

# The Jay

ISSUE 08



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## *Letter from the Editor*

As we close out this final edition of the 2025-26 school year, we also mark an important transition for *The Jag Student Newspaper*.

Being Lead Editor this year has been one of the most meaningful experiences of my high school career. I've deeply enjoyed having *The Jag* be a space for curiosity and collaboration, as well as a platform for the stories and opinions we have been able to share and bring to life.

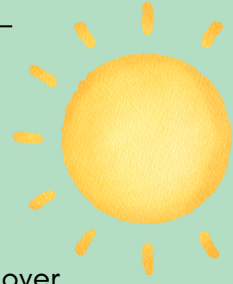
To our readers, thank you for your support. Your engagement gives this publication its purpose. Thank you to our writers for your dedication, creativity, and willingness to take on every challenge.

I am excited to announce that Sara Qian, Yuhe Pan, and Bronwyn Ellis will be next year's Co-head Editors; Byrdie Fisher-Franke will be the Creative Lead; and Dev Wirk will be Sports Editor. All of these future leaders have already shown exceptional leadership, thoughtfulness, and commitment to this publication. I am confident they will continue to grow and strengthen the paper with fresh ideas.

As I leave, I am confident *The Jag* will continue to thrive and I cannot wait to see how it evolves in the years ahead.

With gratitude,  
Mira Wirk  
Lead Editor

# Summer Break?



by Byrdie Fisher-Franke

It is fair to state that children aged 5-19 feel some amount of boredom and or exhaustion over the summer. Spanning from a lack of interaction and passion to an increasingly long summer job, it is hard to find joy and interest amongst a swamp of normality. Fortunately, boredom is not necessarily bad, it only offers what you have been needing all year long; mental rest.

Being able to relax is a privilege after an incredibly long year. Summer is an opportunity for a complete reset, when you don't have to worry about testing, social pressure, or feeling good enough. Many believe summer is the time to catch up on school work, complete a course, or get incredibly good at something that you have struggled with. But when will you give yourself time to rest? School is stressful, work is constant, but never giving your anxiety a chance to wind down is truly the worst way you could treat yourself. Give yourself a break - read a book, watch a movie, sleep in, do something fun that you can't do during the school year.

Summer boredom often spans from the inability to find inspiration. Even if you aren't improving your knowledge academically, could you not practice your creativity? Summer is the time in your life when you have creative freedoms. You can follow your imagination without the barriers of school work or studying for an instrumental exam. But there is one guideline; your creativity should be true to you. If you can't find inspiration from drawing, painting or learning a new instrument, then when will you experience joy that is free from external expectations? Summer for most SMUS teens is the one time in your life where you don't have to work full time. You don't have to tire yourself out with a job, stress about paying student loans, or fear not being able to do everything you need yet. So why should you take summer's opportunity for rest and creativity away from yourself?

Ultimately, summer is when you can truly do what you want. You don't have to keep up to expectations, feel like you're slacking off or missing out. Do what you love, not what people say you should pursue.



# Summer Reading Recommendations

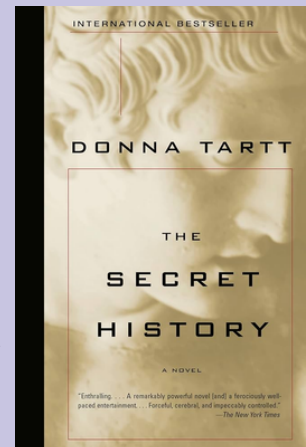
by Yuhe Pan & Cici Song

For the last edition of the Jag, Cici and I will present a more lighthearted article of book recommendations for the summer. Whether you identify as an avid reader or want to try something new over the holidays, we hope that this list provides a book of interest for everyone.

## ***The Secret History* by Donna Tartt**

*"There is nothing wrong with the love of Beauty. But Beauty - unless she is wed to something more meaningful - is always superficial."*

In the backdrop of an elite liberal arts college in Vermont, Richard Papeen is taken under the wing of a closely knit group of classics students and their charismatic professor, who influences them to discover a way of thought and life apart from the mundanities of the contemporary world. As their search for the transcendent persists, Richard and this group find themselves acting beyond the boundaries of human morality, slipping from obsession to betrayal and into inevitable evil. Narrated as a reflection on the past, *The Secret History* explores the fragile boundary between beauty and horror and the dangerous consequences that can arise from a longing for beauty.



