysterious room. It was a tremendously large space, full of computers and wires. It was not well lit, however it was very tidy. It looked somewhat like a laboratory. Alice scanned the room for the source of the sound, and noticed a large glowing red light. “Oh, I suppose you cannot see me. I wouldn’t have a heat signature,” said the voice. Instantly, a circle of light appeared around the android, making the source of the sound visible. It was a gigantic nightmarish robot built into the building, covered in wires and plates of metal.

“Allow me to introduce myself, I am The Heart, of The City of course. I see all and I know all. You, you’re different. Allow me to prove my point.” The Heart grabbed the android and ripped off her arm. Alice turned towards the damaged arm to see colourful wires. Pink, yellow, blue, and damaged joints. “As I thought,” muttered The Heart, ”you’re different. Tell me, why do you wear that raincoat if it serves no purpose?”

The small robot tilted her head up and responded, “I like it.” The Heart lowered Alice towards the ground. “You are like me. We are made of ones and zeros, and yet we grow fond of certain things. We yearn for knowledge, we are curious creatures. Despite being made of wires and gears, we are more human than anyone else here. You may be a flaw, but you are a beautiful flaw.”

Without warning, dozens of mechanical arms began to disassemble Alice. They took the wires from the robot's body and attached them to The Heart, making them one. The last spark of life in Alice was gone. That was when it was discovered that silence was something that you could hear.

Really Good Recipes:

Lemon Squares

From a Betty Crocker Cookbook
Provided by Eliana Pantazopoulos

Since the weather has been a little gloomy lately, I thought that everyone would appreciate a little taste of summer! These Lemon Squares are pretty easy to make and they turn out scrumptious every time!

Makes about 25 squares

Ingredients:

1 cup all purpose flour

½ cup margarine or salted butter, softened

¼ cup powdered sugar



2 eggs

1 cup granulated sugar

2 teaspoons lemon zest (optional but I highly recommend it)

2 tablespoons lemon juice

½ teaspoon baking powder

¼ teaspoon salt

Directions:



Heat oven to 350°. Mix flour, margarine (or butter) and powdered sugar. Press mixture into an ungreased square pan (either an 8x8x2 or a 9x9x2 inch pan), building up ½ inch thick edges. Bake for 20 minutes or until golden brown.

Beat the remaining ingredients together until they are light and fluffy, about 3 minutes. Pour mixture over the hot crust. Bake until no indentation remains when touched *lightly* in the center, about 25 minutes. Leave it to cool. Cut it into about 1 ½ inch squares.

Optional: Dust with powdered sugar on top.
