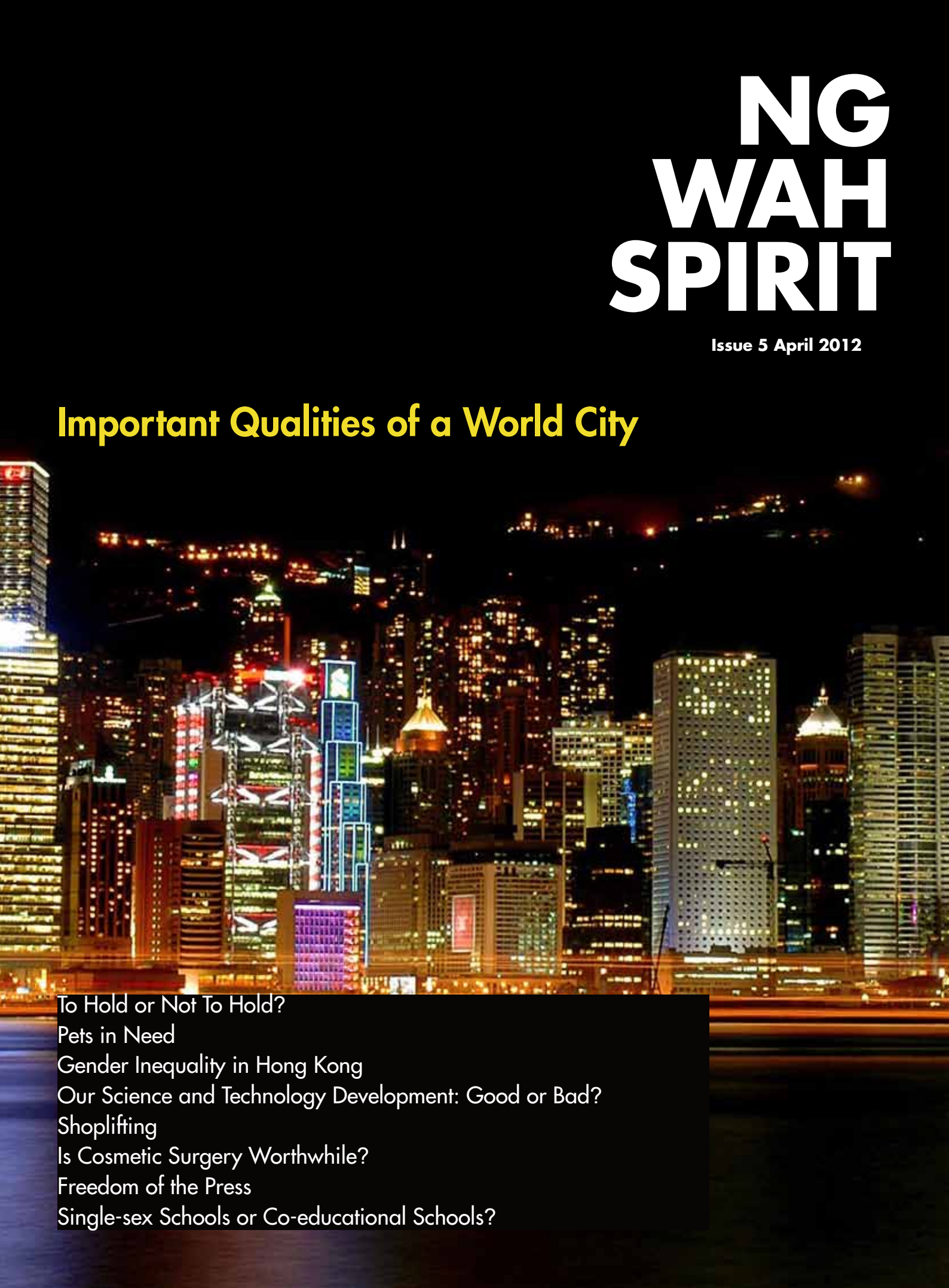


NG WAH SPIRIT

Issue 5 April 2012

Important Qualities of a World City



To Hold or Not To Hold?
Pets in Need
Gender Inequality in Hong Kong
Our Science and Technology Development: Good or Bad?
Shoplifting
Is Cosmetic Surgery Worthwhile?
Freedom of the Press
Single-sex Schools or Co-educational Schools?

Editorial

Dear Friends,

This year's issue of "Ng Wah Spirit" English community magazine represents two terms of hard work, discussion and article writing with a focus on social issues in and around Hong Kong. Our letter section contains heated debate regarding the issues of animal welfare and land use in Hong Kong, with many contributors taking interesting stances and voicing legitimate suggestions and concern. It also gives us great pleasure to introduce you to our investigative pieces on topics as diverse as cosmetic surgery, the freedom of the press and gender inequality. As well as this, there are some extremely insightful pieces to be found in our Life Style section and fascinating stories in our Cool Facts section. We hope you enjoy the content of this year's magazine and we look forward to working on the next edition.

We would like to briefly express our thanks to those who have made this publication possible: our Supervisor Father T Law, Principal Dr F Wong, our teaching staff Mr W Wai, Ms A Chow, Ms A Tse, Ms W Y Wong and Ms Y Y Lee and finally our 'Journalist Programme' tutor Mr P Stilley. Without your invaluable advice and assistance this magazine would not have been possible.

May God bless you always,

The Editorial Board.

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The Qualities of a World City

1. Three Important Qualities of a World City

If we flip through newspapers, comparisons can be found between different cities and their rank in the world. The cities taking the lead are named as 'World Cities'. The most important qualifications of a world city is its role in the global economic system, its influence over the international situation, and its ability to display its culture for the world to see.

As we all know, our material life is supported by the massive economic system of the world and therefore material life is an important factor in becoming a world city. International corporations are more likely to set up their headquarters in world cities that can provide sufficient support for business. Moreover, these international corporations bring opportunities for jobs which enhance the personal wealth and GDP of the country. These important statistics indicate the important role played by world cities and how their functions closely relate to the stability of both societies and economics.

It is not an easy task uniting every individual in improving bad situations nowadays. During the SARS epidemic, the Hong Kong people showed their unity and courage in challenging the spread of SARS, and they finally encouraged global citizens to deal with the situation. World cities should act as pioneers, and be a model for other cities.

"Cultures develop with the history of a country, and represent traditional and regional values. A world city should display its culture for other people to see."