## ***Six of Crows* by Leigh Bardugo**

*"The easiest way to steal a man's wallet is to tell him you're going to steal his watch. You take his attention and direct it where you want it to go."*

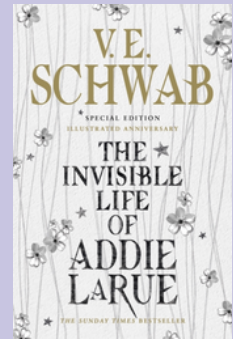


Within the bustling hub of Ketterdam, criminal prodigy Kaz Brekker is offered the opportunity to complete a dangerous heist whose outcome could save the world from possible destruction and, more importantly, make him rich beyond imagination. To accomplish his mission, he recruits a crew among which an uneasy alliance is formed: Inej Ghafa, Kaz's right-hand spy; Matthias Helvar, a convict with a desire for revenge; Jesper Fahey, a sharpshooter with a gambling addiction; Wylan Hendriks, a demolitionist with a privileged past; and Nina Zenik, a former soldier with the ability to manipulate the human body down to the molecule. The first of a duology, *Six of Crows* tells the wild adventure of an unlikely band of misfits and their quest to carve out their own places in the world.

### ***The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue* by V.E. Schwab**

*"... how can a thing be real if it cannot be remembered? It's like that Zen koan, the one about the tree falling in the woods. If no one heard it, did it happen? If a person cannot leave a mark, do they exist?"*

France, 1714. In a moment of desperation, Addie LaRue makes a bargain that will allow her to live forever. Her wish is granted, but it comes with a price: she is granted immortality, but is also cursed to be forgotten by everyone she meets. In the next 300 years, she will witness the rise and fall of history, travel across continents and centuries until she crosses paths with someone who can remember her name. Interwoven with moments of love, loneliness, and existential introspection, *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue* explores the true weight of our actions and interactions and a woman's quest to leave her mark on the world.

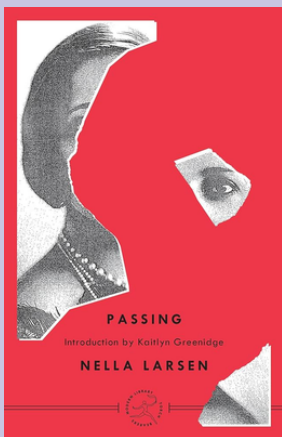


### ***Passing* by Nella Larsen**

*"Since childhood their lives had never really touched. Actually they were strangers. Strangers in their desires and ambitions. Strangers even in their racial consciousness. Between them the barrier was just as high, just as broad, and just as firm as if in Clare did not run that strain of black blood."*

Irene Redfield and Clare Kendry, both mixed-race African Americans in 1920s Harlem, New York, share the ability to "pass" as Caucasian.

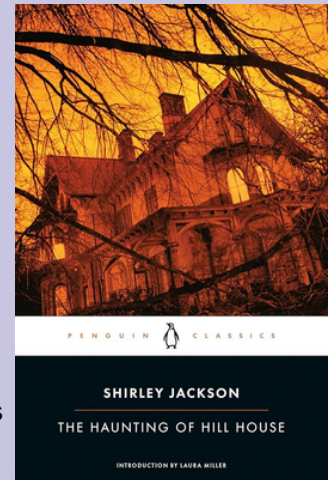
Despite this, they lead drastically different lives, with Irene embracing her African American heritage and community, whilst Clare decides to "pass" as a White woman full-time, even marrying an openly racist White man. The novel picks up after the two childhood friends reunite as Clare begs Irene to help her reconnect with the African American community she had left behind. The stakes are raised after Irene learns of Clare's racist husband, fearing that her relationship with Clare would ruin the facade Clare so desperately depended on to survive. In her novel *Passing*, Nella Larsen explores the fluidity of race, cultural identities, gender roles, and homoerotic attraction through an unravelling tale of jealousy, desire, and hatred, culminating in fatally tragic consequences for both women. This is a great summer read if you are looking for a short and deeply thought-provoking experience.



