

THE STUDENT VOICE

March 2016 Edition



What is StrengthsQuest?

As an Ambassador for StrengthsQuest (SQ), I get this question asked all the time: what is StrengthsQuest? SQ as we call it is a program that helps us learn what we do best. It identifies our natural talents, and when we develop them, it can help us be successful in our studies, life, and careers. If we focus and spend more time developing our talents, at the end it will make us more successful. MVCC believes that every student has the ability to succeed, and that we as students are able to use our talents to maximize our potential. Students and faculty are asked to take Strengthsfinder, a personality assessment inventory from the perspective of positive psychology. After completion of the inventory, the results are calculated and the participants are provided with a list of their top 5 themes of talent based on their answers. My Top 5 are Competition, Activator, Strategic, Communication and Adaptability. What are yours?

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Four other students and I make up the SQ Team. The primary purpose for us is to help increase SQ awareness on our campus.

Some of you may have met some of us in your ED100-College Seminar Class where we did a presentation to introduce students to SQ and their results. Now let me introduce the members of our team.

First meet Stacey Southwick, who will be graduating this May with an AAS in Accounting. She claims, “As an Ambassador I have gained more confidence in myself, and I have become much more comfortable speaking in groups.”

Jennifer Rothrock is majoring in Cybersecurity, Data Processing & Programming and she states, “As an Ambassador I get to help people.”

Mai Chonabayashi is an International Student with a major in International Studies. She says, “Being an Ambassador for SQ definitely makes me move forward.”

Stone Bogart who will be graduating this semester with an Associate Degree in Psychology states, “SQ has forever changed my life in a positive way, and I hope that

students can benefit from this philosophy as much as I have.”

Last but not least is yours truly, Javier E. Lozada. My major is in Chemical Dependency. I believe that knowing your strengths is an excellent way to improve anyone’s academic studies, working opportunities, and daily life.

The SQ Team is here to help students develop their themes. We have office hours and encourage students to stop by if they have questions about their strengths. Our office is located in the ACC building Room 223 on the Utica campus. If there is someone who has not taken the assessment, please email me at jlozada24@student.mvcc.edu and I will get you the information. We are working on getting an SQ game day in the future. There are also plans to get a workshop where we can help students with their themes. If you would like to learn more about SQ, you can also visit our page on the MVCC website www.mvcc.edu/strengths. I look forward to hearing from you.

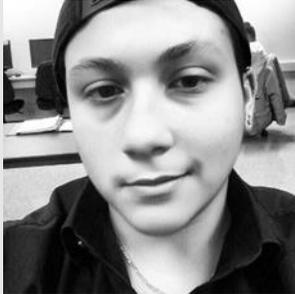


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Javier E. Lozada

Young People Vote Not To Vote

Ashton Hanrahan



A lot is going on in the world today with politics. We have the potential of having the first women president. Maybe we will have a man who is worth 4 billion dollars. We could also see a man who is 74 years young. At this point who knows? This is where all of the pressures of who to vote for and why register to vote. The real question is not who our next president will be, but also who is going to vote for him or her? According to *beck.library.emory.edu*, that's the question. "Why Don't Youth Vote?" Along with some internet research, I conducted an interview with a peer at *Mohawk Valley Community College* to be enlightened on the subject. Referencing back to the article, comments were taken from the "Center for Voting and Democracy's spring 2000 Youth Essay Contest." The theme of the essay was asking college level and high school level students, "Why Don't Youth Vote?" The comments then and now show that our young are increasingly losing interest over the past 16 years.



Stephanie Simmons, born 1980, College Student in Wellesley, Massachusetts, states, "I'm a politically active twenty-year-old college student, and I've never voted in an election—state, local, or national. It seems strange now that I think about it. I've been interested in politics for as long as I can remember, trying to talk my parents into voting for Dukakis in 1988 and holding a sign for Bill Clinton in 1992 and 1996. I eagerly looked forward to the time when I would be able to participate in the selection of my representatives in the government. I have never voted in an election because the voting system is so antiquated and inefficient. Voting is for me, as it is for most young people is something between a hassle and an impossibility. If you clear the barriers, more people, and especially young people, will vote."

