

CEDAR SENTINEL PRESENTS



BLACK HISTORY MONTH



THE KINGSWAY COLLEGE NEWSPAPER

FEBRUARY // VOLUME 58 // ISSUE 4



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EDITOR IN CHIEF	ALANNAH TJHATRA
ASSISTANT EDITOR	CASSIE JOHN-WHITTINGHAM
STAFF	SELENA LY HANNAH BALANCE MAYCEE DAMMOG VYNCEE DAMMOG REA DE GUZMAN LARA NACINO MEGAN VILLANUEVA
LAYOUT	EDITORS & STAFF

WRITERS	CIESHA FELICIEN CATHERINE MOLLOY SELENA LY EMILY KUCHURIVSKI JENSINE AURE ALANNAH TJHATRA KIANA KAPINIAK
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EDITORS' MESSAGES

ALANNAH
TJHATRA
EDITOR IN
CHIEF



This is the month of appreciation for the cultures around us; for the traditions and the stories that have built Canada into the country it is today. And it happens to also be the month of love. It's quite fitting, I think - as we celebrate the diversity of Canada and especially reflect on the contributions and sacrifices of many African Americans/Canadians, we are brought to the remembrance that, ultimately, we must love the people around us. It does not matter what they look like, or what culture they descend from, or what type of clothing they wear - we are all equal, and we should treat each other in this way. We should look back on the past so that we will not repeat the same mistakes that were caused by discrimination, prejudice, and unequal power. We should also look ahead, staying hopeful in a better, more loving, more equal world.