## ***The Haunting of Hill House* by Shirley Jackson**

*"Hill House, not sane, stood by itself against its hills, holding darkness within; it had stood so for eighty years and might stand for eighty more. Within, walls continued upright, bricks met neatly, floors were firm, and doors were sensibly shut; silence lay steadily against the wood and stone of Hill House, and whatever walked there, walked alone."*

32 year old Eleanor Vance, newly freed from her mother's control and older sister's constant berating, is invited to participate in a study on the paranormal by the occult scholar Dr. John Montague. Upon arriving at Hill House, she meets the other participants: Theodora, a stylish, confident, and heavily queer-coded woman whose everything Eleanor isn't, and Luke, who inherited the property after his aunt passed, tasked to "supervise" the manor. A fiery friendship based atop lies blossomed between the two women as Eleanor explores the freedom she has never felt before: having been the primary caretaker of her abusive and ill mother up until her death just a few months prior. What follows is a series of paranormal phenomena all seemingly targeted towards Eleanor as her mental state deteriorates and her obsession with the house grows. Shirley Jackson's *The Haunting of Hill House* is an engaging and brisk summer read, chronicling the protagonist's descent into madness amidst the backdrop of a seemingly idyllic summer in under 300 pages of beautiful, distinctive prose.



# *Multilingualism: Bridging Communities and Supporting Individuals*

by Sara Qian

Walking through SMUS, you can hear conversations in English, Mandarin, French, Spanish and many other languages. For many students and staff, switching between languages is part of their everyday life. Multilingualism is an experience at the SMUS community: many students and staff learn multiple languages and cultures in class or in social groups. Languages not only serve as communication tools, but also convey unique values and ways of thinking. Therefore, learning multiple languages diversifies not only our ways of communicating with others but also our perception of the world. The purpose of this article is to value multilingualism, because it enables individuals to develop their identities based on diverse worldviews and empathize with others.

First, we will characterize multilingualism. Multilinguals show different attitudes and shift their memories as they switch from one language to another. Their acquired languages interact and affect one another. As they learn about themselves via different languages, multilinguals eventually combine these accounts to form a general persona across all acquired languages.

Co-existing with multiple languages is often difficult, as it requires multilinguals to not only adjust their language use but also accept differences between the values conveyed in each acquired language. Thus, many multilinguals struggle with gaps between their different social groups and experience conflicts between different cultural values. Nevertheless, the process of combining multiple cultures gives multilinguals cultural, practical, and cognitive advantages. While they may sometimes struggle to reconcile different cultures, multilinguals learn multiple ways of thinking in the process. They understand that their own and others' identities are based on different cultures, fostering cultural understanding - a crucial skill of a global citizen. As a result, they become open-minded to others' cultural values and serve as a bridge between multiple cultures.

Not only can multilinguals unite different cultural groups through their cultural understanding, their multilingualism benefits themselves practically. They exhibit better academic performance and enjoy advantages in work due to their proficiency in multiple languages. In terms of language learning, multilinguals can employ effective strategies to enhance their proficiency in both new and learned languages. Multilingualism thus aids individuals to succeed in school, work and language learning, raising their confidence in their personal lives.

In addition to supporting individuals' practical success, multilingualism bolsters their cognitive health. By enhancing multilinguals' neuroplasticity (the brain's ability to learn and grow), multilingualism delays the start of Alzheimer's and other dementia symptoms. It also increases cognitive flexibility and working memory. Taken together, these cognitive advantages help multilinguals cope with everyday demands to increase their sense of agency.

In summary, multilinguals can not only bridge multiple cultural groups through their cultural awareness, but also feel confident through their advantages for success and cognitive health. To benefit from multilingualism, we can take advantage of multilingual experiences at our school: conversing with multilinguals, learning a new language, getting to know others' cultures.

## *Leadership in the 2026-27 School Year*

by Bronwyn Ellis

As the end of the school year approaches, some current Grade 11s are chosen to lead our student body in the next school year. I don't know for sure, but I think this year set a record for how many people ran!