For example, Ramen, a traditional food from Japan made of different ingredients and noodles in a bowl, is a recognised culture for Japan. Such cultures act as a label for their own countries, and attract tourists to have a trip. The fascinating elements of world cities are the things people find unique and charming about them.

In conclusion, a world city should be responsible for the development of the world by building a good relationship with others. However, it is also important for a world city to be well-known for its own traditional cultures.

Text by Chan Yiu Fai (S7B)

2. Three Important Qualities of a World City

In my words, a world city means that everyone knows the location of that city. How? The answer is very simple: the city has outstanding achievements in a variety of aspects. For me, the three main important qualities are the physical environment, quality of citizens, and comprehensive facilities.

Apart from being just a great place to do business, a global city needs to be an attractive place to live. According to some researchers, a high quality physical environment is a fundamental attraction for foreign visitors. There is no doubt that environmental problems affect the number of foreign visitors and investors. Chernobyl, Ukraine is a good example that shows the importance of having a high quality physical environment. There is radioactive leakage that is dangerous for people living nearby. As a result, having a good physical environment is the first step towards becoming a world city.

Not only should we pay attention to the importance of physical environment, but we should also pay attention to another important element of becoming a world city: the quality of life for citizens.

“A citizen is the smallest unit of a city, but they affect the development of the city the most. A citizen’s quality of life depends on their education. Equip people with the necessary knowledge and expertise, and their country will thrive and flourish.”

Cambodia is an example. There, children cannot afford the costly school fees for education. Therefore, inevitably, the country cannot escape from lapsing into a circle of poverty with the chronic lack of literates, not to mention professionals and experts, needed for sustainable development. With more people being literate, sustainable development and the country’s prosperity would improve more easily. The quality of life for the citizens is surely fundamental to becoming a world city.

Let us shift to the final quality needed to become a

world city: comprehensive facilities. You can see that some international cities such as London and Sydney have many facilities for local citizens and visitors: for example, transport systems, walkways, footbridges, etc. These facilities not only provide visitors and civilians with a better quality of life but also enhance the image of the city in the eyes of the world. An enhanced image of the city can improve its chance of being chosen to hold major international events such as the Olympic Games. Holding these international events is no doubt a sign that the city is a world city.

Therefore, the high standards of physical environment, the quality of life for citizens, and comprehensive facilities are indispensable factors to become a world city.

Text by Cheung Ho Pan (S7B)



3. All The World in One Place

Nowadays it is very common to speak of “globalization”, which means that all countries and cities in the world are treated as a whole unit. In response to this trend, many cities have been putting lots of effort into improving their economy as well as people’s livelihoods in order to be known as “international world cities”.

In my perspective, a world city must have good performances in three domains: social welfare policies, democratic standards, and education policies.

“A comprehensive social welfare system is one of the fundamental elements of a world city.”

Take Hong Kong as an example; undoubtedly, Hong Kong is a well-recognised cosmopolitan city. The social welfare system covers all walks of life: for instance, there are public transport subsidies for the elderly and a textbook allowance for all students who live in poverty. Such public welfare helps the poor to have a better life and can alleviate their financial burden; moreover, it increases public satisfaction towards the government which makes the management of a city easier. Meanwhile, the standard of the welfare system of a country or city reflects the prosperity of that place, which in turn represents the economic condition of the country.

Apart from the social welfare system, the standard of democracy is also a crucial criterion to become a well-known world city.

In many cities in America or the United Kingdom, citizens are allowed to take part in demonstrations to voice their opinions about government policies.

“They are allowed to express their views or dissatisfactions literally, artistically or even verbally; such freedom of speech and freedom of press is very common in democratic cities.”

Unfortunately, for cities in China, these basic human rights can never be exercised or you will be jailed permanently or put under house arrest. As a result, many people do not treat the cities in China (except Hong Kong and Macau) as world cities. So I think having a high democratic standard is of vital importance for a world city.

Last but not least, a good education policy is also an important quality of a world city. Offering a rounded education to our next generation is the only way to nurture them to become knowledgeable and understanding so as to maintain the sustainability of a city’s development. For a world city, there should be a continuous supply of talent in different areas such as construction, technology, business and medical science. Therefore, governments should pay extra attention to the establishment of the education system and its education policy. It is best for the government to provide more financial subsidies to the needy so that they can have the opportunity to receive proper education. By means of a well-designed education system like this, the continuous development and supply of talent can be guaranteed.

All in all, if a city wants to become a cosmopolitan city like Hong Kong, the government should pay more attention to the promotion of social welfare, improving democratic standards, and establishing a comprehensive education policy.

Text by Lam Yuet Ting (S7B)



To hold or not to hold?

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department should use the empty land next to residential areas as a venue for the Annual Music Festival.

Heading:

Yes! I hope it will be a great success!

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing this letter to express my point of view about the Annual Music Festival which is proposed to be held on the unused land.

I live next to the unused land and I know you are planning to hold the Annual Music Festival there. My friends and I have been looking forward to the Music Festival for a long time because it provides the perfect opportunity to take some time out of our hectic schedules and bond together as a group. We are all so busy nowadays with studying for exams, having music lessons and keeping up with our sport-ing pursuits.

I firmly believe that the unused land next to my home is an ideal venue for holding the event since it is a very large area and it is just 10 minutes walk from the MTR station, which is very convenient for the participating artists as well as the many fans that you are expecting; an otherwise logistical nightmare, I am sure you will agree! Most importantly, though, it could help boost tourism in Hong Kong, and will therefore also be beneficial to the economy.

Apart from boosting the tourism industry, the Music Festival will have the additional bonus of encouraging different musical cultures to develop in Hong Kong. This in turn will attract more and more bands and singers who will generate even greater economic benefits. It is something that local citizens can join in with as well; too many people forget that many local residents are avid music fans.

Some of my neighbours disagree with the idea of holding the Music Festival near their homes. Their main argument concerns the influx of visitors that the festival will attract. Thousand of music fans from different countries around the world will flock to Hong Kong to enjoy the Music Festival, which will not only create a serious traffic problem around the area, but also pose a threat to the safety and well-being of the local neighbourhood.

The serene and peaceful environment that my neighbourhood now enjoys, they worry, will be destroyed.

Personally I do not think that their concerns are particularly serious. In my opinion, the Music Festival will be a great success if the government plans it well.

To appease the local residents who cannot be convinced, I suggest holding the show from around 5pm to 10pm. This will serve to minimise the effect of the festival upon the people which who live next to the unused land.

