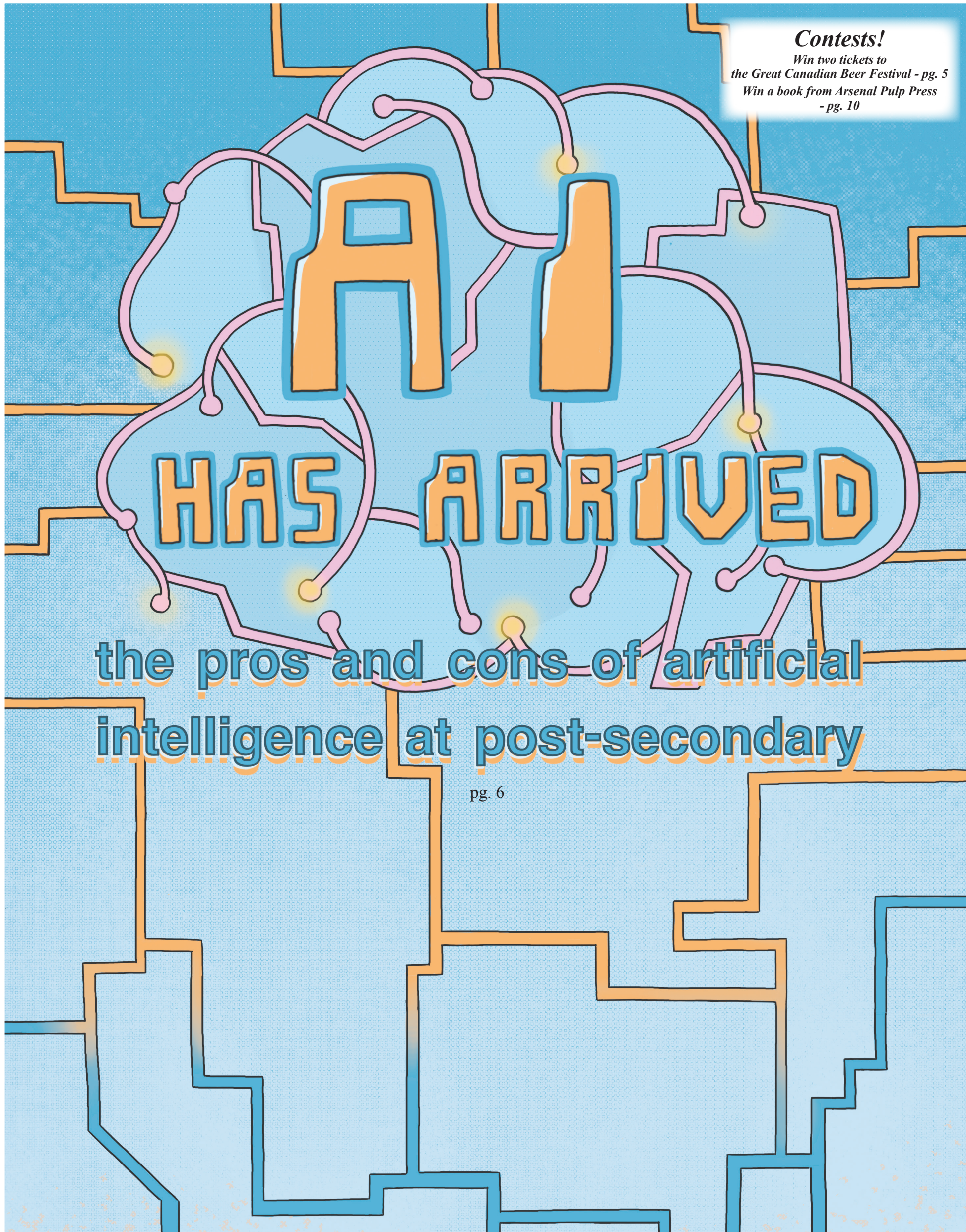


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NEXUS

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editor's letter

My mother's daughter

In the passenger's seat of my mother's Toyota Corolla, I followed her everywhere. On the narrow roads of middle Canada, where province borders blend into canola fields, and in big cities scattered on either side, we found home. For one summer, spent in its entirety lugging around our belongings to different motels, home was everywhere she was. As a duo, a team, a twosome, I was raised in a perpetual slumber party where you are still forced to finish your green beans. Girls night, every night, with a side of time-outs.

During my early years, life was in sequence. My mother was God, and I, a simple imitator. In a way she was the father, the mother, the Holy parent. Mums are all-knowing, omnipotent beings (see page 6 for more on intelligence). I mimed her as we would brush our teeth, watching her across the mirror while dragging my toothbrush along in rhythm with

I know biologically there is another portion to me that forged my creation, but I believe my genes are 100 percent maternal. I am my mother's daughter.

hers. I later also stole the way she scrunched her face when reading words from afar and how she sneezed with her entire body. For several years I pinned the front section of my hair up like hers with a bobby pin. And, I eventually attended community college (see more on college on pages 3 and 4) because she had. Biblically, this is what direction tells you to do. Agnostically, this is criminal.

As I aged into my face and ears, I am a spitting image of my mother, although her eyes are blue. My laugh morphed into half-genuine, half-her's, with the latter only getting louder as the years pass by. A snort has become one untameable shout. Same jokes, same pet peeves, same politics, same matter—I am honoured to share them with her against my will. I know biologically there is another portion to me that forged my creation, but I believe my genes are 100 percent maternal. I am my mother's daughter.

When I moved out, I grieved. My mother is alive and well, but homesickness leaked all over my new apartment as I cried, "I miss my mom." My home was lost in between Mexico City and New York, making the most of her perimenopause—I think a chunk of myself was left on the plane, a vital organ. My body ached for weeks after I unpacked my boxes into my new shell.

There's an art (for more on art, see page 8) to departure, one I have yet to master. "Goodbye" is not an easy word for the mouth to form. The lips are too familiar with the word's succeeding outcomes.

In a mirror while brushing my teeth, I forced "goodbye" out of a sudsy mouth to the portion of myself that exists elsewhere, and I thanked her for how well she served me for so long.

Thank you, Mum.

Lydia Zuleta Johnson, student editor
lydia@nexusnewspaper.com

flashback

25 Years Ago in Nexus



LYDIA ZULETA JOHNSON
STUDENT EDITOR

3 days of peace and music: In our September 8, 1999 issue, "intrepid reporter" Jason Loxton detailed the preceding moments before he entered the gates of Woodstock '99 hell. The palpable stench of sloppily discarded trash and testosterone-fuelled sweat consumed the air with vigour. Tents and their respective citizens lined the festival grounds, making it difficult to traverse the underabundance of peace and love without bumping into shirtless, grubby men. It's safe to say that Loxton confirms the event's overwhelmingly negative reputation. Luckily, he found solace in Cherry Coke, which helped him embark positively through the haze and daze.

What's he building in there?: A stroll around Camosun's Lans-

downe campus this fall may look surprisingly familiar to the campus of 1999. Now considered landmarks, the scaffolding-cloaked Young building and industrial machinery are not new to the school's landscape. In this issue, we covered the "ahead of schedule" timeline of what was soon to be a fully realized revitalization of the building, only four to five months away from completion. The scaffolds returned years later for a different reason, and remain to this day as a tribute to its decorated history.

War on crime: Thieves were of top priority at the beginning of Camosun's 1999 school semester. Counterfeit bill detectors were made available to all campus cashiers—one fraudulent \$20 bill had already been spotted. As well, the college cautioned students to stay vigilant and lock up belongings. That would be sound advice considering the apparent wave of student crime sprees: vehicles were broken into on campus grounds, Business labs ruthlessly vandalized, and pornographic images were being printed using lab computers. Suspect was a 5'11" white male with long blond hair. Sounds eerily similar to Woodstock '99 to me.

open space

Finding connection in suffering

LANE CHEVRIER
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

This summer, I attended the Otherworld Burning Man event, four days of non-stop electronic music with bass lines so deep you can feel the vibrations in your bones. Psychedelic drugs are everywhere.

Burning Man events are about escaping the cagey terror of living in a paranoid culture where we're afraid of our neighbours, whose names we don't even know. There is something to be said for forming a community of people who share the same values and who openly accept each other.

A major spectacle at Otherworld is the Naked Run, where anyone can take off all their clothes and run around together without shame. It

Later that night, despite being emotionally and physically exhausted, I went to another event, the Temple Burn, where a wooden temple is constructed and people are invited to write thoughts and feelings they want to leave behind. Later, that wood would be burned. I saw a lot of pain on those walls.

A young woman struck up a conversation with me, gave me a line of ketamine, and asked if I wanted to hang out with her friends that evening. Sure, why not? We swam through thick throngs of people, flashing neon lights, laser smoke displays, and the rolling thunder of bass drops.