Between 21 candidates for head prefect, Kieran MacKay and Anna Beaudry will be our head prefects next year. Assisting them on the prefect council will be West Dingle, Talia Klenze, Jacqueline Liu, Aria Mavrikos, Siddharth Shetty, and Liam Whiteside as Day Prefects and Hillary Chan, Rain Dai, Anthony Kavalenka, Jannette Ooi, Julia Sherrard, and Valerie Tam as boarding prefects.

The heads of councils are elected from council members and will be leading the council for the next school year. The heads of the Academic Council will be Joanne Jiang and Imanzi Rugwe. The heads of Athletics council will be Manu Atchuthan and Adam Zilber. The heads of the Arts Council will be Brenton Hsu and Henry Lake. The heads of the brand new Business Council will be Joshua Leung and Miku Asai. The heads of the MarCom Council will be Yina Ding and Sakura Morita. The heads of the Service Council will be Elizabeth Hardcastle and Mimi Ilnytzky. The heads of the Sustainability Council will be Sophie Buckley and Apollin Lu. The heads of the Intercultural Council will be Hudson Daly and Kylann Fan. And finally, the heads of the Wellbeing Council will be Phoebe Ma and Mia Wong.

Lastly, the heads of Boarding Houses that are leaders within their house that have been voted by boarders and the houseparents. In Barnacle-Winslow, Keichii Ishihara and Jehiel McCoy will be leading Barnacle while Sarah Lyu and Cayman Ip will be leading Winslow. In Bolton-Timmis, Jack Harris and Mattew Mok will be leading Bolton while Jane Lee and Candy Song will be leading Timmis. And finally in Harvey-Symons, Henry Choi and Alfie Smith will be leading Harvey while Grace Liao and Estee Luk will lead Symons.

Congratulations to all those who have formal leadership positions and on top of these leaders, there are also Link Leaders and Club Heads who are too numerous to list.

# *A Year of Sports*

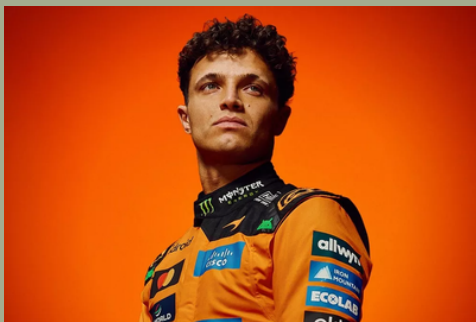
by Dev Wirk

Hello everyone! It's been a great year of writing for the Jag and I thought why not cap off the end of the year with the top five best sports moments of the year.

1. This year's MLB season was wild with lots of controversy regarding the Los Angeles Dodgers spending too much and making baseball unfair for smaller market teams. The playoffs were wild too, culminating in a World Series matchup between the Toronto Blue Jays and the Los Angeles Dodgers. In the end the Dodgers won in game seven in one the most thrilling MLB World Series ever.



2. Last Formula 1 season was electric! Red Bull and McLaren were the favourites going into the year, but as the year progressed, it looked like McLaren was by far the best team on the



grid. Through the middle of the year, the Drivers Championship (for the driver with the most points) was close between the two McLaren drivers - Oscar Piastri and Lando Norris-with McLaren dominating the Constructors Championship (for team with the most points). But after the British GP in July, Red Bull grew wings and got back into the race after they fired their manager Christian Horner and hired their feeder team's

manager Laurent Mekies. Going into the latter part of the season McLaren had won the Constructors Championship but Red Bull driver Max Verstappen was making a historic comeback in the Drivers Championship, having almost eliminated a 104 point lead from Lando Norris going into the last race weekend in Abu Dhabi. Max Verstappen won this race but Lando got third place which earned enough points to seal Lando Norris as the Drivers Champion and cap off a perfect season for McLaren Racing!

3. This College Football season was crazy. Going into the season people predicted Ohio State, Georgia or even Texas to win the National Championship, but no one predicted the final to be Indiana vs Miami. Indiana just last year was considered a basketball school and a joke of a football program, but led by Heisman winner and first overall NFL pick Fernando Mendoza, they had a remarkable turn around winning the most difficult conference, the Big 10, and then capturing their first National Championship.

4. In the 2025/2026 NFL season it looked like quite a few teams were in contention to win the Super Bowl. In the beginning of the year the Philadelphia Eagles or Tampa Bay Buccaneers were the favorites, but as the year progressed there was no clear favorite. In the end it came down to the Seattle Seahawks vs New England Patriots rematch of Super Bowl 43, and this time Seattle didn't throw an interception at the one yard line. As a result, the winner was everybody's favorite Seattle Seahawks!