Amanda Ponzar, born 1978, College Student in Lansdowne, Pennsylvania declares, "When it comes down to it, I care. I watch all the presidential and vice-presidential debates, listen to the State of the Union, read the paper, and frequently publish letters to the editor about my concerns. Just like me, many young people

around this country care desperately about their lives, goals, and future. We need someone to listen, support our issues, and prove to us that America wants to hear from young people.”

According to the “National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS), fewer than 20 percent of young people, ages eighteen to twenty-five, participating in the 1998 midterm election.” And that was a while ago. I took these numbers, and simply Googled ‘18-24 voting statistics.’ What I found was www.childtrends.org. According to that site, in 2014, the percentage of eighteen to twenty-four year olds voting was 16 percent. The numbers are decreasing, and at this rate, I don’t think it will change.

I did a little more digging within the internet and found a recent article by huffingtonpost.com called “Why Don’t Young People Vote?” The articles reveals, “Everything is at our fingertips. There are videos, websites, social media accounts, anything you name it that tells us all about the topics and candidates”

This is true, but it still doesn’t answer why the younger generation, our generation does not vote. It comes back to an argument I have had with many people – we have only lived in a world that is full of hate, terror, debt, and uncertainty. When I asked a student on the MVCC campus if he would

vote this term, this is the response I received, “I don’t vote because I don’t think it matters. To me, I understand what voting is, but I don’t see the need for it. I just don’t have an interest in it.”

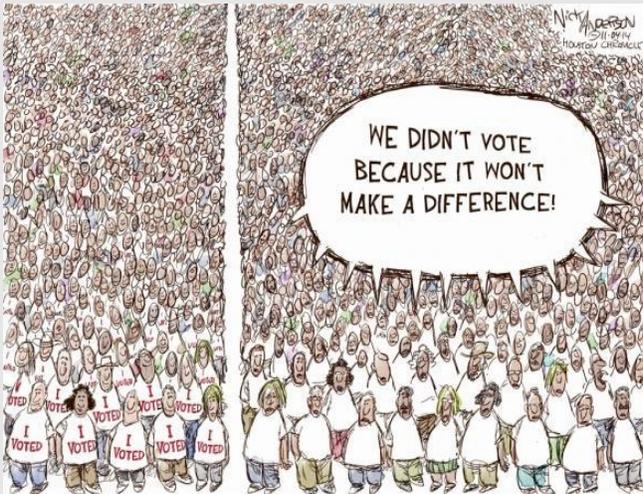
The younger generation does not feel that their votes count, and this is the issue. In a 2014 study, we are the first generation that has had a higher level of student debt, poverty and unemployment, and lower wealth than baby boomers had at our age.

Another MVCC students touts, “We have had sexual and gender roles challenged, the race debate has come back into the picture, and discussions over human rights are conversations we have daily. We are the most educated racially and ethnically, and the most socially diverse of any generation. We don’t really remember a government that wasn’t in a gridlock.”

Now is our time to vote and make a difference. When it comes down to presidency of America, one person is going to win, and he or she is either going to make our generation or break our generation. It may seem like one vote does not count, but that one vote can bring a candidate that is in our favor to be the president of America. We are a generation that has the numbers on our side, but we need to put our majority to work.

You may apply to register to vote in person at the following public facilities:

1. State or local voter registration and/or election offices.
2. The department of motor vehicles.
3. Public assistance agencies.
4. Armed services recruitment centers.
5. State-funded programs that serve people with disabilities.



<https://www.google.com/search?hl=en&site=imghp>

You can also register to vote online at <https://www.usa.gov/register-to-vote>.

It's a quick and easy form to fill out and send in. You receive a voter card in the mail.

Winter Adventure

Alec Ambruso



We all have our interests, hobbies, opinions, and personalities. Those things are what make us who we are as unique individuals. Aspects of ourselves like these give us our own unique motivations and goals to strive for, which in turn drive us to take risks. That's all cool because it may give the person a high – a rush.

For Luke Janicki, snowmobiling is his go-to activity for the winter time. During the winter, many people like to sit back, relax, and enjoy the sizzling fire in their living

room. Meanwhile, when given the chance, Janicki is out exploring the wilderness of the Adirondacks and enjoying himself off track – snowmobiling -- and enjoys a fireplace of his own out in the open. You can call him a trailblazer, as it is people like Janicki who make the most out of any conditions: cold or hot, rain or shine. He gives anyone who reads his story a reason to go out and do something – anything – regardless of the weather. Check out his vivid details in his thrill of *Going Off Track*.