I told one of my companions about how everyone was having such a great time, but I wasn't even

I had been looking at it all wrong. I was searching for joy as a benchmark of human connection, but that's not it at all. It's pain that binds us together.

seemed like everyone was having a wonderful time, connecting with each other on a deeply human level. But I felt like I didn't exist. I was struck by a visceral feeling of grief.

I've never felt like I belonged anywhere. At Burning Man, I'm surrounded by the most bizarre group of eclectic weirdos our society has to offer. Here, of all places, I should fit in. But I was invisible. One singular thought burned into my mind: I'm nearly 40 years old and I can't even fit in with a bunch of freaks. So what's the point of faking it for 40 more years?

I couldn't do it anymore. I knew with an overwhelming conviction that I just needed to die. I would leave in the morning and drive off the side of the Malahat. Surrounded by hundreds of happy people who blissfully ignored me, I lay curled up, weeping until I couldn't breathe.

The next morning, I began to pack up. As I was about to leave, a friend intercepted me and took me aside. I had another cry and he eventually convinced me to hold off killing myself until tomorrow. "For now, let's just cook some breakfast." This seemed like a passable idea.

human. He confided to me that he had scream-cried three times that week. He's racked with chronic pain. He knew someone who had killed themselves, and someone who was planning on it.

"Everybody suffers," he told me. "It's the only thing we truly have in common."

I had been looking at it all wrong. I was searching for joy as a benchmark of human connection, but that's not it at all. It's pain that binds us together.

But what about romance and friendship? Isn't that about joy? Sure. But anyone who's in a committed relationship knows that the real strength isn't in the good times; it's in the ability to support each other through the tougher days, through the blood and vomit, and come out the other end stronger together. That's love that lasts.

I do belong. Like everyone else, I have hidden pain. So, the next time you feel like an alien, don't focus on all the fun that everyone else is having. Human connection is about recognizing our common suffering... and there's incredible beauty in that.

Something on your mind? If you're a Camosun student, get in touch with us with your *Open Space* idea! Email editor@nexusnewspaper.com. Include your student number. Thanks!



Got something to say?

Letters to the editor:
editor@nexusnewspaper.com



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COVER IMAGE: PROVIDED BY CAMOSUN COLLEGE

OVERHEARD AT NEXUS: "I want everyone fully clothed, always."

college

Camosun faculty members concerned over fee deadlines

LYDIA ZULETA JOHNSON
STUDENT EDITOR

Two years into Camosun College's restructure of registration dates and fee deadlines, faculty members are challenging what the college claims are benefits of the change.

Until 2022, the policy allowed students two weeks into the term before paying course fees and dropping classes without facing financial penalties. Since the change, students only have a 100-percent fee refund available if a class is dropped by the day before classes start; this year that falls on September 2. Following that deadline, students will be eligible for an 80-percent fee refund for up to one week. After that, refunds will not be issued for that term.

A Camosun faculty member—who has spoken to *Nexus* on condition of anonymity—says that students have been fixed to a restrictive deadline that finan-



FILE PHOTO

Camosun College changed its fee deadlines two years ago; some faculty say the changes aren't working for students.

students' lack of information results in unsatisfactory class selection.

"[T]hat ability to make an informed choice about which course

program, like a Nursing program, for example, we are finalizing recommended study pathways to bring real clarity to those open programs and make it easier for students to select courses that fit with their aspirations and that they'll actually be able to be transferrable to other institutions depending on their goal," says Harris.

The first faculty member says that a lowered 80-percent refund has the potential to cause long-term consequences, limiting students from registration. They say this disadvantages marginalized students to a greater extent.

"Academics is, as we know, fundamentally entangled with privilege and finance expenses. And so reducing, taking away that 20 percent of tuition, if the course is something like \$460... is a significant amount of money, which could affect the student's ability to take another course in the future. So they might not be moving laterally within Camosun, they might be fully dropping the course from that semester course load and then losing out on that 20 percent. In the long term, if that happens more than once, that can be a significant amount of money that they're losing that they could be using toward tuition in the future, toward their program, other courses, whatever the case may be," they say. "That is my personal

concern for students because tuition is increasing."

Harris says Camosun considered financial concerns, and as a result ensured the policy features broad financial criteria, such as students applying for financial aid, students with sponsorships, and students with tuition of less than \$250. However, Harris stresses student accountability and making attentive decisions for themselves.

"[W]e're really trying to give our students agency as adults to

only will the academic advisor help them choose the right courses that can transfer, but they also might have some of that additional context about which instructors might suit their learning style the most, et cetera."

As well, the first faculty member is concerned that the policy unequally impacts neurodivergent students who may face a wider range of repercussions.

"If we take into consideration a student who may have some neurodivergence, which is something that we see a lot at Camosun... If a student realizes that by the second or third day that they've sat in that class, this does not work for them, then it can affect not only their ability to either drop the course or to take another course, but affects their anxiety levels, their ability to even learn the material," they say. "So there are a lot of different ways that it can affect a variety of students' learning approaches."

Harris emphasizes the available support resources for neurodivergent students and students registered with the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL), saying utilizing these tools can alleviate difficulty in the classroom.

"But [CAL counsellors, academic advisors] are all things that need to occur sort of before the beginning

"With inflation and with the policy change in the add/drop, that hugely affects students' ability to be a part of Camosun College."

ANONYMOUS CAMOSUN FACULTY MEMBER
CAMOSUN COLLEGE

cially prevents them from making individualized academic decisions.

"The primary concern about the add/drop policy change is that it means that students are likely to be penalized before they've even taken a class if they decide that that class doesn't work for them for whatever reason, whether it's a scheduling issue, whether it's a learning difficulty, a learning style, the dynamics with the instructor or the classroom space, whatever the reason is," says the faculty member. "Any reason, I think, is legitimate from a student's perspective. So, it takes away the flexibility and the possibility of students to be able to work with the courses that are on offer at Camosun."

A second Camosun faculty member—also speaking on condition of anonymity—adds that

you want to put your time and energy and passion into, I think, is really stripped away... which I think is really unfair for a student," says the second faculty member.

Camosun registrar Scott Harris acknowledges that students should be well-informed before selecting classes. He says, for this reason, Camosun has created new tools for students to better serve themselves in class syllabi, a consolidation of all historical course outlines and syllabi available on Camosun's website. Additionally, the college is working on further assistance to better define academic information.

"The other thing that we're doing to help students make informed decisions is, especially for those students who are in open programs like University Transfer, that aren't as prescribed as another

"We want students to make purposeful decisions as early as humanly possible so that what they're taking actually aligns with their future academic or career goals."

SCOTT HARRIS
CAMOSUN COLLEGE

make informed decisions... We want students to make purposeful decisions as early as humanly possible so that what they're taking actually aligns with their future academic or career goals. And so there's a number of ways that that can happen," says Harris. "If they're in an open sort of enrolment program like University Transfer and they're not sure, I would highly encourage those students to be working with an academic advisor, because not

of the term anyways," he says. "So the earlier students can be engaging with those support resources to make good, informed decisions, I think the better."

The first faculty member feels that Camosun's policy is exclusively explained in overly technical language, resulting in ill-informed students. They argue that information is unfairly inaccessible for young Camosun students and stu-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

NEWS BRIEFS

CCSS helps students vote

On Tuesday, September 10, the Camosun College Student Society (CCSS) will be hosting Elections BC for voter registration on both Lansdowne and Interurban campuses for the upcoming provincial election. Then, on Tuesday, October 15 and Wednesday, October 16, advance voting will be available on both Camosun campuses for the provincial election. At Lansdowne, polling will be at Alan Batey Library and Learning Commons 151, and at Interurban polling will be at Helmut Huber 111. This will mark the first time the CCSS

has hosted advance voting on campus. See more information at @camosunstudents on Instagram.

Camosun holds S'TENISTOLW Conference

Over 430 Indigenous post-secondary scholars, knowledge keepers, community leaders, and allies were welcomed at Camosun's S'TENISTOLW Conference at the college's Lansdowne campus from August 20 to 23. Hosted by Eyē? Sqā'lewen, attendees arrived from Canada, New Zealand, and the United States to participate in the conference's aim to build and strengthen ties—fostering a space

for learning and exchange. The theme of the event was "Where the waters meet"—a metaphor for the gathering's intentions to bring together diverse groups.

Grads showcase capstone projects

Graduating Computer Science and Mechanical Engineering students recently presented their capstone projects at the Interurban campus. On Friday, August 16, students showed off their projects, ranging from automated wind vanes to apps, to prospective employers and attendees at the Centre for Trades Education and Innovation. The annual event exhibits

projects demonstrating the creative, technical, and real-world expertise of graduates.

BCFS challenges VIU civil action

On Monday, August 19, the British Columbia Federation of Students (BCFS) announced its success challenging the Vancouver Island University (VIU) civil action against VIU Palestine Solidarity Encampment that was brought to the Supreme Court of British Columbia. The injunction VIU sought included a campus-wide curfew, student protest restrictions, and a prevention of structures erected on campus.