I really look forward to attending the show and sincerely hope it will be a great success.

Yours faithfully,
Tsui Ming Chun

Text by Tsui Ming Chun (S6D)



Dear Sir/Madam,

I would like to communicate my views concerning The Leisure and Cultural Services Department's plan to use the empty land next to where I live as the venue for the Annual Music Festival!

First, I agree wholeheartedly with the plans and think it is a wonderful idea, not least because the festival will be the perfect opportunity for people to learn about local music; we have such great bands here in Hong Kong and there is a serious shortage of venues for up coming bands. It is so difficult for venues to get licenses and this is especially the case with the kind of small venues in which new and exciting bands perform.

Second, the land has been empty for over five years! I appreciate some people are concerned about the effect that new uses of the land might have upon their lives but come on! Hong Kong is a place desperately in need of more space. We are reclaiming land from the sea for goodness sake! In my eyes, this is a good way to utilize the land for something meaningful. In fact, if we begin to use the land as a the site for a music festival, there is a possibility that in subsequent years more permanent commercial developments might spring up such as shops, restaurants, karaoke bars or bowling alleys. These, again, would be of great benefit to local residents; no one is likely to complain about new facilities that they can enjoy regularly. Think how convenient it would be! Besides, the majority of local residents agree strongly with the proposal and can see the social and economic opportunities that I have outlined above.

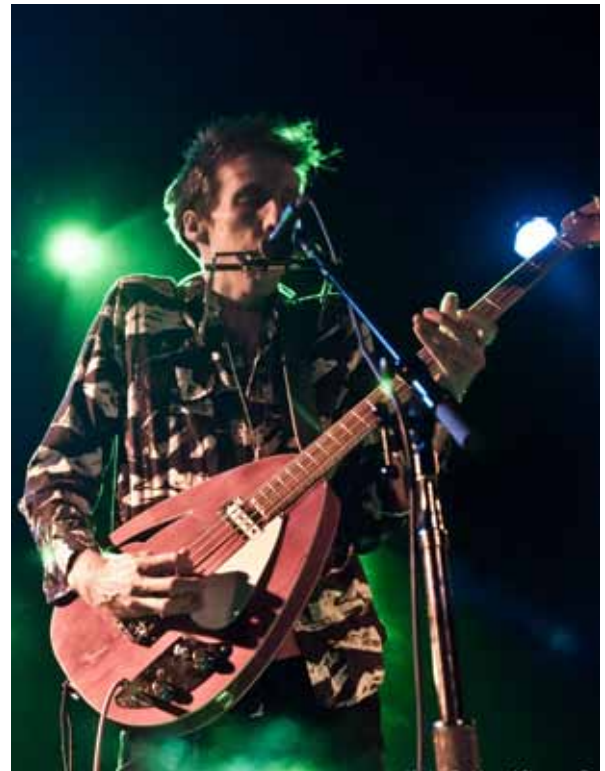
However, I sympathise entirely with one or two of the most obvious issues raised by those in opposition to the proposals. Local residents are rightfully concerned about the problem of increased crime and antisocial behaviour in the area brought on by the thousands of spectators that we would be expecting to frequent the area during the weekend. I think the Police Force should ensure they are well prepared for crowd management and crime prevention in the area during the festival period. This, however, is more a potential problem with the Police Force

than a problem with the music fans. If they can do their job and keep the public safe, I am confident the festival will continue without any problems whatsoever.

Thank you for reading my letter, let me finish by repeating the fact that I strongly support the idea of holding the Annual Music Festival on the unused land and I am looking forward to be one of the spectators.

Yours faithfully,
Thomas Chiu

Text by Thomas Chiu (S6D)



Heading: No! I don't want the disturbance!

Dear Sir/Madam,

Text by Fong Ka Wai (S6E)

I am writing to you today to express my views concerning the absurdity that is The Leisure and Cultural Services Department's proposal to use the empty land next to where I and many other angry residents live as a venue for the Annual Music Festival.

Although everyone might agree that music can help listeners de-stress from work, study and life, it is clear that the festival will bring a lot of disturbance to the residents in the area. We are, after all, not talking about a small amount of Mozart or Bach on the way home from the office but rather 50,000 loud annoying fans, most of whom, I suppose, will be in their early teens, lurking about our neighbourhood for a whole weekend! Indeed, I am sure the Music Festival will generate a terribly loud noise from day to night and lead to serious sound pollution in the area. It may even affect the residents' routines and impact them in both their personal and professional lives. Some of them may be unable to sleep due to the awful racket, for example, and this could make them too tired to negotiate an important deal or make them tired enough to forget important dates such as their children's birthdays or their wedding anniversaries. For these reasons, I disagree entirely with your department holding this Music Festival on the unused land near my home.

I would also like to point out that although the Music Festival may help more people understand the local culture and discover new talents, it will undoubtedly lead to traffic jams and a lot of rubbish will be produced. Just how will the local council pay all the people that will be required to clean up after these out-of-town folk have left? I can assure you that if the answer is with our hard-earned taxes many people will be extremely angry! It would be an outrage and something that I for one would not be willing to let happen easily.

For the reasons stated above, I strongly disagree with holding the Music Festival on the unused land near my home and urge you to reconsider!

Yours sincerely,
Fong Ka Wai



Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing this letter to express my concern about the plan to use the empty land next to where I live as a site for the Music Festival.

Firstly, I would like to talk about the benefits of the Music Festival. The festival could provide good entertainment for the local residents. I think many of them would be interested in the Music Festival as they would be able to meet different pop stars from all over the world. Moreover, the Festival could act as a culture exchange and introduce musical culture to the local residents. It could also help to boost tourism in Hong Kong.

However, it is feared that the festival will lead to traffic jams around the area, affecting the living of residents. Pollution problems are another concern. It will lead to noise pollution for residents who do not attend the festival and plenty of rubbish will be produced at the end of the show.

I hope the department can think of all the possible problems of the proposal and reconsider the whole plan.

Yours faithfully,
Mak Tsz Yuen

Text by Mak Tsz Yuen (S6A)

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to share my views of the Annual Music Festival. The Leisure and Cultural Services Department is planning to use the empty land next to where I live as the venue.

The Annual Music Festival could improve the musical culture in Hong Kong. Moreover, it could attract teenagers to listen and learn about different kinds of music. And it can provide more entertainment for my neighbourhood.