Old Forge

Going Off-track - Trail to Freedom

Luke Janicki

For some people, the sound of birds in the morning is music to their soul, but for me, the hum of the snowmobiles whizzing by my house is like the sound of a lawnmower to someone hoping for spring. I could hear the snowmobiles in my room before I even opened my eyes and I could feel the excitement inside of me building like bricks being laid for a foundation.

The sun was peeking in through the small opening, where the two pine cone decorated curtains of my window were not quite pulled together. The day of snowmobile riding on the trails in Old Forge that I had planned just last night after getting off work late was proving to be just what I had envisioned. It had been a dark and dreary winter so far, speckled with more clouds and raindrops until this week. The last three days were filled with clouds dropping a steady stream of fluffy white snowflakes, and I had spent the days imprisoned in the restaurant where I worked, unable to take advantage of the pristine white landscape that was accumulating on the trails that I could see on the way to and from work. Spending the day snowmobiling on the trails in Old Forge is a good escape from the monotony of winter in Upstate New York.

I got out of bed earlier than I normally would as I was not going to miss this opportunity to free myself from the routines of school and work that had filled my days for the last year. As I crawled out from under the heavy down comforter and stepped out of bed, I could feel the cold against my skin and decided to dress with the full layering of clothes that would keep the chill from piercing my bones.

It was early February. When I stepped outside from my dwelling in the lower part of the house, I could see my shadow as if I were a groundhog. The sun was bright and was coming up over the mountains on the opposite side of the lake, and if seeing my shadow meant six more weeks of winter, then I was ready for it.

The white blanket of snow on the lake was sparkling like diamond crystals and was making kaleidoscopes of color on the pallets in front of me. After performing all of the preliminary checks on my green and black Artic Cat, I revved it up, jumped on and headed from the house, down the side of the snow covered road two miles to the parking lot of the Water Safari, where there were only two people ahead of me anxiously filling up their sleds. They were all dressed

in matching snowmobile wear, matching each other and their sleds. That was not me.



I just wanted to be out there and couldn't be bothered with the efforts with appearance. I wanted to focus on being warm enough to enjoy riding the Adirondack trails on a clear and cold winter's day.

It was my turn at the gas pump and although to some, the smell of gas punches you in the nose like the smell of burning food, it was the smell of freedom to me. Without the gas, the potential for fun for my day would be limited. It was the catalyst necessary to convert my day from the mundane to the spectacular. It was only minutes before I was at the start of the trails on North Street and although I started alone, I knew I was meeting up with some of the guys from work a little later for lunch. Right now, my time on the trails was my solitude. The cool breeze that I was feeling was the hint of exhilaration as I headed down the trail lined by the tall pines dusted with snow making the forest seem magical. The fresh

powder on the trails was kicking up around me as I picked up speed, encircling me with a spray of optimism. The sun radiating through the trees began to warm me up and time flew by as quickly as the trees that I passed on the trails. Occasionally, I would pass a deer bounding in the woods to get away from the noise of the monster that was heading toward it. I rode for quite some time while I filmed the beauty of my time in the woods on my GoPro that I had mounted on my helmet to document my day to be watched whenever I had a day that I was trapped and couldn't get out on the trails.

The high position of the sun and the gnawing hunger pains that were growing steadily brought me back to the reality of lunch time. Passing through more of the woods and diverting off on the trail toward the Big Moose Station, I was breathing in the smell of balsam that was reminding me of Christmas time and walking in the woods to cut down our tree that would stand nine

feet in the corner of the house. I was just about to my destination and could smell the burgers cooking when I had to stop in my tracks. Standing in front of me on the railroad tracks was a large dark brown moose. He was standing there still— like a stubborn child as immovable as the Great Wall of China.

I stopped and got off the sled, shut down the purring engine and waited. I knew from experience that they will stomp their hooves and charge given the right circumstances. Fortunately, after just a few minutes, he turned and was gone, just as quickly as he appeared in front of me. I was back on the trail and soon was parked in line with the other sleds in the parking lot, taking off my helmet and breathing in the cool invigorating air and the tempting smell of food floating in the air.