Happy reading.
- Alannah Tjhatra

CASSANDRA
J.W.
ASSISTANT
EDITOR

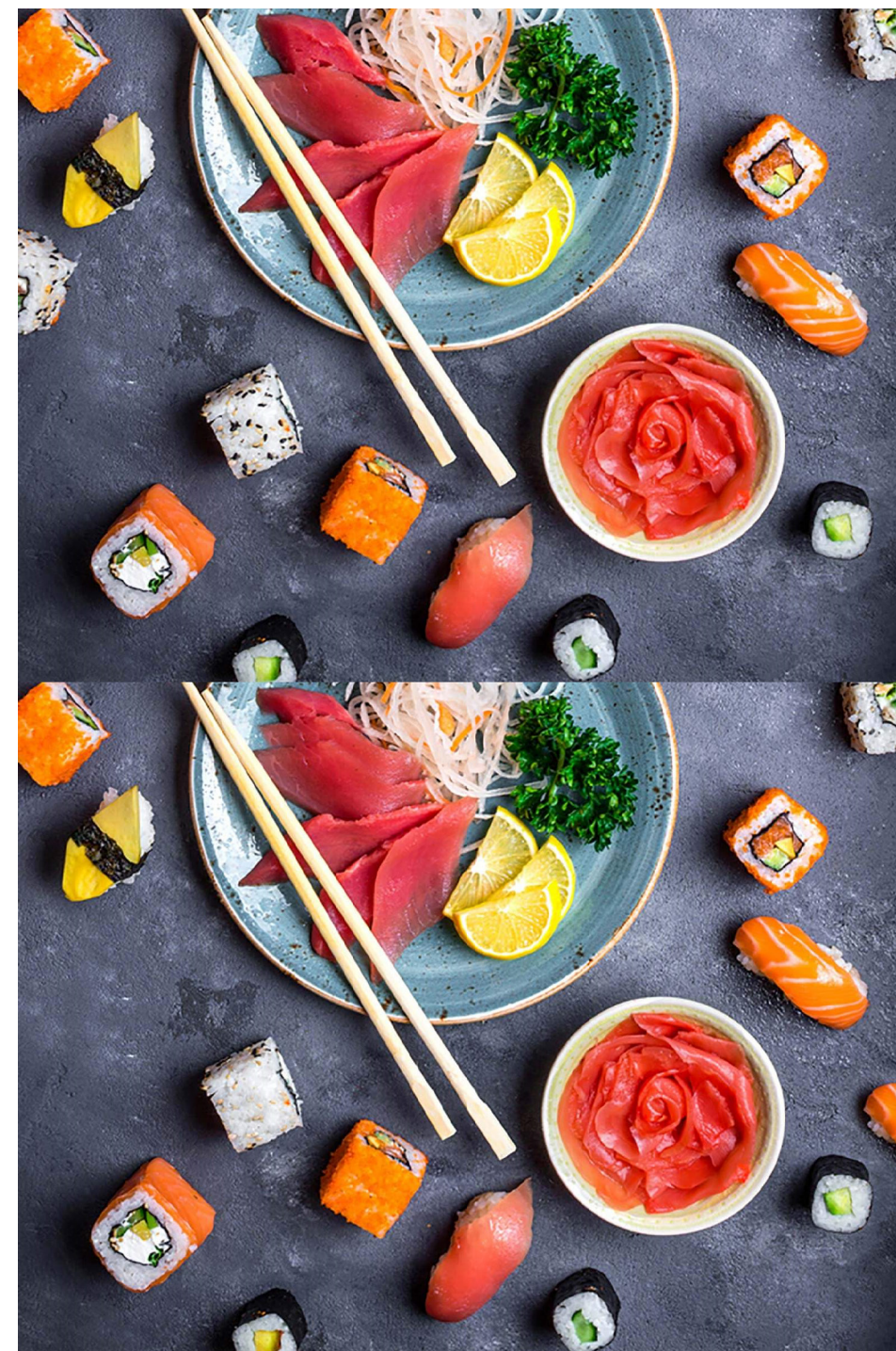


Happy February Kingsway,
The month of February in western culture is recognized as the month of Black History and love. Black History Month is near and dear to my heart by virtue of being a part of the African diaspora. As a child, Black History Month was something I knew about - but since becoming an adolescent, I have truly realized the significance of this month. This is a month to learn about the trials, tribulations, and accomplishments of black people of the past and to ensure that things like race, nationality and social status do not divide us. Christianity is the Great Equalizer, and we were created in God's perfect image. Kingsway is a great school because it is full of diversity and individuals who come from different walks of life and are on their own spiritual walk.

-Cassie

FEBRUARY CONTEST

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE: THE FIRST THREE PEOPLE TO FIND **ALL** THE DIFFERENCES IN THESE PICTURES WILL RECEIVE A PRIZE . ONCE YOU FINISH CIRCULING ALL THE DIFFERENCES, YOU CAN **1)** SHOW YOUR COPY OF THE CEDAR SENTINEL TO ALANNAH TJHATRA OR SELENA IY **OR 2)** EMAIL A PICTURE OF THE CIRCLED DIFFERENCES TO CEDARSENTINEL@KINGSWAY.COLLEGE . GOOD LUCK!



THERE ARE SEVEN
DIFFERENCES IN THIS
PICTURE.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE NINE)



SHE FELT AS IF SOCIETY DETERMINED HER WORTH – BUT SHE KNEW HER VALUE.

The cold bitter air took a bite into my flesh as I forced my tired feet to run to the bus stop. I checked the time; I had just missed the last bus by a minute. I tried my best to get to the bus on time, but business was booming at the Montgomery Fair department store, making my job as a seamstress more difficult. With trembling hands I wrapped my coat tighter around my body and swayed back and forth, hoping that my blood would not freeze.

Living in Alabama was like residing in a box that was taped shut and sealed with lies and deceit. I was manipulated as a child and wore my skin as if it was a disease. Sometimes I

had to stop and say “Rosa” out loud to remind myself that my name was not “Negro.”

Society may determine my worth, but I know my value. I will no longer be a pawn in their game of supremacy. I am Rosa Parks, and it is time to take a stand.

“Living in Alabama was like residing in a box that was taped shut and sealed with lies and deceit.”

The late bus approached and my stomach immediately did a somersault. I recognized the bus driver. The last time I’d seen him, he had made me get off the bus - I ended up catching a cold from the rain. I looked straight into his nefarious eyes and dropped my fare into his hands. I quietly walked in and took the last seat available in the coloured section. As the bus picked up speed, my mind

and eyes started to doze off as I reflected on the events of the day.

I felt someone shaking my shoulder; my eyes bolted open as the bus driver’s frame came into focus.

“Wake up, negro!” His hands made a fist and his blue eyes were rimmed with fury. “The bus is full and the white folks need to sit.”

I took a deep breath and tried my best to stop my voice from trembling as fear and anxiety tried to capture my heart.