However, the Music Festival may bring problems. Firstly, it will produce a lot of rubbish and create noise pollution. Secondly, there are no highways nearby and the roads are not well developed around the area. Therefore, there may be serious traffic jams during the performances.

I strongly urge your department to reconsider the plan.

Yours faithfully,
Chan Kin Hang

Text by Chan Kin Hang (S6A)



Dear Sir/Madam,

I am sure you have been inundated with letters of the type I am about to write so let me forewarn you that I am regrettably contacting you with a serious complaint. I am writing to express my views on The Leisure and Cultural Services Department's terrible proposal to use the empty land next to where my home is as the venue for the horrific circus that will be the Annual Music Festival.

Let me say, first of all, that I am a local resident in the area and I often join the different festivals organised by your department. Usually I am a big fan of your events and my family and I thoroughly enjoyed the Cheese-Rolling Festival and the Bun Tower Festival. I also recognise that the land has not been used for more than five years, and many of my neighbours would like to see it put to good use.

That being said, I do not believe that holding a Music Festival is the best way to use the land. In fact, I can think of few things worse! It is simply unarguable that a single weekend in the year will be a "good use" of land. For 363 days of the year, it will remain as unused as ever. It seems that this festival nonsense is merely an easy way for some young councilors, probably a fresh graduate straight out of university, to make a name for himself and gain the respect of his seniors by organising something that he can call his own. I cannot find any other way to make sense of this ridiculous suggestion!

Let me explain my point of view more clearly. Many of the local residents in the area, including me, originally moved to this area because it is quiet and peaceful. It is the perfect place for a retired gentleman to take walks, practice tai chi early in the morning and play mahjong with the wife in the evenings. Holding the Music Festival here will definitely ruin our ideal living environment! There will definitely be noise and light pollution, and my sleeping quality will be affected.

Why not use the land for something more sustainable? Something more appealing and serving to the local community? May I suggest turning the land into a duck pond and outdoor exercise area? Many locations in the New Territories have fantastic open spaces and gardens. When we visit my sister-in-law in England, my wife and I are always so jealous of her beautiful garden and the many flowers that she is able to grow simply as a result of having enough space. I am sure you would find many people willing to act as park warden. In fact, I myself would be willing to set up a neighbourhood watch scheme to oversee the project! Consider this an offer!

Thank you very much for your time and please consider the opinions I have put forward. I do not speak just for myself, but for many local retired residents whom I count among my friends.

Yours faithfully,
Yan Tak Sing

Text by Yan Tak Sing (S6C)



Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to express my opinion on the proposal about the Music Festival. I understand that there is a proposal to use the unused land next to my home for the Annual Music Festival, but I do not agree with holding the event as proposed.

No doubt the festival will bring money, but it will affect the residents in the area. For example, the music will be too loud and it will be very hard for people to fall asleep since the festival will be held until midnight.

Light pollution will also be a large concern. The stage needs plenty of light bulbs for trendy and stylish lighting effects and these lighting effects will definitely affect the local residents.

Therefore, I think this Music Festival should not be held on the unused land near my home.

Yours faithfully,
Wong Cheuk Lun

Text by Wong Cheuk Lun (S6C)



Pets in need

Ng Wah students write a letter to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), addressing their concerns on pets abuse.

Dear SPCA,

I am writing this letter because I am concerned about my neighbours abusing their pets. Just opposite my flat, there is a student who always hurts his cat. I remember one day he was furious and I was unfortunate enough to witness him dashing home to his flat, where he picked up his cat up and threw it straight across the hallway. It was very cruel and I do not suppose that this was an isolated occurrence! I am, in fact, very angry with my neighbour and feel very sympathetic towards the cat. I tried to talk to him in order to persuade him not to abuse his cat but he did not accept my advice and said the cat belonged to him, so he could do anything to it he likes and does not require anyone's permission. I think that is totally unacceptable so I am writing to you for help.

Actually, there are lots of ways to help this poor cat escape his terrible fate at the hands of his appalling owner. For example, I would like to see the government set stricter laws and raise the penalty for those that continue to abuse animals. What's more, the government could also separate the abuser from the pet by force, thus preventing the pet from getting hurt any more by its abuser. Although these suggestions would solve the problem of animal cruelty with considerable effectiveness, they are, of course, completely beyond my control as a normal citizen. I hope that you, with your position of greater influence, will urge the government to take considerable action to save the pets.

I hope after today, no more pets will be hurt by their owners.

Yours sincerely,
Tsang Kwok Wai

Text by Tsang Kwok Wai (S6E)



Dear SPCA,

I am concerned because I saw some people treating their pets badly and it brought to my attention the shocking treatment of animals by some Hong Kong citizens. It is an issue even more close to home for me because I suspect that my neighbours are treating their pets badly too. Last week, for example, I saw my neighbour Mr Tsang frightening his pets. He had his cat trapped underneath a laundry basket and was ringing loud bells all around the perimeter. The cat would sporadically meow and jump at the linen edges, digging in its claws and teeth – a sight that made Mr Tsang and his deplorable wife cackle with glee. He not only frightened his pets, but also abused his pets by providing an improper diet, poor shelter and virtually no veterinary care. Therefore, I am writing a letter to show my concern.

Personally, I think people should take the poor treatment of pets as a serious social issue. The pet's owners should look after their pets with care and love. In addition, we must ensure that all pet owners do not treat their pet badly. In order to protect the pets, I suggest the government tighten laws aimed at fighting animal cruelty. It is urgent because tighter laws would have an immediate effect, stopping people from abusing their pets. Imagine all the pets being abused right now that could be saved simply by making the law a little stricter! I would predict that 80% of people who treat animals badly would stop if they were aware that there would be serious repercussions for their actions. I am sure that you yourself have seen animals being treated badly in and around Hong Kong; people whipping dogs or kicking cats across the road. It makes my heart sink. I am appealing to your sense of human decency and therefore, I sincerely hope that you can consider my suggestion.

In summary, I think all citizens should respect their pets because being respectful to pets is one's responsibility. Thank you for your time!

Yours sincerely,
Mui Chun Ming

Text by Mui Chun Ming (S6E)



Dear SPCA,

I am concerned because I saw my neighbour, Vic, use an umbrella to beat his dog last week. I suspect my neighbour Vic treats his pets badly. This is a serious problem since the dog was hurt after Vic beat it.