I met up with two friends and we sat by the crackling fire in the wood stove, eating burgers and Philly Cheesesteak sandwiches with melting cheese dripping from the bread onto the plate. After the rest and rejuvenation, it was back on the trail -- back

toward town. Several detours later, we ended up on First Lake, the frozen lake in front of my house. Although it is not recommended to ride the lakes, we knew that the area we were on had been frozen despite the rain the previous week. There was always the part of the lake on the other side, near the channel that doesn't freeze and we knew enough to stay away from that dark spot among the white carpet. It was time for tricks and jumps to add a little adventure, and the spray of white dust was everywhere with the sun hitting it before it had a chance to fall, making arches of rainbows for each of us to ride through.

At the end of the day, we started a log fire in the fire pit down by the lake, cracked open some cold refreshments and stared into the dancing flames that reached into the skies pointing toward the beaming stars that mimicked our feeling that nothing could be brighter than spending a mid-winter's day on the Old Forge snowmobiling trails, giving hope and optimism, whether there was an early spring or not. We were living free!



Let's Make Great Whole Wheat Bread Again – America



Alec Ambruso

“Make America great Again.” “Let's make America whole again.” What do these slogans mean? What does Donald Trump mean “great again?” We're pretty great if Tony the Tiger from Frosted Flakes has any merit to his name. And what does “whole” mean? Sorry Hillary, unless you hire Superman with a fishing rod, Hawaii is staying put in the middle of the Pacific. For the record, Batman is going to smack Clark Kent back home in the new movie – oops, sorry your planet's gone bro! And Alaska will remain next to Canada – stay out of this Sarah, please, or Tina Fey – .

Hello my fellow Americans – It is Alec the sports writer and I'm here to discuss – politics. Wooo. I'm excited – . Yeah this is pretty weird. For one, I'm writing in the first-person and two, this is probably one of the last things I'd write about. Now, you're probably like, “Why did you write on this topic, then? WHY AM I EVEN READING THIS RIGHT NOW HRGIUHRUIHGERGEWIRU!!!!!!!!!!?”

Well, turn off your caps lock and hear me out. It's pretty interesting for someone to try new things – have you ever eaten squid eyes? – and I actually learned more about today's politics and issues by listening to the people whom I interviewed – you were all great, by the way. So, now that I have you hooked from the title, it looks like you might just have to finish reading this article or don't, my feelings won't be hurt – nope. Let's now take a serious approach to this article – shhh, we probably won't – and learn what your fellow MVCC HAWKS think about Mr. Small Loan of a Million Dollars and Mrs. Bill Clinton's slogans.

It is interesting to hear MVCC students' opinions on matters, as they go even beyond my questions to voice their points of view. The majority of my interviewees do in fact follow politics – maybe this is a reckoning for me. The general reason for this They care about the future of this country. Even the one person – you know who you are – who initially said he doesn't follow politics

closely because there's "way too many things," seemed to know what he was talking about. In all fairness, it doesn't require watching all of these debates going on to notice the issues facing this country, and that's where I think he was coming from. This is also a personal matter for some, as one of my interviewees wants to be a politician himself, though he made it clear that politicians are more like "actors" to him, putting on performances to get votes. Trump is putting on a show, so I can see what he is saying here.

Now, back to the slogans. Hillary Clinton saying "Let's make America whole again" is surely a twist to Trump's slogan. But, what is she trying to say? I'm so glad you asked. The subjects whom I talked with gave me their thoughts. The general belief was that it is a statement designed to attract supporters, yet it does not have much meaning behind it. One subject called it a "naive" statement, and that an actual goal should be set. A couple others believed Clinton to be a liar, "masking" lies with words and having nothing to back it up.

From my understanding of what Clinton could be referring to, it seems as though she means to say America is divided. If, hypothetically she does mean this with her saying, I was curious to know what the subjects thought, as well. I got a lot of comments saying this country is racially and socially divided, and one even went to say our own Alumni College Center is itself divided. He has noticed white people tend to sit and hang out with white people, and the same goes for black people and so on. Go ahead and see for yourself. Though it may not always be the case, it oftentimes is. Another interviewee said that people only *think* there is a race issue in this country, but in fact it isn't an issue at all, and is merely "blown out of proportion." And of course there's the divide between the rich and the poor. One of my interviewees said that the middle class is "dying" and becoming part of the poor. Another said that the rich should start paying more taxes, meanwhile so and so said that the economy needs poverty and wealth to co-exist in order for the economy to function properly.

