

## *Shawnigan Lake School Leaving Speech—by Alex T.*

My very first impression of Shawnigan Lake School was hiking up and down hills in the freezing cold night while walking into the darkness. I had no clue where I was but I knew that it was thousands of miles from home.

So, I soon found out I would be living in Strathcona house with more than 50 girls. It did not take me long to realize that Strathcona was where it was all happening – a very lively bunch of girls.

I was told not long after I arrived that there were millions of Kangaroos were I live and students wondered if they could fly. An interesting question I thought as I sadly replied, “I think you are thinking of the wrong country.” Shortly after they asked me again. “So do you live anywhere near Canberra?” Once again, I said, “Wrong country.” I am actually from New Zealand!

Anyhow, one of the greatest things I had been taught by many of you was your most amazing slang. Who would have ever thought that L.B. would stand for little boy or L.G. for little girl. I absolutely loved the way you abbreviated such interesting terms, I was always listening and trying to adopt your slang into my every day vocabulary. Legit also came up many times. “Is that the legit stuff?” someone asked. I could not understand what they were talking about. So I did spend a few days asking what things meant which I knew the Strath girls found very amusing. “Oh Alex, she is so foreign. Oh her accent, I want an accent.” The thing is that you do have accents whether you think you do or not. I heard someone say “Attatudeeee” and I just laughed thinking how could you *not* think you have an accent?

Here at Shawnigan, you have the most beautiful campus. It is truly spectacular. How many schools nowadays have a lake in the middle of it that actually has frozen over. I have been thinking for days how I would just love to go for a little skate across it and test it out. But I am sure you’ll say that it is not safe. Everyday for the last month I would get out of bed and look out my windows hoping for snow to come, and then be disappointed or tricked by the thick frost. But, finally, it has snowed before my leave.

Coming from an all-girls school, it was very different entering a co-ed school. The first thing I noticed was the singing in chapel. Very multi-toned, but how nice it was to see guys opening the doors for girls – most impressive. So here I am at the end of my time. . . .

I just want to say a huge thank you to Lisa, my roommate. I couldn’t have been put with a warmer welcoming girl. So, thank you. Strathcona House – wow, you truly are one of a kind. Thank you for letting me be part of your House. I have had such an amazing time and thoroughly enjoyed getting to know each and everyone of you. I wish I could be staying longer. And to all teachers, thank you, I have enjoyed every moment of my school days and, believe it or not, looked forward to school each day. I really don’t think I have had a more amusing English teacher and laughed so much. My classmates, thank you for letting me be a part of your classes. I have enjoyed your company. Also a big thank you to the Rush family for hosting me while I have been here. I have had an amazing experience and definitely would recommend doing exchange. You will meet new people and have so much fun, and I have so many memorable memories of Canada. Also thank you to Mr. Robertson, Mrs. Kingstone and Mr Samuel for making this exchange possible. I have enjoyed every minute of it. Thank you.