I think people should love and respect their pets. Pets have a right to live well. They are not born to be beaten by humans! People should take care of their pets well too. We must ensure that we have plenty of time to look after them well and we will not hurt them for any reason. It is an urgent issue because animal cruelty is increasing rapidly nowadays and becoming one of the most serious problems in Hong Kong. If this continues, it will undoubtedly affect the national image of Hong Kong.

In summary, I think people should love, respect and take care of their pets well. Moreover, people should ensure that their home is suitable for keeping pets. Pets have their own rights to enjoy a good living environment. Thank you for your time.

Yours sincerely,
Leung Yuen Hei

Text by Leung Yuen Hei (S6E)



Dear SPCA,

As you might have guessed, being the SPCA, I am writing to express my concern about animal cruelty! In recent years, many people hurt their pets in different ways, such as beating their pets or not giving them food. Last week, I saw my neighbour Mrs Ng, a woman in her late nineties who is nonetheless very friendly and sprightly, hit her little pet dog with her high-heeled shoe. The dog bled and trembled. I believe that the dog felt pain and was scared for a long time.

We must ensure that the pets have a safe and secure place to live. Therefore, I think the government should tighten laws to fight animal cruelty. Besides escalating the maximum jail sentences for animal cruelty, the government should reduce the problem in other ways. It is urgent because a lot of pets suffered from animal cruelty. The example of Mrs Ng shows what a complicated issue animal abuse is to me. This is not a nasty person we are talking about. No! Mrs Ng is a lovely woman! She teaches my nephew from Taiwan Cantonese every Tuesday and is always on hand to prepare a traditional remedy if she so much as hears me cough!

I suspect, in her case, it is a generational thing. I am not one to cast judgement and detest generalisations but as Mrs Ng has told me before how as a young woman living in Sichuan province with her husband, she would prepare luxurious feasts, containing, as I am sure you might suspect, the finest dog meat from the local market. Since her late husband passed away she has not cooked dog out of respect for his memory, but I often wonder whether her poor attitude towards her pet could be caused by the fact that she considers him more of a food source than a friend or companion?

If what I say is correct, we need to take serious effort to reeducate the elderly about the correct treatment of animals in the twenty-first century. It is no longer tolerable to justify mistreatment on the shaky precedence of tradition.

I hope this problem can be solved as soon as possible. Thank you for your time.

Yours sincerely,
Yeung Chi Kit

Text by Yeung Chi Kit (S6E)

Dear SPCA,

I am writing to voice my concern about pet abuse in Hong Kong. Last week, I could not help but notice that my neighbours Mr Chan and Mrs Chan were very angry because they were both fired by their boss. They work together at the same company and for some reasons or another I suppose married couples are not as efficient or effective as eager young twenty-somethings, ambitious and with their noses perpetually against the grindstone! They were slamming doors, shouting, and throwing things around – I am sure that I heard a glass smash. After that, they threw a football at their dogs repeatedly and beat the dogs frequently. More seriously, their dogs are forced to stay in a small cage. In light of this, I hope you can pay attention to this problem and hence address it with adequate attention.

I certainly think you should contact my neighbour regarding this incident. Afterwards, you should free the dogs from that family and send them to the protection centre. Why should action be taken urgently? Because, in this case, it seems there is a pressing need to separate the dogs from their cruel owners. And the chance of the dogs being hurt by their owners will also be reduced. After that, the dogs can have a good life in the centre.

Finally, I wish the SPCA can solve this problem quickly because I do not want to see the frightened dogs tremble next to my home. It is very unbecoming and I get the feeling my own dogs become flustered when they hear the yelping and whimpering the otherside of the wall. What is more, I hope that all animals can enjoy a good and stress-free life.

Yours sincerely,
Chow Sung Hin

Text by Chow Sung Hin (S6E)

Dear SPCA,

I am writing a letter to show my concern that my neighbours are treating their pets badly.

Last week, I saw my neighbour Mr Smith walk with his dog in the park. I was shocked to notice the dog was seriously injured; there were many wounds on its body. I wondered what had happened to the dog, so I went forward and asked Mr Smith for the reason behind the obvious wounds. Suddenly, without answering my question or showing much concern, Mr Smith took his dog to the public toilet behind a group of trees. I followed him secretly and hid myself so that he would not be aware of my presence. I could not believe my eyes! Mr Smith was kicking his dog! I was so shocked that my neighbour could be so cruel towards his pet. Mr Smith, in my opinion, has always been a strange fellow, but this incongruous act of callous cruelty is beyond my explanation! All I know is that a poor, innocent animal is suffering a great deal at the hands of this maniac and I am sure it is not the only case of its kind.

We must ensure that pets are better protected. In order to do so, we must educate people by holding talks and exhibitions to show the best way to look after their pets. Moreover, tightening the law is another effective way to fight against animal cruelty. I urge you to do these things because pets are our friends and we must not hurt them. Instead, we have to protect them and take our responsibilities to take good care of them with the utmost seriousness!

I hope the problem of animal abuse can be improved and no more incidents like that concerning my neighbours will happen again. Also, I hope my advice can help to stop animal abuse. Thank you for your time and for reviewing my request.

Yours sincerely,
Wong Hiu Tung

Text by Wong Hiu Tung (S6E)



Dear SPCA,

Yesterday, when I was walking back home, I saw Jenny, one of my neighbours, beating her dog using a rod. It was 8:30pm at The Luxury Garden. I was concerned because dogs are relatively small in size when compared to human beings. How can they withstand the cruelty of their owners? I believe that what I saw is just a drop in the ocean. There are many owners in the world who are doing similar things to Jenny. The situation is indeed quite serious.

It is our responsibility to protect animals from getting hurt. We should not turn a blind eye to this kind of cruel behaviour. I really want to improve the situation, and I am going to suggest what we can do to ensure the welfare of the animals.

Firstly, we should urge the government to prevent owners from hurting their pets through law enforcement. The maximum jail sentences should no doubt be increased. Secondly, an allowance made by the government is also necessary to subsidise pet owners who are poor. Moreover, advertisements, which spread the message of protecting animals, should be made in an attempt to educate the general public. This is extremely urgent because the problem is indeed serious.

Hopefully, the situation will improve after the enforcement of the mentioned suggestions. Thanks for your time.