After BCFS' intervention, the court significantly narrowed the interlocutory injunctions granted with the consideration of the federation's intervention arguments. A trial date has yet to be set, but injunction orders will expire after 150 days. The BCFS represents more than 170,000 BC students, aiming to protect and advocate for student rights; Camosun College students are all members of the BCFS.

—LYDIA ZULETA JOHNSON,
STUDENT EDITOR

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college

Revamped Environmental Tech program back after two years

“It’s better for students to kind of come in, get it done, and minimize costs as much as possible and work right away.”

EMRYS PRUSSIN
CAMOSUN COLLEGE

DANIEL ELLERTON
STUDENT EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

After a two-year hiatus, Camosun College’s Environmental Technology (ENVR) program, a science-based diploma that prepares students to develop technologies for tackling the climate crisis and strengthening sustainability, is back, with some changes.

The program has been shortened to two years from three, shaving eight courses off the diploma requirements. Students can still obtain a diploma or choose to transfer to UVic or Royal Roads.

“It’s better for students to kind of come in, get it done, and minimize costs as much as possible and work right away,” says Camosun Environmental Technology chair Emrys Prussin. “You can go to Royal Roads or finish your degree up at UVic; there are a lot of transfer credits in Geography so you can kind of streamline yourself in the Geography degree.”

One of the biggest changes is the Indigenization component.

“We’re offering IST-142, which

is the Land, Water, and Stewardship course, and will be offered in winter of 2025,” says Prussin. “Then for each of our courses, we’ve committed to Indigenizing the ENVR-coded courses. We’re going to try to incorporate an Indigenous component where we work with elders who are willing to share knowledge. My hope is that we can find data sets, environmental and scientific data sets, around environmental issues that really impact Indigenous populations.”

The program has been redesigned to align with what industry leaders need the most in an environmental consultant. The courses have been modernized to include technical skills, field study, and materials. The program is one of three within the lower mainland and Vancouver Island that offer Canadian Aquatic Biomonitoring Information Network training. It also provides students with an accreditation upon graduation, which will be needed in the future to provide environmental advice within Canada.



CAMOSUN COLLEGE

A student on an Environmental Technology trip to the Esquimalt Lagoon; the program is being relaunched this fall.

“When students finish our program, they become eligible to fast-track to become a registered biology technologist,” says Prussin. “There is new legislation coming about... You have to be either... a registered professional biologist or a registered professional environmental tech, and each of those accreditations have a scope of work they’re allowed to do.”

Students in the program do field work at a 160-acre property on Barrow Road in Metchosin that Camosun holds the land title for. It

provides exclusive space for Camosun students to perform field work in the area of forestry.

“I’m hoping we can do some drone work, such as aerial mapping for forestry application,” he says. “There are a lot of technical skills. Like, we’re going to do soils, but we’re going to take more time and draw soils out longer, so it’s not rushed.”

Calculus was removed from the curriculum, but STAT-216 was added in the first year in order to prepare students for their capstone project.

Research methodologies and field sampling techniques, which will expand a student’s ability to apply learned techniques to real-world problems, were added.

“We will also be doing a course where you analyze and interpret data,” says Prussin, “and then in the final year, you do a capstone project where you create a field project where you go and make a field experimental design and collect the data, do the statistics, and then you write a report and do a presentation.”

college

Camosun faculty members concerned over fee deadlines

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

dents returning to education after several years.

“I think this policy, because it’s not explained anywhere, it is in the academic calendar, buried under really technical language that even I had to... really tease apart carefully to understand what the implications are. So I think this policy is capitalizing on students’ lack of awareness of tuition policies rather than actually fulfilling the values that the college claims to have for students and supporting its students,” they say. “I think it’s doing the opposite, and I think that’s really against the ethics of a huge swath of folks who are working and teaching [at Camosun].”

Harris says he believes the college over-communicates. He refutes the claim that the language is too

technical, saying that communication from the college to students has been refined with technology like ChatGPT to allow information to be comprehensible at a grade-school level to be easily accessible to all incoming and returning students.

“We actually had [Camosun student agreements] rewritten last year. They were coming out at around a Grade 12 readability level, and so we had those redone to a Grade 7 or 8 readability level. So we’re very mindful of that. It’s not like we’re ignoring those students. We’re definitely trying to be extra proactive with those students,” he says. “We’re working with the School of Access to make sure the right kinds of information gets communicated out to the learners based on their expertise.”

Both faculty members would like to see a change in the deadline policy that includes more freedom for students’ flexibility and is more focused on learning and less on the college’s finances.

“With inflation and with this policy change in the add/drop, that hugely affects students’ ability to be a part of Camosun College,” says the first faculty member. “At the expense of students’ ability to enrol, maybe long term or in a consistent way... It’s making students bear the brunt of Camosun’s need to balance the budget and to maintain the bottom line. I think that really goes against the general mission of a community college at large.”

Harris confirms that the policy change was made in part to combat financial loss. He says that while the

previous policy had benefits, it was no longer feasible.

“This change also brought us in line... We were the only college in British Columbia that had a 100-percent refund after the start of the term, and it just wasn’t fiscally sustainable for the college. We’re trying to ensure that Camosun is here in 50, 100 years. And so we’re trying to make sure that we’re being as fair as possible while also ensuring that the college is sustainable. Every time a student registers in a course and holds that seat into the term, there’s fixed costs associated with that and that won’t always be able to be backfilled by another waiting learner,” says Harris. “So that’s why we landed on the 80-percent refund, which is also one of the highest in the province.”

The first faculty member recognizes Camosun’s effort to support students. However, they hope to see a change in the deadline policy to further that support.

“I think it is important to note this, that fundamentally, I’m not against Camosun itself. I think Camosun does excellent work at supporting students,” they say. “I have met some of the most dedicated instructors and student support staff here... The issue is with the policy and the priority of balancing the books rather than stewarding the students and taking care of them.”

What’s your opinion on this, as a Camosun student? Email editor@nexusnewspaper.com with a letter to the editor today!

NEXUS
camosun’s student voice since 1990

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drinks

The Great Canadian Beer Festival returns for 30th year



PHOTO PROVIDED

Attendees sip beer at a previous year's Great Canadian Beer Festival.

LANE CHEVRIER
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The Great Canadian Beer Festival (GCBF) is returning for its 30th anniversary, and for the first time in 20 years, it won't be held at Royal Athletic Park. Presented by the Victoria Beer Society (VBS), the event—being held this year at Topaz Park due to a booking conflict—will feature around 65 Canadian breweries serving over 200 beers, with about 80 percent of those being from BC.

Event manager Lee Marchbanks says that a new higher-tier ticket option is coming to GCBF,

similar to the VIP tickets featured at Langford Beer Festival (LBF), with extra perks.

“For the first time ever, we're having a premium ticket option, and that includes a separate entrance, so not waiting quite as long to get into the festival, and there will be a premium ticket area with their own hangout tent,” says Marchbanks. “Probably the biggest highlight of that is a four-bite food pairing by chef Brian Tesolin of the Courtney Room. There has been a collaboration beer series with Ile Sauvage, Herald Street, Whistle Buoy, and Small Gods, so these four beers will

be on tap, plus four different bites paired by the Courtney Room.”

This year, VBS is introducing a new program with sponsor Vessel Liquor Store, allowing people to easily order beer that they encounter at the festival.

“It's a very cool idea that I don't think has been done very much,” says Marchbanks. “There's going to be a QR code at every brewery booth that wants to participate, so the idea is that festival attendees can scan the QR code, and it takes them to Vessel's online store, and they can buy beer in package straight from Vessel. It won't, unfortunately, be every single beer, but I'm hoping that it will be the vast majority, and that as festival-goers are going through and sampling the ones that they really love, they can take them home.”

At last July's LBF, there was a noticeable lack of variety in the beer on offer—Marchbanks says that this was a product of summertime trends within the local industry. He admits that the VBS is responsible for curating a balanced lineup, and says that the GCBF will feature a more fall-appropriate lineup, including some darker brews.

“I will say that the brewery culture right now is leaning towards a lot of sour beers and light beers, and that is a bit of a trend right now,” he says. “With GCBF, as we're moving later into summer, hopefully it will be a bit cooler weather, and we do

“I do think that beer festivals will be reflective of beer styles and beer trends, but, for sure, it is part of our job to curate that list, and so far the GCBF beer list is shaping up to be nice and balanced.”

LEE MARCHBANKS
GREAT CANADIAN BEER FESTIVAL

have a lot more beers registered that are darker, some barrel-aged beers, and definitely a lot more variety. I do think that beer festivals will be reflective of beer styles and beer trends, but, for sure, it is part of our job to curate that list, and so far the GCBF beer list is shaping up to be nice and balanced.”