“I do not see the problem, sir. I am sitting in the coloured section.”

His fist began to shake and his tone of voice escalated to a shout that could be heard from miles away.

“This is my bus, and you will do what I say: stand up and let the white folks sit.”



At that moment, a tidal wave of thoughts and emotions flooded my brain. I remembered the black boy that got lynched last week because

have my body hanged. I just kept my mouth shut and my head low as I prayed for peace. I was not afraid

for my life; I was more worried about my family’s reaction if they found me dead. However, I knew this issue expanded far beyond a seat on a bus. The bus driver needed to know that I was a human being, just like him. I was not a dog or a slave. I was not the dirt that he stepped on. I was not his child.

I am a black woman, and I am proud of my colour - and I know my value.

About fifteen minutes later, the police arrived and handcuffed my wrists behind my back. They yelled insults in my ears and called me stupid because I did not stand up and give my seat to a white person.

I will not sacrifice my freedom and my dignity for the ignorant and arrogant. I sat down so that future generations can stand together. I sat down so people can see that my skin does not define me.

My name is not negro, it is Rosa Parks - and I know my value. ■

“I WOULD LIKE TO BE KNOWN AS A PERSON WHO IS CONCERNED ABOUT FREEDOM AND EQUALITY AND JUSTICE AND PROSPERITY FOR ALL PEOPLE.”

ROSA LOUISE MCCAULEY PARKS

Edited by:
Alannah
Tjhatra

Formatted by:
Hannah
Balance

JOB HUNTING

As high school draws to a close for many of us (seniors) this year, it is good to start to focus on job hunting. Even if you aren't finished high school, it can be a good idea. I started my search in grade nine when I decided to work at the community center for the experience. I then asked for a job as a teacher's aid in grade eleven instead of working at the gym. The best job I ever had in high school, however, has to be my job at the morgue.

I volunteered at the Northcutt Elliott Funeral Home during the summer before senior year and it was the best job ever! I had numerous people with various reactions when I told them this, but the most popular was: "Oh. Dead people. Fun."

The best of those comments I received was from my mother's hairdresser who said, "No. You become a hairdresser, teacher, *something*. Not *THAT*." And I admit, I was expecting it to be pretty boring and for the people to be a bit creepy, but that wasn't the case at all. My employer Mr. Kuipers and the paid members were all extremely nice and had many stories and jokes to

tell -- for example, when Mr. Kuipers kept trying to convince Mr. John to work there but he was too superstitious to set foot in the building.

The people that came for the morgue's services were also quite entertaining. I know it sounds terrible to say, but the funerals were never boring and I actually enjoyed them! We had one Catholic priest come in for a funeral and when Mr. Kuipers asked him if he wanted coffee, the priest said he wanted nothing unless it was vodka.

"No. You become a hairdresser, a teacher, something. Not THAT."

There was also a "pastor" (and I use this term lightly), who didn't really know how to

run a funeral service. He was also from the New Apostolic Movement, and seeing as none of us knew what that was (and the guy just kept **staring** and **smiling**), we were all in the office trying to guess whether he was in a cult or not. The best funeral by far, however, was the funeral of a 91-year-old whose eldest son was part of a "motorcycle club" called the Toronto Red Liners. Half of the attendees of that funeral were somber elderly men and women, while the other half were bikers from as-

sorted "clubs" with the most prominent being Red Liners from Mississauga and Toronto. There were so many bikers in attendance that we had to set up chairs in the lobby so they could look through the glass at the proceedings. And because there were so many, they took up the majority of the front of the parking lot. When Mr. Kuipers asked one of them if they could park at the back so the elderly could park out front, the guy replied that they needed to park there in case the cops came. While it may seem a bit rude to make the elderly people walk, it also makes a heck of a lot of sense seeing as apparently there was a swarm of police circling the area. Luckily, nothing major happened and they just smoked weed in the parking lot the majority of the time.

Needless to say, that was the most exciting summer I have ever had, and if there is one thing that the experience taught me, it is that you may find something you want to do in an area you never imagined. So when you are looking for a job, don't immediately rule out a bunch of jobs -- especially if it is one of your first job experiences. You need to try different areas to see what you actually want to do, not just what you *think* you want to do. ■

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE FIVE)



THERE ARE SEVEN DIFFERENCES IN THIS PICTURE.