Yours sincerely,
Chung Sui Lun

Text by Chung Sui Lun (S6E)

Dear SPCA,

I am writing to complain about my neighbour, Mr Chan, who hit his rabbit with a basketball last week. At the time, Mr Chan was in a bad mood because he was fired by his company. After that, when he went back home, the rabbit ran around him. He was annoyed and threw the basketball at the rabbit. The rabbit tried to escape from the house into the corridor. Mr Chan closed the door and did not let the rabbit into the house again. The rabbit went to Mr Chan's neighbour's house. They were very shocked because they did not understand reason Mr Chan would become such a cruel person. I wanted to draw your attention to this abuse.

In order to ensure the welfare of pets in Hong Kong, I think the government should implement a law to protect animals. Also, pet shops should make people sign a contract about the rules of keeping pets because it is a pet owner's responsibility. If they do not take the action, this problem will get worse.

To conclude, I think we should raise the public's awareness to the problem.

Yours sincerely,
Michael Tsui

Text by Michael Tsui (S6E)

Gender Inequality in Hong Kong

Dear Kathy,

How are you? How do you feel about your life as a fresh graduate? From your lovely reply, I was told that you worried about gender inequality in Hong Kong. Don't worry! I am going to tell you in detail about Hong Kong.

I am deeply concerned about discrimination in Hong Kong that leads to inequality in careers, salary and the small things in life. From my research I have discovered that Hong Kong was originally administered under a system of feudalism. Feudalism, being based on manual labour, encourages a situation that respects males but does not value females quite as much. As a result, the condition is completely different - as you thought. With an information explosion, the Hong Kong government has become democratic due to being one of the colonies of the United Kingdom.

As a result of this, the Hong Kong government established a department called the Equal Opportunities Committee to cope with the problem you are anxious about. This committee aims to tackle not only national, but also international sexual discrimination. You should believe that more and more girls from minority backgrounds are promoted nowadays, and the average salary of women can be even higher than that of men!

"It is found that the society has become increasingly open to females. Women are getting treated equally as favourably as men, females are able to study, to work, and that is totally what you want to see, isn't it?"

However, it makes me uncomfortable to think that this equality is starting to deteriorate.

"It may not be the case that females will again be treated as second class citizens, but rather men will be treated as the slaves of women."

You should be reminded this special sexual discrimination is rarely seen all over the world.

"I am not shocked when I discover a man carrying a girl's bag on his shoulder, standing outside a shop of a famous brand for a few hours."

Poor pitiful men! In my opinion, why should they stoop to this subordinate position? Why should sexual discrimination be reversed so that men become the victims?

Kathy, I am sorry that I got angry in the above paragraph. The fact is, you recommended not to worry about discrimination against women and mothers. Instead, the more essential problem is how to prevent discrimination against men. In just a few words, I have explained my opinion on the matter of sexual discrimination and I hope that you find it useful. I also hope you are happy job hunting in Hong Kong. Write back to me, Chris, should you face any problems!

Love,
Chris

Text by Man Kwun Fung (S7C)



Superwomen Working Mothers

With the echoes from social parties, working mothers are a hot topic among a lot of people. They have a terrible image in the society as some claim that they are not good for the family. But, is it really true that working mothers harm the family? Certainly not! In fact, working mothers are beneficial to the family as they provide great support. You will find some of the facts that agree with this statement below.

First of all, working mothers can ease the financial burden. Not only do they take care of their children, but they also make efforts to meet the high cost of living. With harsh inflation and home price rising, working mothers play an important role to gain control of this thorny situation and to provide a brilliant life for her husband and children. As one would say, "Each successful man or glitterati must have an extraordinary woman behind." We need to look up to these kind of women as they are far better than those who stay at home.

Aside from financial support, working mothers encourage their children to be more independent. In recent years, it is acknowledged that a large number of teens rely on their parents; they are being looked after with too much care. For example, teens expect their parents to drop them off and pick them up at school. Moreover, they expect their parents to spoon feed them their needs and wants. You would be surprised to find out that a master degree graduate from the Chinese University of Hong Kong who received an interview from Apple Daily was actually a dropout in society. Without a doubt, being independent can certainly help with one's success in the society.

Last but not least, working mothers are a reward to our society. For example, countless working mothers are working under minimum wage, yet they try really hard to maintain the family's image and dignity. Such efforts should not be annihilated as they help relieve the financial problems in Hong Kong. Why should we force them not to work? It is absurd!

All in all, under no circumstances should we deny or insult working mothers. They are an asset to us as they help protect families' and societies' dreams. We must overcome the traditional views of working mothers-give them the respect they deserve!

Text by Suen Yiu Nam (S7C)

Our Science and Technology Development:

Good or Bad?

Flipping through the newspapers, you cannot help but notice seeing that science and technology have developed in leaps and bounds. Nowadays, i-phones, smart phones and portable devices are essentials in our daily lives. According to a survey conducted by the University of Hong Kong, the rate of science and technology development has skyrocketed in recent years. Science and technology, while giving us a convenient life, can also bring unpleasantness. Today, we are going to explore the pros and cons of science and technology.

To begin with, let us talk about the pros of having a cell phone. Every citizen owns a mobile phone. This means that we are well connected- we can call anyone anywhere any time.

"With phones, we are able to gossip about news, talk about meetings and share our happiness and sadness to one another."

Compared with letters and emails, cell phones surely made our lives more convenient.

Now, let us talk about the cons of having a cell phone. No one will doubt that phones play an integral role in our lives. However, we must bear with the annoying ringtones where ever we go . It may not be a big deal for the owner of the phone, but people around and near him often are annoyed or disturbed. For

example, notifications or ringtones for calls and messages can often be annoying or disturbing. Therefore, not only do we gain the benefits of mobile phones, but we face many inconveniences of it as well.

Now that we are done talking about mobile phones, let us shift our focus to another technology: closed circuit television, CCTV. Before, it was hard to catch crimes such as robbery and theft in shopping malls and jewellery shops; police officers, relying on the descriptions from the victims, faced difficulties. But, with the appearance of CCTV, such problems were solved. Police could investigate the video and arrest the suspects. Ergo, the security of shops can be guaranteed.