<http://theodysseyonline.com/salisbury/who-wore-it-better-donaldtrump-bad-hair-day-edition/132295>

I can see the resemblance



Trump's slogan garnered most of the attention. "Make America great again." Now what does that mean? I made sure to jot down the interviewees' thoughts on them. Trump's slogan garnered a collective "How?" from everyone I talked with. None of them really understood what Trump meant and were confused as to how Trump will actually make America "great again." His slogan clearly is trying to say America is not and has not been great in recent years, and this belief was actually opposed by the subjects. "America's always been great," "It's *better*," were some of the responses I received.

Why is America great to them? To name a few things: gas prices are down, jobs are becoming more available, and the stock market is improving. On a personal level with one of the people I talked to, America is great as long as he is able to support himself in college, have job opportunities, a roof over his head, and have food on the table. A very true quote I made sure to note, "We take things for granted."



Now, for the fun part. I asked each person I talked with who they would be inclined to vote for come Election Day. The result? Bernie Sanders. Why, you ask? Oh, you ask such good questions. Some of the reasons given to me were that he is a more genuine person than Trump or Clinton, and he practices what he preaches. One said he wouldn't vote regardless of who the nominees were, as he stated, in regards to Sanders' goals, "Bernie probably won't do it." Then, another said if it came down to Clinton and Trump, he wouldn't vote either.

There you have it, folks. What have we learned now? Following politics help build an awareness of the future of this nation, politicians are liars and actors, they design slogans to attract voters, Frosted Flakes are GRRREAT and many of our students want Bernie to win. At least, that's what I've gathered. So people, make sure to come to the right decisions as to who you plan on voting for because, and apologizing the language, as one gentleman once told me, "*Vote for who sucks less.*"

Opinion Hot-Seat

Hunter VanDresar



Right now in the heat of the 2016 presidential race, Donald Trump's trademarked campaign slogan is "MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN." Hillary Clinton seems to be copying Trump's slogan and twisting it to match socialist and liberal reforms at one of her campaign rallies. With Hillary Clinton bashing the Republican Party and the republicans bashing the democrats, the political race is on for the White House. But, doesn't one question Hillary what she means by *whole*.

Clinton is going against the grain by her statement of "Make America whole again" because she is criticizing the government now and when she was Secretary of State. Also, Clinton sectionalizes America by

identifying a separatism of republicans and even groups of Americans who have different political sentiments. Clinton claims at a speech in Cleveland, "Now extreme views about women – we expect that from some of the terrorist groups, we expect that from people who don't want to live in the modern world, but it's a little hard to take from Republicans and democrats who want to be the president of the United States." She adds, "Yet they espouse out of date, out of touch policies. They are dead wrong for 21st century America. We are going forward, we are not going back"

<http://www.cnn.com/2015/08/27/politics/hillary-clinton-republicans-terrorist-groups/>



Hillary Clinton is a very intelligent woman, yet she refers to republicans during the first of the democratic presidential debate as her “enemies.”

Anderson Copper of CNN asked this question to the candidates "You've all made a few people upset over your political careers. Which enemy are you most proud of?"

Clinton stated, “Well, in addition to the NRA, the health insurance companies, the drug companies, the Iranians. Probably the Republicans.”

If Mrs. Clinton wants to be our next president, she needs to make sure that she’s

not insulting people that she might be working with, the oil is not catching the squeaky wheel on this one – this will not make our country *whole* again Hillary needs to see that making something a more united *whole* is not going to work if she doesn’t compromise with the other side. After all, she does understand the term as she states, “Compromise is not a dirty word.”

If Hillary Clinton, as a candidate for the presidency of the United States, wants to polarize the political climate of Washington’s Republican majority in both houses of congress, she will be asking for a hard battle with congress having the present “compromise” attitude.



Baby Boomer- Born with a silver spoon in his mouth



Wash your mouth with soap dear son, Trump.