THERE ARE THREE DIFFERENCES IN THIS PICTURE.



Edited by:
Vyncee
Dammog

Formatted by:
Alannah
Tjhatra

MICHELLE OBAMA

“There are still many causes worth sacrificing for, so much history yet to be made.”

Michelle LaVaughn Robinson Obama

SELENA
LY

Michelle LaVaughn Robinson Obama. A lawyer. Writer. Mother. Wife of the 44th President, Barack Obama. She was the first African-American First Lady of the United States. She developed her four main initiatives, leading her to become a role model for women and an advocate for healthy families, service members and their families, higher education, and international adolescent girls education. She has accomplished and launched many movements during her time as First Lady.

In 2010, she launched Let's Move!, bringing together leaders, educators, and other members of every profession in an effort to address the challenges of childhood obesity. The goal of Let's Move!, was to solve the epidemic of childhood obesity within a generation. Ranging from solutions in healthier food in schools, helping kids be more physically active, or urging companies to market healthier foods to children, and focusing on parental support that's needed to make healthier choices for their kids.

In 2011, Michelle and Dr. Jill Biden got together and launched Joining Forces, a nationwide initiative calling Americans to rally around service members, veterans, and their families and support them through wellness, education, and employment opportunities. This program

works to ensure that service members, veterans, and their families have the tools they need to succeed through their life.

In 2014, Michelle launched the Reach Higher Initiative, an effort used to inspire young people across America to take charge of their future by completing their secondary and post-secondary education. Whether that be at a professional training program, a community college, or a four-year college or university. The program aims to ensure that all students understand what they need to complete their education, by working to expose students to college and career opportunities, helping to understand financial aid eligibility, encouraging academic planning, and more.

In 2015, Michelle launched, with the help of her husband (who was he again?), launched Let Girls Learn. A program that the U. S. government is using to help girls around the world go to school and stay in school. Mrs. Obama's efforts in this program include her calling countries across the globe to help educate and empower young women, sharing the stories and struggles of these young women with young people in America, to inspire them to commit to their own education.

As First Lady, Michelle has taken that position and skyrocketed it to new heights.



Her support for military families, helping children lead healthier lives, and encouraging young people to fulfill their boundless promise, has been a journey of greatness that deserves to be known.

Though she is no longer First Lady, Michelle continues to help in her own way. And though she is without her position and power, she continues to influence and impress others to do the right thing. She recently released her book, *Becoming*, a memoir “serenely balancing gravity and grace, uplift and anecdote, though its high mindedness does permit a few low blows at Barack Obama's villainous successor”. She continues to make her mark on the world, fighting oppression and standing up for the minorities. Michelle Obama is the role model for role models, and she deserves to be remembered and respected by all members of the world. ■

Edited by:
Vyncee
Dammog

Formatted by:
Cassie
J.W.



SIBLINGS

Siblings. You can't live without them, and sometimes you can't live with them either. I was lucky to have a whole three-and-a-half luxurious years of having my parents' full attention to myself. That is...until my parents sat me down and told me five words that would change my life.

"We are having another baby."

I was so confused. What more did they need? I thought I was all they could ever ask for! But apparently not. I began to explore reasons as to

why they could possibly need another child. Maybe they loved me so much that they wanted to have another mini-me. Or maybe I didn't come out as they expected and they wanted to try again! Or maybe the pet store ran out of pets? I'll never know.

Nicole was born and I was worried she might take my spotlight. Up until now, I had been the centre of everyone's love and attention - my parents, my grandparents, my mom's choir members, and even the cool teenagers from church. I didn't know if they

would still love me after they met Nicole. She looked too cute for my liking!

But everything changed the first time I held her in my arms. As her huge dark eyes looked up at me and she started making weird sounds, I couldn't help but fall for her. Her cuteness scheme was working!

As her little fingers wrapped around my three-year-old finger, I vowed to myself that I would be her protector. From spiders, critters, seagulls, and even the boogie man - I would protect her.

For the next couple of years, it was just Nicole and I. We had lots of fun, which mostly consisted of me trying to get her to walk, talk, and get on my level - only to be constantly scolded by my mother.

Then one unexpected day, my parents sat Nicole and I down for a serious grown-ups talk. "We are having another baby." They said, with huge smiles on their faces.