Attendees whose first beer festival impression was at LBF will find that GCBF is bigger and better in every way, with more breweries, beers, and activities such as games and an inflatable obstacle course, says Marchbanks.

“I would say that new customers, especially if their only experience was at the LBF, can truly expect twice as much, and probably even

more than double the beers to try, and a lot more variety,” he says. “We certainly put lots of our eggs in the basket of GCBF so there's a lot more fun, interactive things to do while you're there. If people had fun at LBF then they'll have even more fun at GCBF, and if people were feeling that LBF was maybe lacking in something, then there will be even more things to entice them to GCBF.”

Great Canadian Beer Festival
Friday, September 6 and
Saturday, September 7
\$25-\$80, Topaz Park
victoriabeersociety.com/gcbf

Win a pair of tickets to go to the Great Canadian Beer Festival on Friday, September 6!
Just email editor@nexusnewspaper.com and tell us what your fave craft beer is.
First come, first served.

CAMOSUN COLLEGE STUDENT SOCIETY SPONSORED CONTENT

Students continue to get health and dental coverage through student society

If you're a Camosun College student—and if you're reading this, you likely are—you're automatically enrolled in a Canada Life health and dental plan through the Camosun College Student Society (CCSS) and its partner Gallivan.

All eligible students—domestic and international—are in the plan, with the fees added as part of your tuition fees. The health and dental plans were approved by a student referendum in 1999 and, as such, are now a requirement of being a student at Camosun.

What students are automatically entered into the plans? Any student that is enrolled in 60 hours of class time over a seven-week period; is a member of the CCSS; and resides in Canada (you can be studying in person or online).

If you're taking a part-time course load because of physical or mental conditions, you may be eligible to opt-in to the plan; contact the Student Benefits Plan Office for details before the deadline of the first semester of your academic year (see below for contact information).

You should know there's a validation period. For the first 45 to 60 days from the start of the term, you'll have to pay for your health and dental expenses.

But keep the receipts! After the enrolment process is complete, you can submit online claims for reimbursement.

If you're returning after your first semester, no need to worry about this, you may continue using the plan without disruption. Your benefits are valid for 12 months.

When you're enrolled, you'll apply and get a benefits card that you can show the service provider; this will give them all the information they'll need to direct bill Canada Life. You'll just have to pay the co-portion not covered by the plan (some service providers aren't set up for direct billing, so you'll need to pay, then submit a claim to get reimbursed).

“The CCSS offices at either campus are available to assist students with any questions or issues with the health and dental plan,” says CCSS benefits administrator Christine Desrochers. “Please stop by and we can help you navigate your benefits.”

So, what's covered? Visit mystudentplan.ca/camosun for details, but some of the benefits you get as a student include prescription drugs, vision coverage, paramedical practitioners, mental health supports, emergency travel assistance, and dental

benefits. Take a look at the brochure reprinted here for more information on this coverage.

If you have comparable coverage, you may want to opt-out of the plan, or consider coordinating both plans; the deadline to do so is 30 days from the official start date of your program. Contact the CCSS to discuss options.



Students can also add their family on the benefits plan during the first 30 days from when they have been assessed the fees.

Desrochers suggests taking a look at the CCSS' select savings partners.

“These are different providers that offer students on our plan a discount, and a great way to maximize your benefits,” she says. “Drop by our office at either campus for the most up-to-date list.”

To contact the CCSS to discuss the health and dental plans, Lansdowne students, go to 101B Fisher or email ccssplan@camosun.ca; Interurban students go to Campus Centre 111 or email interurbanplan@camosun.ca. Lansdowne students can also call 250-370-3696, and Interurban students can call 250-370-3869.

Have your student ID number ready when you contact the CCSS.

Health Benefits	Coverage
Prescription Drug	80% Maximum of \$3,000 per benefit year. Based on the BC Provincial Formulary with a generic rider.
Vision	100% Plan covers one eye exam, eyeglasses or contact lenses to a combined maximum of \$125 in a 24 month period.
Paramedical Practitioners	80% \$30 per visit, to an overall plan maximum of \$360 per benefit year for: Podiatrist or Chiropractist, Chiropractor, Registered Massage Therapist*, Naturopath, Osteopath, Physiotherapist*, Acupuncture, Certified Athletic Therapist* *Physician's prescription required Overall plan maximum of \$300 per benefit year for: Speech Language Pathologist* *Physician's prescription required \$50 per visit, to an overall plan maximum of \$500 per benefit year for: Psychologist, Social Worker or Registered Clinical Counselor
Dental Accident	80% Maximum of \$1,000 per accident. Services must be performed within 12 months of accident. If treatment is scheduled to occur more than 90 days after the impact, a treatment plan must be submitted before the end of the 90-day period. Pre-authorization required.
Ambulance	80% Maximum of \$250 per occurrence.
Medical Equipment & Supplies	80% Including but not limited to: Crutches, wheelchair, hospital-type bed, prosthetics, rigid and semi-rigid braces. Custom-made orthopedic shoes or orthotics limited to \$150 per foot, per benefit year. Blood Glucose Monitors to a maximum of \$150 during a 5 year period. Prescription & pre-authorization may be required. Not solely for athletic use.
Emergency Travel Assistance	100% Maximum of \$5,000,000 per lifetime.
Other Insurances & Services	- Tutorial, Accidental Death & Dismemberment, mywellness Enhanced: includes 3-hours of counseling sessions.

Access all benefits coverage details at www.mystudentplan.ca/camosun

Dental Benefits
Please submit an estimate/pre-authorization prior to specialist services and any dental treatment plan exceeding \$500.

Annual Maximum - \$800 per benefit year		
Diagnostic & Preventative	100%	Camosun Dental Clinic: Includes one annual exam, x-rays, polishing, scaling and fluoride once per benefit year. You are encouraged, but not required, to use the Camosun Dental Clinic.
	80%	Alternative Dental Provider: Includes one annual exam, polishing and 2 units of scaling once per benefit year.
Minor Restorative	70%	Fillings.
Extractions	50%	Limited to 2 wisdom teeth per benefit year.
Endodontic & Periodontic	50%	2 additional units of scaling/root planing per benefit year.

In the event of any discrepancy between the information herein and our contract with the insurer, the terms of the contract will apply. All benefits payable through the student plan are based on reasonable and customary charges.

I, AI

A classroom discussion

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is the seemingly paradoxical concept of non-living entities generating persistent logic and reason—which, from the earliest days of ancient philosophers such as Descartes, are the singular defining features of what it means to be human.

The first actual attempts at simulating human intelligence came in 1943, when academics Walter Pitts and Warren McCulloch published ideas in *The Bulletin of Mathematical Biophysics*, wherein they used mathematical functions to simulate a “neural network” such as those found in the human brain. While this function may be considered similar to today’s circuit boards, study shifted to AI as we know it, which can be traced back to a conceptual experiment by Alan Turing in 1950.

In “Computer Machinery & Intelligence,” Turing chose to avoid getting hung up on defining a “machine” and what it means “to think.” Instead he focused on functionality, asking if machines can do what we as thinking entities can, and decided that if a typewritten conversation between a machine and a human could be considered indistinguishable, then a machine can be considered intelligent. This became known as the Turing Test.

Along the winding path that took us from mathematical algorithms to Siri, computer programmers eventually formed rudimentary language parsing software, which identified pre-programmed combinations of keywords as containing “meaning.” This is probably best personified through the early text-based adventure games of the late

Verifying the info you receive from AI is of utmost importance since ChatGPT is notorious for haughtily telling bald-faced lies based on some obscure *Onion* article that it believes to be absolute fact, because mama never told her little chatbot that you shouldn’t believe every byte of data you scrape out of the dank recesses of the internet.

’70s and ’80s, wherein a player might instruct the computer to “take food” or “throw rock break window.”

This labour-intensive process quickly revealed a programmer’s searing holy hellfire: if intelligence is based around explicit instructions, then complex intelligence requires manually pre-programming millions of commands to account for every possible eventuality. Called “bottom-up” programming, this was quickly found to be impracticable, and eventually “top-down” knowledge evolution was conceived, which we now know as machine learning. This begins with a simple premise and allows the computer to use trial and error to rewrite and refine its own rules and associations.

Fast forward to 2017, and our very perceptions of reality are thrown violently into contest through the emergence of deepfakes, or the process of using machine learning to generate a convincing video depiction of a real person, and with that, the AI ball as we know it was set into motion. Since then, AI technology has become eerily sophisticated, and we now have AI personalities that can, in a superficial sense, achieve the hypothetical test that Turing envisioned nearly a century ago.

There are three main avenues of AI that we may encounter: speech synthesis/cloning, image/video generation, and text-based artificial personalities. It’s the latter two that are causing the most stir, with visual AI algorithms capable of generating shockingly coherent artwork from complex instructions, and conversational AI algorithms creating (mostly) passable writings.