5. This EPL season had so many shocking twists and turns. To start the season Manchester City and Arsenal were favourites to win the Premier League, and teams like Leeds and Burnley were predicted to be relegated. At the beginning of the season Liverpool were leading the league but soon lost the top spot to Arsenal. As the season progressed Manchester City started to catch Arsenal for the top spot. Meanwhile in a surprisingly exciting relegation battle for the ages, Tottenham Hotspur was battling their peer club, West Ham, to avoid relegation. This battle between bottom dwelling clubs is a big deal because the bottom three teams at the end of the season get demoted to a lower league which lowers the club's prestige, income, and player quality the next season. And it really is the saddest day ever for the hardcore fans. As the season dwindled and came to an end Arsenal narrowly beat out Manchester City for 1st place ending their 22 year drought of winning the Premier League. As for the relegation battle, it came down to the last match week, and Tottenham escaped with a win securing West Ham's relegation.



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# Teacher Interview: Music with Mr. Geddes

*by Claire Ru*

For this issue, I interviewed Mr. Geddes again, but this time on a different topic. You may have noticed a band involving SMUS faculty and alumni has emerged recently. As a part of the band, Mr. Geddes shared insight on pursuing dreams and passions at any stage of life.

As a graduating student, I found this interview especially inspiring, as it sheds light on how even if some of our passions are not connected to our primary career, they can still be pursued and realized through consistent effort.

## **Could you please briefly introduce your band and your music to us?**

The band is called Door D'or, which refers to the Golden Door, because "or" in French is gold.

The band features the following members;

Mat Geddes, vocals, guitar

Evan Fryer, keys

Owen Sanquist-Sherman, bass

Darin Steinkey, drums

Ry Clayton, lead guitar

We've just released our first album. It's called the Exquisite Dream, and it's got nine originals and a cover song. There are a couple of songs that I wrote myself, for example, Fiber Optics and Walk on Water, and I've played those in the chapel before. The other songs were collaborations. The first song we wrote together was called Shelter, which was written in the chapel mostly because we rehearsed there a lot. Mr. Bateman has also collaborated with us musically and he designed the art for the album cover.

## **What intrigued you to start engaging with music?**

We always had the radio on in the car, so I just would listen and look out the window. We didn't have iPads when I was a kid, so the window was your screen. I went on lots of road trips, and because we live in a beautiful part of the world, there's a lot to see. The music helped me just get off into a different space, like a daydream. Additionally, I love to sing. So, that is where it started.

Then I think, especially in my teenage years, I listened to a lot of music on a Walkman. I listened to everything, from rap to metal to pop. It was just that there was a lot of good music coming out, and so it was inspiring. It really helped me get out of my normal day to those cool, little imaginative worlds. It gives me that kind of access to emotions or things that I haven't experienced, but other people are telling me about.

### **What prompted you to build a band?**

I guess it's just always been a dream, but mostly it's reconnecting with friends, and we had these songs that were relevant in the current world. We wanted to put them out there. That's the main thing.

It's also fun performing live, which is totally different from just making music. There's something that's quite special. I've always been a concert junkie, and I love to go to as many live concerts as I can. I think being part of that and being on the stage is really fun. The way that we operate is that we don't play the same way every time. We're trying to have some improvisation, so that's really exciting because you never know where it's going to go. Sometimes, you're able to get to these new places that you didn't think you could get to, that are beyond what you've done before.

We kickstarted this year to build a band, because some friends wanted us to play some songs at their festival. So we were like "okay, well, we've got some songs. Let's get a set together." But then that festival didn't happen. It fell apart, but it got us going, we played our first show and that momentum led to the album.

### **How do you balance your career and your passion?**

I always wanted to do music as a career, but then I got this teaching job, and it was just a great place to be. It's fun, it's challenging, and there was lots of room for upward motion and lots of lifelong learning. That, coupled with house parenting, plus having a family, amounted to more than 20 years. It was tough to do music as well. I was still writing songs, but not a ton, because I would get home after all of that stuff and feel pretty tired. There was not a lot of creative juice left.