ANOTHER ONE?!!!

Now that all three of us are a little bit older and a tiny bit more mature, I can assuredly tell you that having younger sisters is the best thing anyone can ask for. And here are some reasons why.

They are the best official photographers.

After living with them for so long, they usually end up seeing many different sides of you. They know which side highlights your double chin, which makes you look simply fabulous. They also are usually honest with you when your pose looks weird or awkward.

They give their honest input.

They're honest with you when a piece of clothing makes you look large or overly-scandalous - or when it makes you look like a nun. They're honest with you about your friends that they don't like and why they don't like them. Although sometimes their honesty is borderline touché, they (usually) have your best intentions in mind.

Hair stylists.

If you ever see me with braided hair or anything nicer than straightened or curled hair, you can be sure that it's one of my sister's doing. Although they often complain and are annoyed when I ask one of them to braid my hair, nothing compares to the smile on my sister's face when someone compliments my hairstyle and I proudly say, "My sister did it."

They see a side of you that no one else sees.

Everyone has different masks that they wear. There's something almost magical when your "crazies" match up and you guys are just laughing at everything and anything.

When they finally get in trouble, it's a glorious feeling.

Although I hate to say it, there's something magical when your younger siblings finally get the punishment they deserve. The look on their faces after getting beat by a wooden spoon, or having their phone taken away, or even worse; being forced to APOLOGIZE to you... is incomparable.

And lastly...

They've seen you at your best and your worst, and they love you anyways.

This one's pretty self-explanatory. Basically, sisters are awesome. I love you, Nicole and Lauren. ■



Edited by:
Megan
Villanueva

Formatted by:
Alannah
Tjhatra



Two years ago, I decided to take on a new hobby which was rock climbing. I wanted to do something really fun and new that would also count as exercise. I had been thinking about this new activity for a while and so I decided to go and try it with one of the older youth at my church, we'll name him Ezra.

Ezra had also recently started rock climbing just a few months before me and he was also stronger which meant that he had more experience and strength in comparison to myself.

When I got there, I participated in an orientation where I learned the rules, how to tie the proper knots, and how to belay. For those who don't know, belaying is the part where you are the one taking in the slack of the rope as the climber is ascending.

So after I was officially allowed to rock climb in this indoor facility, I went to Ezra

and he had me try my first rock wall which was a medium difficulty wall.



Before I started to climb my first one, I told myself "I got this, this should be easy, I can do this one without any help." Then as I struggled to get up a few feet off the ground, Ezra encouraged me that I could do it. Even when I started to lose faith in myself and say that I

was not good enough for this activity, Ezra convinced me that I could definitely do it. He also assisted me by pointing out some footholds and handholds that I couldn't see. When I used those holds, it made it so much easier to get up higher and higher.

After I passed this one challenging point, I cruised the rest of the way to the top. All that was left to do was to lean back and walk down the wall. Since I trusted the person belaying me, I was able to comfortably lean back and walk down without hesitation. Now we switched the roles, he was the climber and I was the belayer. He started off with a more challenging wall, tied in, and got to the top with almost no problem. It was difficult for me to keep up with him as he was climbing faster than I could pull all the slack.

As he was walking down the wall, I was thinking about how he trusted me enough to

belay him at a wall of this difficulty. I was a new climber, a new belayer, and he was okay with me being the one making sure he doesn't fall and break his bones.

We continued for about two hours until both our bodies were aching. We changed and we went on our way. Later that day, it hit me that that's how God wants us to be like. He wants us to be the climber while he is the belayer. When we struggle, when we hit a few snags, God is there to guide us and lead us down the right path just like Ezra was there to show me what steps I should take and where I should put my hands and feet. God is always there, even if we can't see Him as we go on our journey of life, even if we can't see as the belayer is picking up our slack, we can always follow His words and reach our destination.

Ezra is a great example of how we, as followers of Christ, should have faith in the Almighty. Essentially, Ezra had enough faith in me to put his life in the hands of an amateur. So if someone can have enough faith in a person who is only a mortal being, shouldn't we be able to put our whole life God's hands?

This rock climbing adventure helped me to stay fit, have a good time, and remember that God is always there for me and He is there for you too, so just climb on. ■

CONTACTS

If you would like to submit **anything** - articles, short stories, poems, photos, or artwork - to the Cedar Sentinel, please send your work to cedarsentinel@kingsway.college. We would be happy to receive your submissions.