This article explores AI from an academic standpoint. Is procedurally generated artwork legally distinct from the real artwork that the AI was trained on? Is it considered transformative fair use, or is it at least ethical? Can AI-generated writing be trusted as accurate? And can the use of AI in assignments be considered cheating?

Unfortunately, the unprecedented ingenuity of this technology leaves many of these inquiries in a murky grey area, but through discussions with some Camosun instructors, I’ll do my best to find some clarity.

Legality

The question of legality emerges primarily in the procedural generation of AI artwork, which is trained by assimilating millions of actual, human-created art pieces. Those opposed to AI art say that art must be original material, and because AI algorithms are trained on real artwork without the creator’s consent, this is, in their opinion, considered stealing. The opposition states that just as human artists are inspired by pre-existing media, the crucial element lies in the concept of “transformative fair use,” which creates something similar but entirely distinct, with no permission necessary.

Even the concept of art itself is crumbling under scrutiny. Some argue that true art cannot be created by machines, because art is an emotional expression of the human experience. Others feel that art has always existed independently of the creator—that

the meaning lies in the artwork itself, and if a piece causes an emotional reaction in the human viewing it, it has artistic merit.

Camosun College Criminal Justice instructor Michel Legault says that as far as legality is concerned, the answer is undefined, because laws and policies are largely a product of unfortunate hindsight.

“The ‘legality’ is the term that probably creates the grey area, because there’s no legal framework *per se*. Laws are made as a result of ‘something went wrong.’ Yes, some laws are made for prevention, but most of the laws are made as a result of something that happened, an offence occurred or whatever,” he says. “So if AI is used in a way to create a criminal offence of some sort, then legislation will probably follow at that point. In the meantime, academic institutions or even companies, for that matter, have to create their own policy around the use of AI, saying, we expect a level of critical thinking, we expect you to do your research, understanding what you bring to the table.”

“If I graduate students into the workforce that don’t have the skills or capabilities that we’re certifying on the basis of credentials, is that my fault because I didn’t catch them, or is that the student’s fault because they used AI and passed it off as their own work?”

LYNELLE YUTANI
CAMOSUN COLLEGE

Integrity

The most rampant problem arising in schools regarding the use of AI is when students procedurally generate the answers to their assignments and try to pass them off as legitimate using engines such as ChatGPT. Originally, my opinion was that ChatGPT uses quite a lot of words to say nothing of actual substance, so it must be laughably easy to spot and weed out, so therefore not really a true academic threat.

However, that view was challenged by English instructor Kelly Pitman, who says that students who use AI put a heavy labour load on teachers, as well as actively contribute to the erosion of trust between instructors and students as a whole.

“It requires, typically on average, several hours per assignment that may be dependent on AI, because I have to go through a process of checking through students’ writing, and I have to talk to the student, and I often have to schedule a rewrite for them,” she says. “That’s how it’s transformed my life, and I’d have to say my fear is that it’s also transforming my relationship with students, because your default is always, ‘Hmm, this seems like a kind of set essay from a book, I wonder if the student wrote it,’ and you’re constantly having to ask that question... and often the answer is that they did not.”

Detecting plagiarism used to be a simple process of copy and pasting text into a search engine to evaluate if there were any glaringly similar matches. Unfortunately, AI-generated text is too variable to be caught by such strict parameters, and the instructor has to rely on their intuition around evaluating conflicting writing styles. Accusing a student of academic dishonesty is no trivial matter, and while she has only ever been wrong once, Pitman lives with the constant anxiety of misinterpreting the situation and falsely accusing an innocent student.

“I’m also very afraid of being wrong, and accusing someone who has really worked hard to do what they had to do, but I have had a lot of conversations with students who have used AI, and they are painful and difficult conversations where they tell me why, and I tell them why they can’t, and I feel for them,” she says. “Often they know it’s wrong, and they’re doing it because of extrinsic factors. They’re nervous about it, they’re panicking. They’re working a full-time job, they’re living in a dump with a roommate they don’t like, and worried about the future, and there’s a lot of motivation [to cut corners].”

Camosun College Faculty Association president Lynelle Yutani, who is also a Camosun instructor, says that, like Pitman, rather than blind vindictive punishment, her primary focus is understanding the student’s justifications, in order to gain some context on their poor choice.

“Whenever I’ve had a student in my class who has bent those academic integrity boundaries, the reason behind that has always interested me more than the thing that’s actually happened,” says Yutani. “The pressure to get good grades, or the consequences of failing out of an expensive program, or sometimes there’s ego involved, all of these things that drive us to do things that are very survival-instinct based.”

Consequences

The repercussions of getting caught for cheating extend far beyond the immediate consequences of getting caught or the perceived short-term benefits of following the path of least resistance. Pitman thinks that students consid-

AI-bot in artificial intelligence

Story by Lane Chevrier, contributing writer
Art by Ray Nufer, student editorial assistant

ering cheating should re-evaluate the very reason that they are paying an arm and a leg to attend college in the first place.

“What I wish is that students ask themselves more often is whether it matters whether they know the content of the courses that they’re taking. Is it about a ticket to a job or is it about learning?” she says. “That’s the core question, because if it’s really just a bunch of hoops to go through so that you can start your future, you’ve got your teachers insisting that you learn and that’s not your priority. There will come a time when you will be expected to demonstrate the skills that it says on paper that you have. So you’re losing that opportunity to make sure that you will be able to do that.”

Yutani says that the students who graduate without legitimately learning are not only doing themselves a disservice—it also reflects negatively on the instructors whose job it is to make sure students who traverse the education system emerge rightly and thoroughly educated.

“If I graduate students into the workforce that don’t have the skills or capabilities that we’re certifying on the basis of credentials,” she says, “is that my fault because I didn’t catch them, or is that the student’s fault because they used AI and passed it off as their own work?”

To Pitman, the value of education does not lie solely in written knowledge, but also the ability to reason, problem solve, and think critically. Students who take the time to learn and understand are also taking the time to improve how they resolve problems and challenges in the lives of themselves and those around them.

“I’m surprised at how often I have to work with a student to get them to think about the knowledge, and what value that might have for them, and what value it might have for a culture that we have people who can think their own way out of problems,” says Pitman. “I see myself performing a civic duty as well as preparing people for employment, and I don’t want to send people away with a college education or a university degree who can’t read a book or who can’t spot a problem in an argument, can’t think their way through to a new solution that no one’s thought of.”

“I’m also very afraid of being wrong, and accusing someone who has really worked hard to do what they had to do, but I have had a lot of conversations with students who have used AI, and they are painful and difficult conversations where they tell me why, and I tell them why they can’t, and I feel for them.”

KELLY PITMAN
CAMOSUN COLLEGE

Perspectives

Yutani believes that AI is not a magic technological solution, and that it has the potential to do more harm than good if not used responsibly.

“It’s not a panacea to solve all your problems and make everything easier. Depending on how it can be used, it’s very possible for it to make things worse. And I think that’s what we’re seeing in general, in pop culture media,” says Yutani.

Pitman points out that AI can only ever function using popular points of view that have already existed across many years of the internet, and that in order to move forward as a culture, we need to find new discussions and new ideas.

“Another thing that I think students need to think about with AI is we’re living in a time of great development of our ideas, about identity and power, and AI by default is reproducing dominant discourse,” she adds. “We can’t just keep rehearsing and revising the same old knowledge; that’s been getting us nowhere.”

AI algorithms have no sense of morality, and this subtle trait is what makes us human. The ability to distinguish between multiple morally complex scenarios is something AI will never be able to do, because it lacks empathy.

“The important question is, ‘What is the human element, and does it matter?’ If I ask someone to write an argument about the best political candidate for the 2025 federal election, AI could probably do a comparison,” says Pitman. “But a human being can have a subtlety to bring to that conversation, including putting together a moral subtlety that AI cannot do. A machine doesn’t make value judgements, and value judgements are a lot of what we do when we communicate and work together.”

On the other hand, like technologies that have come before it, AI can play a positive role in the classroom and workplace, and shouldn’t be viewed as strictly negative or creating double standards.

“I’m not sure if it’s so terrible when you look at it from an equity or accommodation perspective,” says Yutani. “Not everybody can have the same level of skills, but if we have tools that allow people to achieve a similar level, is that the worst thing in the world? If tomorrow you’re employed and your employer says, I need you to get this thing done, and you don’t know how to do it, well, for a lot of people the first step would be Google, YouTube, and AI. If you deliver a product that works for your employer and they’re satisfied with it, then you’re successful in the workplace, and if I’m in an applied learning classroom, and I say, ‘No, you can’t do any of those things,’ that’s a bit disingenuous, don’t you think?”

Yutani believes that open communication is the key to properly integrating AI into the classroom—there is no reason for a student to slink around in the shadows using this forbidden technology surreptitiously, like a child sneaking into the kitchen to get a midnight snack. The knowledge—and the snacks—are there to be consumed freely; we just need to communicate openly about it.