During COVID, and just after that, my kids were getting older, doing their own things, so I started putting more time into [music]. I picked up my guitar more and spent more time with other people playing music, which led to the creation of the album. I was influenced by the people around me. Mike, who's a previous house parent, was a big reason why I enjoy playing, because he's very creative and super fun to be around. He returned home from living in Oman for 15 years. That was a catalyst.

### **What are some challenges you encounter in building the band and the album?**

It's really hard to get five people together at any given time, so just managing schedules is one challenge, but also, to do any project like this, you have to have a huge commitment and a vision. You just have to keep going one step at a time, and there are way more obstacles than things that are helping you, so you really just have to go for it. If your heart desires it, you just have to do it. Thankfully, Darin, who's the drummer, also considers putting out an album to be a lifelong dream for him, so the two of us could push this all the way forward.

It has been pretty stressful, because there's so much work to getting yourself out there. It's not so much the record—it was super fun to be in the studio, and it's not so much creating the songs, although that requires work too. It was all the things like building a website, making different profiles on social media, promoting yourself, and these are all things that are different from actually making music and playing music. These tasks probably take ten times as long as creating the music.

### **Are there any interesting stories behind the process of creating the album?**

When we were getting ready for the album, we had this one song sort of start to appear during one rehearsal. The next day, I went out and sat by the ocean in the sun. It was a beautiful day, and I just wrote down a whole bunch of possible lyrics. I had my guitar, so I figured out the chord changes for the songs.

At our next rehearsal, we started a voice memo recording and we just started playing, and for whatever reason, it was a very inspired performance. Though I didn't have ideas organized into verses, all of the lyrics seemed to work. That take was so good, and it's the first time we ever played the song. We ended up duplicating that performance for the record. It is unusual for a song to be born all at once, so this was in that special flow state that people sometimes reach. The song is called "In the Radiance".

### **In your first officially released album, what is your favorite song? Why?**

I think "Shelter" is the most interesting song. It was the first one that we wrote. It was on my birthday in 2021. We had a jam, and that song started there. It's a song that starts with finding a way through the darkness and sums up a lot of the themes in the album, whether that was a global pandemic, or the conflicts in the Middle East and elsewhere, or difficult situations or relationships, there are tough times. It's like a storm; the storm is horrible when it's there, and it seems very dangerous. It's threatening, but it will pass, and there will be sunshine one day.

I think that the theme for our band, as suggested by its name, is that your inner self can walk through the golden door to something better. So, I think that's my favorite song because it sums up so much of what this project has given us, which is a way to get together and connect musically, that we can work through all of that difficulty together. The song starts with finding a way through the darkness, and it ends with "here comes the sun", so that's nice.

### **Is there anything you would like to add?**

I've also recorded a solo album coming out, and it's different. It's more acoustic. I recorded it in Nashville with top musicians and Steve Dawson, a top producer and superb guitarist, so that was really exciting.

Door d'Or has an album release show on June 12th at Herald Street Brewworks downtown, and Colin Craveiro from grounds, he's in the band called Sail Cassidy. They are going to open for us. Also, Owen has a band with Julian and Gage called The Foundations, and they are gonna open as well. Then we've been invited to play this big festival in Vancouver on July 11th called Khatsalano festival. There are over a hundred bands. We get to play on the Vine Stage at 11am to kick off the festival, so that's really exciting too.

We really do need the support of the community to help us, otherwise the algorithms don't know that anyone wants to listen to us. So stream on!

*People can support the band the most by buying the album digitally or on vinyl.  
You can also stream and support using the following;*

#### Door d'Or

<https://doordormusic.bandcamp.com/album/the-exquisite-dream>

<https://www.youtube.com/@Doordormusic>

*Subscribe on YouTube*

*Follow on Insta/FB/Tiktok @doordormusic*

*Stream on Spotify/Apple/Amazon etc.*

*Mat Geddes - solo album*

*Fall 2026 release The Gedi Night*

*First single "Shake the World" drops May 30, 2026*

<https://matgeddes.bandcamp.com/track/shake-the-world>

*Follow on Insta @thegediknight*

*Soundcloud <https://soundcloud.com/matgeddes/shake-the-world>*