And be sure to check out our website, cedarsentinel.com!

NOTE: There are no restrictions as to who can or cannot submit to the newspaper. As long as you attend Kingsway College, you can submit your work.

Edited by:
Vyncee
Dammog,
Selena
Ly

Formatted by:
Hannah
Balance

Formatted by:
Alannah
Tjhatra



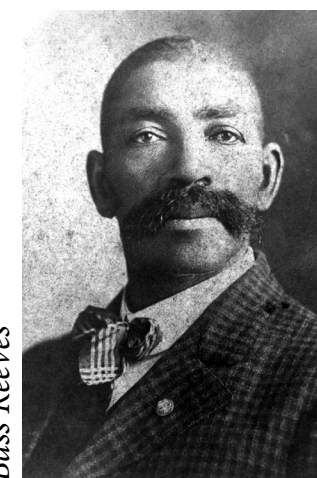
ONE IN FOUR COWBOYS WAS BLACK, CONTRARY TO THE STORIES TOLD IN POPULAR WESTERN BOOKS AND MOVIES.

It's actually believed that the real "Lone Ranger" was inspired by a man named Bass Reeves. And you probably guessed it: he was African American.

Reeves had been born as a slave, but he escaped West during the Civil War where he lived in the Indian Territory. He eventually became a Deputy U.S. Marshal, was a master of disguise, an expert shooter, and rode a silver horse. (I'm thinking it was probably more grey than silver. But anyway. That's beside the point.)

Reeves's story isn't unique, though. During the 1800s, the West drew slaves with the hope of freedom and wages. When the Civil War ended, free men went West with the hope of a better life where the demand for skilled labour was high. And these African Americans made up *at least* a quarter of the legendary cowboys who lived dangerous lives in the West.

To give you better visualization, imagine this guy in *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* instead of Clint Eastwood:



Bass Reeves

THE EARLIEST RECORDED PROTEST AGAINST SLAVERY WAS BY THE QUAKERS IN 1688.

The Quakers, also known as "The Society of Friends," have long-supported abolition.

Four Friends in Pennsylvania saw the slave trade as a huge injustice against their fellow man and decided to use the Golden Rule to defend their argument, saying, "we should do unto others as we would have done to ourselves." (If only that phrase could resolve today's issues.)

Their protest against slavery and human trafficking was presented at a "Monthly Meeting at Dublin" in Philadelphia. The Dublin Monthly reviewed the protest but sent it to the Quarterly meeting because they didn't want to deal with such an important issue.

The four Friends continued their efforts and presented at the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, but it was a long eighty-eight years until the Society of Friends actually denounced slavery.

DID YOU KNOW?

SOME INTERESTING TRIVIA ABOUT BLACK HISTORY MONTH

THE FIRST LICENSED AFRICAN AMERICAN FEMALE PILOT WAS NAMED BESSIE COLEMAN.

I've always wanted to be the "first" to do something. Unfortunately, we already have "the first men to land on the moon," "the first lady to become Prime Minister," and "the first person to invent microwave burritos." It seems that a lot of the cool "firsts" are taken.

Bessie Coleman achieved one of those "firsts" as the first licensed African American female pilot.

She was born in Atlanta in 1892, and she grew up in a world of very harsh poverty and discrimination. She moved to Chicago when she was twenty-three in hopes of making a fortune there. Unfortunately, Coleman didn't have much luck with it -- that is until she started hearing exciting tales of World War I soldiers' flying exploits. Inspired by those stories, she became determined to become a pilot.

It was already difficult because she was a woman, and even more difficult because she was also African American. However, she did not give up.

Coleman set her sights on France in order to reach her dreams. (She had to learn French first, of course.) In 1920, Coleman crossed the ocean to France. And over the next seven months, she learned to fly.

In the next year, Coleman was awarded a pilot's license by the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale. Pretty amazing, I think.

THE AMAZING CELLS OF HENRIETTA LACKS

Henrietta Lacks has not been a very well-known name until recently. This African American woman made a large contribution to the scientific community through the study of her cells -- even though she didn't know it. She had cervical cancer, and a sample of her cancer cells was sent to a tissue lab. (There is much controversy over this because her cells were studied and experimented on without her consent.) Still, these cells were responsible for what scientists know as HeLa cells, or the first "immortal" cell line -- meaning that, while normal cells always died after a while, Lacks's cells actually doubled every 20-24 hours.