Aspiring to be President

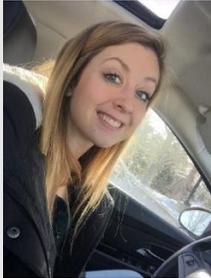


Our Baby-Boomer



Count Your Blessings

Haleigh Kolek (editor and photographer)



February 14th, 2016

It was just another Sunday. Valentine's Day, actually. But mainly just another Sunday. The days prior had been bitter cold just as this day continued to be. Nothing seemed out of the ordinary. A light brown house sat quietly on Snowden Hill Road, a house everyone usually drove by without a thought.

It was around 12PM when the family inside that home heard a strange noise outside. One of the daughters of the married couple who owned the house happened to be home with her father. She looked up from her work – she had been sitting on the living room floor with an essay that she was writing. Without saying a word, her father spoke from the other room first.

“What was that?”

The girl just shrugged, not bothering to look out the window.

“Sounded like a snow plow.”

The two resumed their work.

Outside was a whole different story. A young man had been driving down the hill and somehow managed to lose control of his vehicle. It crossed the center line and hit the ditch off the other side of the road. This caused the vehicle to hit the drain pipe that ran underneath the family's driveway, smashed through their mailbox and became airborne. Skimming a tree on the other side of the driveway – his airbags deployed and his vehicle was now lodged within several other trees that sat on the property.

Back inside, the two who were home continued with what they were doing for another fifteen minutes or so, completely unaware that anything was wrong. That is, until the daughter's phone began to ring. When she looked at it, she noticed it was her uncle who lived a couple houses down from them was calling. It was peculiar that he was calling her, as he would usually contact her father if he ever needed anything.

After answering the phone, the daughter immediately knew something was wrong. “Where are you?” Were the first words that came through her phone.

Confused, she looked over towards where her father would be in the other room.

“I’m home, my dad’s here too. Why, what’s up?” After hearing him explain the situation of a white Chrysler vehicle stuck in the trees outside her house, she immediately called for her father and jumped up to examine the incident outside her living room window. It was there, all right.



View of the accident from inside the house.

Her cousin who lived with her uncle was busy making the phone call to the police station to report the accident. Her younger cousin made a story out of the event, saying her older brother was frantic in making sure the police got there. When they were giving him a hard time over the phone not knowing where the accident would be on the road, she recalled him retorting angrily; “It is the car that is smashed between some trees, you can’t miss it!”

This must have been a particularly touchy subject for the young man making the phone call. A week or two before this incident, he had just lost his best friend in a

very public car accident. His family members noticed a change in him immediately, and he had not been the same since. When he got to the scene of the accident, he stood by and watched as the firemen pried the 17 year old out of the car. He had merely escaped with a cut on his hand, nothing more. The girl and her father came out from inside their house to inspect the situation.

The firemen and police officers were helping the young man calm down, as he was in shock. He kept shouting; “Oh my god!” and; “My mom’s going to *kill* me!”



To the left of the picture paramedics are tending to the young man’s wounds. Center of the picture shows the crash.



The car is wedged in the tree

After the paramedics got him into the ambulance to bring him to the hospital for further examination, it took about two and a half hours to get the vehicle towed out from the trees.

Once it was out, everyone left and there was a mess to be cleaned up in front of the family's home. Car parts were everywhere – a broken mailbox had pieces lying all over the place. Yes, the young man was safe and he was going to be okay, but that being said now there was a whole list of things for the family to do to get their property looking like normal again.

The day after the accident, an article came out in the newspaper explaining what had happened and what caused the accident. Upon reading it, the daughter was baffled. The article said that the young man had hit black ice, and spun around before crashing. She thought this to be completely untrue. She remembered and even saw in some of the pictures that she had taken that the roads had been completely dry. Yes, it was cold out, so black ice was possible. But she had remembered looking for even any sign that the driver had spun out and she had done her own small investigation the day it happened.

There were no tire marks anywhere in the road, which if he had spun out, there would be marks somewhere. Also, the tire tracks that were left in the ditch from where he entered were clean and straight –there was no sign that his vehicle had been out of control.

Although she would never know for sure, to this day she has a clear picture in her mind that what had been released by police was not the full truth. She believed that the driver must have not been paying attention, and must have been either texting or looking elsewhere when his vehicle had drifted off the road and into the ditch. It seemed more likely than the idea that there was black ice.



This image shows the tracks leading to the accident.