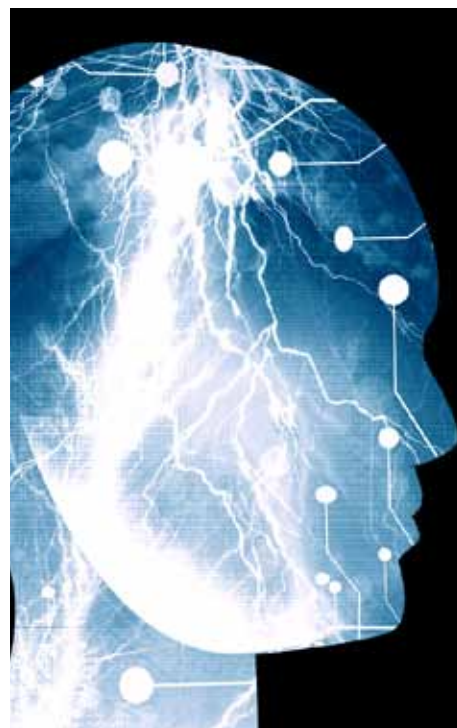
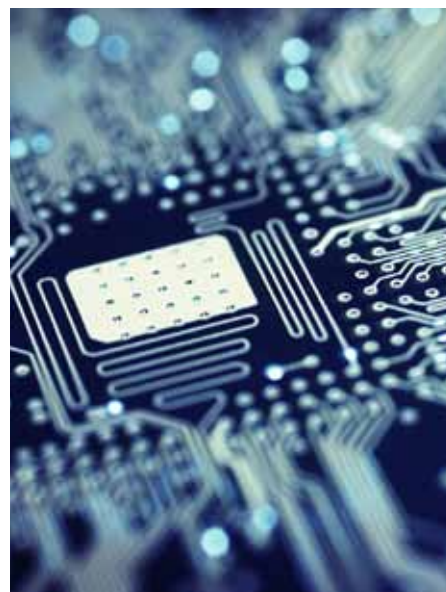
Nevertheless, CCTV can violate our privacy.

"Wherever we go, we can see CCTV installed in many corners. This means, even the daily behaviours of innocent citizens are being recorded."

These daily behaviours may appear on the newspapers or televisions along with the news is surely an unwanted experience.

To sum up, science and technology have both advantages and disadvantages. To maintain a sustainable development, it is time for us to make good use of them.

Text by Wong Wai Man (S7C)



Ways to Prevent Shoplifting

A recent youth survey indicated that about one out of four interviewees has tried shoplifting. The case reveals that the number of children committing such crime has increased these past few years. This tells us that it is an urgent matter and we must address this serious problem. So, what are the causes of children shoplifting?

Firstly, some children claim that they don't have sufficient money. They are unable to buy luxurious goods. Secondly, the security facilities are not well monitored, so shops do not even know that their products are being stolen. Even worse, some professors attribute students' crime to peer pressure. Children often steal things in a group, they think that by doing so, the possibility of getting caught or spotted by the guard would be reduced. Unfortunately, they are wrong.

In order to prevent children shoplifting from happening again, I would like to make the following suggestions. To start with, shops should strengthen their security. In Hong Kong, not all the shops have a security camera installed. By installing a camera, shop masters can know what is happening in the shop. As a result, it can prevent people from stealing goods.

Besides installing a camera, increasing the punishment is beyond a doubt beneficial. Some children have a wrong concept that if they get caught stealing at a young age, they will not be punished. Heavily punishing those who commit a crime can prevent them from stealing things again. The government should consider increasing the fine. Also, shops should prevent those criminals from entering their shops. With these considerations, people would think twice before they try to do illegal things.

What's more, we should increase children's awareness about the consequences of shoplifting.

"Some teenagers have an illusion that they would not be punished even they get caught. Thus, government and schools can join their hands together to help youngsters quit the habit of shoplifting."

First, the police force can hold some talks at schools. They can introduce the punishment of committing such crimes. Second, teachers should teach students about morality and install a correct mindset in them. For example, raising the number of moral lessons is a way.

In fact, there are lots of ways to prevent children from shoplifting. We should try our best to prevent such crimes.

Text by Chau Ho Yin (S7C)

Shoplifting in Hong Kong



All of the adults have gone through the age as teenagers. Have anyone of you tried shoplifting before? A recent youth survey has found that one out of every four interviewees has tried shoplifting. The results sound horrible, don't they? About one-fourth of our society's future pillars have tried to commit a serious crime. What are the reasons behind this?

Apparently, the situation nowadays is very different compared with the situation in old times. Decades ago, when parents still had harsh control over their children, they couldn't even have their own pocket money. Every day after school, children will go home straight away and they would not even dare to stay out late on the streets. Time has passed and things have changed. Children nowadays always hang around on the streets, their parents give them a lot of freedom. Such privileges allow the teenagers to commit crimes in order to fulfil their desires. Teenagers are willing to take risks as they are too free, or in other words, too bored, and shoplifting is the easiest way for them to get a taste for crime without breaking serious laws.

Moreover, teenagers nowadays receive a lot of influences from their friends but not from their parents. They spend more time with their friends but not with their parents. Hence, teenagers are more likely to choose the wrong path without considering the consequences as they are clearly not mature enough to figure out what's the right thing to do.

There are numerous solutions to solve this issue but the most efficient way is to start with the schools. Schools can make a huge impact on the growth of teenagers as they spend most of their time in school. Police should hold talks and campaigns in campuses to educate the teenagers that it is foolish to commit a crime because of adventurism. Once you are caught, you will regret it for your entire life, because shoplifting can be caught easily as there are CCTV cameras everywhere.

In addition, the government should increase the penalty of shoplifting to give a clear message to teenagers that breaking the law, no matter if it is serious or not, they will be given heavy punishment and there will be no mercy. The government should also increase resources for social workers so they can prevent teenagers from trying to shoplift.

In conclusion, the rising trend of shoplifting must be stopped before our younger generation is poisoned by the wrong values.

Text by Wong Yat Sang (S7C)

Is Cosmetic Surgery Worthwhile?



In recent years, many super stars, pop stars and even singers were reported by the mass media that they have been suspected for having cosmetic surgery, and the trend is rising. This news reported by the media is somehow persuading the public to have cosmetic surgery. Cosmetic surgery is undoubtedly a high technology surgery, but there are different opinions toward this trend. Some denounce cosmetic surgery as unnatural and unreal while some claim that it should be their freedom to spend their money in exchange for beauty.

Many cosmetic surgery companies hire pop stars to be their spokesmen, in order to raise the public's attention, especially women. Jacqueline Chong, for example, had breast enlargements. Actually nowadays, cosmetic surgery is quite a big market, particularly for women. People who go through cosmetic surgery mainly believe that by changing their appearance, they can better their chances in work or in finding their soul-mate.