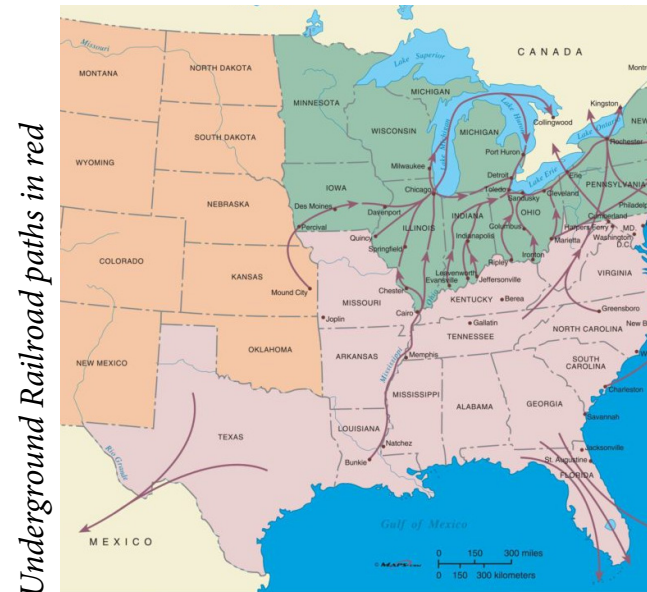
Lacks's cells have been critical to medical research and the creation of vaccines for polio, advances in cloning, vitro fertilization, and more. ■

THE ORIGINS OF THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

The 1793 *Act to Limit Slavery* said that any enslaved person who reached Upper Canada become free upon arrival. So, a small number of African Americans who were in search of freedom began to enter Canada - primarily unassisted.

The word soon spread that freedom could be found in Canada. During the War of 1812, enslaved servants of the Southern U.S. military officers brought back word that there were free "Black men in red coats" in British North America (aka Canada, before it was called Canada. They probably changed it because "Canada" is a lot shorter to say than "British North America." Just saying.)

So when the word got out that Canada was the Promised Land to escape to, arrivals of freedom-seekers in Upper Canada increased. Many more people arrived in Canada after 1850, following the passage of the American *Fugitive Slave Act*, which allowed slave catchers to pursue fugitives in Northern states.



Underground Railroad paths in red

KIANA KAPINIAK

I stand at the edge of a cliff and let myself take in the beauty of the serene forest.

This is where everyone should live, I think to myself, not locked away in some musty, cement compound, never seeing the light of day. I sit down on the edge of a rock and let my legs dangle as I think of all the events prior to finding myself here. It had all started 5 long years ago, right after my 17th birthday, when my boyfriend approached me...

"Hey, Maya, can I talk to you for a minute?" Shane asked me while I was working one of my afternoon shifts at the cafeteria.

"Sure, just let me wash my hands," I replied.

Shane and I had been dating only a fleeting 6 months, but I already loved him. He and I had both grown up together in Compound 1508 and studied under the same teachers. Our families were close and we have been best friends for as long as I could remember.

When he finally asked me out, I thought for sure that was the beginning of my happily ever after. In our district, when someone's heart gets broken, they become uglier and when a person was loved, they become more beautiful. The ugly girls were looked down on and people were constantly talking about what could have possibly happened to make them that ugly. I was thankful

Edited by:
Selena Ly,
Megan Villanueva

Formatted by:
Alannah Tjhatra

RAINBOWS AFTER RAINSTORMS

I had Shane and would never have to worry about that. But was I ever unprepared for what happened next!

"So, what did you want to talk about?" I asked Shane as I came out from behind the counter.

"Uh," he paused for a second, "I've been thinking about this for a while now, and I really think we should break up."

WHAT?!

"I don't really like you in this way," he continued, "and you deserve someone who truly loves you. I think we were just better off as friends. So, no hard feelings?"

"Yeah, uh sure, no hard feelings," I mumbled in utter shock.

"Okay, cool, catch you later Maya," Shane said and walked away.