“If you verify everything that’s there to the right source, and then you’re able to cite the right source, it’s doing the work twice, in a sense, because if you did the research right from the get-go, you arrive at the same place.”

MICHEL LEGAULT
CAMOSUN COLLEGE

“To me, it’s not AI that’s a problem, it’s our approach to incorporating it into our lives that is not being done in the most appropriate and collaborative way,” says Yutani. “I think it’s about disclosure and consent. Let’s agree to share when and how we’ve used AI on anything, whether it’s me producing material to you, whether it’s you turning in material to me. Let’s agree that we’re just going to be transparent about that.”

Legault agrees that the key to embracing AI is to treat it like any other information source: critically, which requires stringent verification and citation. However, it should be noted that verifying AI sources can result in far more work than you would have to do if you just used Google, like our pre-Generation-Alpha ancestors did.

“There’s nothing wrong with doing research, the idea is what do you do and how do you bring that research? Do you properly quote it, do you cite it? If you’re asking AI to do your paper, there’s some very positive aspect to that, if you are prepared to say so, as well as make sure that you are able to bring your own knowledge to the table,” he says. “You have to be able to critically approach the information in front of you, and verify it. And if you verify everything that’s there to the right source, and then you’re able to cite the right source, it’s doing the work twice, in a sense, because if you did the research right from the get-go, you arrive at the same place.”

Verifying the info you receive from AI is of utmost importance since ChatGPT is notorious for haughtily telling bald-faced lies based on some obscure *Onion* article that it believes to be absolute fact, because mama never told her little chatbot that you shouldn’t believe every byte of data you scrape out of the dank recesses of the internet.

At the end of the day, AI is here to stay, and the sooner we can stop treating it like some grubby little thief whispering treacherous filth into our ears, the sooner we can gingerly embrace it before moving onto some other groundbreaking technology at which we can wave our torches and pitchforks.

Pitman reminds us that while hard work is a virtue that cannot be understated, teachers can also do their part to help struggling students so they won’t have to resort to criminal enterprises to pass.

“I think we just have to accept that it’s not unfair or a bad thing if something takes work. AI is much easier, and that’s its attraction, right, but I think Thomas Edison said that there’s no replacement for hard work,” she says. “But I also think teachers have a role to play in assuring that they’re thinking about how to help students master the material, how to layer the knowledge so that they go into an assignment with a pretty good basis.”

Yutani agrees that people shouldn’t get carried away by the negative connotations that AI has stirred up, and instead focus on using it in a way that advances our cause as mostly intelligent, sometimes-sentient living creatures.

“I’ve actually heard this ‘sky is falling’ scenario about every major technological advancement over the last 30 years, that’s been my whole life,” she says. “I recognize that it’s going to be difficult, we’re going to make mistakes, but in the end, society only moves forward, and we’re going to have to make the best of that and do so with the least collateral damage.”

music

Camosun student brings the dreamy noise with Black Treacle

“We want people to listen to us and feel like they’re listening to a lost eight-track recording.”

RAY NUFER
BLACK TREACLE

EMILY WELCH
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Local band Black Treacle is making an impression in the music scene, and it’s easy to see why. Their sound is dreamy yet heavy, and instantly transports the listener to a time of basement block parties and Sony Walkmans, a time where tapes of The Cure, The Charlatans, and The Smiths lined teenagers’ shelves. Black Treacle’s music is melancholy, unique, and it imprints itself on those who hear it.

Vocalist/guitarist Ray Nufer—who is also a third-year Camosun Visual Arts student, and *Nexus* student editorial assistant—says that the band started as a studio experiment and blossomed from there.

“We played our first show in January, so we’ve been performing live for about half a year,” says Nufer. “After our first year, we released an album... Harry [Breeze, guitar/bass synths/vocals] comes from a recording background, and he was the one who got me interested in tape machines, envelope filters, and other kinds of vintage equipment. Harry brought his recording background to Black Treacle, and I brought a great deal

of lyric writing and songwriting—I come from a writing, poetry, and art background. So what I personally bring to Black Treacle is a lot of the visuals, the photography, illustrations, sometimes animation, so together I think we make a pretty great team.”

And along with drummer Andrew Brown, each band member has been influenced by different music, which helps give Black Treacle—who are playing at this year’s Good Party fest, which is free, although donations for charity will be accepted—its unique sound.

“Harry is really ’60s, ’70s inspired, and I’m a lot more ’80s, ’90s post-punk inspired. We want people to listen to us and feel like they’re listening to a lost eight-track recording.”

Even though Black Treacle is fairly new on the music scene, they have already had some very memorable musical experiences. For example, the band’s first gig was supposed to be in a little apartment in Chinatown; it got shut down at the last minute and the band hit social media looking for a new space.

“So, someone answered who had just started putting on painting



PHOTO PROVIDED

Black Treacle, featuring Camosun College student Ray Nufer (left), tap into the spirit of post-punk with their sound.

parties in the basement of Archer Gallery... This person had never hosted music events, we had never put on a live show. But we went there and saw how big and beautiful a space it was, he had lights, we had our own sound equipment, plus one of Andrew’s friends who knew how to drum tech, and all the bands collaborated to make a proper show space, and over 200 people came to the show, like everyone who had heard of Black Treacle and at least

100 more. It turned out to be a really, really big night, and we played fabulously.”

Nufer says that they still have people approach them about that performance, but the band’s first love will always be the studio.

“We’re a group that was born in the studio, and that will always be our main prerogative, but I personally really like performing,” she says. “Harry and I both agree that we’d like to keep performing on

the west coast, where post-punk and alternative rock are pretty well received. We don’t really have ambitions other than just keeping it local and staying true to our creative selves.”

Good Party fest
Friday, September 13
Saturday, September 14
Sunday, September 15
Free, Vic West
Community Centre

music

Calgary’s No Brainer headlines triple-threat punk show

“I’ve done multiple releases with lots of bands over the years, but this one is probably the one I’m most proud of. We really worked hard on it.”

MIKE GRANT
NO BRAINER

RAY NUFER
STUDENT EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

Feeling lucky, punks of Victoria? Then Calgary’s No Brainer, Powell River’s Electric Brains, and locals Pooched are ready for you on September 7.

No Brainer vocalist Mike Grant is excited to come back to Victoria—he’s previously played at Logan’s Pub and Phoenix Bar & Grill in his other bands, but this is his first time coming to Victoria with No Brainer.

The members of No Brainer have known each other for years—Grant met guitarist Bill Kerr and drummer Tom Kapiczowski in Grade 7.

“We all met in junior high, and my first band ever was actually with them, called Mossleigh,” says Grant. “So I’ve known them the better part of my whole life.”

No Brainer is made up of most of the members of Mossleigh, with bassist Marcus Wodrzaka join-

ing the lineup in 2018; Grant met Wodrzaka in audio engineering school. Together, their influences are united, falling under the general umbrella of melodic punk.

“Some of our biggest influences are this band called the Swingin’ Uters. They’re on Fat Wreck Chords, they’ve been around for a long time,” he says. “They have that East Bay Area punk sound that I would say is similar to Calgary punk. We’re influenced by bands like Bad Brains, Cock Sparrer, even Bad Religion.”

Grant is optimistic about the future of his hometown punk scene, as it’s made a major comeback since the pandemic.

“Pre-COVID, it was a bit on the decline. There wasn’t as many new bands or even people going to shows,” says Grant. “Recently, there’s this crop of young kids that are just killing it. There’s so many new bands popping up, and the scene feels very united. Everyone’s



PHOTO PROVIDED

Calgary-based punk rockers No Brainer are playing at Lucky Bar on Saturday, September 7.

super supportive of each other, and the shows are just bonkers.”

No Brainer’s debut album, *Dead Weight*, was released on Outhouse Records in the spring of 2024, recorded with a BC connection: Vancouver-based producer Jesse Gander, who has played in Victoria many times himself.

“It’s our first LP. We recorded it out at Rain City Records the previous year with Jesse Gander. I’ve done multiple releases with lots of

bands over the years, but this one is probably the one I’m most proud of. We really worked hard on it.”

And the achievements don’t stop there: No Brainer recently got to open up for Circle Jerks and Adolescents in Calgary.

“It’s pretty much a dream come true,” says Grant. “They’re two of my favourite ‘80s hardcore bands. [Circle Jerks vocalist] Keith Morris is amazing.”

By the time they get to Victoria,

No Brainer will have toured Eastern Canada, playing Toronto and Ottawa on Labour Day weekend.

“If you can come out to see us, please do,” says Grant. “It’ll be a good time.”

No Brainer
7 pm Saturday, September 7
\$15, Lucky Bar
luckybar.ca



Listen and Learn

by AJ Aiken

Unravelling the cassette revival

The ballad of the cassette tape is revolutionary but short, holds a special place in the hearts of Gen X, and includes a pencil.