"They claim that by having this advanced surgery, they can gain confidence."

To verify this claim, we must investigate this idea in-depth. How can one gain confidence? From my point of view, confidence comes from within; it is not related to one's appearance at all.

Among the older generation, the majority strongly accuses and criticises cosmetic surgery. They think putting plastic stuff into the body or even injecting botox goes against the traditional etiquette. To be honest, there is also a risk of mutilating the body. Even with advanced technology we have today, there are still many unknown risks in having cosmetic surgery.

From my point of view, I can see both pros and cons for this argument. For example, I can accept the people who suffer from birth defects would want to have cosmetic surgery.

Some of these people may have a strange or odd appearance, but they can have cosmetic surgery to recover and gain a normal appearance.

In conclusion, I agree that everyone has a right to decide whether or not they want to have artificial surgery. But I kindly suggest that people should think three times about the circumstances and consequences before having surgery. After all, there are many unknown risks. I do not think that it is worthwhile to put ourselves at such risks in exchange for better appearances! Please think before you act!

Text by Lung Tsz Yin (S7C)



The media is recently involved in a series of inappropriate reports. Apart from the content, the behaviour of the reporters are criticised by many citizens. Some citizens suggest that there should be a stricter control over the media but I think this proposal is not the best way to solve this problem.

The first criticism is the reliability of the media. Untrue reports are extremely common in gossip magazines and newspapers. As an example, ATV news department has announced the death of the Head of State in China. Such news shocked all political parties in Hong Kong. And this misinformation was quickly clarified by the spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China. This issue makes people aware of the inaccuracy of the Hong Kong media.

Besides the reliability, the behaviour of the reporters is also a

concern. The door stepping journalists of Hong Kong are known for being notoriously bad at gathering news. They often intrude on the celebrities' privacy. They may use a long ranged camera to take photos of the celebrities' houses and their private lives. Although celebrities accuse and complain about the media's behaviour, the reporters who invaded their privacy often only receive a small penalty, a fine.

"Having stricter control over the media won't solve the problem because it is just the palliative method."

It is not the media who should take full responsibility. People should also take responsibility for this issue. The media operates with the society's demands. The media only reports the news because the people are eager to know. As a counter example, the People's Republic of China has a strict control

over the media. But the standard of the media is low in terms of morality and quality. The function of monitoring the government is lost.

Freedom of press is the most important right. It shouldn't be cursed by anything.

Text by Kwong Ho Yin (S7C)

Freedom of the Press



Proposal for the Freedom of the Press

Recently, more and more news in newspapers are criticised by local citizens. Some interviewees expressed their feelings and mentioned that the behaviour of the journalists is unacceptable. This is because the reporters follow the celebrities in social areas, in private parties, or even at homes.

Taking a glimpse at the local gossip magazines, we can see various superstars and artists. But the report does not say how good the stars are, they always say how bad the stars are. For instance, the media revealed Cecilia Cheung's intimate photos in weekly magazines.

"By doing so, the media did not show any concerns about her feelings, they only distorted the truth."

Some people are suggesting that the Hong Kong mass media should have stricter control. They commented that the government has to do more monitoring work and establish some licences and laws to restrict journalists. Nevertheless, there are other parties who disapprove of this suggestion. They stated that it would ruin the freedom of the press because this freedom is of greatest importance to the community.

From my point of view, if the government does monitoring work, it will ruin the freedom of the press. I disagree that the mass media should be monitored. In that case, there would be a wide variety of constraints.

Text by Chan Ho Yat (S7C)

Single-sex Schools or Co-educational Schools?



Nowadays, more and more parents are willing to make a good preparation of education for their children. Some parents line up at prestigious schools such as King's College and St. Louis College at mid-night to wait for an admission form for their children. With this, comes another problem of whether or not their daughters and sons should go to single sex schools or co-educational schools to better their study.

Some research in the UK suggested that pupils should attend single-sex schools in pursuit of a satisfactory academic result. Regrettably, many educationalists prefer students to study at co-educational schools to better their study.

"These two totally different opinions trigger a hot debate in society. It leads to parents' to worry about their choice of colleges for their children's future development."

Therefore, I would point out the benefits and drawbacks of both schools so that parents' doubts can be eased.

"Firstly, by studying at single-sex schools, students can concentrate more by listening to the teachers' guidance."

Paying a high degree of attention in the class is a sufficient and important element for students to get excellent results in their exams.

By listening to teachers' advice,

students can save plenty of time in making a well-rounded preparation for their examination. For example, at single-sex schools, students are more hard-working as they compiled valuable notes which can definitely make examinations easier.

Despite the fact that pupils can fully concentrate on their study at some single sex schools, these pupils may have some overwhelming problems. For example, the chances for these students to get along with the opposite sex are far from adequate. Students, who go to an all-boys school, only knows how to interact with male students. These students only know how to play basketball, do some group projects and organise some social gatherings with the same sex. Once these students have the chance to meet the opposite sex, they may find it extremely difficult to talk to or work with them. The prevalence of this kind of situation is easily comprehensible because these students, who study at single sex schools, hinder their personal growth and can't develop some soft skills such as attitude and manner in front of opposite sex.

Apart from the issues of going to single-sex schools, we should also talk about the benefits and drawbacks of going to co-educational schools.

"Undeniably, students at co-educational schools can have an exceptional opportunity to get along with the opposite sex."

These schools can definitely foster a virtual society that students can meet and work as individuals and as a team. Also, these students can gain some fundamental skills as they learn to interact with each other with different personalities through group discussions, debates and group assignments. Students who are equipped with these skills can survive and are seldom trapped in society. In particular, these students can grow up to face their bosses and colleagues easily with confidence.

Lamentably, pupils who study at co-educational schools may face some drawbacks that the parents should consider. The teenage students may have different doubts and questions towards the opposite sex. These doubts can make students have a hard time concentrating or paying attention to their teachers. Some students may even have some love affairs with their schoolmates. Regrettably, students don't have sufficient knowledge to handle their love affairs. Teenage pregnancy, for example, is one of the issues that the students face studying at a co-educational school.

All in all, different schools have their own characteristics to help their students' development. There is no concrete evidence to favour the single sex schools over co-educational schools. However, it is important for students and parents to discuss and find their own way.

Text by Chan Wai Chong (S7C)



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