I stood there stunned for

a few minutes, not wanting to believe what had just happened. That night I lay in bed for hours crying, not able to fall asleep. It was the absolute worst night of my whole 17 years of existence. The next morning, I woke up and screamed. Every girl from Compound 1508's worst fear had come true to me. I had gotten uglier. As I stood staring at myself in the mirror that appalling morning, I thought that life couldn't possibly get any worse, but was I ever wrong!

Over the next 5 years, I had 6 different boyfriends, each one breaking up with me after they had used me for a couple of months and caused me to fall for them. Every single one taking a piece of my heart and leaving me uglier than the last. My days became full of sorrow and tears, but I was surviving. I still had a home and a family

that loved me - at least I thought I did, until one day when my parents called me over.

"Maya," my mother began, "we never wanted things to come to this, but people are talking about you and our family. It is really affecting your father's business. So, I'm sorry, but you are going to need to move out."

"But," I stammered, "You promised to help me start my singing career."

"Oh honey," my mom replied, "You aren't getting anything accomplished with that ugly face."

That's when I realized that every other heartbreak and bad day was absolutely nothing compared to the pain that I felt being rejected by my own family.

Later that night, I packed up my few belongings and took them to the back room of the cafeteria, where I laid down and started to bawl. This wasn't how life was supposed to be, right? Was everywhere so vile and cruel, that a person would shun their own daughter, simply for being ugly? I started to think about what was outside the compound walls. Was everywhere else just grey walls and prissy people, or was there more out there? I've heard stories of running water and living things soaring through blue skies. I had never really thought about the outside world before today, but suddenly all I could think about was what lay out there. As I continued to ponder life beyond the compound, I suddenly realized that there was nothing stopping me from leaving. I had no more friends and no one loved me here, including my parents, so why not go explore the outside world? Then, for the first time in a long, long time, I smiled a real,

genuine smile. I even started humming a little tune as I gathered my stuff and headed for the main exit of the compound.

When I finally reached the exit, I found a huge bolt barring the door and two guards sleeping beside it. I quickly scanned around and saw a ring of keys in one of the guard's pockets. I quietly pulled them out of his pocket and unlocked the humongous, barred door. A cool breeze of fresh air hit me as soon I stepped outside and it was the most amazing feeling I'd ever experienced. I had never in my life felt and smelt something quite so pure and refreshing.

The next few days I wandered around looking at all the beautiful things I had only ever read about in books: flowers, trees, butterflies, and a million other things. It was the most magical few days of entire my life and I finally began to see the good in this world.

"Don't jump!"

I am suddenly brought back to reality by someone's deep voice behind me. I realize that I had somehow stood up and was now standing on the edge of the cliff with my arms up. I was just enjoying the nice breeze, but I can see how one might assume I was about to jump. There was a time, not so long ago that I actually might've jumped, but these past few days out of the compound have somehow really changed me. I turn around slowly and face the voice.

"Don't worry, I don't plan to," I answer the man with a smile, "I'm just enjoying this delightful breeze."

"Good," he smiles back, "you scared me for a minute there. My name's Jackson, by the way. I've never seen you before, where are

you from?"

"A place I'm never going back to, that's for sure," I say wholeheartedly.

"Who are you staying with?" he asks.

"I'm here by myself. I don't know anyone, I've just been sleeping in little caves and shelters I find along the way," I reply.

"That's not very safe," he frowns with concern as he speaks.

I half laugh at his comment, "Well, I'm not really drowning in options at the moment."

"How about you come back to my house," he suggests. "My mom is baking some apple pie and you could rest and clean yourself up. No pressure though, just giving you some options."

"Mmm," I sigh, "I love apple pie. I think I might just have to take you up on your offer." I beam and make my way over to where he stands with his horse.

As we sit around Jackson's kitchen table eating apple pie and talking, I find myself feeling valued for the first time in years. I know my life isn't going to be perfect from now on, but I can definitely see the rainbow coming after the rainy last few years.

4 years later, Jackson and Maya are happily married with a beautiful, 1-year-old daughter. Jackson showed Maya what true, unconditional love was and helped her to pursue her dream of becoming a singer. Maya, becoming loved again, not only returned to her former self but became radiantly stunning! They built a small wooden cabin and lived happily in the forest near Jackson's loving parents for many, many years. ■