Nostalgia has been hitting music formats again—cassettes have been making a comeback. The ballad of the cassette tape is revolutionary but short, holds a special place in the hearts of Gen X, and includes a pencil.

First off, cassette tapes were made for dictation, not music, due to the ease of recording. However, that's why cassettes took off in music—anyone could record anywhere with minimal equipment. All that was needed to record was, at its crudest, a boombox and a quiet place. Independent bands could record albums and make demos on cassettes without high studio costs.

The cassette tape was first introduced by Philips in 1963 at the Berlin Radio Show. Despite the debut of cassette home stereos in 1964 (hello, mixtape); the first music album released on cassette in 1966; and the replacement of 8-track players with car cassette decks in 1968, it took 20 years before cassettes became the most popular music format. That claim was short-lived as CDs started outselling cassettes at the end of the '80s.

The sound was turned up by Sony's introduction of the Walkman in 1979—the portable music player

that revolutionized how people listened to music. For the first time, people could easily listen to their music wherever they went.

In 2017, a resurgence started. *Billboard* magazine credits *Guardians of the Galaxy* as helping with bringing back the nostalgic music format, as main character Peter Quill had a Sony Walkman and his "Awesome Mix" tapes, which were released on cassette.

According to 2023 cassette record sales, the *Guardians of the Galaxy* theory appears sharp. The top five spots for highest cassette sales goes to *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 1: Awesome Mix Vol. 1*, *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2: Awesome Mix Vol. 2*, and *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3: Awesome Mix Vol. 3* holding spots one, three, and four respectively and Taylor Swift's *1989 (Taylor's Version)* and *Speak Now (Taylor's Version)* holding two and five.

Another helpful factor for the cassette revival were the supply-chain issues vinyl pressing plants saw during the pandemic. To make up for the lack of vinyl, artists turned to other formats, including cassettes.

Sales of cassettes have made a significant increase: 81,000 units



AJ AIKEN/NEXUS

The cassette tape and some of the associated vital accessories needed for the complete experience.

were sold in the US in 2015 and 436,400 in 2022 (granted, that's not exactly the 450 million sold in the US in 1988). Artists like Swift and Maren Morris are putting out new albums on cassette, while record companies are re-releasing albums on cassette, but in smaller runs than CDs.

It's not cassette tapes themselves that Gen X speaks fondly of—it's mixtapes. Prior to pirating music online, Gen X was recording music off the radio onto cassettes, hopefully without the DJ, or anyone

else in the room, talking. With a double cassette deck, songs were recorded from the radio recording or purchased music onto a blank tape to create a mixtape.

These curated tapes were given as gifts to friends or used to introduce people to new music. It was special because everyone knew how much time and effort it took to create a mixtape. Some people would create their own inserts to personalize the mixtape even more.

There's been a long-standing Gen X joke that the younger gen-

erations will never know what a pencil has to do with cassette tapes. The explanation is simple: when the magnetic tape of a cassette accidentally gets caught in the player and unravels, the hexagonal shape of a pencil fits well into the wheels of a cassette tape, making it easier to wind up to fix.

The pencil, the mixtapes, being able to do it yourself: all part of the enduring nostalgia of cassettes, and just some of the reasons why they'll always have a special place in music history.

review

Victoria Fringe Festival 2024 review: *Welcome to Croglin* dramatic comedy entirely devoid of both drama and comedy



PHOTO PROVIDED

Welcome to Croglin was part of this year's Fringe; see nexusnewspaper.com and our next issue for more Fringe reviews.

LANE CHEVRIER
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Welcome to Croglin is a short play produced by Victoria theatre company Outpost 31 and presented through the Fringe Festival. Written by David Elendune, it tells of a struggling playwright who falls asleep and dreams that the ghost of Katharine Hepburn visits him to "right his wrongs," according to the production's description. While I'm not sure what wrongs were righted, I certainly know what wrongs

were written, as the production, which I hesitate to call a play, flails through a meandering 55 minutes of monologues and diatribes, unfunny jokes, and shallow philosophical ramblings without ever once approaching anything that could be considered a plot.

Christina Patterson plays a vague approximation of Hepburn in her 50s, and, for what it's worth, I could see a passing resemblance in her performance to televised interviews of Hepburn later in her

life. She was brash, candid, and unapologetic, a characteristic Hepburn became famous for. Regardless of this illusion, Hepburn's voice is merely a mouthpiece for Elendune, who riddles the script with modern cultural references that rarely existed before 2020.

The playwright, portrayed by Jared Gowen, offers a rather wooden depiction of an overwrought artist. Despite having a few vulnerable lines that were meant to humanize the character, the performance was

As far as plot goes, there is literally none to speak of. Nothing happens. For nearly an hour, the two characters trade opinions with as much narrative throughline as scrolling through TikTok videos, frequently interspersed with something that could pass for humour in a kind of '90s sitcom sort of way.

not nuanced enough to create an emotional response in the audience. I can hardly fault Gowen for this, however, as the script barely lights upon any semblance of depth in his character for more than a few seconds. Before the audience can develop any kind of connection with the character, the reins are yanked violently back to jumping from one non-sequitur diatribe to the next, with productive dialogue usurped by tedious monologues from one character (usually Hepburn), while the other stares blankly on.

The content comes across as either unprofound or unoriginal, one example being a monologue about the hardships of women that seemed uncannily similar to the recent *Barbie* movie. Still others reminded me of the sort of highfalutin philosophical waxing

that one might expect to hear from their overly intoxicated uncle as he follows a straight line about as accurately as a slalom skier.

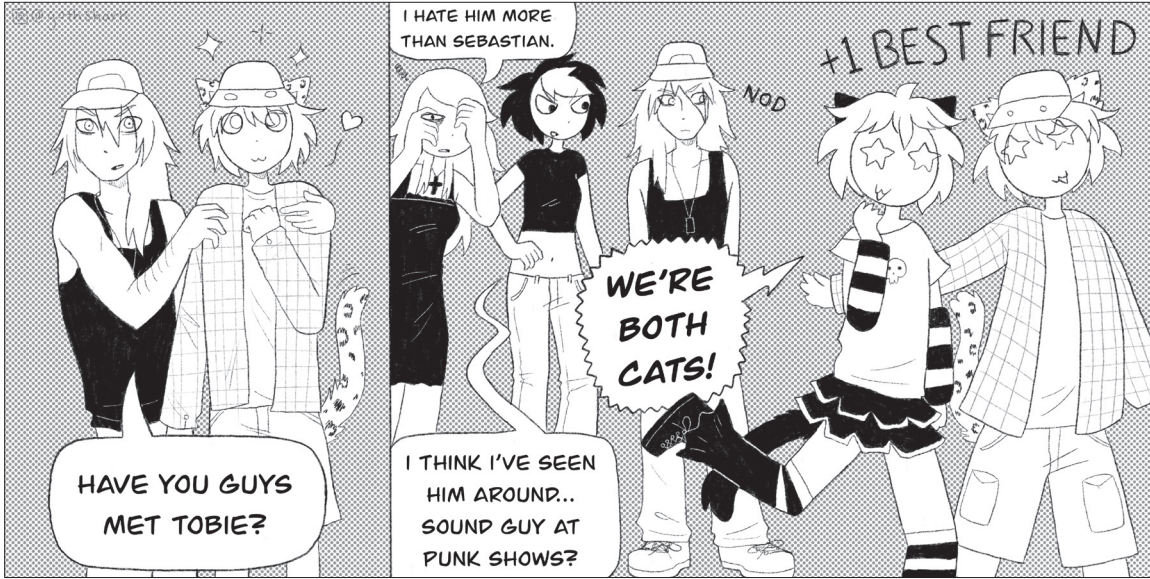
As far as plot goes, there is literally none to speak of. Nothing happens. For nearly an hour, the two characters trade opinions with as much narrative throughline as scrolling through TikTok videos, frequently interspersed with something that could pass for humour in a kind of '90s sitcom sort of way.

While Elendune has won several awards for prior work, in this case I think I can let his own writing speak for itself, with the most ironically apropos line of the play, which went something like this:

"It's quite hard, isn't it, this writing business?"

"As hard as Chuck Norris on Viagra!"

Ruby Rioux and the Bats from Saturn - Ray Nufer



Natural Selection - Emily Welch



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3. "Lydia's Film Critique: Happy Together," July 3, 2024
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Lydia's Film Critique

by Lydia Zuleta Johnson

Robot Monster

Robot Monster is nothing less than a triumph in American cinema and nothing more than cheap trash.

If two words effectively attract swarms of schlock-hungry audiences, they are “robot” and “monster.” Plastered in large red text across an illustrated poster, *Robot Monster* (1953) was a lucrative success, bringing in \$1 million USD at the box office. It isn't hard to imagine why—the picture was filmed in elegant 3D, and with a title like that, amusement is almost guaranteed.

On its very surface, the film is an abysmal B-movie classic with several gaping plot holes and novelty up the yin-yang. Its abundance of poorly executed gimmicks and the Automatic Billion Bubble Machine (accredited to N.A. Fisher Chemical Products, Inc.) is only skin deep. Below what many naively consider a staple in garbage cinema is possibly an abstract research into the mind of an eight-year-old boy overly consumed by fiction.

As the film opens, credits roll over a spread of comic-book covers. A menacing score composed by Oscar-winner Elmer Bernstein dissolves into a ditsy, childish tune as school-aged boy Johnny (Gregory Moffett) approaches over the hill, dressed in spacesuit getup. Bubbles float from out of his toy gun toward the audience's anaglyph glasses.

As the child and his young sister Carla (Pamela Paulson) stroll through the rocky Bronson Canyon terrain, they find two clean-cut archaeologists busy at work. After a short ramble about spacemen and robots, the children are whisked away by their mother (Selena Royle) and older sister Alice (Claudia Barrett) for a routine nap.

When Johnny wakes, powerful lightning bolts strike, and up above a bright flashing light grows enor-



mous before consuming the screen completely. A quick cut jumps immediately to a seemingly unrelated sequence of battling prehistoric reptiles.

It's easy to mistake this scene as incoherent nonsense, but upon closer examination, it's clear that director Phil Tucker is just getting started.

What Johnny and the audience solemnly learn is that he is among the last of six humans on Earth: himself, his two sisters, his mother, and the aforesaid archaeologists. What has happened to the rest of mankind can be attributed to Ro-Man, a portly half-gorilla, half-diver alien. He putters around his territory in a slow-moving form on account of his rotund body. Very little of him is threatening but his

words are mostly clear: “Now I must kill you.”

Through the rim of Ro-Man's diving helmet, a concealed face is covered in gauze—his only visible expression: a shake of the fist.

After a few deaths and a brief affair between a love-starved Ro-Man and a reluctant Alice, the film closes with a big twist and bookends itself with “THE END” blocked over the spread of comic-book covers, the child-like dreamscape locked in between.

Robot Monster is nothing less than a triumph in American cinema and nothing more than cheap trash. Death, destruction, pain, and glory, the timeless film is survived by an affectionate crowd of cult followers.

Pair with a glass of Plymouth gin and eat your heart out, *Citizen Kane*.



Fellas, Let's Figure It Out by Jaxson Smith Peterson

Bro, you need a little bro



PHOTO PROVIDED

The author (right) mentoring a young baseball player this summer.

This summer, I had the privilege of serving as an assistant coach for the Victoria Mariners baseball team. While the baseball side of the experience was more than enjoyable, I found the most rewarding part of this job to be mentoring the young men on the team.

I have always believed that sport is a fantastic medium for learning about life. Sports teach kids that you won't succeed 100 percent of the time and that failure is necessary for growth. Kids who play sports learn that the more you practice something the better you get at it, and learn how to persevere through adversity. These lessons are much easier learned in a positive environment with good coaching. Young athletes will often just shut down if they have a drill-sergeant-type coach whose only form of communication is screaming. This is why coaching a youth sports team can be such a great experience for both the kids and yourself if you provide positive reinforcement and teach the athletes in a constructive way.

By the time most of us reach college or our early 20s we have a plethora of life experience to draw from (not nearly as much as those

who are several decades older than us, which is why I think every young man should have a mentor, but that is a topic for another day). As college students we have dealt with many of the stereotypical middle-school or high-school struggles that kids are facing. Most importantly, we have dealt with them recently and understand how to work through things like relationship problems and bullying.

Having a person who is younger than their parents and teachers but still old enough to provide advice, wisdom, and a listening ear means a lot more than you'd think to a kid who is going through struggles.

Drawing on your past experience, telling funny stories, and, more than anything, listening to them can make all the difference in the world to a kid who is struggling. Using the medium of sport to get through to the athlete, whether it be through a metaphor, comparison, or even just being around the game, can really help to get through to them.

Mentoring kids or teenagers is a unique, deeply fulfilling experience and one that I think every college student should experience.

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What's on the go with the CCSS?

Camosun Student Society
@camosunstudents

Are you new at Camosun and wondering what the Camosun College Student Society is and what we do? Here's a brief look at some of the things our student directors have been up to!

All through June, our Pride Director, Terence, was busy making Pride month amazing! From Rainbow Reels movie nights to the Camosun Running Club 'Run with Pride' collaboration, there was something for everyone to enjoy!

Our Indigenous Director, Rose, is really looking forward to meeting her fellow indigenous students at Camosun and is busy planning for September! She invites you to email her to get put on the mailing list and be the first to find out about future activities!

Polly, our International Director, has been working on an exciting project called the Weekly Dose! This project will feature weekly check-in videos with the aim of supporting mental health and wellness among Camosun students. Follow @camosun.weeklydose on Instagram to check it out!

Camosun Sustainability Collective and Director Elaine recently joined Surfriders at the Esquimalt Beach Lagoon Clean up and helped remove loads of trash from the beach! Want to join their next adventure on September 8th? Follow @camosunsustainability IG for details! Elaine is also on the lookout for volunteers, so if you have a passion for sustainability please get in touch!

Olivia, our Women's Director, has been busy making the Women's Lounge at Lansdowne Campus in the Richmond House a welcoming and safe space by women for women, and ensuring it has the resources needed like the newly established Period Pantry in the Lounge which is open to menstruators of any gender!

Prince Solanki, the current External Executive and Board of Governors (BOG) member, plans to organize another Camosun Student Soccer tournament in October. As the former Student Wellness and Access Director, he believes that sports are the best way to build relationships in school, relieve stress, prevent disease, and improve confidence!

We have so many more board members working hard for you every day, this is just a small sample of everything that's been happening at the Camosun College Student Society! Stay in touch with our board members by emailing them or following their constituency pages on Instagram, they would love to hear from you!

Scan the QR code to keep in touch with our directors and follow their journeys!



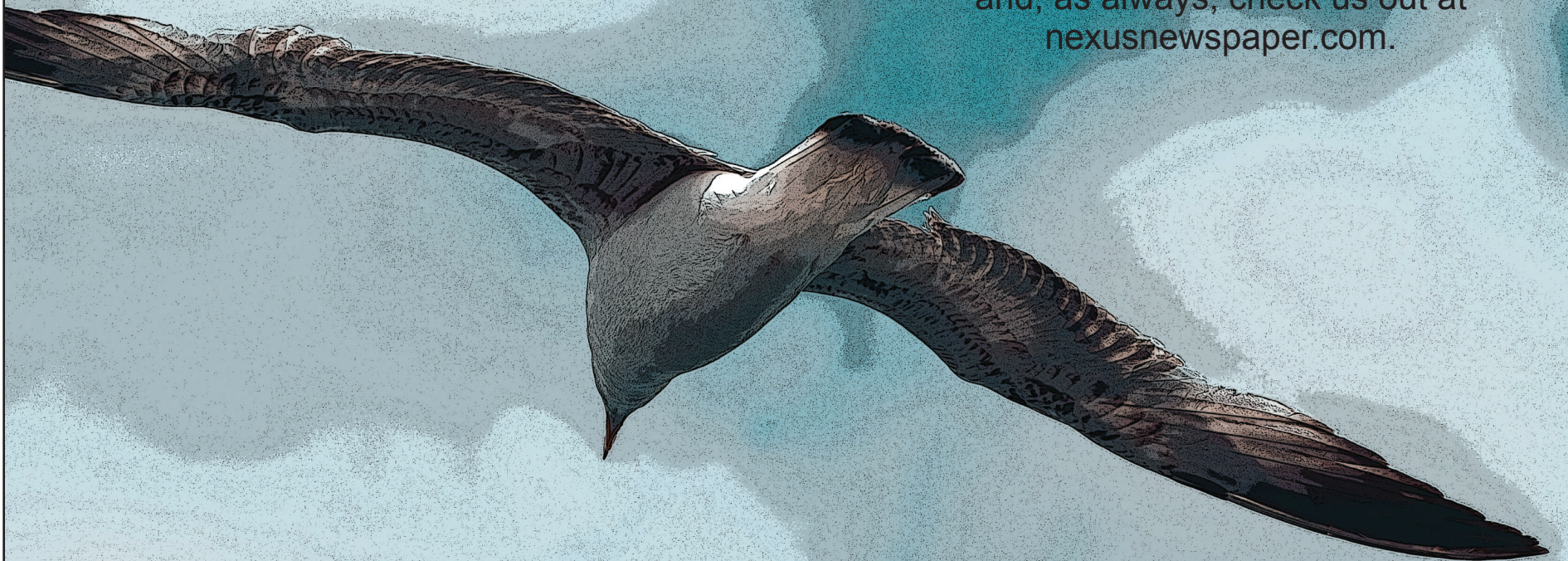
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